

# Press Release

apexart - Bamako, Mali

## *Musow Ka Touma Sera*

curated by **Fatima Bocoum**

**November 30 - December 30, 2019**

**Open 9 AM to 6 PM Tuesday through Sunday**

Venue:

**Lycée des Jeunes Filles Ba Aminata Diallo,  
Medina Koura, Bamako, Mali**

Opening Reception:

**Monday, December 2, 9:45 - 10:45 AM**



Fatoumata Diabaté, *À Chacun Son Dimanche #06*, 2019

Featuring Work By:

**Fatoumata Diabaté  
Amsatou Diallo  
Fatoumata Diallo**

**Fanta Diarra  
Kani Sissoko  
Oumou Traoré**

According to UN Women, thirty-five percent of women in Mali have experienced sexual violence. In addition to this high rate, Malian women are further violated by an unspoken cultural norm called *sutura*, a tradition that psychologically grooms women and girls to conceal, forgive and bear their sufferings. *Sutura* impacts how Malian society deals with sexual violence in multiple ways. For those with knowledge of an assault, empathy for the victims is expressed with silence and inaction. Victims themselves are required to protect their families from associated shame. And a victim's anger towards her assailant is converted into empathy by fear of tarnishing his reputation. Survivors of abuse are, therefore, expected to sacrifice their individual autonomy and rationalize their traumas and taught to prioritize stature in their communities over their own safety, desires, and justice. In patriarchal societies such as Mali, men dominate nearly all realms of public life. In this context, *sutura* can be understood as a systemic tool that protects the patrilineal reputation. It forces women to first be adept in its practice then its enforcement; otherwise, they are ostracized, deemed illegitimate and unworthy.

Through the artworks of six Malian women artists, *Musow Ka Touma Sera*—written in Bambara and translated as “it is the era of women”—examines *sutura* and its subcultural mechanisms which enable the amplification of patriarchy and presents a message of empowerment to Malian women.

*Musow Ka Touma Sera* was selected through apexart's Open Call. For more information and images visit [apexart.org/bocoum.php](http://apexart.org/bocoum.php).

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**Fatima Bocoum** is an entrepreneur, activist, and curator from Mali. She earned an Associate of Science in Fine Arts from GSU as well as a Bachelor of Arts in Media and New Technologies from Fordham University. She is the Founder of OpenLetr, a feminist blog with the mission to break societal and cultural boundaries to empower women to speak out and make better daily choices all while taking on curatorial projects. The latest of which, entitled *Transfiguration*, was exhibited at Undercurrent Projects and featured seven women artists from six different countries. Bocoum's work heavily revolves in the area of women's rights and empowerment, and she was featured in *Mounyou Ni Sabali?* a documentary by Kaourou Magassa on sexual violence in Mali which premiered in March 2019 in Bamako during the Ciné Droit Libre Festival.

apexart's program supporters past and present include The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, The Buhl Foundation, Bloomberg Philanthropies, The Greenwich Collection Ltd., William Talbott Hillman Foundation/Affirmation Arts Fund, the Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation, the Fifth Floor Foundation, the Consulate General of Israel in New York, the Kenneth A. Cowin Foundation, the Trust for Mutual Understanding, and public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council and the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

**#MusowKaToumaSera**

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