

Conversations with Artists  
Black President: The Art and Legacy of Fela Anikulapo Kuti

**NEW MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART**

The following excerpts are from a conversation that took place on July 17, 2003 between Trevor Schoonmaker, guest curator of *Black President: The Art and Legacy of Fela Anikulapo-Kuti*, and artists Satch Hoyt, Ghariokwu Lemi, Senam Okudzeto and Olu Oguibe. This exhibition was on view at the New Museum from July 11-September 28, 2003.

**TREVOR SCHOONMAKER:** I'd like to start by asking the panelists about their initial reaction to the idea of a contemporary art exhibition about Fela and his legacy, and why was it important for them to participate in this show.

**GHARIOKWU LEMI:** My initial reaction was very positive because as Africans we always wanted to be in the mainstream. The history of Africa is replete with a lot of darkness. We are eager for anything that is going to bring us to light so I'm happy its has come to pass—it's a progressive thing.

**SATCH HOYT:** Well, of course my reaction was initially positive, and still is. I think it's just a very innovative idea, the whole concept of doing a show around a musician, activist and politician.

**SENAM OKUDZETO:** I thought it was a strange idea in the beginning, but the more I thought about it, the more I thought it was a genius idea. I think that one of the most important things about Fela is his vibrancy, and the fact that he presents politics in this very contemporary and funky way. It seemed a great way to discuss the legacy of colonialism in Africa, and the Africa I grew up in, but in a manner in which I think people who are not from Africa might find surprising, because they are not familiar with Fela's work.

**OLU OGUIBE:** When I moved back from Florida to New York in 1999, a friend of mine named Daniel Fosse, said to me, "It would be a good thing to do some projects with Apex Art." Apex Art, as some of you may know, is in a space in Tribeca, New York. And I said to him, "Well, I would love to do that, but I really am not familiar with the program." So he brought me 20 brochures of shows from Apex, practically everything that they'd done up to 1999. I actually brought some of those with me today, because on two of those brochures, from the summer of 1999, I had made some notes to propose a show I was going to call "Beast of No Nation" for Fela Kuti. It was quite different from Trevor's, but actually some of the names recur: Alfredo Jaar, for instance, and Obiora Udechukwu. So this is an idea that's been playing on my mind for a while. I didn't propose it to Apex, by the way, because I'm actually quite a reluctant curator. So I just wrote the idea down, and let it pass.

I felt relieved when Trevor told me he was planning this show—actually, he first approached me to write for it. Part of what I then did was to pass on some of the ideas I already had in terms of expanding the scope of the exhibition geographically and aesthetically. I also used that opportunity to get my own work in, as Trevor was interested in that as well!

**TREVOR SCHOONMAKER:** When I was in graduate school studying contemporary African art from '94 to '98, Olu was a kind of distant mentor, as he was one of the very few scholars in the US who actually were working with this subject seriously. Olu was someone who always made time for me through e-mails, phone calls, or conferences, so it is a real delight to have him participate as an artist, panelist, and writer for the catalogue.

**OLU OGUIBE:** That's very kind of you to mention, thank you.

**TREVOR SCHOONMAKER:** Lemi, I think the audience would really enjoy hearing about your first encounter with Fela. Your story is quite personal and very much about your experience of Lagos, Nigeria.

**GHARIOKWU LEMI:** I will start by saying that I believe strongly in predestination. Before I met Fela, I'd been involved in Pan-Africanist thought and consciousness. From secondary school, I knew about James Brown, and about George Jackson when he was killed in San Quentin prison. I used to be so much in love with the music of Mary Makeba, and my thinking was along those lines, not yet knowing that I was going to play a role in Fela's career. I'm not a schooled artist, but I had an idea to practice with Fela's 1974 album cover, from "Roforofo Fight". When I saw the cover photograph, I said, "This could be illustrated." I didn't know I was planning the way for my future career.

A journalist who had just come back from the US and was working with *Sunday Punch* (a Sunday weekly paper in Nigeria) saw the poster, and said, "Who did this?" And they said, "One small boy next door." So he came to see my portfolio, and when I brought out my drawings, he saw Fela's cover. When he said, "Can you do more?" I said, "Okay, I could try."

