Yesterday, today and tomorrow, African women leadership and versatility through the lens of art and creativity
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Speak Up Africa is an African-led, Africa-based organization working with leaders and change-makers in Africa and beyond to solve Africa’s pressing sustainable development challenges. Speak Up Africa is dedicated to supporting African leaders and citizens to take an active role in identifying and developing solutions to tackle the challenges facing our continent. Speak Up Africa’s aspiration is to be unparalleled in lifting African actors to drive equitable and sustainable change towards healthy and thriving African societies. Driven by the conviction that women and youth will drive the next wave of social and economic development in Africa, Speak Up Africa is here to unleash the untapped potential of the continent’s women and youth.

Speak Up Afric’Art serves as a beacon for collaboration and engagement for artists, experts, policymakers, and the public to unleash the potential of a healthy and thriving Africa where change happens by Africans for Africans. This artistic endeavor aims to use art as a catalyst for showcasing Africa’s most innovative ideas and giving a stage to Africans by inviting a diverse collective of creatives including painters, sculptors, photographers, filmmakers, performance artists, and digital creators to interpret these themes creatively.

Speak Up Afric’Art aims to raise awareness, inspire, enable and mobilize people to address the root causes of social problems and to consider and create alternative solutions. Art can challenge stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination, and celebrate diversity, identity and culture. Art can amplify the voices and stories of marginalized, oppressed or silenced groups, and create spaces for dialogue and collaboration across differences.

Gender equality is a fundamental human right and a crucial component of sustainable development. The theme for 2024 edition is “Celebrating African LeadHERs from Senegal” to support the inclusion of women and girls on public platforms and in leadership and aims to encourage women’s and girls, in all their diversity, to significantly participate in decision-making spaces for improved public health.

By naming this first showcase of Speak Up Afric’Art “LINGEER” we pay a tribute to all women innovators, visionaries, and changemakers.
Gender equality is a fundamental human right and is vital for a prosperous world and a thriving Africa.

Women representing half of the world population, it is more than necessary to empower them to actively engage in all areas of society.

Gender equality supports all the essential foundations for a healthy economy and prosperous nations and is vital to the collective success of Africa against the sustainable development goals.

Currently, it is expected that gender gaps will take over 120 years to close in Sub-Saharan Africa, and over 135 years for pay and leadership equity to be reached.

Historically women have been excluded from decision making spaces and programs that affect their health and well-being. Voice, participation, and leadership are vital for the empowerment of women. Achieving gender equality is beneficial for everyone, giving each person equal opportunities at work and in the public sphere. It is about reaching better education and health outcomes, lower mortality rates and a higher per capita income.

Championing the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals

Goal 5

Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.
The LINGEER Exhibition represents the vision of Speak Up Afric’Art to bring together a collective of artists to unleash the potential of a healthy and thriving Africa where change happens by Africans for Africans. The LINGEER exhibition serves as a convening platform for collaboration, engagement and action to cement our contribution towards gender equality.

LINGEER, presented by Speak Up Africa and curated by Mohamed Cissé, is captured by the talented artist Khalifa Hussein, to showcase the multiple facets in the everyday life of women who are African innovators, visionaries, and changemakers and spotlight curating art for social impact and transformational change in Africa.

LINGEER features a myriad of artistic contributions to further enhance our message, including the artistic direction of the incredible Audrey Derneville and original poems and stories of the exceptional women featured by Poetess Samira Fall.

This exhibition aims to also introduce you to the work of Speak Up Africa to achieve gender equality. As a women-led organization, gender equality is in our DNA. Unless women and girls – in all their diversity – can meaningfully hold leadership positions, making decisions and allocating resources, our continent will never fully thrive. We support the inclusion of women and girls on public platforms and as leaders. We encourage them to significantly participate in decision-making spaces. We support our own team, and the civil society organizations we work with, to better understand the role gender plays in everything we do, and to ensure all our interventions take gender into account. Women and girls’ participation is the key to unlocking our continent’s future. It drives everything we do.

Our work in this space includes driving change and conversations around gender equality across the continent and creating moments and movements to elevate women and girls’ voices in decision-making spaces for health, engaging communities.

This exhibition will present three Speak Up Africa signature initiatives African LeadHERs, African LeadHERs meets BAL4HER and Voix EssentiELLEs.
Talaatay Dakar.

A slam artist, a visual artist, sports professionals, a stylist, a lawyer, a ceramist...

These are the profiles of the eight ladies who were willing to take part in the celebration, led by Speak Up Africa, of the essential role of women play in our societies.

