

# MAGNIN-A

## J.D. 'Okhai Ojeikere

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Born in 1930, Ovbionu, Nigeria  
Died in 2014, Lagos, Nigeria, where he lived and worked

J.D. 'Okhai Ojeikere was raised in a small village in rural southwestern Nigeria. In 1950, he bought a modest Brownie D camera, and a neighbour taught him the rudiments of photography. In 1951 he began to seek work from the Ministry of Information in Ibadan, repeatedly sending the same letter: "I would be very grateful if you would use me for any kind of work in your photographic department." His persistence paid off in 1954, when he was offered a position as a darkroom assistant. Just as Nigeria was shedding colonial rule in 1961, he became a still photographer for Television House Ibadan, a division of the Western Nigerian Broadcasting Services, the first television station in Africa. Jazz musician Steve Rhodes was director of programming and Ojeikere has recalled, the spirit of the time: "Just after independence, we were full of ideas and energy. We were going to conquer the world."  
In 1963 he moved to Lagos to work for West Africa Publicity. In 1967 he joined the Nigerian Arts Council, and during their festival of the following year he began to take series of photographs dedicated to Nigerian culture. This body of work, now consisting of thousands of images, has become a unique anthropological, ethnographic, and documentary national treasure. Most African photographers of his generation only worked on commission; this project, unique of its kind, flourished without any commercial support.

The Hairstyle series, which consists of close to a thousand photographs, is the largest and the most thorough segment of Ojeikere's archive. "To watch a 'hair artist' going through his precise gestures, like an artist making a sculpture, is fascinating. Hairstyle are an art form," Ojeikere has commented. He photographs hairstyles every day in the street, in offices, at parties. He records each subject systematically: from the rear, sometimes in profile, and occasionally head on. Those from the rear are almost abstract and best reveal the sculptural aspect of the hairstyles. For Ojeikere, this is a never-ending project as hairstyles evolve with fashion: "All these hairstyles are ephemeral. I want my photographs to be noteworthy traces of them. I always wanted to record moments of beauty, moments of knowledge. Art is life. Without art, life would be frozen."

### SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2015  
J.D.'Okhai Ojeikere, Musée de Bamako, Mali (curator: Bisi Silva)  
Staying Power, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK

2013  
J.D. Okhai Ojeikere: Hairstyle, Willemotte gallery at lichfield studios, London, UK

2005  
Hairstyle, Maison de France, Lagos, Nigeria  
Blaffer Gallery, Houston, U.S.A

2002  
Hairstyle, Wedge Gallery, Toronto, Canada

2001  
J.D. 'Okhai Ojeikere, MAMCO, Geneva, Switzerland

2000  
J.D.'Okhai Ojeikere, Cartier Foundation For Contemporary Art, Paris, France

1995  
J.D.'Okhai Ojeikere, National Arts Council, Lagos, Nigeria

### GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2021  
HERITAGE, Galerie MAGNIN-A, Paris France  
Africa Tambien, Galeria Tambien, Ibiza, Spain

2015-2019  
Ex Africa, CCBB, Brazil, (October, 11, 2017 - October, 22, 2018)  
Making Africa, A Continent of Contemporary Design, Travelling Exhibition (curators:Amélie Klein, Okwui Enwezor)  
14 Mar 2015 – 13 Sep 2015 Vitra Design Museum, Weil am Rhein, Germany  
30 Oct 2015 – 21 Feb 2016 Guggenheim Bilbao, Bilbao, Spain  
22 Mar 2016 – 28 Aug 2016 CCCB Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain  
01 Oct 2016 – 17 Jan 2017 Kunsthal Rotterdam, Rotterdam, Netherlands  
15 Oct 2017 – 07 Jan 2018 High Museum of Art, Atlanta, Georgia  
03 Feb 2018 – 06 May 2018 Albuquerque Museum, Albuquerque, New Mexico  
14 Oct 2018 – 13 Jan 2019 Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, Texas, USA

2018  
Structures of Identity - Photography from The Walther Collection, FOAM, Amsterdam, Holland

Hairstyles, Daoulas Abbey, Britain, France  
Everyday Africal, Zinsou Foundation, Cotonou, Benin

2017

Art/Afrique : le nouvel atelier \_ The Insiders : a selection of works (1989 to 2009) from the Jean Pigozzi collection of contemporary African Art, Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris, France (curators: Suzanne Pagé, Angéline Scherf, Ludovic Dellande; scientific exhibition council: André Magnin)  
On aime l'art...!! Un choix d'Éric Mézil parmi les oeuvres de la Collection agnès b., Collection Lambert en Avignon, France  
Momenta, Biennale de l'image, Vox, centre de l'image contemporaine, Montreal, Canada  
Studio Africal, Tristan Hoare Gallery, London, England  
AFRICA. Raccontare un mondo, PAC Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea, Milano, Italy (curator: Adelina Von Fürstenberg)