Literally two days before that time, he had been discussing with Fela the concept of illustrating his covers. So the journalist gave me a test by giving me a picture of Fela, and I did the painting within 24 hours. I showed it to him, and when he said he was taking me to Fela I thought he was drunk.

Fela fell in love with the piece and tried to give me a check for one hundred and twenty Naira. I used to do portraits for thirty Naira, so I was really freaked out. But my instinct said I should not take the money, so I didn't, and Fela gave me a pass to come to his shows free of charge—I could accept that!

A few weeks afterwards, the police attacked Fela's house for the fourth time, and he was hospitalized. I saw the journalist again and he said, "I'm going to see Fela in the hospital, would you like to come?" And I said, "Of course!" When we got there, Fela started discussing the concept of doing a song to fight the police back—and that was "Alagbon Close". That was my first chance to design, and Fela loved it. It became a national hit. People had never seen an album cover like that before. I did 25 of those in 19 years.

**TREVOR SCHOONMAKER:** Satch, your experience in London of starting as a musician and then moving into the visual arts gives you a multidisciplinary perspective. What were your thoughts on Fela, and how did you encounter him?

**SATCH HOYT:** I think I initially encountered Fela in London with South African musicians like Chris McGregor who were in exile. I actually started playing Fela's music when I lived in Mombassa, Kenya, and was playing with a band called Mombassa Roots. The first song that really hit me was "Lady." I always used music with all my work, so the piece I've done for the Fela show has samples of "Shuffling and Smiling," along with edited excerpts of Malcolm X and Kwame Nkrumah.

**TREVOR SCHOONMAKER:** You talked to me briefly about Fela's studies in London at Trinity College of Music in the late fifties and early sixties. What was going on at that time?

**SATCH HOYT:** It was a very pregnant time racially in London. The Notting Hill Gate riots were in 1958. (Fela actually lived in Notting Hill). In that period there were musicians like Joe Harriet, who was the equivalent of John Coltrane. Then there was "Osibisa" later on.

**TREVOR SCHOONMAKER:** Senam, you are a constant global traveler, going from the US to London to Ghana, and spending many years as a child in Lagos. Could you speak a little bit about that?

**SENAM OKUDZETO:** Sure. I never met Fela personally when I was in Lagos, as I was too young, but I always say that Fela was the soundtrack to the seventies in West Africa. He was immensely popular. I can't remember when I first heard the music, because it saturated my youth.

When Trevor asked what I would do for the show, I said, "Well, that is problematic, because I love Fela, but he married 27 of those dancing girls, and I am a feminist artist..." So I ended up doing a feminist piece about Fela. I knew Fela's sister, Yemisi Kuti—actually, she is his cousin—and somehow I wanted to involve her, because she was my direct living link to Fela. Theirs is a highly political, very intellectual family. Yemisi runs charities and is the director of the Nigerian Association of NGOs; she is also very close to Femi so I would always see her at Femi's concerts. The first time I actually met her, I was introduced to her by the diplomats and she was terribly proper. She met all the diplomats and shook their hands, talked about contracts, and then jumped on stage and just danced for hours. Then she got off, and set up

meetings for the following week. I thought, "Wow, this woman is incredible." Fela grew up with her and people like his mother around him—very intelligent, intellectual, strong, political women—and we don't necessarily see that when we look at the imagery of Fela or hear him speak about the 27 dancing girls behind him. So that was how I worked my way into this project.

**TREVOR SCHOONMAKER:** Lemi, could you tell us a bit about what life was like in the Kalakuta Republic, Fela's commune, and his lifestyle with the women there. Senam was addressing a feminist critique in her work, in bringing Yemisi into the performance, and commenting on Fela's mother, who was a strong political leader in Nigeria. Could you tell us a little bit about Funmilayo?

