



## African Artists' Foundation SHAPING THE FUTURE OF CONTEMPORARY ART IN NIGERIA

by Joseph Gergel Curator, African Artists' Foundation

**A**s the economic hub of Nigeria, the city of Lagos is also the country's artistic centre. Over the last decade, there has been an explosion in the contemporary arts community in Nigeria, with a roster of cultural foundations, galleries and public programming initiatives that are contributing to a burgeoning arts infrastructure and giving voice to emerging modes of artistic expression on the continent.

Established in 2007, African Artists' Foundation (AAF) is a non-profit organisation dedicated to the promotion and development of contemporary African art and artists. The AAF plays a significant role in art and academic communities, organising art exhibitions, competitions and workshops with the aim of unearthing and developing talent, creating social awareness and providing a platform to express creativity. By helping professional and emerging artists in Africa and

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RIGHT George Osodi – Lagos boys



LEFT Kadir van Lohuizen – Diamond Matters

BELOW Peter diCampo – Life Without Lights





THIS PAGE Drivers Dexterity  
by George Osodi

supporting international exhibitions and community outreach programmes, the AAF sees the contribution to a strong cultural landscape in Africa as a transformative element in driving social change.

As well as a rigorous programme of exhibitions and workshops at its gallery in Lagos, the AAF organises two flagship projects every year: the LagosPhoto festival and the National Art Competition.

Launched in 2010, LagosPhoto is the first and only international arts festival of photography in Nigeria. Events in the month-long festival include exhibitions, workshops and the display of large-scale outdoor prints throughout the city, with the aim of reclaiming public spaces and showing the general public multifaceted stories of Africa.

LagosPhoto 2012 included 29 local and international photographers under the theme “Seven Days in the Life of Lagos”. The theme captured the energy and vibrancy that make the city of Lagos such a unique cultural environment.

The upcoming LagosPhoto 2013 programme boasts a new partnership with World Press Photo. The pre-eminent international competition and exhibition showcases the best of photojournalism worldwide, and will bring its annual exhibition to Lagos to be shown alongside the festival.

The National Art Competition (NAC) is an annual arts competition organised by the AAF, with each edition driven by pertinent themes in line with current social issues. In its five-year span, the NAC has showcased emerging talent in such diverse mediums as painting, sculpture, photography, mixed media, installation and video art. ■



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MEDINA DUGGER



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The outdoor exhibition at the African Artists' Foundation in Ikoyi, Lagos.