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'Carnaval in Africa: Photographs of Guinea Bissau by Doran H. Ross'
Opens at the UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History Sept. 10

In the West African country of Guinea Bissau and its capital of Bissau, the Portuguese-derived, pre-Lenten Carnaval dates back at least 120 years. 'Carnaval in Africa: Photographs of Guinea Bissau by Doran H. Ross'—on view at the UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History from Sept. 10 through Oct. 29, 2005—includes more than fifty color photographs from a remarkable West African Carnaval in 1987, which featured more than 500 newly made papier mâché masks promoting the dual themes of "Vaccination for Health" and "Agricultural Development."

In Bissau each annual Carnaval is organized around a central theme. In 1987 the primary theme was vaccination, and Ross' photographs capture masqueraders costumed as syringes—some up to ten feet high—intended to encourage inoculations against polio, measles, and other preventable diseases. An ongoing secondary theme of agricultural/rural development accompanies the principal theme of every Bissau Carnaval. Candid photographs show revelers dressed as a veritable forest of papier-mâché trees being attacked by fire, axe, and saw to clear the land for planting. Several images also offer a glimpse of a recurring cartoon character in all Bissau Carnavals named Nturi Palan, a mischievous, but well-meaning trickster with large ears, bulging stomach, and big feet.

This exhibition is a prelude to the major traveling exhibition '¡Carnaval!', opening at the Fowler Museum on Nov. 6, 2005, and organized by the Museum of International Folk Art in collaboration with the UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History.

Ross is a specialist in the arts of West Africa, and former director of the Fowler Museum. His photographs appear in museum exhibitions across the country and he has curated numerous exhibitions, including last year's 'Artists Advertising Themselves: Hand-Painted Signs from Ghana' at Los Angeles' Craft and Folk Art Museum. He is the author of many articles and books, including most recently, *Gold of the Akan* from The Glassell Collection, published by the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

'Carnaval in Africa' will be on view in the Fowler Museum's Goldenberg Galleria. The Fowler is open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5 p.m.; and on Thursdays, noon until 8 p.m. The museum is closed Mondays and Tuesdays. The Fowler Museum, part of UCLA's School of the Arts and Architecture, is located in the north part of the UCLA campus. Admission is free. Campus parking is

available for \$8 in Lot 4. For more information, the public may call (310) 825-4361 or visit fowler.ucla.edu.

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