

## **It's Too Funky In Here! by Malick Sidibé**

Opening: Thursday, Sept 8th 2016

Show: Sept 9th until Nov 5th 2016

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FIFTY ONE TOO is honoured to present the homage show "It's Too Funky In Here ! of the late Malian photographer Malick Sidibé (1935-2016).

An exquisite selection of images capturing young Africans dancing joyful on the rhythms of the twist, the cha cha cha and rock 'n roll; set against a backdrop of a new area for Mali after it's independence from France in 1960. Through Sidibé's vibrant black & white photographs the Malian youth culture of the sixties and seventies can be revisited again, as it would be a live retrospective in time.

Last April Malick Sidibé past away. Nowadays he is considered as one of the most important African photographers. What better way to celebrate his artistic legacy by presenting his energetic images of young Bamakans dancing their way to freedom on the rhythms of the rock n' roll? In those days the Malian youth adored the rock 'n roll music as being thé music genre of the West. Mimicking the international youth culture, they copied their music idols like James Brown, Jimi Hendrix, Aretha Franklin, the Beatles, the Rollin' Stones, etc..., in their dance moves, dress style and hairdo's.

Malick Sidibé's photographs captured these youngsters in full action of this dance scene. In his photographs you can see the acceptance of his presence on his subject's faces, who seem (intentionally) unaware of the camera, allowing him to immortalize their moves. At that time Sidibé didn't consider himself as an artist, but was eager to capture his subjects at their utmost. He made the youth look stylish, in full action, real and universal.

Due to the country's independence, rock 'n roll also became the spirit of the decolonization for this young generation. The persona of James Brown was thé symbol for the African identity worldwide and the representation of the vibrancy of rock 'n roll. Through this music the youngsters freed themselves from the establishment feeling united with the African youth, beyond their national boundaries wherein James Brown was the epicentre. The musician's legacy can especially be seen in one of the exhibited photographs. The image, called "Fans of James Brown dated 1965", shows two young females holding the world-famous album 'Live at the Apollo' in between them. Their clothes, their posture, the album close to their hearts give away James Brown's popularity.

This is one of the many examples where Sidibé captured the essence of their culture through composition, concept and beauty.

Malick Sidibé, also described as the "Eye of Bamako", documented with his camera their love for rock 'n roll, acknowledging that the Malian youth were on the same page of those in London or Paris and elsewhere.

An eponymous FIFTY ONE PUBLICATION will be available at the gallery and at our [shop.gallery51.com](http://shop.gallery51.com).