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For Immediate Use
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***Earth Matters: Land as Material and Metaphor in the Arts of Africa* Opens on Earth Day, April 22, at Fowler Museum**



George Osodi, *De money series no. 1*, 2009.
Fuji crystal archival print, National Museum of African Art

The news today is replete with reports on territorial disputes, resource extraction, and other forces that impact and endanger the environment. These timely issues are explored in *Earth Matters: Land as Material and Metaphor in the Arts of Africa*, an exhibition opening at the Fowler Museum at UCLA on Earth Day, Apr. 22, and continuing through Sept. 14, 2014.

In *Earth Matters*, works of art examine the conceptually complex and visually rich relationship between individuals and communities in Africa and the land upon which they live. The exhibition features more than one hundred exceptional works from the 19th–21st centuries, including powerful ritual sculpture and masks as well as paintings, photographs, videos, and sculpture by forty-one internationally recognized and emerging contemporary artists from the continent and its diasporas—among them Ghada Amer, El Anatsui, Sammy Baloji, Allan deSouza, IngridMwangiRobertHutter, Wangechi Mutu, and William Kentridge.

Earth Matters invites visitors to consider the earth in Africa as a sacred or medicinal material, the site of mining and burial, a source of inspiration, and an environment in need of protection. It is the first major exhibition to approach this topic with such geographic breadth, chronological depth, and artistic diversity.

The exhibition is organized into five thematic sections: The Material Earth, Power of the Earth, Imagining the Underground, Strategies of the Surface, and Art as Environmental Action. Highlights include:

- An imposing 19th century power figure from the Royal Museum of Central Africa in Belgium
- A finely modeled and rare terracotta figure that once belonged to a Nigerian association for community elders
- A figure from Tanzania used in healing rituals
- William Kentridge's early film *Mine* (1991) exhibited alongside a charcoal drawing produced for the making of the film
- A towering wood sculpture incised with graphic symbols by El Anatsui, called *Erosion* (1992)
- A mixed-media work lamenting the effects of war, *We are Destroying Planet Earth* (2007), by Ghada Amer and Reza Farkhondeh

Earth Matters: Land as Material and Metaphor in the Arts of Africa is curated by Karen E. Milbourne and organized by the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of African Art, Washington, D.C. Major sponsorship for *Earth Matters* is provided by the government of the Gabonese Republic. The Los Angeles presentation is made possible through the generosity of the Barbara and Joseph Goldenberg Fund, the Shirley and Ralph Shapiro Director's Discretionary Fund, and Manus, the support group of the Fowler Museum. Public and family programs are made possible by the Jerome L. Joss Fund and the UCLA Dream Fund. Special thanks to our colleagues at the UCLA Institute of the Environment and Sustainability.



A fully illustrated publication accompanying the exhibition will be for sale in the museum store. Written by Milbourne, the volume included artist's statements by Clive Van den Berg, Wangechi Mutu, Alan deSouza and George Osodi.

The Fowler Museum at UCLA is one of the country's most respected institutions devoted to exploring the arts and cultures of Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and the Americas. The Fowler is open Wednesdays through Sundays, from noon to 5 p.m.; and on Thursdays, from noon until 8 p.m. The museum is closed Mondays and Tuesdays. The Fowler Museum, part of UCLA Arts, is located in the north part of the UCLA campus. Admission is free. Parking is available for a maximum of \$12 in Lot 4. For more information, the public may call 310/825-4361 or visit fowler.ucla.edu.

Opening Events on Earth Day

Tues., Apr. 22, 2014

5:30–7 pm Preview and Reception

7 pm Fowler OutSpoken Lecture: Karen Milbourne

Guest curator Karen Milbourne from the Smithsonian's National Museum of African Art gives an exhibition overview and shares how many of the contemporary artists became connected to the project, and each other, in ways that extend beyond the gallery walls. Seating is first-come, first served, with priority seating for Fowler members at 6:45 pm.

Wed., Apr. 23, 2014 12 pm

Culture Fix: Allen Roberts on the Earth as Medium

Across Africa, artists have found inspiration in the earth's clay, pigments, plants, and stone. For this opening day gallery talk, UCLA World Arts and Cultures professor Allen Roberts visits *Earth Matters* to explore how these materials express cultural identity and provide connections to earlier generations. Presented in conjunction with UCLA's 10th Earth Day Fair, organized by E3 and UCLA Sustainability.

Additional programs are announced online at fowler.ucla.edu