

Narratives of African Women Artists (Paris, 15–16 Apr 21)

École du Louvre, Paris, France, Apr 15–16, 2021

Deadline: Oct 15, 2020

ArtHist Redaktion

This symposium is part of a wider collaboration with the Africa 2020 Season, a pan-African and multidisciplinary project taking place in France from December 2020 to mid-July 2021. Africa 2020 is an invitation, by N’Goné Fall, General Commissioner of the Season, to look at and understand the world from an African perspective. In this context, the AWARE association: Archives of Women Artists, Research and Exhibitions whose goal is to improve the exposure of 20th century women artists, sought the expertise of scholars, artists and curators from Africa and around the world to raise the issue of the visibility of women artists in Africa.

This symposium intends to bring together researchers from various horizons in order to shed light on the research on African women artists and to bring African perspectives to the foundational narratives of art history.

The past few decades have seen concerted drive in Europe and the United States to produce global art histories, with little participation by scholars from other parts of the world, especially Africa. Alongside this initiative is an unprecedented growth in research and writing on modern and contemporary African art. Major monographs on individual artists, groups and national art movements have appeared in recent years. Yet, only very few women artists have featured in these publications, despite that they played important roles in the making of these histories. This symposium offers a critical platform for established and emerging scholars to evaluate and re-examine existing histories and archives as well as recover new ones to more fully account for the significance of work by African women artists past and present. Among the guiding questions for this symposium are: How have modern and contemporary art history in Africa been written? Which histories, media, identities, genders have been forgotten and which have been overlooked? Which new narratives do we need for the writing of more comprehensive future art histories?

The proposed interventions can explore the following four axes destined to create a framework of reflection around the theme of narratives:

- Lost narratives: Who are the women whose stories we are at risk of losing? How do we fill this gap?
- Narratives of Womanhood: What does it mean to be a “woman artist”? How do notions of “the feminine” or “womanhood” shape what is accepted, recorded, or understood in the formation of art historical narratives?
- Narratives of media: What are the relationships between gender and medium? How have the

politics of materials and techniques played formative roles in the shaping discourses about women in the arts? How might we challenge or undermine these?

- Institutional narratives: What role have institutions played in entrenching the underrepresentation of women in the arts? What responsibility should institutions assume in creating more equitable systems of representation moving forward? What are alternative institutional models that are more inclusive?

Presentations will last 20 minutes and will be illustrated with slide presentations. They will be filmed and recorded, and some of them may eventually be published as articles in a publication dedicated to the event or on AWARE's website.

Paper Proposals

The proposals are to be sent in PDF format to aware.africa2020@gmail.com before 15 October 2020 and must include an abstract (in French or English) of approximately one page (maximum 2,000 characters), a title, 4 to 8 images, and a Curriculum Vitae.

Accepted proposals will be communicated by 30 November 2020.

Presentations can be in French or English.

Deadline: 15 October 2020

Type of Event: Symposium

Scientific and Organising Committee

Africa2020 Season:

N'Goné Fall, General Commissioner of Africa 2020

AWARE: Archives of Women Artists, Research and Exhibitions:

Camille Morineau, Co-founder and Director of AWARE; Anaïs Roesch,

International Program Manager; Matylda Taszycka, Head of Research Programmes

External Members:

Eva Barois De Caevel, Independent Curator; Nadira Laggoune, Director of the

Musée National Public d'Art Moderne et Contemporain of Alger; Peju

Layiwola, Artist, Founder of the Women and Youth Art Foundation and Vice

President of the Arts Council of the African Studies Association; Nkule

Mabaso, Independent Curator; Nontobeko Ntombela, Independent Curator and

Professor at the Wits School of Arts; Karen Milbourne, Senior Curator,

National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution; Chika Okeke-Agulu,

Professor of Art History, Department of Art & Archaeology / Department of

African American Studies, Princeton University; Senam Okudzeto, Artist and

Educator, Founder of the Ghanaian NGO Art in Social Structures ; Fatou Sarr

Sow, Sociologist, Director of the Gender and Family Institute of the Cheikh

Anta Diop University in Dakar; Rachida Triki, Professor of Art History and

Aesthetics, Tunis University.

CFP: Narratives of African Women Artists (Paris, 15-16 Apr 21). In: ArtHist.net, Sep 9, 2020 (accessed Feb 2, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/23476>>.