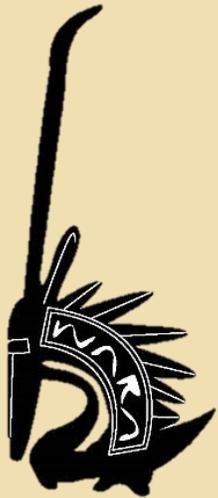


THE PAINTINGS OF YELIMANE FALL

COMMUNITY, LITERACY, AND ACTIVISM IN ISLAMIC AFRICA

This exhibition is organized by the West African Research Association (WARA). Founded in 1989, WARA's mission is to promote research and scholarly exchange between West African and US scholars and institutions. WARA supports the production and dissemination of knowledge on West Africa and the diaspora through its research fellowships, conferences, and publications; and through the many programs headquartered at WARA's research center in Dakar, Senegal.



**WEST AFRICAN
RESEARCH
ASSOCIATION**

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

**The West African Research
Association**

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*Yelimane Fall, Bismillah, 2010
Acrylic and fabric on paper*



*Yelimane Fall, Thank You, Serigne Touba, 2011
Acrylic on paper*

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Yelimane Fall, **Recognition**, 2010
Acrylic and fabric on paper

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

The Paintings of Yelimane Fall is divided into three sections: Community, Literacy, and Activism, reflecting core values of the artist. Fall's work is in Arabic and in Wolof, a West African language spoken in Senegal and written in Ajami, the modified Arabic script used to write African languages. But fluency in Arabic or Wolof is not necessary to experience the impact of his work, as the literal interpretation of the script represents only one layer of meaning. Fall invests an immense amount of research and contemplation into each of his works, and encourages viewers to take their time so that the layers of meaning can slowly reveal themselves.

Photographs taken by Cynthia Becker of contemporary life in Muslim West Africa form part of the exhibition, providing a broader context for the understanding of Fall's artistic practice. These photographs allow the viewer to see the ways in which Fall's art shares the graphic styles and vibrant colors of Senegalese street art.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Yelimane Fall is an artist and community activist who has developed a unique calligraphic style that reflects a vibrant West African aesthetic. He fills his compositions with large curvilinear Arabic letters, robust forms and bright colors. His work draws on the teachings of Shaykh Amadu Bamba, the founder of the Murid Sufi order. These teachings focus on values of tolerance, self-reliance, and hard work. Trained as a graphic designer, Fall gave up a successful career to devote himself to the Murid brotherhood. Fall uses his art to promote Murid values, as reflected in the signature of "MF" or "Messenger of the Faith" with which he signs his paintings. Fall holds studio and teaching space in the Complexe Culturel Leopold Sédar Senghor, where he serves as a mentor for young, aspiring artists. He also works with street children and children from poor communities to teach visual arts literacy and Murid values. Fall is currently laying the groundwork for the first West African Institute of Calligraphy, which will welcome students from throughout West Africa and beyond.



Yelimane Fall painting a mural at the West African Research Center (WARC) in Dakar, Senegal.

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THE CURATORS

Cynthia Becker is an Associate Professor of the History of Art & Architecture at Boston University, specializing in the arts of Morocco, Algeria, Senegal and Niger. Dr. Becker recently published an article on Yelimane Fall's work entitled "Yelimane Fall: Senegalese Calligraphy in Action" (African Arts 2014). Her research has been supported by grants from Fulbright, the Council of American Overseas Centers, Fulbright-Hays, the American Institute of Maghreb Studies, and the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study.

Taylor Smith completed a BA in Art History and a BFA in Painting at Boston University in 2015. She received a grant to arrange this exhibition through Boston University's Undergraduate Research Program. Taylor has worked for several arts organizations and galleries including the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and Galerie Richard, Paris and studied at the Courtauld Institute of Art in London.

EXHIBITION SPECIFICATIONS

Number of Works: Twelve framed acrylics, four carved and painted works on wood, seven framed 8 x 10 photographs

Approximate size: 55 running feet

Fee: \$1750 for 8 weeks or \$1500 for WARA members (shipping not included)

Shipping: WARA makes all arrangements and exhibitors pay round-trip shipping costs

Security: Moderate security

Insurance: Host institution must provide a certificate of comprehensive fine arts insurance coverage.