

# Urban Cadence: Street Scenes from Lagos and Johannesburg

exhibition prospectus

## description

*Urban Cadence* tells the multifaceted stories of two urban environments—Lagos, Nigeria and Johannesburg, South Africa—experienced through the artistic expressions of over sixty photographs and videos by nine award-winning and internationally recognized contemporary African artists. African cities are the fastest growing in the world, and these two cities have experienced this growth in diverse yet fascinating ways: the first as a megacity, the latter as a center of industrial development. The street scenes in this exhibition represent the complex narratives of these urban sites: tales of migration, labor, desperation, success, hope, and imagination among others. Here, these stories are woven together through the metaphor of cadence, which speaks to the rhythms of life. Cadence is the gait of the artist and inhabitants of the city as they move through urban spaces. It is a visual rhythm an artist creates when telling the city's myriad stories. At the same time, it is a musical metaphor that artists draw on to speak about their images or their photographic practice. Whether sobering, humorous, or unexpected, the visuals of *Urban Cadence* challenge us to explore what it means to be urban in Africa in the early 21st century.



Akintunde Akinleye, *Each Passing Day*, 2006

# the artists

## Akinbode Akinbiyi

Born in Oxford, England in 1946, Akinbode Akinbiyi studied in Nigeria, England and Germany. He is based in Berlin and has been working as a photographer since 1974. His current work focuses on the phenomenon of African megacities, namely Cairo, Lagos, Kinshasa and Johannesburg, where he lived and worked in late 2012 and early 2013. "When you walk you move slowly through spaces and by so doing you see more. I have been doing this for 40 years. I move very slowly and gently, I try not to invade other people's spaces, while at the same time trying to take images."



*Aguda, Lagos Island, Lagos, 2006*

## Akintunde Akinleye

Akintunde Akinleye, a Reuters photographer based in Lagos, was the first Nigerian photographer to be recognized by the prestigious World Press Photo Contest. He began photographing in earnest after secondary school when he bought a camera to take pictures, which he sold to help raise money to pay for his university entrance exams. He is now an award fellow of the National Geographic Society-All Roads photo project. In 2012, Akinleye was nominated for Prix Pictet photography award on sustainability for his work *Delta, A Vanishing Wetland*. His work has been presented internationally.



*Bone Repair, 2009*

## Kelechi Amadi-Obi

Kelechi Amadi-Obi was born in Owerri, Nigeria. After graduating from law school, he decided to pursue a career as a full-time artist. Working in fashion, advertising, and fine art, he has garnered international attention over the last two decades. He was a founding member of the Nigerian photographers' collective Depth of Field. Amadi-Obi's work has been included in group exhibitions such as *Snap Judgments: New Positions in Contemporary African Photography*, International Center of Photography, New York (2006); and *Depth of Field: Images of Lagos & London*, South London Gallery (2005).



*Captain Rugged 1, 2013*

## Jude Anogwih

Jude Anogwih is a visual artist and curator from Lagos, Nigeria. His work interrogates the concept of identity, mobility and migration using experimental photopainting/drawing, video, installation and maps. As a practicing artist, his work has been shown at many international art exhibitions and projects. Anogwih was a Goethe-Institut Fellow at Documenta (13), Kassel, Germany and Goethe-Institut Moving Africa Participant at Salon Urbain de Douala (SUD) 2013. He is a founding member and co-coordinator of Video Art Network Lagos.



still from *Viva Illusion?*, 2016

## Jodi Bieber

Jodi Bieber has lived and worked in Johannesburg for the past 35 years. She studied photography at the Market Photo Workshop founded by David Goldblatt. Over a ten-year period (1994-2004), Bieber focused her photography on the country of her birth. But perhaps she is best known for her iconic photograph of the young mutilated Afghan woman - Aisha - featured on the cover of *Time Magazine* in August 2010. Bieber was awarded the 54th annual World Press Photo of the Year 2010 for the image. Her most recent solo exhibition was *Quiet* in 2014 at the Goodman Gallery.



*Orlando West Swimming Pool, Orlando West, 2009*

## Donna Kukama

Donna Kukama was born in 1981 in Mafikeng, South Africa. A multimedia artist working in performance, video, text, and sound installation, her approach to her practice is experimental, and she mostly applies methods that she describes as "deliberately undisciplined." Kukama appropriates and manipulates existing forms and uses her performances to insert an alien voice and presence into various moments in history. She has participated and performed in various art fairs and biennales, including the 55th Venice Biennale. Kukama was named the National Arts Festival's 2014 Standard Bank Young Artist for Performance Art.



still from *The Swing (After Fragonard)*, 2008

## Sabelo Mlangeni

Sabelo Mlangeni was born in 1980 in Driefontein, South Africa and moved to Johannesburg in 2001. Mlangeni began studying photography through a correspondence course then enrolled at the Market Photo Workshop where his mentor was Jo Ractliffe. In 2006, Mlangeni received the Edward Ruiz Mentorship prize, which gives young photographers an opportunity to develop a substantial body of social documentary work. *Invisible Woman*, depicting women who clean Johannesburg's streets at night, was the result.