Khadija Ba, Awa Cissé, Audrey d’Erneville, Samira Fall, Imam Gaye, Dossou Ndiaye, Fatimata Sy, Rajah Diouri Sy...

These are the eight professionals who allowed us to tell, through the eye of photographer Khalifa Hussein, their daily lives as women in Senegal.

It was in July 2023, during the Speak Up Africa Leadership Awards, that the idea of an art exhibition first emerged, on the sidelines of the 15th edition of the Dakar Biennale, during a discussion with Yacine Diop Djibo, Fara Ndiaye and Maëlle Ba.

It quickly became obvious to us that it would revolve around women.

Since then, the infamous Battle of Nder (“Talaatay Nder”) has kept coming back to me.

This famous battle, which took place in the town of Nder, located in the kingdom of Waalo, in the northwest of Senegal, led by Lingeer Fatim Yamar Khuri Yaay.

It was March 7, 1820. On a Tuesday.

Taking advantage of the absence of men who had gone to the fields, the oppressor, attacked the Kingdom. The Lingeer woman thus made the decision to fight the enemy, followed by the rest of the women of the kingdom.

After a first victory, a new assault, this time way more offensive, surprised them and they were defeated.

Following their escape and to ensure survival of the lineage, both of the Lingeer’s daughters, Ndaté Yalla Mbodj and Njembot Mbodj, decided to set themselves on fire, rather than to be humiliated or enslaved.

What was my surprise when, a few weeks after our first discussion on an exhibition project, and without us having yet talked about the direction I wanted it to take, Yacine approached me about the resonance that the work of Audrey d’Erneville, entitled “Lingeer”, had for her.

There were no more doubts. “Lingeer” was born.

It is therefore to THEM that this exhibition pays homage.

All these descendants of Fatim Yamar Khuri Yaay, the real Lingeers of our times, pillars of our societies, sisters, daughters, mothers and more than ever benchmarks.

Talaatay Dakar.

Prologue by

Mohamed A. Cissé

LiNUGER
Mohamed Amine was born in 1988 in Dakar. Between 2016 and 2018, he developed the MJM platform in Douala, which includes Galerie MAM and MOSS, a literary salon, which regularly hosts African novelists and essayists. He therefore conceived, locally and internationally, many exhibitions. It is also during this period that he represented Galerie MAM at many international events such as AKAA, Art Paris Art Fair, ART X Lagos and Dak'Art. Since January 2019, he has been developing cultural projects through his agency KCISS. He was also assistant curator, in 2019, of the exhibitions “Aujourd’hui”, of the World Bank at the National Museum of Yaoundé (30 artists), alongside Simon Njami. In 2020, he was selected to curate the contemporary art exhibition of the “Generation A” festival, at the Théâtre Paris Villette (Africa2020 Season). In 2022, he co-curated Picasso Remix, at Galerie le Manège, featuring the work of 16 contemporary artists, during Dak’Art biennial. He has been selected to be assistant curator of the first Guadeloupe Intercontinental contemporary Art Biennial (BIAC), scheduled to take place in 2023.
Khalifa is a young photographer artist living in Dakar, more precisely in the famous Medina neighborhood. He started painting in 2014 and it was in 2016 that he began to specialize in photography. Very difficult to classify him in a photographic movement: he is often a still photographer, photojournalist, fashion photographer and finally surreal artist. Talent, imagination, original composition, everything is found in the young photographer’s finished products. He has the ability to present reality in a form that surprises most viewers. He regularly collaborates with companies for the creation of digital content and has also led several projects for NGOs, Institutes and Foundations, particularly in the production of documentaries, photographs, institutional films among other. To date, he has more than ten solo or group exhibitions to his credit, distinctions, and continues to work on different themes and styles.
African LeadHERs
Culture and creativity 4 gender equality

Speak Up Africa’s African LeadHERs initiative was launched on the occasion of the Generation Equality Forum which took place in 2022, organized by UN Women and co-chaired by the governments of France and Mexico in partnership with civil society and youth. The aim of the event was to make concrete commitments to gender equality, following the previous ones made in Beijing in 1995. African LeadHERs supports the inclusion of women and girls on public platforms and in leadership and aims to encourage women’s and girls, in all their diversity, to significantly participate in decision-making spaces for improved public health. Through the African LeadHERs program, we partner with leaders from all sectors of society, including sports, fashion, culture and art to creatively work together to build a stronger, fairer and more inclusive world.
Sport promotes equality since the same rules apply to everyone. Amidst issues of gender imbalance in society, Sport is a prime lever to accelerate gender equality as it confronts gender norms both on and off the field. Female participation in sports challenges common stereotypes and social roles associated with women. Gender imbalances in the sports industry remain considerable. On top of their low representation in sports, very few women are in decision-making positions such as head coach, club manager or referee. They are less represented in management, marketing, management, or other disciplines in the sports industry.