**GHARIOKWU LEMI:** I didn't get too close to her. She was an amazon. Whenever she came around, she was always in a meeting with Fela. Senam was talking from a feminist point of view, and I share her sentiments, really. I had a lot of reservations about the activity between Fela and the girls. And I can remember vividly in 1977, myself and two other friends sat down and were thinking about something to get the girls busy. So I said, "Fela, I have this idea. I want us to lecture the girls, and to teach them ideology". But Fela said "No, no, no. You know, I want to marry them. They are my wives. Let's not bring them into this." I was really shocked, and just backed out. I thought like Malcolm X had said, "If you educate a woman, you educate a nation." But Fela didn't see it that way, even though his mother was a front line politician, and an advocate of human and women's rights.

**OLU OGUIBE:** I came to Fela in a roundabout kind of way. My initial background was very steeped in country and western, and then the British—Elton John and the Beatles, and everybody else—before I actually got into African American musicians such as the Commodores and James Brown. I think the path to my encounter with Fela would probably run a bit parallel with Lemi's, because I was very political as a young person. In high school my nickname was actually Marcus Garvey. And when I went to college, I quickly went into student unions, and for a student activist in Nigeria, Fela was key. Eventually I met Fela, which was a very rare opportunity. I actually met him after my first solo exhibition in 1988 when I was invited over to Jazz 38 and was introduced to him. On a particular night every week, Fela would leave the shrine, and come over to Jazz 38, do a gig, and then go back to the shrine. It was a deeply touching moment, like meeting Chinua Achebe when I was 16.

**TREVOR SCHOONMAKER:** You mentioned that your first solo show was in '88. You created the work that we actually have in this exhibition, "National Graffiti" in '89. This is one of the few pieces that was not produced specifically for the exhibition, so could you tell us why you selected that work?

**OLU OGUIBE:** My work has always been pretty much an extension and illustration of my own ideological convictions, and therefore very political. In 1988, I believe, I began a series of works that were based on a certain decision, at that point in my career, to move away from

Western forms and materials. I began to paint on local materials and local dyes, mats and baskets. All these are part of what I also learned listening to Fela, because he chose pigeon English, and he created Afrobeat. And all of these were in reaction to his western musical upbringing.

**TREVOR SCHOONMAKER:** Lemi, a lot of us know about the violent encounters that Fela had with the military, and with the police of Lagos. Did you yourself ever feel threatened?

**GHARIOKWU LEMI:** I felt threatened on different occasions. The one that was the closest was in 1976 when a comrade was put in charge of the terrible traffic situation in Lagos. The traffic situation was not a situation, it was a *shit-uation*, where errant drivers were horsewhipped on the road.

Fela was president of an organization called Young African Pioneers, a political movement of young people. We sat down and decided that this practice could not go on. Fela did some press interviews that were very vitriolic as usual, so the papers could not publish them. But since Fela had money we said, "Okay, let's print our own newspaper." We did a kind of newsletter that we distributed free of charge. There was no editor's name and no publisher's name. But I did a cartoon lampooning the comrade, and signed it, so my name was the only name that could be traced. I was lucky enough that one of the heads of police belonged to my village tribe. He called my mom and told her about the name on the newspaper. My mom said I should just go underground and the man covered for me. I was fortunate enough never to be there during all the physical assaults.

Let me tell you about the day of the bombing graphically. I was working on the cover, and I was supposed to give that to Mr. John Boot, the managing director of Decca, West Africa, on that same day. So I had finished, and in the morning, my friends came; we were like the three musketeers. They wanted to go to Fela's house, but my instincts told me to hold back. So I said that I had not finished the work, and pretended to retouch it. Within the next hour, one young lady down the road came around and shouted, "Mama Lemi, Mama Lemi," to my mom. She said, "Is Lemi in the house? There is a problem in Fela's house." So my friends and I went, and we saw the incident later, but I was not physically present for it.

**TREVOR SCHOONMAKER:** I was wondering if we could shift gears for a second. Satch, as a musician, I wonder if you could speak about Fela's musical impact—how it affected you, and what you see happening today and over the last few years.

**SATCH HOYT:** Well, there were many influences in relation to Fela's music, you know, from James Brown, Joe Harriet, as I mentioned earlier on, in that earlier period at Trinity College. And John Coltrane, of course. And at that period, in Trinity College, he was studying trumpet, and then went on to tenor sax. And there was this theatrical Funkadelic. Obviously George Clinton must have listened to Fela; his music is just so layered.

