

FOR IMMEDIATE PRESS RELEASE

SEATTLE, November 2, 2014. M.I.A Gallery is very pleased to announce, "Back to Front," an exhibit dedicated to the internationally acclaimed photographers Malick Sidibé (Mali) and J.D. 'Okhai Ojeikere (Nigeria)

The exhibition will open on November 20 and will run until January 3, 2015 with a reception on Thursday, November 20th, from 6-8 pm.

This exhibition presents two monumental photographers whose practices studio portraiture in its most encompassing form with unique backdrops. Both artists stress the importance of cultural shift in post-independent eras.

Portrait studios not only become a customary space to come to, they are converted into aesthetic labs both liberating and transcending the self. They would immortalize the cultural and political emancipation of a new generation, thus incarnating the glorification of the present through mimicked aspirations and statuary poses. In that sense, Malick Sidibe reinforces this sentiment of belonging and self-contemplation.

Nonetheless, the exposure of the diaspora culture has imposed new aesthetic norms. While the young Africans wouldn't travel, the cultural artifacts did.

Music and fashion occupy an important role in exhilarating new ideologies often rooted in the African-American cultures. The "borrowed" lifestyles appear as a transnational phenomenon connecting the young Africans to the concept of globalization.

A trend that Nigerian photographer J.D. 'Okhai Ojeikere overlooks and instead reveres local cultures. In his aesthetic journey, he wanders in Lagos to capture evanescent hair dresses. In preserving the memory and heritage of Yoruba coiffures, Ojeikere predicts the loss of traditional cultures in a fast growing city.

Back to Front juxtaposes two singular styles, one rooted in the adoption modern lifestyles and the other revealing the post-modernist elements in traditional hairstyles.

Malick Sidibé, born in Soloba, Mali, opens "Studio Bamako" in the popular neighborhood of Bagdadji. Using his ability for drawing, he carefully thinks every posture, costume, and arrangement. His photographs are part of major museum and institutions collections,

Malick Sidibe got the Hasselblad Award, the golden Lion at the Venice Biennale and lately the ICP award for lifetime achievement. He lives in Bamako.

J.D. 'Okhai Ojeikere, born in Lagos, exhibited internationally in major venues such as the Venice Biennial, Tate Modern, Studio Museum in Harlem, Documenta, and Fondation Cartier pour l'Art Contemporain, among others. He is represented in some of the most prestigious collections, including the Met's, which includes two photographs from his celebrated Hairstyles series. He passed away in mars 2014.