*Woman and City, 2012*

## Uche Okpa-Iroha

Born in 1972 in Enugu, Nigeria, Okpa-Iroha creates photographs, which he hopes will raise awareness of sociopolitical and economic issues. He prefers to work closely with his subjects in order to initiate a dialogue with them. He is a founding member of the Blackbox photography collective. Okpa-Iroha has exhibited internationally. Among other awards, he received the Seydou Keita Award for the best photography presented at the 8th Bamako Rencontre, was nominated for the Jean Paul Blachere Foundation Prize and received the National Geographic All Roads Photography Programme Award.



*American Dream, 2008*

## Jo Ractliffe

Jo Ractliffe was born in 1961 in Cape Town and lives in Johannesburg. She completed her BFA and MFA degrees at the University of Cape Town. Well known in both the United States and Europe, Jo Ractliffe has most recently had solo exhibitions at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts and at Fondation A Stichting, Brussels. Ractliffe was nominated for the 2011 Discovery Prize at the Rencontres d'Arles photography festival.



*Jeppe St. Cnr West St., Newton, 2000-2004*

## educational resources

In addition to a forthcoming full-color exhibition catalogue (available August 2018), these educational resources provide additional points of entry for audience engagement and are available via free online services Spotify and Youtube.

### Playlists

Experience the city streets presented in the exhibition with a suite of public playlists available on the Gund Gallery profile on Spotify, the free music-streaming platform. The largest of these playlists, titled *Urban Rhythms*, presents recent pop music hits in Nigeria.

Four additional playlists explore the roots of contemporary Nigerian pop music in the musical traditions of Nigeria. Each of the playlists focuses on one of the four main traditions – Apala, Waka, Fuji, and Jùjú. The link to the playlists is available upon request.

### Videos

#### Interview of Uche Okpa-Iroha

Award-winning contemporary Nigerian photographer Uche Okpa-Iroha discusses his process in capturing the vibrant and animated urban life of Lagos. He strives to authentically document the fleeting and rapidly transforming city and the people who live there.

#### Interview of Jodi Beiber

South African photojournalist Jodi Bieber discusses her travels around the world documenting people and places that many of us may never see for ourselves. Bieber's work featuring views of Johannesburg illuminates the mundane or hidden lives of diverse friends and families.





Jodi Bieber, *Alternative rock band Ree-Burth, Pimville, 2009*



Jodi Bieber, *Humphrey Nkosana and Goodness Sonto Mokgokgo along with their guests posing for wedding photographs, Rockville, 2009*

## specifications

**Artists:** Akinbode Akinbiyi, Akintunde Akinleye, Kelechi Amadi-Obi, Jude Anogwih, Jodi Bieber, Donna Kukama, Sabelo Mlangeni, Uche Okpa-Iroha, Jo Ractliffe

**Curator:** Guest curated by Carol Magee, PhD, Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Art and Art History, UNC-Chapel Hill

**Exhibition Organizers and Sponsors:** *Urban Cadence* was initiated by TECAA (Touring Exhibitions of Contemporary Artists of Africa) and made possible through the advocacy, generosity and leadership of TECAA's principals Diane Frankel and Cynthia Plevin. The Gund Gallery at Kenyon College shepherded the project's completion, tour and forthcoming book. Gund Gallery exhibitions and programs are sponsored, in part, by the Gund Gallery Board of Directors, the Ohio Arts Council, and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

**Number of Works:** 64 framed photographs and video works; checklist available upon request

**Exhibition Catalogue:** August 2018; 15 complimentary copies

**Running / Square Feet:** Flexible; approximately 300-400 / 2,500-4,000

**Security:** Moderate

**Fee:** \$15,000

**Shipping/Insurance:** One-way fine art shipping, depending on tour schedule; wall-to-wall insurance

**Availability:** April 2018-September 2021; inquire about time frames after 2021

**Venues:** Gund Gallery at Kenyon College, October 13, 2017 -March 4, 2018

Contact:

Robin Goodman, Collections Manager & Registrar, Gund Gallery at Kenyon College, 740-427-5971, [goodmanr@kenyon.edu](mailto:goodmanr@kenyon.edu)

Tour:

Available for flexible time frames starting April 2018

**GUNDGALLERY**  
Kenyon College