**TREVOR SCHOONMAKER:** Can you tell us a bit about the actual soundscape that you created for your installation?

**SATCH HOYT:** Yeah, within that soundscape, I had sampled for “Shuffling and Smiling”, and I chose that because of the impact of religion on peoples of the African Diaspora, and Africa as a whole. And within the cinematic image that I tried to create with the music, I feel I am taking the people on this journey, as I said before, in using excerpts of a speech by Malcolm X that he orated in Chicago in '63, as well as a speech by Kwame Nkrumah from around that period. The urban sounds of Lagos were recorded earlier on in the year: phantom sounds, pygmy sounds. And this, for me, is my tribute to everything that I believe embodied and emboldened his music.

**TREVOR SCHOONMAKER:** Senam, your piece is a bit of a departure from the work I've known in the past, in that you actually embrace video. Could you talk a bit about that personally, and aesthetically? Some of the footage in your work that is not the actual Dialectic of Jubilation performance, but appears to be documentary footage in Ghana. Is that actually work that you shot of your family?

**SENAM OKUDZETO:** I just couldn't think of a way only to work with images as Fela is so musical. Actually that's why I chose to make an installation with drawings, like a video and drawings, because I was afraid that the video by itself would be so awful that I'd need some drawings to back it up. But in the end, I think we made it.

I was thinking about what's most important about Fela's work. And I thought, “my God, it's the way in which this man suffered so much for his beliefs, and yet was always defiant in the way he brought forth his message. The way he performed, that he could sing about the beating and the attack and the eventual murder of his mother on stage, and could still perform this with vibrancy”. Then I started to think about my direct experiences with African cultures with my family, and how my family mourned. My father has this huge family, and the only way we really get together is for his family funerals. A huge part of the rites, not only in my culture but in many other West African cultures, is the dancing and drumming with which you send the spirit away. You celebrate the life of the dead. And this also has a real vibrancy, because this is a very difficult, very challenging moment that you celebrate in an alive manner. Fela in all his music is always alive but difficult, and always challenging. And he is in and out of house arrest and prison.

So I wanted to somehow tie in my sentiment of this. I would always take photos of these family funerals. And then I shot footage at Easter of a family ritual, and dancing—but I showed it on a digital camera, so it looks really grainy. And then I clipped it so it is like quoting the ethnographer, because it's always difficult to use this kind of footage without people getting a little “fetishistic” about it. I brought that into the film so that I could have a more personal journey into it. I finished the first shots of the funerals, and then I have just a couple of shots of Yemisi's tee shirts that say "Fela Lives."

**OLU OGUIBE:** Frankly, I think if I were to respond to Fela in the context of this exhibition, I don't know if I would make a piece that is as successful as the piece I have here, because I made it not in response to Fela, but to events in Nigeria. Fela was part of the vehicle of responding to those. So [in my piece] I took from his lyrics.

At least for young artists in Nigeria, Fela was very significant because he reinforced our conviction that it is possible to create art that deals with everyday life. The whole idea of a separation between so-called art and life or politics is what Fela would describe as "deodorized dog shit".

I think what he gave to all of us artists, is that you have to make good art. If you make art that is not successful, and try to pawn it off because it has politics, then it's just bad everything. It fails on all fronts. It fails politically and it fails aesthetically. But if you have good command of your form, then you can do just about anything with it.

**TREVOR SCHOONMAKER:** That's probably a good stopping point to move on to Q&A. Thank you very much to each of you.

**GHARIOKWU LEMI:** On the issue of Fela and 27 wives, I think one thing that gets missed a lot, is that it was a marriage of circumstance, meaning they were going to put him away for running a prostitution house, right? And he said, "What the heck, I'll marry all of them." The Yoruba tradition allows you to marry as many as you want anyway.

**MAN (AUDIENCE):** Fela married to raise their social status.

**SENAM OKUDZETO:** Yemisi said it was a form of social welfare. She explained it by saying that in Africa we don't have a health care system, we don't have social welfare. So polygamy is a form of social welfare. Fela thought he was taking care of these women.

