

WIDEWALLS

July 15, 2015

Richard Taittinger Gallery: Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?

By Amy Lin



Art historian Chika Okeke-Agulu has once said that people have to get used to the fact that *"African artists have now taken and secured their seat at the dinner table, invited or not"*. With this quote in mind Richard Taittinger gallery has invited twelve African artists to take their rightful place and participate in *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* group show. The show is meant to celebrate the diversity of African art and to serve as a visibility platform that introduces the participating artists to a wide New York audience. All artists are connected to Africa either as the place of birth or as a space of cultural influence.

Questioning Bias Trough *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?* Exhibition

Although the show borrowed its title from the classic 1967 movie, its symbolism is in closer connection to previously quoted Chika Okeke-Agulu observation. The goal of the exhibition is not only to present works of African artists but also to question stereotypes often connected to them. In the global art market African art is usually seen through the lenses of identity politics. *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?* group show aims to change bias and fixed assumptions about African art by presenting their intimate artworks with the international subtext. *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?* celebrates the raising impact of African artist in the art world. The influence was particularly visible at this year's 56th

edition of Venice Biennale. Not only has the Biennale appointed a Nigerian-born Okwui Enwezor as its director, but it also featured an impressive number of African artists.

Intimate Artworks at Richard Taittinger Gallery in New York

Guess Who's Coming to Dinner? group show will present versatile artworks but contemporary photography seem to be dominating the show. Ethiopian photographer Aida Muluneh will exhibit the works from her *The Wolf You Feed*, series that deals with African cultural heritage, rituals and ceremonies but also with issues such as exile, loss and disillusionment. Algerian artist Amina Menia has been traveling her homeland taking pictures of public sculptures since 2009. Her *Chrysanthèmes Series* of photographs is focused on commemorative stelae and monuments dedicated to martyrs. The series is questioning memories attached to certain places and sites. Another Algerian artist, Halida Boughriet will exhibit a series of her acclaimed *Pandora* images. For this series, Halida Boughriet took pictures of children in their home while exploring the relationships that human bodies maintain with the space they live in. *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?* exhibition will also include a series of unusual family portraits by Amalia Ramanankirahina.

Celebration of African Art at Richard Taittinger Gallery in New York

Guess Who's Coming to Dinner? group exhibition will open on July 16th at Richard Taittinger gallery in New York. The opening reception will be held the previous day July 15, from 6 pm till 9 pm. *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?* group show is an excellent and an uncommon opportunity for the New York audience to acquaint themselves with the variety of media and diversity present in contemporary African art. The group exhibition will be on display at Richard Taittinger gallery till August 22, 2015.