The exhibition

The Septentrion, dynamics between past and present

July 14, 2024, to March 15, 2025, at the National Museum of Cameroon

The exhibition "The Septentrion, dynamics between past and present" was inspired by the return of cameroonian archaeological artifacts deposited at the Angoulême Museum in 2011 by the family of Jean-Gabriel Gauthier, a French archaeologist and anthropologist who worked in the North Cameroon region. The exhibition highlighted the cultural heritage of the Far North, North, and Adamaoua regions, whose richness and diversity have yet to be widely exposed to the general public.

Challenges:
To consider the history of these regions as a set of dynamics in a given time and place ; Present the identity of these territories as a shifting concept, in constant flux.

A Cameroon/France cooperation: a co-production of the city of Angoulême (France) and the National Museum of Cameroon (MNC), supported by the French Institute of Cameroon and the French Ministry of Culture, the Office of International and Multilateral Affairs, and the technical coordination of the Cameroon Ministry of Arts and Culture.

Objective the return of archaeological artifacts :
The archaeological artifacts exported by J.G. Gauthier to France for study between 1960 and 1990 come from the Sao and Fali sites in the Lake Chad basin. All of these artifacts had been on deposit since 2012 at the Angoulême Museum (France) without clear status. The context of this project enabled Cameroon to decide on the future of this collection, which is now listed in the MNC inventory, and to make an official deposit of this collection at the Angoulême Museum. However, a selection of key pieces has been returned to Cameroon to be included in the permanent exhibition of the national museum and in the exhibition.

A little-known heritage:
- This was the first time that the national museum had devoted an exhibition to a region of the country that is largely overlooked by the media and cultural institutions. Such an exhibition could not claim to be exhaustive. Aiming to be inclusive in its geographical and chronological scope, it was unable to display evidence from all the entities present in this vast territory, but was rather considered as an outreach to other cultural areas.
- More than 200 works (objects, photographs, films) selected by scientific committees.
- 28 lenders (mostly private and public) from the North, associated with the collections of the National Museum of Cameroon and the Museum of Angoulême (France).

An unprecedented curatorial team:
- Two chief curators: Professor Hugues Heumen Tchana, director of the National Museum of Cameroon, and Emilie Salaberry-Duhoux, director of the Angoulême Museum (France).
- Three scientific committees, one per sub-region, each bringing together figures from the cultural world, universities, cultural associations or regional festivals, and communities, to ensure a diversity of viewpoints.
- Thematic areas of work to build a dialogue between the three sub-regions for a unique exhibition experience.
- Three contemporary artists from the three regions of the North, each invited to create an original work in dialogue with the heritage pieces: Moustapha Oumaroun Baïdi, William Kayo, and Nzie Mfifen Oussenatou.
- Works by Alioum Moussa, a visual artist from Maroua and scenographer for this exhibition.



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