



Revue

Cape Town kicks off Africa's art fair calendar for 2018

By Toyin Akinosho

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National Theatre

THE sixth edition of the Cape Town Art Fair opens in roughly 90 days' time, with far more ambitious programming than its last five outings. Set up at the city's International Convention Centre, from February 16-18, 2018, it hosts an increasing number of galleries from outside the continent, showing new, edgy (and not-so-edgy) visual art alongside prominent art houses located in Africa. Among the European galleries returning to participate are London's Africa focused October and Tiwani Galleries, as well as Gallery Minini and Primo Marella, both from Italy. From Cuba, the fair will welcome, again, Gallery Continua. Those participating for the first time include Galerija Gregor Podnar (Berlin, Germany), Perrotin (Paris, France) and Magnin-A (Paris, France).

The Fair's "usual suspects" include Goodman Gallery, Stevenson, Gallery MOMO, SMAC Gallery, WHATIFTHEWORLD, Blank Projects, Barnard and Everard Read CIRCA Gallery, all of which are South African galleries. From elsewhere in Africa come Galerie Cecile Fakhoury (Abidjan, Ivory Coast), Afriart Gallery (Kampala, Uganda), Circle Art Gallery (Nairobi, Kenya), First Floor Gallery Harare (Harare, Zimbabwe), ARTLabAfrica (Nairobi, Kenya) and Addis Fine Art (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia). CPTF will be sponsored for the next three years by Investec, a South African founded, but globally renowned, investment firm. Apart from exhibits by invited and paying galleries, there are viewings curated by the Fair's organisers, reflecting the theme. SOLO, the new section of the fair, will be curated in by guest curator Nontobeko Ntombela. In its first iteration, the section will focus on the artistic production of women artists, examining the widespread socio-political issues faced by women in both public and private spheres, while also highlighting their contribution to the art world.

Prices Crash Widely at Arthouse's 19th Auction

THE most noticeable event at Arthouse Contemporary's 19th Art Auction last Monday was the headlong crash in the published estimated prices of the works on sale. Over drinks after the event, held at the Kia Showroom on Vitoria Island, Jeff Ajueshi, owner of the Thought Pyramid, the new art centre in Ikoyi, declared: "This was the collector's

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also far below its lower estimated price of ₦250,000. It seemed, for a while that this price crash would be redeemed when the hammer fell on Duke Asidere’s Our Lagos, a 24 by 24 inch oil on canvas, at ₦400,000, exactly the top price estimated. Even then, there was a sense around the room that the work was worth far more than that price.

Adesoji Adesina’s 54 by 46 inch sized Tom Collins acrylic oil on canvas, looked rather distinguished, out of the first six works on sale, but at ₦800,000, it was a ₦100,000 less than the lower estimated price and almost half the higher estimated price of ₦1.5Million, Ben Osaghae’s The Beauty of Togetherness was the first of the really high priced pieces. But the 41 by 32 inch oil on canvas sold at ₦2.07Million, more than ₦400,000 less than the lower estimated price of ₦2.5Million. One sale that bucked the trend was Ebenezer Akinola’s neo-realistic painting We just dey goo, going for ₦1.495Million, close to ₦300,000 higher than its higher published estimated price of ₦1.2Million. It was the strongest indication that Nigerian collectors are still keen on paintings that look almost photographic. The fact that the auctioneer was always starting at far less than the lower estimated price and appeared quite in a hurry to sell, suggested that galleries and artists who put in the works had called in advance to advise of a revision downwards. But that would be a very ignorant conclusion. The truth, as Arthouse Contemporary’s operations manager Nana Sonoiki, put it, is “that the reserved prices are not published, and those estimated prices are just what they are, estimates”. The reserved prices are lower; they are the prices agreed between the ‘vendor’ and Arthouse Contemporary, so when you hear the auctioneer begin with a price that sounds much lower than what’s in your brochure, know that he is working with information from the reserved price”. That’s some lesson from Art Auction Class 101. There’s more about this last auction than this column allows. Watch this space for more.

Soyinka’s Latest Book Presentation. Osundare Reads At Goethe and Bisi Fayemi Holds Court

BISI ADELEYE FAYEMI will be reading from her latest book Loud Whispers, at the Civic Centre on Victoria Island from 3pm this afternoon, Sunday, December 3. It’s an invitation only event. The former first lady of Ekiti State is also the author of Speaking for Myself (2013) and Speaking Above A Whisper an autobiography (2013). The new book is a collection of opinion pieces on a wide range of issues. Loud Whispers was first presented and read to the public at the 19th Lagos Book and Art Festival, held at the Freedom Park on Lagos Island, in early November 2017. Meanwhile, the proposed nationwide reading tour by Nigeria’s Poet Laureate, Niyi Osundare, has been shortened to just one reading engagement. That is now scheduled for the Goethe Institut, the German Culture Centre, at the Lagos City Hall, on December 15. The scheduled December 16 reading at the Quintessence is no longer holding.

Osundare is reading from his latest collection of poems: If Only The Road Could Talk. The poet’s last reading tour of the country was with The Katrina Poems five years ago. Bookcraft Publishers are organising a public presentation of two volumes of Wole Soyinka’s Intervention Series at the Freedom Park on Tuesday, December 5. The readings start at 5pm. Intervention Series VI and VII contain the essays titled Between Defective Memory and the Public Lie: A Personal Odyssey in The Republic of Liars II and Green Cards Green Gods: The Republic Shrieks Back, respectively. The event will be chaired by Rotimi Amechi, Minister of Transport.

• Compiled by staff of Festac News Press Limited

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