« Teaming Up: African LeadHERs meet BAL4HER » launched by Speak Up Africa and the Basketball African League (BAL) focuses on leveraging sport as a key driver of gender equality and social and economic transformation in Africa. Through this mentorship program, 6 young African female athletes from Senegal, Egypt and Rwanda benefited from the leadership and networking experience of six female leaders in the sports industry. Over a period of six months, the mentees were coached by mentors to strengthen their skills and knowledge on issues such as gender inequality in sport, mental health, public speaking, and storytelling.

Inclusion is one of Speak Up Africa’s core values, and one that we embody throughout our organization, our work and our partnerships. We recognize the urgent need to build communities and societies in which individuals with disabilities are protected and valued. Special Olympics is a remarkable organization and we are privileged to have been working with them in Senegal since 2014 on a number of key programs promoting inclusive health.

With Special Olympics, we saw first-hand the transformative power of sports and unity to instill confidence and improve health. With more than 200 million people with intellectual disabilities around the world, it is critical to have tailored advocacy strategies to ensure that we leave no one behind. This partnership allowed us to better understand the needs of people with intellectual disabilities and reinforced our commitment to advocate to ensure that their specific needs are accounted for in national policies and programs.
Voice, decision-making and leadership are vital factors for the empowerment of women. These factors ensure that women can express their preferences, demands, views and interests, and that they can gain access to decision-making positions. Only when women and girls are empowered and supported to actively participate in decision-making processes can effective policies, based on their concrete experiences, which take into account gender differences and cultural sensitivities, be developed and implemented.

In Africa, women constitute approximately 75% of the healthcare workforce, yet they hold only about 25% of leadership positions in the sector. This significant gender disparity underscores the urgent need for initiatives like Voix EssentiELLEs.

Through Voix EssentiELLEs, we’re enabling women and girls led organizations and their leaders in Senegal, Burkina Faso, and Côte d’Ivoire to actively participate in shaping health programs and policies that affect their communities.
LINGEER,
Yesterday, today and tomorrow, African women leadership and versatility through the lens of art and creativity

L for Leadership, Fatimata Mamadou Lamine Sy

I for Inclusion, Rajah Diouri Sy

N for "Numérique", or Digital, Awa Cissé

G for « Garder », or Keep, Imaan Gaye

E for Enriching, Khadija Aisha Ba

E for Eclectic, Audrey Sally d’Erneville

R for Return, or Come-back, Ndye Dossou Ndiaye
Lingeers from yesterday, today and tomorrow

Rooted in traditions and necessary to keep

Open in an eclectic world of which they are a pillar.

Champions fighting multiple battles,

They are ringing the time of female leadership and inclusion

Conscious of the plurality of their stories,

And the duty they have of transmission towards the youth.

They find themselves at the crossroads of commitment.

Rich in different but complementary paths

Equipped with creativity and originality to enrich their surroundings

Contemporary Lingeers using the tools of this digital age

At the heart of the issues, they refine new approaches and tactics

Some choose to return to their native country to make a different impact

They are all: Lingeers, yesterday, today and tomorrow.

by

Samira Fall
Fatimata Sy is a young woman working in the public health and humanitarian sector for more than thirteen years. Deputy mayor of the town of Guédiawaye and municipal councilor in the commune of Ndiaréme Limamoulaye. Fatimata holds a Higher diploma in social work with an option in social services management, a Master II in finance and public management, a Master 2 in citizenship, human rights and humanitarian action and a diploma in State in social work supervised education option. Fatimata is passionate about early childhood, the fight against gender-based violence and the meaningful participation of young people in decision-making bodies.

**Leadership**

I looked up in my dictionary
A letter for the intrepid Lingeer
And pugnacious, for her
I found the L of leadership.
The lioness of Guédiawaye
Made of her living space
Her hunting ground.
She is raising her voice
Far from social barriers
She is showing that the place of women
Is everywhere she wants it to be:
In the development world, in politics,
In the humanitarian world, in public health,
Or even in civil society engagement.
She wears the trust of her peers
Like its most beautiful asset

She appears serene.
Leading by example first and foremost.
This essential voice
Combats injustice daily
By deconstructing all gender bias.
Serving, training, raising awareness
It’s her mission, without any fear
To lead, speak and be comfortable in her shoes.
The lioness of Guédiawaye
For whom I chose
The letter L for leadership because
She releases the voice
The one that allows young women
To fully commit.

