



## PRESS RELEASE

# THE HEALERS



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## A Season of events celebrating contemporary African art at LSHTM

**Loulou Cherinet – Gera – Cyprien Tokoudagba – Zwelethu Mthethwa  
Tracey Rose – Abdoulaye Konate**

**10<sup>TH</sup> MARCH - 10<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2005**

As the world's attention focuses on Africa in 2005 in an international effort to accelerate progress for the continent, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) is joining in the initiative by celebrating its rich and diverse cultural heritage through a series of art events. Providing an unusual venue within the Africa 2005 season, the renowned research-led postgraduate medical school specialising in international public health and tropical medicine is hosting two artists-in-residence, an exhibition, a programme of events and a festival. These events reflect and respond to the scientific and sociological work of the School to bring new perspectives on healing and medicine in Africa.

**The Healers** is a season of events starting with an **exhibition** of contemporary African artists, selected by Nana Oforiatta Ayim, exploring issues of healing. The exhibition will take visitors on a journey beginning with death and rebirth (Loulou Cherinet); then on to look at a traditional use of art for healing (Gera), representations of an African cosmology that encompasses life, wellbeing and healing (Cyprien Tokoudagba); depictions of those who administer indigenous healing and their – often contested – place in urban society (Zwelethu Mthethwa); on to the transcending nature of ritual and trance (Tracey Rose), coming back full cycle to death and legacy (Abdoulaye Konate). The exhibition encompasses video work, paintings and photography that provide another facet of the work of the artists who also appear in the acclaimed Africa Remix exhibition at the Hayward Gallery.

Two **artists-in-residence**, Tracey Rose and Abdoulaye Konate, will explore the work of the school's staff and students to explore issues of health and healing. Their works will be presented at the festival.

The season culminates in a **festival** organised by cultural consultants Dudu Sarr and Sarah Castle. These will bring together academics and artists in a reciprocal exchange. The presentations will challenge conventional public health specialists' approaches to art and also artists' perspectives on science. Academics will comment on culture as a means to facilitating and impeding improvements to health in Africa. Artistic presentations (including film, live music from Gwana and Ndepp musicians, and other creative performance) will explore cultural expressions of the body and images of disease together with physical and spiritual well-being. Exchange and dialogue between artists, musicians, craftsmen and researchers will catalyse new and dynamic perspectives and potentials for collaboration between the medical profession and artists both in Africa and within the diaspora.

The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine,  
Keppel Street, London WC1E 7HT  
[WWW.LSHTM.AC.UK/ART/AFRICA2005](http://WWW.LSHTM.AC.UK/ART/AFRICA2005)

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## Notes to Editors:

- Further information and images can be dispatched on request. Please see the LSHTM website <http://www.lshtm.ac.uk/art/africa2005/> or contact the Press Officer Raymond Hainey: 020 7927 2802 or [Raymond.hainey@lshtm.ac.uk](mailto:Raymond.hainey@lshtm.ac.uk) or the Season organiser Dr. Susannah Mayhew on: [Susannah.mayhew@lshtm.ac.uk](mailto:Susannah.mayhew@lshtm.ac.uk)
- Opening times: The public can view the **exhibition** Monday to Friday between 12pm and 7pm, and Saturdays between 10am and 2.00pm. A guide to the location of the works will be available from reception. The **festival** is on 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of April. Advance booking requested. Contact: [sarrcastle@yahoo.com](mailto:sarrcastle@yahoo.com)
- Involving 40 partner organisations across London, Africa 05 is a series of major cultural events taking place in London that celebrates contemporary and past cultures from across the continent and the diaspora. Key partners for Africa 05 are Arts Council England, British Museum and the South Bank Centre in association with the BBC. For further information on Africa 05 please contact: Georgina Langdale, Ruth Cairns, Victoria Harris or Truda Spruyt at Colman Getty PR on 020 7631 2666. The logo for Africa 05 has been designed by Turner Prize winning artist Chris Ofili.
- Loulou Cherinet worked at the Goteborg Konstmuseum in Sweden, before dedicating herself to painting for two years in Indonesia. In 1996, she enrolled at the University School of Fine Arts and Design in Addis Abeba and returned to Sweden to study at the art academy. She works primarily with the video medium and has taken part in exhibitions internationally, including the Sydney Biennale and the Rencontres de la Photographie Africaine in Bamako.
- Gera found himself drawn towards traditional medicine during his studies and began work as a healer with plants, prayers and talismen. He developed a pictorial language to explain the secrets of the talisman and thus began his artistic practise. His paintings are colourful geometric compositions that combine symbols and signs. His work has been shown amongst other places at the Biennale in Lyon, the Museum for African Art in New York and the Musee National des Art d’Afrique et d’Océanie in Paris.
- Abdoulaye Konate studied painting at the Institut National des Arts in Bamako and completed his education at the Instituto Superior de Arte in Havana, Cuba. He worked as a graphic designer at the Musee National in Bamako and in 1998, he was appointed Director of the Palais de la Culture. He was also Director of the ‘Rencontres de la Photographie Africaine’ in Bamako. He has received several awards and his works are to be found in many private and public collections. In 2002, he received the Chevalier d’Ordre National du Mali and Chevalier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres de France.
- Zwelethu Mthethwa’s work is largely concerned with people in South Africa who immigrated into urban centres in the 1980s. For this exhibition he has photographed traditional healers with the tools of their trade in urban settings. He has had numerous international exhibitions and will be shown at the Venice Biennale later this year.
- Tracey Rose completed her studies in fine art at Wwatersrand, Johannesburg in 1996. In much of her work, she investigates questions of gender and colour, often through the visual motifs of her own body. She has presented performances at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Johannesburg Biennale, the 49<sup>th</sup> Biennale in Venice.
- Cyprien Tokoudagba received his first commission for the restoration of a Vodoun Temple. After his inclusion in the Paris exhibition ‘Magiciens de la Terre’, he began to paint on canvas. His work, in which the Vodoun universe plays a large part, connects the African Diaspora with the history of a part of the continent.
- Nana Oforiatta Ayim selected the artists. She writes on contemporary African art. After completing her MA in African art and anthropology, she worked for the magazine, Revue Noire in Paris and for The Statesman in Accra and for organisations, such as the British Museum and the Liverpool Biennale. In her work she explores a non-Western approach to art. She currently holds an AHRB award for research into indigenous forms of telling history in Ghana and is working on projects of contemporary African culture with the Royal Festival Hall and the Victoria and Albert Museum. For further information see <http://www.ano.org.uk>
- Dudu Sarr and Sarah Castle are cultural consultants who are organising the festival. Sarr and Castle bring artistic and academic backgrounds respectively to promote cultural understanding and exchange. Their programme of events for LSHTM aims to enhance mutual respect, learning and understanding both between academics and artists and between Africans and non-Africans. For further information and registration please contact: [sarrcastle@yahoo.com](mailto:sarrcastle@yahoo.com)
- The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine is one of the world’s renowned research-led postgraduate institutions specialising in international public health and tropical medicine. The LSHTM’s mission is to contribute to the improvement of health worldwide through the pursuit of excellence in research, postgraduate teaching, advanced training and consultancy in international public health and tropical medicine. The School has more than 300 academic members of staff, covering a wide range of disciplines, including health economics, epidemiology, public health, anthropology, statistics, microbiology, clinical and social sciences. Since 2000 has been running a series of contemporary art activities to reflect and respond to the School’s work. These have

included commissions of new work and several exhibitions; these are detailed on the School's website: <http://www.lshtm.ac.uk/art/>