

ILUMINANDO VIDAS

Associação Moçambicana de Fotografia – AMF Maputo

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Press Release

«Iluminando Vidas»: Mozambican Inauguration

«Iluminando Vidas. Fotografia Moçambicana 1950-2001. Ricardo Rangel & the Next Generation» is the name of an itinerant photographic exhibition that gives a comprehensive insight into Mozambique's remarkable photographic tradition. The show was presented (and extremely well received) last year in three venues in Switzerland.

From April 26th to May 25th 2003 it will be presented for the first time in Mozambique, at the Gallery of the Association of Mozambican Photography (AMF) in Maputo.

The Swiss curator, Bruno Z'Graggen, elaborated and produced the exhibition together with American co-curator Grant Lee Neuenburg. After 1990's «Karingana ua Karingana», this marks the first time since the end of Mozambique's protracted war that its photography will be presented on such a scale. The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue, also called «Iluminando Vidas» which, since its launch during PhotoFesta in October of 2002, is widely available in Mozambique.

The point of departure for «Iluminando Vidas» is the work of the doyen of Mozambican photography Ricardo Rangel, now 79 years old, who is considered to be one of the most distinguished African photographers in the area of photo-journalism.

The show consists of 25 of Rangel's images and more than 100 photographs from 14 of his «disciples». The photos are accompanied by the personal statements, biographies and self-portraits from the photographers, all of which are considered to be among the most important and representative of contemporary Mozambique. The project has a multi-media concept, and features a website (see: www.iluminandovidas.org) and a 7-minute video called «Life Goes On» produced by the co-curator Grant Lee Neuenburg.

The aim of the project is to enhance understanding and appreciation of Mozambican photography, a unique cultural tradition which remains little known in the North. By bringing the show to Maputo, a greater public will become aware of the noteworthy photographic tradition the country possesses, thanks largely to Ricardo Rangel. Mozambican photography is presented as a success story that the country can take pride in. Despite difficult conditions, the next generation of photographers has a promising future. «Iluminando Vidas» also aims to dispel the widespread cliché of Africa as a continent of disasters.

The exhibition is the result of a unique collaboration between numerous partners in Mozambique and Switzerland. The prints were produced at the Centro de Documentação e Formação Fotográfica (CDFF) in Maputo. The project's main sponsor is the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

Trajectory and Press Reactions in Switzerland

In 2002, «Iluminando Vidas» was presented in three venues in Switzerland: from April 13th to May 19th at Photoforum PasquArt in Biel/Bienne, from June 6th to July 21st at Museo Cantonal d'Arte in Lugano, and from November 29th to December 15th in the exhibition space of Lyss in Basel (School of Art and Design). The following photographers were invited to the inauguration: Ricardo Rangel, Sérgio Santimano and Joel Chiziane to Biel/Bienne, Sérgio Santimano to Lugano and Joel Chiziane to Basel. The exhibition and catalogue created considerable public interest in Switzerland, and received significant attention from the press.

North/South Dialogue: Workshops in Biel/Bienne and Basel

On the occasion of the inauguration of the exhibition in Biel/Bienne, a 10-day photojournalism workshop on the theme «From day to day: Observations of the Quotidian» was realized with students from the School of Art and Design Basel and the Cantonal School of Art and Design Valaise (Sierre), together with Ricardo Rangel, Sérgio Santimano and Joel Chiziane. Twenty-two students participated in the workshop.

During the exhibition in Basel, the photographic works of 11 students from the School of Art and Design Basel were presented alongside the works of the Mozambican photographers. A discussion was organized, which was attended by Joel Chiziane. All of the participants expressed their hopes that the dialogue would have continuity.

Other exhibitions planned

«Iluminando Vidas» has been invited to the Vèmes Rencontres de la Photographie Africaine in Bamako, Mali from October 20th to November 20th 2003. Other sites envisioned are in Mozambique's northern city of Nampula, and perhaps another provincial city. There is also a possibility that the show will go to South Africa, Namibia and elsewhere.

For updates and more information consult the websites:

www.iluminandovidas.org

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