**OLU OGUIBE:** But who was really taking care of whom?

**SATCH HOYT:** Women were pivotal in everything he did.

**GHARIOKWU LEMI:** I think what is important is to also have the opportunity of redemption. Fela also made a song, in the 1960s, about one Nigeria, and would eventually change his mind about it. He'd go back and say, "I don't actually believe in that. It's a great thing to have the opportunity to revisit your actions, and to have the strength to go back on some of them and say, "I don't think that was right." And I think Fela did that about marrying his wives.

**MAN (AUDIENCE):** Senam, could you just say in a sentence what you were trying to avoid in your work? I understand you didn't want people to see it as standard exotic images of people dancing?

**SENAM OKUDZETO:** It's hard to do, because once you take it from its context, it becomes so exotic. So I thought I just would exaggerate that, to perhaps make people more aware of how they were reacting to it. I don't know if that's successful or not.

**MAN (AUDIENCE):** And the exaggeration was the framing of it.

**SENAM OKUDZETO:** Yeah.

**MAN (AUDIENCE):** Okay, thank you.

**OLU OGUIBE:** But why would you be so concerned about that?

**SENAM OKUDZETO:** Because I was living in Switzerland, baby.

**OLU OGUIBE:** But the point I'm making is if you shoot footage of people in London, you don't feel it is going to be exotic.

**SENAM OKUDZETO:** Olu, I'm living in Switzerland. I'm the only African for a million miles, and with everything I show them, they say "oh, my God, that's amazing." So it's all about context. In Ghana, they'd say "so what?" In New York you're a little more sophisticated, and you might also have a "so what" reaction. So that did alter how I made the final footage.

With this whole project, I was a little bit nervous about the idea of exoticization, because I thought "these are all delicate issues. We have a black man. We have these issues of virility. We have issues of politics. We present it in America to an audience that to my horror is not familiar with Fela's work. He is such a larger-than-life character. There are so many ways in which you can miss the sophistication of the depth of his character". So I was really worried about how to make work that would mediate this incredible god-like figure to people, and make them feel that they had the right to access him, or the right to criticize or enjoy his music in any way.

**OLU OGUIBE:** I completely agree. One of the things that's preoccupied me lately is how much of the work can be "translated". I think I was set off by Barkley Hendricks's piece. It is a very ironic, complex piece, because it has things inside which you do not see, but that see people. I was struck that Fela should be "imagined" in this way, with an immaculate sacred heart, that is roughly in the form of Africa, turned around and reversed. And the fact that the work itself takes its title from "Coffin for Head of State" which again, I think is the one song in which he does the most vitriolic, most acidic criticism of Christianity and Islam. I don't think Fela could ever feel comfortable with the Christian images in the piece. I feel very uncomfortable myself.



**GHARIOKWU LEMI:** You know, imagery is not really determined by the form of religion you partake in. The halo is a metaphysical shorthand, a metaphysical symbol.

**OLU OGUIBE:** No, it's a very specifically Christian symbol. We are talking about signifiers here, and they are not aimless symbols. They have their histories.

**TREVOR SCHOONMAKER:** I can't speak for Barkley Hendricks, and he is not here. But I know that he is probably using the iconography that he is comfortable and familiar with. So for him to iconize Fela as well would be seen as almost a Renaissance altar piece. To complicate him as both saint and sort of bad-ass rebellious sinner made sense to Barkley. Now, he certainly didn't know him personally, but he had met him on several occasions so he felt like he had some relationship with him.

**WOMAN (AUDIENCE):** This isn't necessarily about what Fela would or would not want, because he's not here. What's so amazing about it is watching the way the people react to their experience with him and translate that into something visual. It's very complicated and wonderful, and it allows for debate and dialogue, like you guys are having right now.

What I just wanted to ask was what you think the contemporary and current relevance is of the exhibition, of Fela and his legacy, and the way that your work relates to the world we are living in now.

**SENAM OKUDZETO:** When Fela was talking about the military government seizing power, and justice, that somehow is relevant in America today. If you listen to his music, I think all the issues he addresses—welfare, injustice, sort of the struggle to become a man—keep coming up, so we have to keep listening to his music.