**FATIMATA SY**
**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF ASAFE AND VOIX ESSENTIELLES FROM SENEGAL**

Fatimata Sy is a young woman working in the public health and humanitarian sector for more than thirteen years. Deputy mayor of the town of Guédiawaye and municipal councilor in the commune of Ndiaréme Limamoulaye. Fatimata holds a Higher diploma in social work with an option in social services management, a Master II in finance and public management, a Master 2 in citizenship, human rights and humanitarian action and a diploma in State in social work supervised education option. Fatimata is passionate about early childhood, the fight against gender-based violence and the meaningful participation of young people in decision-making bodies.
Rajah Diouri Sy has been National Director of Special Olympics Senegal since 2011. After graduating from the Ecole Supérieure de Commerce de Rouen, she worked for 26 years in the field of accounting and finance, as Administrative and Financial Director of an industrial company. In June 2019, she decided to dedicate herself, as a volunteer, full-time to Special Olympics Senegal.

Alongside her professional life, she is involved in community life by being, from 2000 to 2015, successively, an active member of the office of the Parents’ Association of the Sainte-Jeanne d’Arc Institution, General Secretary and Vice President. She joined Special Olympics Senegal in 2006, as a parent of a child with Down syndrome, by volunteering to support the association administratively. In 2009, she was appointed General Secretary and in 2011 National Director.
Awa Cissé was born in Dakar, where she grew up. A jack of all trades, Awa did attend a boarding school in Paris, before turning to law and ending up obtaining a diploma in Management, with a specialization in Marketing, at ISM Dakar. Since 2010, Awa has been working in marketing, within different sectors of activity: communications agency, agri-food and sports. Passionate about sport and well-being, a few years ago she launched the blog “Oul & Soumpe”, intended to share advice and tips on her life as a woman and mother living and consuming locally. Married and mother of two little girls, Awa is Marketing Manager of the Basketball African League, based in Dakar. She lived and worked in Senegal, France, Cameroon, Ivory Coast and Morocco.

**AWA CISSÉ**
MARKETING MANAGER, BASKETBALL AFRICA LEAGUE

Awa Cissé was born in Dakar, where she grew up. A jack of all trades, Awa did attend a boarding school in Paris, before turning to law and ending up obtaining a diploma in Management, with a specialization in Marketing, at ISM Dakar. Since 2010, Awa has been working in marketing, within different sectors of activity: communications agency, agri-food and sports. Passionate about sport and well-being, a few years ago she launched the blog “Oul & Soumpe”, intended to share advice and tips on her life as a woman and mother living and consuming locally. Married and mother of two little girls, Awa is Marketing Manager of the Basketball African League, based in Dakar. She lived and worked in Senegal, France, Cameroon, Ivory Coast and Morocco.
Imann Gaye is a ceramicist and social entrepreneur based in Dakar, Senegal. She received a BA from Wimbledon College of Arts (UAL) in contemporary sculpture where she won the 2018 “Sculpture Futures Prize.” In 2020, she co-founded with her collective the Ban Workshop, an independent ceramic workshop in Dakar, Senegal.

"Garder", (Keep in English)

I lengthly questioned
My dictionary
For this skillful Lingeer
And he recommended
The letter G (for “Garder”, Keep, in French)
Because everything that is not preserved is lost
Imaan Gaye has placed her markers in pottery.
Historically held
By women
Passed from mother to daughter
And,
From generations to generations
Precious knowledge
Which she shares with the young generations
And breathes into it a beat of eternity
Through the rhythm of transmission.
She gives a purpose to her art
Serving the collective
And allows artists
A ethical retribution.
She uses ecological clay
From bottom to form
To make everyday objects
Pieces of art that survive time.
Taking care of this world
Which is ours.
Guardian of the past and actress of the future,
Aiming of promoting local crafts
And preserving wealth
To several descendants
Of relentless workers.
There are a few potters left
Joining forces, to continue to exist
Endowed with the strength of community.
Dexterous Lingeer
To whom the letter G (for “Garder”, Keep, in French)
Suits perfectly.
Khadija Aisha Ba is a Senegalese fashion designer based in Dakar. She is the founder and creative director of the brand "L’Artisane", known for her contemporary and innovative designs that blend traditional African styles and modern aesthetics. In addition to her brand, Khadija launched a Concept Store in Dakar called “Le Sandaga”, which she readily describes as a “Mood Store” – atmospheric boutique.

