

## Press Release

### **Malick Sidibé** 4 March – 1 April 2010 at The Lichfield Studios

Unseen work by Mali's most celebrated living photographer Malick Sidibé will be shown at the Lichfield Studios in London from 4 March 2010. Sidibé, who became the first photographer to be awarded the Lion d'Or for Lifetime Achievement at the Venice Biennale in 2007, is now internationally respected for his black and white photographs that capture the transformation and energy of post-colonial Bamako, Mali's capital city. His presence in Europe ranges from a major exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery in London (2003) to working alongside fashion designer Marc Jacobs.

Before the arrival of colour photography and instant processing, the studio photographers of Mali flourished in what was later considered the Golden Age of West African portraiture. Seventeen African countries gained independence in 1960, creating a huge demand for identity papers for working people who could now travel across national borders.

Sidibé launched 'Studio Malick' in 1962, at this key moment in Mali's history. His talent and charm won him a fashionable, young clientele, not only for portraiture, but also to see the pictures that he began to take of Bamako's nightlife. He was one of the first studio photographers in Bamako to take a lighter 35mm camera outside to parties, weddings and picnics. Emerging from colonial rule, the city was in the throes of celebration and self-expression and his work records this exuberance. The move into documentary work was an important moment in the evolution of West African photography, with local photographers entering territory that had been the domain of their European counterparts, many of whom now left the country.

Robert Storr, the 2007 curator of the Venice Biennale, who recommended Sidibé for the lifetime award said "No African artist has done more to enhance photography's stature in the region, contribute to its history, enrich its image archive or increase our awareness of the textures and transformation of African culture in the second half of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first."

A selection of Sidibé's trademark small format portraits as well as his images of Bamako nightlife, will be shown at Lichfield Studios. Customers would flock to the studio to have their photo taken with their new watch, handbag or even socks from St Germain des Près, French labels being the ultimate status symbol. Others would come to spot themselves attempting the Malian Twist at a local dance event, or out at a weekend picnic by the River Niger. As Sidibé's reputation grew, his Studio became popular with all ages, with families posing for formal group shots.

Nowadays Studio Malick is still an active workspace, where thousands of boxed negatives, spanning over 30 years, are shelved and stored and Sidibé continues to repair and add to his collection of hundreds of vintage cameras.

**For further press information and images contact Julia Huff at Theresa Simon & Partners  
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### **Notes to editors**

**Malick Sidibé** b. 1936, Mali, studied jewellery at the school of Sudanese Craftsmen in Bamako where he graduated in 1955. This is where he met Gerard Guillaat, who was looking for a student to decorate his "Photo Service" shop and studio. Sidibé was chosen and when he finished Guillaat asked him to stay as his apprentice. Sidibé gradually became known outside Mali through international exhibitions starting with the Fondation Cartier in Paris in 1995 . A major retrospective of his work was held at the National Portrait Gallery in 2003 alongside fellow Mali photographer Seydou Keïta. In the same year he was awarded the prestigious Hasselblad Prize. Since then he has continued to be exhibited and added to public and private collections worldwide and became the first photographer to be awarded the Lion d'Or for Lifetime Achievement at the Venice Biennale in 2007. In 2009 he was approached by Marc Jacobs and commissioned by the New York Times Magazine's fashion pages to respond to haute couture *and* prêt-a-porter with his trademark black and white studio photography featuring bold geometric backgrounds and local models.

**Tristan Hoare** studied History of Art at Edinburgh University. Following an internship at the Louvre, he spent four years at Christie's Auctioneers, both London and Paris. During this time he worked in a variety of departments including 18<sup>th</sup> century French Furniture, Old Masters, Impressionist and Contemporary art, before focusing on photography. After leaving Christie's, Tristan worked for Ben Brown Fine Arts in Cork Street before setting up his own company advising clients and curating mixed exhibitions.

Tristan Hoare and celebrated international architect Jean-Michel Wilmotte, whose practice is situated on the first floor of the studios, will alternate exhibitions at the space. Hoare intends to show work rarely seen in this country, with three to four exhibitions per year, whilst Wilmotte UK is planning a major Lichfield exhibition in the summer.

**Lichfield Studios** was purchased by the Earl of Lichfield in 1984, where he designed and built a state of the art photographic studio. One of the great photographers of his generation, he used the studio to photograph Royals, celebrities and friends and was awarded fellowships of both the British Institute of Professional Photographers and the Royal Photographic Society. Notable shoots that took place at the studios include Lady Thatcher (celebrating her 80th birthday), Pelé (recreating his famous overhead kick), *Forty Years On* (re-photographing his former Harrow school friends in the same style as their Leavers photographs of 1957) and also shooting, twenty years later, several of the sitters featured in his *book Lichfield – The Most Beautiful Women* (published in 1981). The Earl of Lichfield died in 2005.

### **Visitor information**

**Lichfield Studios:** 133 Oxford Gardens, London, W10 6NE

**Hours:** Tues - Sat 11am – 6pm

**Private view:** Wednesday 3 March 6 - 8pm

**Exhibition:** 4 March – 1 April 2010

**Nearest Tube Station:** Ladbroke Grove or Latimer Road

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