



## CLOSING STATEMENT

### « **Visionary Africa: Art at Work** » closes in Ougagoudou : The exhibition pavilion is handed over to the city

From February 19 until March 18, 2011 the itinerant urban multidisciplinary project, « **Visionary Africa: Art at Work** » stopped in Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso before moving to Addis Ababa in Ethiopia for a few weeks. The artistic coordination of this project, which enjoyed the support of the European Commission, was in hands of the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels. In the frame of this project an **exhibition pavilion** designed by the architect David Adjaye (Ghana) was set up in the city centre during FESPACO, the most important pan-African cinema and television festival. Over a three-week period, several artists, cultural professionals and students visited the pavilion and the exhibition within. Hundreds of passersby were also drawn in by the exhibition's subject.

The **National Museum** of Burkina Faso made available two guides to provide an expert commentary on the exhibition to the general public for the occasion. This mediation process met with great success. The public, which, traditionally, is more knowledgeable about music and film, was very curious and interested in finding out more about the history of independent African cities through the work of contemporary African artists.

The exhibition, put together by the co-curator of « **Art at Work** », Simon Njami (Cameroon), presented a journey through the "Past, Present and Future of Independent Africa" as seen through the eyes of great African photographers. At the end of the exhibition in Burkina Faso, it was agreed that this new multidisciplinary space would be donated to the **Ministry of Culture** for the benefit of local artists. The EU Ambassador to Burkina Faso, his Excellency Mr Amos Tincani officially handed over the keys to the « **Visionary Africa: Art at Work** » pavilion to Mr. Philippe Savadogo, Minister of Culture of Burkina Faso. The pavilion will thus be transferred to the National Museum. A new pavilion will be built for the next stage of the project in Addis Ababa.

A **workshop bringing together 80 cultural professionals** was also organised during the exhibition and focused on the question "Which art and which audience in African cities? ». The debates, which were moderated by Stephen Minoungou (Director of Recreatrales) and Nicola Setari (co-curator of Visionary Africa), were quite a success. Their conclusions show that contemporary artistic practice can be a decisive factor in the development of the city of Ouagadougou.



# VISIONARY AFRICA

The internationally acknowledged artist, **Theo Eshetu** worked on location as artist in residence for three weeks. His project, which combines traditional craftsmanship with contemporary video art, is currently in the process of being edited and finalised. It focuses on the public's viewpoint during FESPACO, the International Film Festival.

The aim of "**Visionary Africa: Art at Work** » is to demonstrate the importance of culture and creativity as **development** tools and is directly in line with the **Brussels Declaration** by Artists and Cultural Professionals from EU and ACP countries. All the partners expressed their satisfaction about the initiative's success in political and institutional circles, among cultural professionals and with the general public.

The itinerant project « **Visionary Africa: Art at Work** » will travel to Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) in May.

## **Press relations :**

Hélène van den Wildenberg – Cecoforma press: [press@cecoforma.com](mailto:press@cecoforma.com)

Leen Daems, press officer, Bozar Expo - [www.bozar.be](http://www.bozar.be): [Leen.Daems@bozar.be](mailto:Leen.Daems@bozar.be)

Catherine Baum, press officer, Delegation of the European Union:  
[catherine.baum@ec.europa.eu](mailto:catherine.baum@ec.europa.eu)