



K. KOFI MOYO AND FESTAC '77: THE ACTIVATION OF A BLACK ARCHIVE



Kofi Moyo, FESTAC '77 Opening Procession, Lagos, Nigeria, 1977, copyright K. Kofi Moyo, courtesy of Black Image Corporation

Logan Center Exhibitions Presents K. Kofi Moyo and FESTAC '77: The Activation of a Black Archive

Expansive Exhibition of Images by the Chicago-based Photographer, K. Kofi Moyo Highlights History and the Black Photographic Archive

February 12-March 21, 2021

(CHICAGO - JANUARY 27, 2021) Logan Center Exhibitions at the University of Chicago is pleased to present ***K. Kofi Moyo and FESTAC '77: The Activation of a Black Archive***, in partnership with the Richard and Mary L. Gray Center for Arts and Inquiry. Featuring images from the archive of Chicago-based photographer Karega Kofi Moyo, the exhibition will be on view from **February 12-March 21, 2021**. Running online in parallel to the on-site exhibition, a dedicated [website](#) featuring video content, essays, a video tour, and other digital materials supports viewer engagement from afar.

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FESTAC '77 Bus, Lagos, Nigeria, 1977,
copyright K. Kofi Moyo, courtesy of Black
Image Corporation

If public health conditions allow, visitors may reserve a free timed ticket through the UChicago Arts Box Office which will be available beginning February 8.

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resituates, and also finds a place for, a cache of images by Karega Kofi Moyo, who was active between 1968 and 1978 during a pivotal time for Black liberation and cultural production. Notably, the Moyo repository, replete with images of Black political, social, and cultural life from that period, includes images that refer back to an auspicious 1977 event for Black diasporic convening in Lagos, Nigeria: the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture, known as FESTAC '77.

This presentation includes a core selection of Moyo's photographs of FESTAC '77, which are activated here for the first time in an exhibition context. They index the event and the journey to it from the perspective of a Chicago participant. In addition, the show presents varied contemporary responses to, and interpretations of, Moyo's FESTAC '77 images. Projects by University of Chicago students Enid, Ayrika Hall, Cortlyn Kelly, Fabien Maltais-Bayda, Shane Rothe, Andrew Stock, and Abigail Taubman draw from a Fall 2020 course taught by Romi Crawford and Theaster Gates as part of their Mellon Collaborative Fellowship at the Gray Center that aimed to activate and turn on a Black photographic archive, such as Moyo's, and also rouse the art historical significance of FESTAC '77.

Projects include a curated playlist that highlights how a growing interest in pan-African identity manifested through music in the United States, composed of tracks that explore the breadth of rhythmic styles and melodic techniques present at FESTAC '77; a series of performative exchanges that center choreography as a critical tool for engaging with the Moyo archive; a video exploring sentiments around the FESTAC '77 experience; an installation of images paired with Moyo's reflections, which locates the role of the artist's memory in making the archive; and a broadside investigating the role of Black light as metaphor, metonym, media, and material network within Chicago's Black Arts Movement.

The exhibition offers an occasion to ponder the artistic and art historical significance of both FESTAC '77 and Black photographic archives. It also suggests the potential for animating the local and regional bearing of such projects. Supporting access to the works from afar, the exhibition will be virtually hosted with a dedicated website that will feature installation images, a narrated video tour, and audio descriptions of the works on view.

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is presented by Logan Center Exhibitions in partnership with the Richard and Mary L. Gray Center for Arts and Inquiry and co-curated by Romi Crawford and Theaster Gates, with Danielle Wright, Assistant Curator, and Alyssa Brubaker, Exhibitions Manager. This exhibition is made possible by support from The Reva and David Logan Foundation and friends of the Logan Center.

For more information and details about related programming, visit loganexhibitions.uchicago.edu or follow Logan Center Exhibitions on Facebook and Instagram @logancenterexhibitions.

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About Karega Kofi Moyo



FESTAC '77 Art Exhibit, Lagos, Nigeria, 1977, copyright K. Kofi Moyo, courtesy of Black Image Corporation

K. Kofi Moyo is a photojournalist who has published works in *Ebony*, the *Chicago Defender*, and the *Black Photographers Annual*. In 1977 he traveled to Lagos, Nigeria, for the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC '77), where he was an exhibiting artist. He later co-founded Real Men Cook for Charity and published *Real Men Cook: Rites, Rituals, and Recipes for Living* (Simon and Schuster, 2005).

About the Curators

Romi Crawford, PhD, is a professor of Visual and Critical Studies at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Her research and writing explore areas of race and ethnicity as they relate to American visual culture (including art, film, and photography). Recent publications include “Reading Between the Photographs: Serious Sociality in the Kamoinge Workshop,” in *Working Together: Louis Draper and the Kamoinge Workshop*, ed. Sarah Eckhardt (Virginia Museum of Fine Art, 2020), and *Fleeting Monuments for the Wall of Respect* (Green Lantern, forthcoming 2021).

Theaster Gates is a professor in the Department of Visual Arts and the Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago, as well as a Distinguished Visiting Artist and Director of Artist Initiatives at the Lunder Institute for American Art at Colby College. Drawing on his interest and training in urban planning and preservation, his work redeems spaces that have been left behind and recirculates art world capital, often contending with the notion of Black space as a formal exercise—one defined by collective desire, artistic agency, and the tactics of a pragmatist.

In 2010 Gates created the Rebuild Foundation, a nonprofit platform for art, cultural development, and neighborhood transformation that supports artists and strengthens communities through free arts programming and innovative cultural amenities on Chicago’s South Side. He has exhibited and performed internationally, most recently at Tate Liverpool (2020); Haus der Kunst, Munich (2020); Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (2019); and Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2019). He was a recipient of the Légion d’honneur in 2017. In 2018 he was awarded the Nasher Prize for Sculpture and the Urban Land Institute J.C. Nichols Prize for Visionaries in Urban Development. Gates received the 2020 Crystal Award for his leadership in creating sustainable communities.

About Logan Center Exhibitions

Logan Center Exhibitions presents international contemporary art programming at the Logan Center Gallery and throughout the Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts at the University of Chicago. Reflecting the spirit of inquiry at the university, Logan Center Exhibitions focuses on open, collaborative, and process-based approaches to cultural production. Working closely with artists, students, scholars, and community members, Logan Center Exhibitions presents innovative exhibitions by emerging and established artists; supports ambitious new commissions and research projects; disseminates knowledge through publications; and facilitates connections through talks and other public programs.

About the Richard and Mary L. Gray Center for Arts and Inquiry

The Richard and Mary L. Gray Center for Arts and Inquiry is a forum at the University of Chicago for experimental collaborations between artists and scholars. Gray Center activities take place all over campus (encompassing various divisions, departments, and programs), across the community, throughout the city, and beyond. Through its various programs—including the Mellon Residential Fellowships for Arts Practice and Scholarship, exploratory research initiatives, the monthly Sidebar conversation series (reconceived as [FarBar](#) for the academic year 2020–21), [Gray Sound](#), an experimental music and sound performance series, international conferences, and institutional collaborations—the Gray Center seeks to foster a culture of innovation and experimentation at the intersection of arts practice and scholarship. The center also publishes its interdisciplinary journal, [Portable Gray](#), twice a year (Fall/Spring) through the University of Chicago Press.



General Information

Logan Center Exhibitions is located at:
The Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts,
University of Chicago
915 E 60th Street
Chicago, IL 60637

Gallery Hours

Tue-Sat, 9am-9pm
Sun, 11am-9pm
Mon, closed

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