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Overcoming Maps 6 shuttles between Senegal, Gambia

- By **Our Reporter**
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Between May 8 and 16, 2010, *Overcoming Maps 6*, the sixth edition of the Pan-African Circle of Artists' (PACA) study tour of Africa will hold in Gambia and Senegal. Built around the philosophy and symbolism of maps as instruments of 'ownership', 'violence and, in the case of Africa, memorials to the historic Berlin conference, the project which began in 2001 seeks to promote integration and networking in Africa.

As in previous editions, *Overcoming Maps 6* will involve visual artists, writers, poets, journalists, critics, anthropologists, among others. The edition will intensify the objectives and the gains of the previous tours by providing participants an opportunity to interrogate the art-social situation in the continent through cross-disciplinary, intellectual and creative interactions. There will be a creativity workshop and roundtable, which will be organised as the centralising activities in Gambia the tour to enable participants to interact and confront their common challenges and aspirations through their work and purposeful discussions, as cultural actors from a highly tormented continent in an increasingly challenging world.

Following the activities in the Gambia, participants will travel by road to Senegal to partner with Senegalese artists and others.

According to a programme released by the international advisory council of PACA, participants are expected to arrive Banjul and will be visiting artists' studios as well pay courtesy visits to Mama Africa Centre and Adebayo Yusuf's Gallery, Banjul. This will be followed by sightseeing to enable them relax and get ready for the workshop planned to hold later. The workshop to be held in Alliance Francaise, Banjul, will allow participants to create works from materials to be sourced locally from the environment. Informal discussions on art and related matters will be organised daily during the workshop to enable artists, writers and others exchange ideas based both on their work, general cultural backgrounds and professional experiences.

Other activities planned for the Gambia include visits to the Nigerian and Ghanaian embassies in Banjul; courtesy call on Baba Ceesay, Head of Department of Cultural Heritage, National Museum, Banjul. The *Overcoming Maps* party will also pay courtesy call on the Vice Chancellor, University of Gambia on and later gather at Alliance Francaise in Banjul for the opening reception of the commemorative international exhibition of the *Overcoming Maps 6*.

The highlight of the exhibition will be a roundtable with the theme, "*Integrating and Exploiting the Field of Cultural Production for Wholesome and Meaningful Development in Africa.*" It will feature reports on the art situation in the participants' countries. Lead speakers will include, Baba Ceesay, Isha Fofana, Director, Mama Africa Centre, Banjul; Dr Frank Ugiomoh, University of Port Harcourt, Dr Abel Diakparomre, Vice- president, PACA-Nigeria. The occasion will be chaired by Dr Gerard Chouin (former Director of Alliance Francaise in Enugu) and Minister of Culture, Banjul.

Other presentations at the event will feature *The Situation of Art and Creativity in Nigerian Primary and Secondary Schools* by Kent Onah (Nigeria); *The Role of Government in the Propagation of Art in Nigeria*, by Simon Ikpakronyi; *One Minute Video from Nigeria*" by C Krydz Ikwuemesi and Ayo Adewunmi; as well as presentations from participants from Ghana.

From Banjul, the group will travel by road to Dakar for the commencement of activities scheduled for that city and to enable participants to catch up with on-going ninth edition of *Dak'Art*. At later in the afternoon, there will be the opening of another commemorative exhibition with roundtable with Senegalese and other artists at les Artistes Plasticiens de Pikin Centre in Dakar. While the exhibition has the theme *New Encounters*, the roundtable focuses on *Art and the SocioPolitical Realities in Africa*. Lead speakers at the roundtable will include Simon Ikpakronyi, Director, National Gallery of Art and Mor Faye, President, les Artistes Plasticiens de Pikin.

On Thursday, May15, the programme in Dakar would be concluded with visits to important exhibitions and places in Dakar as may be advised by Mor Faye, President, les Artistes Plasticiens de Pikin, before the party returns to Banjul in the evening of the same day for a grand reception at Mama Africa Centre before the final departure of participants to their various countries on May 16.

The Pan-African Circle of Artists (PACA) was founded at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, in 1991 by some young artists of Nigerian and Ghanaian origins. Part of the aim was to create a forum on which art and culture in Africa could be promoted and disseminated from *inside* by Africans and on Africa's terms.