**WOMAN (AUDIENCE):** But do we have a voice like that in this country?

**MAN (AUDIENCE):** Cornel West.

**SATCH HOYT:** Richie Havens, as well. Nobody ever mentions Richie Havens.

**MAN (AUDIENCE):** He was an incredible musician.

**WOMAN (AUDIENCE):** Public Enemy.

**MAN (AUDIENCE):** I think it's a challenge.

**WOMAN (AUDIENCE):** You know, I think I have a little bit of an answer. We are not the democracy we think we are. We don't have that vehicle to make that kind of performance. To get your music out there is very difficult.

**SENAM OKUDZETO:** Well, in Nigeria, what Fela came out with was even harder.

**MAN (AUDIENCE):** It's a challenge for people in New York. Do you want to make the saleable work that every gallery is going to run after, and not cause any problems? It's the same for the musicians. Do you want to make the music that you have conviction in, even if it does not sell millions of copies? At the end of the day, it comes down to the individual. Fela was willing to go to jail over and over and over again. There were other people who were singing about love, and selling tons of records and never going to jail. I think it's a challenge for contemporary artists and musicians to take a stand.

**MAN (AUDIENCE):** I think every country has these individuals: Nina Simone here, and Bob Marley in Jamaica...

**OLU OGUIBE:** I think we have a cowardly generation. We haven't seen what you're talking about. There's no point going back to Bob Dylan and Nina Simone, that was their generation, and kicked ass. This is a cowardly generation. No one wants to take a chance.

**MAN (AUDIENCE):** Hold on. You can't sit up there and talk about a cowardly generation. We have a generation of youth in the United States of America that created hip-hop, a cultural movement that is internationally influential. This has its own way of speaking to the world, from Jay-Z to Public Enemy, from Missy Elliot to Tupac Shakur, from Dead Prayers to whoever you want to say, KRS-1, whatever. There are heroes out here on the street every day, as we speak, trying to make the same statement that Fela Kuti, Bob Marley, Frederick Douglas, or Harriet Tubman made. There are youth up here right now who are trying to get free and who need the support of our generation.

**OLU OGUIBE:** We all know that rhetoric. That's weak!

**MAN (AUDIENCE):** I have a question. I'm sorry I'm going to take it in another direction totally. I'd like to know from Trevor and the panelists what you thought about the subject of AIDS as this exhibit came into being? Also, what do the panelists think about using the Fela exhibition as a way in which to raise consciousness about AIDS?

**TREVOR SCHOONMAKER:** We thought about it from day one, as a collective group, and as individuals, even before the museum was on board with the project. This is something that's been building for four years. The fact that Fela died of AIDS in '97 is very significant. And we actually tried very hard to organize something that didn't come to fruition, a big AIDS Africa panel.

A number of the artists chose to deal with the issue. Lemi himself has a painting called *AIDS Africa* in the show, and Sokari Douglas Camp has a work that deals directly with AIDS, and with Fela's dancers and queens. Satch Hoyt's piece actually deals with it in a much more

subtle way. So it is addressed. With the artists who produced new work for the exhibition, I never wanted to steer them in any one direction. There are artists who have dealt with AIDS in the past, like Pascale Marthine Tayou and others. For me to say that he or she needs to actually address the issue in this exhibition I thought was unfair if they had already dealt with the subject matter. It is addressed in writing, both in the exhibition catalog, and in the second collection of essays that we put together called *Fela from West Africa to West Broadway*. So we tried our best to touch on these various different subjects. It required two books and publications to address everything we wanted to, and there's still a lot of subjects we weren't able to address as fully as we'd have liked to.

