

Malick Sidibé



Malick Sidibé, *La Gazelle* (1974) Silver Gelatin Print

In 1960, when Mali became independent from France, a great sense of freedom and confidence coincided with economic expansion. Luxury shops appeared for the first time and young Malians, inspired by magazines and record covers from Europe and America, started wearing Western clothes. They formed clubs that became meeting places, where they drank, discussed politics and swapped James Brown records. Each club, with names like The Barons, The Seducers or The Soul Brothers, had a distinct style and reputation and would throw competing parties as often as possible. It was also in 1960 that Malick Sidibé, having completed a five-year photography apprenticeship, set up his studio in the lively Bagadadji quarter of Bamako. He bought a complete set of laboratory equipment from a Frenchman who was heading home, and became one of the first photographers to take a 35mm camera out into the city. He teamed up with his friend Garrincha, part tailor, part DJ – and a dancer credited with the invention of ‘James Brown bell-bottoms’ specially designed to enhance your dancing skills – and together they went to all the parties, covering up to five a night. Malick would then return to the studio and print until dawn.

Thus, Studio Malick became the place in Bamako to hang-out and be photographed. Many of his clients were women who wanted to show off the latest clothes, watches and hairstyles, and would return regularly as new trends emerged. For young people a studio portrait was an important event and each image was constructed using a mixture of carefully chosen props. They would dress like their idols, copying a specific film or look; and for each club there would be rules dictating the way their members should wear their hats and jackets, or the way they held their cigarettes. The energy emanating from these pictures is still palpable in the studio today. Before his death in April 2016, one might sit with Malick for a few hours and witness people of all ages dropping by; others would call out his name as they bicycled past. Inside the studio the famous striped textile is still in use, and the shelves are packed with repaired cameras and negatives. Always happy to discuss the old days, Malick loved to tell stories of Bamako at the time of independence. In his opinion, the young today don't know how to have a good time. Looking at these carefree photographs, one feels he might of had a point.

Malick Sidibé

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Selected Solo
Exhibitions

2016

Malick Sidibé: The Eye of Modern Mali, Somerset House, London
Malick Sidibé, Jack Shainman, New York

2014

Studio Malick, DePaul University Art Museum, Chicago
Studio Malick, Cornell Fine Arts Museum, Florida
Studio Malick, Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, New York

2012

Malick Sidibé, Galerie Boutique Agnès B., New York

2011

Malick Sidibé, Jack Shainman Gallery, New York
Malick Sidibé. The Eye of Bamako, M+B Gallery, Los Angeles

2010

Studio Malick, Tristan Hoare, London
Malick Sidibé: La Vie en Rose, Collezione Maramotti Reggio Emilia, Italy

2009

Malick Sidibé et la Photographie de Mode, Frontières, 8èmes Rencontres de Bamako,
Biennale Africaine de Photographie, Bamako
Malick Sidibé, Bamako Style, Galería Oliva Arauna, Madrid

2008

Malick Sidibé, Chemises, Foam Fotografiemuseum, Amsterdam
Malick Sidibé 08, Fondation Zinsou, Cotonou

Selected Group
Exhibitions

2017

Studio Africa !, Tristan Hoare Gallery, London

2016-17

African Art Against the State, Williams College Museum of Art, Massachusetts
From The Collection: 1960-1969, Museum of Modern Art, New York

2016

Muse: Mickalene Thomas Photographs and tête-à-tête, Aperture Gallery, New York

2015-17

In and Out of the Studio: Photographic Portraits from West Africa, Metropolitan
Museum of Art, New York

2014-15

Beyond the Classical: Imagining the Ideal Across Time, National Academy Museum,
New York

2014

More Material, Salon 94, New York

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2013-15

Plural Modernities from 1905 – 1970, Centre Pompidou, Paris

2012-13

Everything Was Moving: Photography from the 60s and 70s, Barbican Centre, London

2012

We face forward. Art from West Africa Today, Manchester Art Gallery, Manchester
Who, What, Wear, Selections from the Permanent Collection, Studio Museum Harlem, New York

2011

30 Years of New York Times, Rencontres d'Arles, Arles
Paris Photo, Magnin-A, Grand Palais, Paris
Another Story, Moderna Museum, Stockholm
Art Paris Art Fair, Magnin-A, Grand Palais, Paris

2010

African Stories, Magnin-A, Ancienne Banque du Maroc, Marrakech
The Nights of Bamako, Photography of Malick Sidibé, Espace Hermine de Plouha, Association GwinZegal, Saint-Brieuc

2009

Les nuits de Bamako, Photographies de Malick Sidibé, Musée Nicéphore Niepce, Chalon-sur-Saône

Awards

International Center of Photography Lifetime Achievement Award, 2008

Golden Lion Award Venice Biennale, 2007

Hasselblad Award, 2003

Public Collections

Art Collection of the United States Embassy
The Art Museum, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey
Baltimore Museum of Art, Maryland
Birmingham Museum of Art
Alabama
Brooklyn Museum, New York
The Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College, New York
The Getty Museum, Los Angeles
High Museum of Art, Atlanta
Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire
International Center of Photography, New York
LaSalle Bank, Chicago
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
The Museum of Modern Art, New York
The Rhode Island School of Design Museum, Providence
Philadelphia Museum of Art, Pennsylvania
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, California
The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York