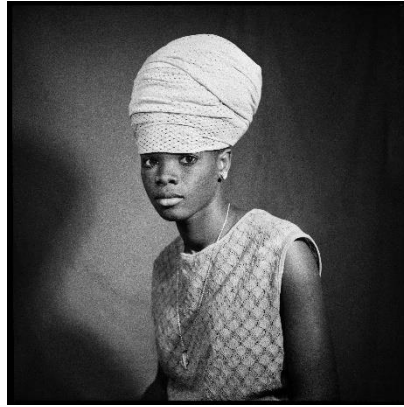


# YOSSI MILO GALLERY



**For immediate release:**

## **Sanlé Sory *Volta Photo***

**April 26 – June 23, 2018**

**Artist's Reception: Saturday, April 28, 5:00 – 7:30pm**

Yossi Milo Gallery is pleased to present *Volta Photo*, a solo exhibition of studio portraits from the 1960s – 1980s by West African artist Sanlé Sory (b. 1943, Burkina Faso). Featuring over 90 black-and-white photographs, *Volta Photo* will open on Thursday, April 26 and will close on Saturday, June 23. The artist will be present at a special reception at the gallery on Saturday, April 28 from 5:00-7:30pm. This is the artist's first gallery exhibition in the United States.

Sanlé Sory's portraits are key documents of the exuberant youth culture in Burkina Faso following the small West African nation's independence from France. After learning to use a twin-lens Rolleiflex 6x6 camera and process prints, Sory opened his studio, *Volta Photo*, in 1960, the same year his country (then called Upper Volta) began its transition from remote colony to independent nation. He worked as a regional reporter, event photographer and record sleeve illustrator active in the city's dynamic music scene. Most notably, however, Sory was one of Bobo-Dioulasso's earliest and finest studio photographers.

A mingling of Fula, Malian and Voltaic youths—customers and loyal friends of Sanlé—populate the photographer's inventive studio portraits. Teenagers and 20-somethings playact as their favorite music icons, while others model modern fashions brought with them to the studio or show off their gym physiques. Some don costumes or hold props provided by Sory that appeal to their taste for the modern, such as Air Afrique flight bags, radios, telephones, lamps, record players and plastic guns. Loosely painted backdrops conceived by the artist feature scenes of leisure and modern life, such as a cityscape at night, a beachside promenade and an expansive airplane tarmac, "anything", Sanlé says, "to help people make the picture their own".

Focusing on photography both as industry and aesthetic genre, Sory's body of work demonstrates the medium's unique place in the daily construction of Burkinabe identities and aspirations, economic development and the gradual urbanization of a young generation growing apart from rural society while carrying over its rich traditions. Sory's photographs provide a view from the ground of the shifting boundaries delineating local customs from mass culture, and self from an imagined community spread across borders by such means as radio, music recordings, film and photography itself.

Sanlé Sory's photographs have been exhibited publically only since 1998, with his first solo presentations in Morocco, Burkina Faso and the United Kingdom in 2016-2017. The artist's first U.S. solo museum exhibition, *Volta Photo: Starring Sanlé Sory and the Good People of Bobo-Dioulasso in the Small but Musically Mighty African Country of Burkina Faso*, is curated by Matthew S. Witkovsky and will open at the Art Institute of Chicago on April 27, 2018, with an accompanying catalog by Steidl Verlag. A special limited edition book of 74 previously unseen studio portraits will be co-published by Yossi Milo Gallery and Tezeta to complement the gallery's exhibition. In the past year, photographs by Sory have been acquired for the permanent collections of the Minneapolis Institute of Art; Art Institute of Chicago; North Carolina Museum of Art; RISD Museum and the Tang Museum at Skidmore College. Sory was born in Nianiagara, Burkina Faso and currently lives in Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso.

For more information, please contact Alissa Schoenfeld at 212.414.0370 or [alissa@yossimilo.com](mailto:alissa@yossimilo.com), or visit the gallery's website at [www.yossimilo.com](http://www.yossimilo.com).