

## **Editorial: the 1960s and the Groove**

They were born fourteen years and several countries apart: one in the Sikasso region of Mali in 1935, the other in the Sankuru province of the Congo in 1949. They came to master two highly distinct crafts: images and stills on the one hand, sounds and notes on the other hand. Yet, at least two elements connect the works of photographer Malick Sidibé, and singer Papa Wemba, the two African artistic giants who left us last April: the 1960s and the groove.

Each in their own way, they captured, created and distilled the rhythms and light of Africa's youth (as well as the not-so-young) from the 1960s onwards. It is perhaps because their professional and artistic endeavors began at that time, an era in African history ripe with hopes, desires, eagerness and possibilities, that their creations carried a particular spirit, or groove, throughout the decades that would follow. Malick Sidibé, the Eye of Bamako, was until recently still letting visitors inside his photographic studio; Papa Wemba, the King of soukous, ndombolo and lingala rumba, collapsed on stage in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, as he was performing before thousands of his fans. Death prompts the mind-bending union of sorrow and celebration. While we mourn Malick Sidibé and Papa Wemba, we find pleasure in the fact that generations of aficionados will keep savoring their visual and sonic compositions and variations, well beyond their time, and well beyond ours. We thank them for the delights they brought, and will keep bringing, to our eyes, ears, and bodies.

We also wish to recognize Djiby Sow, Biram Dah Ould Abeid, and Brahim Ould Bilal. These Mauritanian anti-slavery and human rights advocates were arrested and jailed in November 2014 for their activities. While Mr. Sow was freed in June 2015 for health reasons, Messrs. Ould Abeid and Ould Bilal were still imprisoned. Two weeks ago, the Mauritanian Supreme Court finally broke the previous tribunal's sentence, and ordered their immediate release. Although Mauritania was the last state in the world to officially render slavery illegal in 1981, its practice is still persistent and widespread throughout the country today. We pay tribute to those activists who speak truth to power and dare holding their state and society accountable at their own, very real risk.

This issue of *Ufahamu* heralds an important transition. We acknowledge, recognize and celebrate three of our very own, editors-in-chief, Nana Osei-Opare and Jeremy Jacob Peretz, and our senior editor, Amanda Domingues. While Nana and Jeremy are stepping down from their roles after successfully publishing five issues, including this one, since the fall of 2014, we are losing Amanda to graduation. *Ufahamu* strives to bring quality scholarship on Africa and its diaspora to our readers. This work requires a considerable amount of time, dedication and effort, which Nana, Jeremy, and Amanda have consistently delivered over the past two years. In particular, they have been committed to uphold *Ufahamu*'s mission of publishing academics and writers from African universities, which has resulted in an increased number of submissions from across the continent and the world. They have carried out that work with great professionalism and an untamed enthusiasm. Salute.

As always, we extend our gratitude to Stacey Meeker. Despite suffering kidney stones earlier this year, Stacey worked through the pain and pain-medication to ensure that our Journal and numerous other UCLA graduate student journals were fit for publication. Her dedication and commitment to the cause has been immeasurable. We thank our copyeditors, Jordan Blilie and Michelle Gaston, as well as Bill Morosi, our layout editor, for meticulously ensuring the articles in this volume were spotless. Thanks are due to our publicist, Claire Pfitzinger, as well as Sheila Breeding from the UCLA's African Studies Center, for their tireless support to the Journal. Finally, we thank our faculty advisor Jemima Pierre.

The above-mentioned individuals have all contributed to assembling Vol. 39. Issue 2., which explores diverse topics such as film, literature, politics, and medicine, and spreads spatially from Morocco through South Africa via Zambia, Nigeria, Malawi, and the mental territories of the African diaspora. As ever, we urge our readers to submit their best pieces for our upcoming issues. We also encourage those who may have unsuccessfully submitted in the past to keep doing so, and not get discouraged. As *Ufahamu* aims to publish the highest quality scholarship, all submitted pieces will go through a rigorous and competitive screening and review process. You may access our calls for paper at <http://www.international.ucla.edu/africa/ufahamu/call>, or via twitter @

UfahamuJournal. Submissions may come in all forms: poetry, transcripts, opinion pieces, essays, interviews, etc.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue. If you have not done so yet, have a look and listen to the creations of Malick Sidibé and Papa Wemba. Be warned: you may find yourself wanting to dance.

Best wishes,  
Madina Thiam