

PRESS RELEASE

The Aarhus Art Building – Centre for Contemporary Art presents:

Ato Malinda: *Incommensurable Identities* October 8, 2011 – January 8, 2012

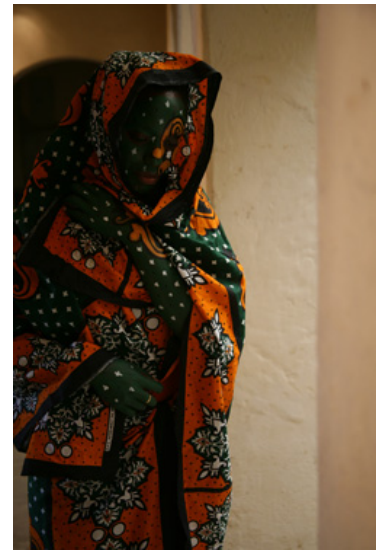
Kenyan performance art in the Aarhus Art Building

The young Kenyan artist Ato Malinda presents her first solo exhibition in Denmark, under the title *Incommensurable Identities* - non-inter-measurable identities. With a critical eye on her African roots, Kenya's history and culture, she gives a young woman's perspective on African identity and inequality in a globalized world.

For the opening on October 7, Ato Malinda creates a unique live performance at the Aarhus Art Building, designed specifically for the exhibition. Ato Malinda is primarily a performance artist and works in the field between performance art and video art.

Art Nouveau framing

Ato Malinda has created a special interior in The Aarhus Art Building as the setting for her artworks. Flower-filled living rooms are furnished with Bauhaus furniture and Scandinavian design, and large wall fotos are framed by hand-painted Art Nouveau-patterned frames. Malinda works deliberately with style bride and culture clashes as a reference to her own background, growing up in both the Netherlands and Kenya.



European, the African Diaspora and African cultural roots are woven together in Ato Malinda search for African identity. She personifies the African water spirit Mami Wata, who turns out to have roots in Europe and India, and the exhibition gives an insight into the complexity of African culture and identity today.

Past and present stories of British colonial domination, oppression of women and today's struggle for freedom meet in a political and artistic interpretation. Malinda's dream for the future consists in the creation of an African renaissance, not denying the past dominant colonial ideologies, but creating a third space questioning the interstices between Africa and the Western world.

International debate: Feminism, Post-colonialism & Micro-strategies in Contemporary Art

The Aarhus Art Building invites the Cameroonian curator, director of RAW MATERIAL COMPANY and advisor to the next Documenta, Koyo Kouoh, to participate in an international panel talk on October 9, at 3 pm. Together with the two artists exhibiting at the Art Centre this fall, Jane Jin Kaisen and the Kenyan artist Ato Malinda, Koyo Kouoh will take a critical look on art, female identity and inequality in a globalized world. Kouoh participates in the debate with her curatorial experience and theoretical take on the African and international art scene today.

Chief Curator at Aarhus Art Building Charlotte Born Sprogøe will moderate the debate.

IMAGINE

This year's theme *IMAGINE – towards an ecoaesthetic* the Aarhus Art Building wants to take a closer look at alliances between art and sustainable development. IMAGINE suggests that art is a critical but at the same time positive, fruitful option that makes allowances for the surroundings and the environment. The theme emphasizes the origin of the concept of sustainability and the linkages between environmental and social problems which have been characteristic of thinking about and the development of this particular concept since the early 1970s.

The exhibitions on the programme for 2011 try to embrace this complexity in the concept of sustainability and its history from two different angles. One approach to the theme focuses on the artistic views of alternative energy. The other, which the exhibition with Ato Malinda represents, focuses on oppressive mechanisms that affect various minorities, women and environment on the existing premises of inequality and power relations.

About Ato Malinda

Ato Malinda (b. 1981) was born in Kenya as the daughter of a Kenyan mother and a Ugandan father. She grew up in Holland, but returned to Kenya as a teenager. After high school she moved to USA where she studied molecular biology and art history at the University of Texas in Austin. But when Ato Malinda realized that Western education had a negative impact on her self-perception, she moved back to Kenya.

She began her professional practice as a painter, and only after a brief stint in the UK, did she decide to pursue her inherent desire for performance art. Ato Malinda has exhibitions in Africa, Europe and the Caribbean. She has had residency in Curacao, Cameroun and Denmark, where she participated in the art project *NotAboutKarenBlixen* and exhibited in connection with the My World IMAGES. Today she lives and works in Nairobi, where she has also curated several exhibitions.

Opening, live performance and “sneak concert”

Friday, October 7, at 5 p.m. – 9 p.m.

The Aarhus Art Building opens its doors for three young upcoming artists:

The Kenyan performance artist Ato Malinda, the Danish-Korean video artist Jane Jin Kaisen and singer and multi instrumentalist Mads Björn, who this evening will present a “sneak-concert” for his upcoming solo album *Monolith*.

Program:

17.00 - Opening Speeches by chief curator Charlotte Sprogøe and Ph.D., post. doc. Lotte Philipsen

17.45 - Live performance with Ato Malinda

18.30 - The cafe serves a green meal

19.30 - “Sneak-concert” with Mads Björn

20.15 - Chill

Open house for the press

Open House for the press on Thursday, October 6, at 12 – 2 p.m. We offer a sandwich and the opportunity to meet the artist.

For further information and interview appointment, contact the Aarhus Art Building Press Officer Stine Kleis

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