2016

Regarding Africa: Contemporary Art and Afro-Futurism, Art Museum, Tel Aviv, Israel (curator: Ruth Direktor)  
African Portraits: Omar Victor Diop, Seydou Keïta, Aida Muluneh, Malick Sidibé & J.D. 'Okhai Ojeikere, HackelBury Gallery, London, England

2015

Africa, Louisiana Museum, Modern Art Museum, Humlebaek, Denmark  
In and Out of the Studio : Photographic Portraits from West Africa, Metropolitan Museum, New York, USA (curators: Giulia Paoletti, Yaelle Biro)  
Staying Power, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK

2014

Mémoires vives, Cartier Foundation for Contemporary Art, Paris, France  
Here Africa, Musée des Suisses du Monde, Geneva, Switzerland  
Tribute to Frédéric Bruly Bouabré & J.D. 'Okhai Ojeikere, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France

2013

Keïta, Ojeikere, Sidibé, 11 Columbia, Monaco  
Il Palazzo Enciclopedico, Venice Biennale, 55th International Art Exhibition, Venice, Italy  
Sartorial Moments and the Nearness of Yesterday, Museum of the African Diaspora, San Francisco, USA (curator: Bisi Silva)

2012

Cheveux Chéris, Musée du Quai Branly, Paris, France (curator: Yves Le Fur)  
Portraits et Identités, The Walter Collection, Burlafingen, Germany

2011

ARS 11`, Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki, Finland

2010

A life in Pictures, Lagos, Nigeria  
Anos 70, Fotografia y vida cotidiana, Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporaneo, Seville, Spain (curators: Sergio Mah, Paul Wombell)  
Stare: The Pleasures of the Intensely Familiar and the Strangely Unexpected, Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach, Florida, USA

2007

Art & about, City of Sydney, Sydney, Australia  
Documenta 12, Kassel, Germany

2006

100% Africa, Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao, Spain (curator: André Magnin)  
Vive l'Afrique, Galerie du Jour -Agnès b., Paris, France  
Galerie du Jour -Agnès b. Tokyo, Japan  
About Africa, part one, Fifty-One Fine Art Photography, Anvers, Belgium

2005/2006

Arts of Africa, Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of African Art, Washington, DC., U.S.A  
African Art Now: Masterpieces from the Jean Pigozzi Collection (curator: André Magnin)  
National Museum of African Art, Washington DC, U.S.A  
Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC, U.S.A  
Museum of Fine Arts Houston, Houston, U.S.A

2005

Arts of Africa, Grimaldi Forum, Monaco (curator: André Magnin)  
Vive l'Afrique, Galerie du Jour – Agnès b., Paris, France

2004/2005

Kurzavordanach, Photographischen Sammlung, SK Stiftung Kultur, Mediapark, Köln, Germany

2004

Je m'installe aux abattoirs, La collection d'art contemporain d'Agnès b., Les Abattoirs, Toulouse, France  
Joy of Life - Malick Sidibé and Ojeikere, Two Photographers from Africa, Hara Museum, Tokyo, Japan

2003/ 2004

Parures de tête, Musée Dapper, Paris, France (curators: Christiane Falgayrettes-Leveau, Iris Hahner)

2001

Century City: art and culture in the modern metropolis, Tate Modern, London, UK (curator: Iwona Blaswick)

2000

Africa Inside  
Noorderlicht 2000 photofestival  
Fries Museum, Leeuwarden, Netherlands  
La Beauté in fabula, Palais des Papes, Avignon, France

1996

Nigerian Traditional Hairstyle, Goethe-Institut, Lagos, Nigeria

1983

«Ten top Photographers », National Museum, Lagos, Nigeria

1978

Photography in Advertising, 50th Anniversary of Lintas Limited, Lagos, Nigeria

## FAIRS

2017

Paris Photo, Grand Palais, Paris, France

2016

Photo Basel, Switzerland

Art X Lagos, Nigeria

Paris Photo, Grand Palais, Paris, France

2015

1:54, Contemporary African Art fair, New-York, USA

Paris Photo, Grand Palais, Paris, France

2014

Art Genève, Switzerland

Paris Photo, Grand Palais, Paris, France

2013

1:54 Contemporary African Art Fair, London, UK

Paris Photo Los Angeles, USA

Paris Photo, Grand Palais, Paris, France

2007

Documenta 12, Kassel, Germany

## Collections

Museum of Modern Art, New-York

Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris

The Art Institute of Chicago

Princeton University Art Museum