Enrich

The original Lingeer
The one who is worthy
Of the letter E for Enrich
She makes the past
Cool and trendy again
And adds value to it.
She creates pieces that stand the test of time
Inspired by her mother’s style
She subtly diverts
Objects, and reappropriates
Her grandmother's boubous.
She reinvents herself,
And draws from her DNA
Her originality.
Impact women
Through female entrepreneurship
And have more flexibility
For his personal life
And daily life.
African vintage on her back
Passion in her heart
She waved goodbye to a stable income
To move towards the new modern
Participating in writing its codes
By consulting yesterday’s alphabet book
Which she conjugates in future tense.
Fashion, a tool for social transformation
She firmly believes in it
After closing the door
To fears and doubts
Who build from scratch,
The brake.
From tradition to modernity.
Necessary transition
By the original Lingeer
Holder of the letter E for enrich.

Khadija Aisha Ba
FOUNDER OF “L’ARTISANE”
Audrey d’Erneville, is a Senegalese Art Director and Fine Artist. She was born in Paris but made the world her home. Currently based between Los Angeles and Dakar, she also spent some of her childhood in South Africa and strives to create work that is as rich and colorful as her cultural background. With an MFA in graphic design, she has 12+ years of experience working across various industries and have created branding for world renowned clients. Multi-faceted creative, she has always been inspired by her Senegalese culture: the car rapides, barber shop signs, textiles, the colors of the city. And it is a desire to create a sort of Senegalese pop art that launched her into the Art World. Her background in graphic design is reflected in the typography and the layout of her paintings.

Luminous Lingeer
To whom suits perfectly.
The letter £ for Eclectic
The world is her backyard,
And Dakar inspires her.
She draws from her of multicultural roots.
To express her fire
Which comes in every color.
From design to paint,
With sensitivity
Borrowed from the daily life in Dakar
An “organized disorder”.
Where everything is where it should be.
A Lingeer inspired
By the collision
Between the past, the present and the future

Where female artists
Will be more than ever
At the forefront.
Traditions and transmissions
Far from the boxes that delimit,
She multiplies and grows.
Rich from all the different strings
On her bow.
In her bag
She stores of her wanderings
Immeasurable wealth
She has a thirst to create
Still and always
beyond all borders.
Luminous Lingeer
And eclectic

AUDREY D’ERNEVILLE
DESIGNER AND ARTIST
Dossou Ndiaye is the Coordinator of the Woman’s Program at the NBA Academy Africa. She additionally plays a key role on the basketball operations team, supporting the daily functioning of the Academy. Dossou attended Missouri Western State University on a basketball scholarship where she majored in Biology and Pre-Med. After graduating College in 2019, she briefly worked in the medical field before coming back to her native Senegal to mentor student athletes on the continent for she believes whole heartedly in the untapped potential of Africa’s young people.

In order to prepare the next generation of leaders she mentors kids in leadership, confidence building, goal setting, and is a big advocate for mental health and wellness to Academy students and local youth outside the Academy seeking creative outlets and structured activities.
Samira Fall is Senegalese slam poet and author. At the age of 13, she began writing poems, many of which were awarded numerous prizes throughout her academic career. In 2014, she took her first steps into the world of slam poetry. This opened the floodgates for what came next: Samira draws her style from spoken word, Jamaican dub poetry, freestyle and numerous African oral traditions such as “Tassu” or “Taalif.” Her unique works are imbied with a bittersweet lyricism that casts a critical eye on social, cultural and educational norms, and has reveals a strong interest in gender issues.
Through the Lingeer exhibition, we wanted to highlight the women who make Senegal and Africa, a varied group of creatives, athletes, activists, artists and organizational leaders, who through their daily actions fight for the rights of all women. Art is a powerful platform for creating lasting change for gender equality. Together, through diverse voices and pathways, we can achieve an Africa where every woman can realize her full potential.

YACINE DJIBO
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF SPEAK UP AFRICA

I had a great pleasure in leading the Artistic Direction of this project. I say project, because it is more than an exhibition. It is first of all the fruit of meetings between people from different horizons and backgrounds, who have found complementarity and purpose together. It is then the development of a common vision, in the service of a noble cause: gender equality. All of this will have finally resulted in this exhibition which, we hope, will resonate widely.

MOHAMED A. CISSÉ
ART CURATOR AND CO-DESIGNER OF THE LINGEER PROJECT
Join the conversation online by using the hashtags: #AfricanLeadHERs, #SpeakUpAfricArt et #Lingeer

For more information, please visit www.speakupafrica.org