**END**

## **BIOGRAPHIES**

**TREVOR SCHOONMAKER**, guest curator of *Black President: The Art and Legacy of Fela Anikulapo-Kuti*, and Director of the Fela Project, is an independent curator living in Brooklyn, New York. He holds an MA in Art History from the University of Michigan, where he specialized in contemporary African art. Trevor was co-founder of Jump n Funk, a club night that began as a launch party for the Fela project but due to its popularity became a monthly event. He was curator of *The Magic City* (2000) at Brent Sikkema, and co-curator of the permanent exhibition *African Arts: Objects of Power, Knowledge, and Mediation* (1998) at the University of Michigan Museum of Art. In 2002, he acted as Project Manager for the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council site-specific storefront exhibition *Looking In*. Trevor is Editor of the *Black President* exhibition catalogue and the accompanying Palgrave collection, *Fela: From West Africa to West Broadway* (2003). He spent a summer interviewing artists in Nigeria in 1992, and has been listening to Fela for over 13 years.

**SATCH HOYT** has had one person exhibitions at Priska C. Juschka Fine Art, Brooklyn, New York (2003) and The Scene Gallery, New York (2003). He has also participated in group exhibitions throughout the US and Europe including *Body Power/Power Play* (2002) at Württembergischer Kunstverein, Stuttgart, Germany; *Where the Boys Are* (2002) at Clementine Gallery, New York; *Boxer* (2001) at Kunsthalle Tirol, Hall, Austria; and *SportCult* (2001) at Apex Art, New York. He has been an artist-in-residence at CrossPathCulture, Johannesburg, South Africa (2003); Art Omi International, International Artists' Colony (2002); and CCP Foundation, Marrakech, Morocco (1998). Hoyt has also been playing and recording music since 1974. He composed, arranged and played (flute and vocals) with various ensembles such as The Burnt Sugar Arkestra (New York), Stomu Yamashta (London), Grace Jones (Paris), various artists in Kenya and on a CD with Louise Bourgeois in collaboration with Ramuntcho Matta (Paris). Hoyt lives and works in New York City.

**GHARIOKWU LEMI** is a graphic designer, songwriter, and artist who currently lives and works in Lagos, Nigeria. Specializing in record sleeve designing, he created 26 album covers for Fela Anikulapo Kuti (between 1974 and 1992), which are the subject of an art project and thesis at the Institute for Ethnology and African Studies at Mainz University, Germany. He has received the Nigeria Music Award, the Fame Music Award and the Sleeve Designer of the Year Award. Lemi has also designed album covers for several other bands and musical acts, including the local Afrobeat orchestra, Antibalas. Most recently, Lemi was commissioned by MTV for a new work.

**SENAM OKUDZETO** received her MA from the Royal College of Art in 1997 and her BFA from the Slade School of Fine Art in 1995. In 1999-2000, she participated in the Whitney Museum Independent Study Program. She has had several one person exhibitions including *Long Distance Lover* (2000) at Dana Center, Loyola University, New Orleans, USA; *Alive at the Fridge* (1999) at The Fridge, London, UK; *Fresh As A Daisy* (1998) at The Brickhouse, London, UK; and *Senam Okudzeto* (1998) at The Studio, New York. She has also shown in group exhibitions both in the US and abroad including *Sticky Fingers; Identity, Distance Desire* (2001) at ParaSite, Hong Kong and *Freestyle* (2001) at the Studio Museum in Harlem, New York. She was awarded a Radcliffe Institute Research Fellowship at Harvard (2003) and took part in residencies at Stiftung Binz 39, Zurich, Switzerland (2003), Stiftung Laurenz Haus, Basel, Switzerland (2002), and The Studio Museum in Harlem (2000-2001). She also received a Pollock Krasner Foundation Grant (2002).

**OLU OGUIBE** received a Ph.D. in art history in 1992 from the University of London and a BA in 1986 from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. His artwork has been included in many one-person and group exhibitions most recently *Ashes* (2002) at The Scene Gallery, New York and *Many Thousand Gone* (2002) at Suite 106, New York. He has taught in universities and colleges in Africa, Europe, and the US including a position as Stuart Golding Endowed Chair in African Art at the University of South Florida and senior visiting lecturer at Goldsmiths College, University of London. He has curated or co-curated international exhibitions for spaces such as the Tate Modern, London; Museo de la Ciudad, Mexico City; School of the Art Institute, Chicago, and organized a satellite exhibition at the Venice Biennale. He is among the ten international curators of *Fresh Cream: Contemporary Art in Culture*, for Phaidon Press and is the author and editor of many books and texts on contemporary art.