From the Studio to the Street

A Look into How Burkinabe Artists Intervene in the Political Space

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Burkina Faso at a Glance

• Landlocked country at the heart of West Africa (27,4000 sq km, 18 millions inhabitants)
• Former French colony that gained its independence in 1960
• The country suffered many military coups and political troubles
• In 1983, Thomas Sankara seized power and adopted a radical left-wing policy (The Sankarist Revolution)
• He was assassinated in a coup by Blaise Compaoré in 1987 who then ruled the country for 27 years
• Compaoré installed a semi-autoritarian regime and was ousted in October 2014 by a popular uprising
Raising Awareness through Artistic Creations

• **Cinema: Association Semfilms**
  - Ciné Droit Libre Festival since 2004 (10 minutes to convince, films, concerts…)
  - 2015 Edition featured young African leaders
  - Droit Libre TV (online films and reports on human rights and freedom of expression)

• **Music**
  - Common artistic projects: Collectif des artistes unis pour Norbert Zongo, Collectif des artistes du Burkina Faso (Ebola)
  - Songs to warn President Compaoré: Smarty, Faso Kombat, Collectif Tékré in the USA, Humanist in France…
CINÉ DROIT LIBRE

SMARTY
CINÉ DROIT LIBRE

Smockey
Raising Awareness through Artistic Creations

• **Theatre**
  - Festival Les Récréâtrales 2014, the most political edition (Debates on political matters, political plays like *La Malice des Hommes* by Jean-Pierre Guingané)
  - Artistide Tarnagda, young Burkinabe playwright, actor, recently published “Sank ou la patience des morts"

• **Dance**
  - *Nuit blanche à Ouagadougou*, by Serge Aimé Coulibaly, turned out to be a premonitory dance piece during Les Récréâtrales
  - For Serge Aimé Coulibaly and other African choreographers, artistic creation has to convey a message/struggle, whether political or social
Poussières de sang

Compagnie Salia nï Seydou, 2008
Smockey & Sams’ K le Jah

Founders of Le Balai citoyen
Le Balai citoyen (The Citizen’s Broom)
- Artists have become over time the new figures of legitimacy
- In 2013 Smockey and Sams’ K le Jah founded Le Balai Citoyen ("The Citizen's Broom"), a grassroots political movement
- Smockey and Sams’K le Jah: very politically-engaged artists individually, known as “artistes engagés” or “grandes gueules de la musique”
Taking Action When Speaking is not Sufficient

Actions by Le Balai citoyen

• Before the popular uprising
  ▪ 28 October 2014: the largest protest ever seen since 1966
  ▪ 30 October 2014: National Assembly taken by protesters and burned down

• After the popular uprising
  ▪ 2014: Ne touche pas à mon article 37 et non au référendum
  ▪ 2015: Après ta révolte, ton vote
  ▪ 2015: Je vote et je reste
  ▪ Transition time: two ministers forced to step down
  ▪ Ongoing, Social actions: cleaning, donation of medical materials, donation of blood, reforestation in collaboration with the police, campaigns against GMOs...
Le Balai citoyen during the popular uprising
Actions after the popular uprising

Dimanche 29 Novembre 2015

APRÈS LA CLOTURE DU SCRUTIN, LE DEPOUILLEMENT EST PUBLIC
ALORS ...
"JE VOTE ET JE RESTE"

JUSTICE POUR NORBERT ZONGO Maintenant!

APRÈS LA CHUTE DE BLAISE COMPAORÉ... LE DENOUEMENT?
Actions after the popular uprising
Le Baliai citoyen received a Prize from Amnesty International.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION