

Pan-African Solo Choreography Competition
of Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso



ORIGINS

Africa Simply the Best is a pan-African solo choreography contest held since 2015 in the International Cultural Centre ANKATA in Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso. Initiated by the Belgo-Burkinabe dancer, choreographer and founder of ANKATA Serge Aimé Coulibaly, the event belongs – after five editions – to Africa's most significant cultural events. It aims to bring young African artists together and celebrate their creativity, innovation and originality by honouring the best solo choreographies. Since 2019, the competition has taken place biannually.

DOELSTELLINGEN

The organisers of *Africa Simply the Best* pursue the following objectives:

- To facilitate the international showcasing of talented young artists;
- To encourage interdisciplinary creativity and stimulate a spirit of healthy competition, which can lead to innovative and impactful performances;
- Confront other artistic realities and approaches by performing internationally, particularly in Europe;
- Support creativity deeply rooted in African culture and experience that resonates with the local audiences and has the power to unite them by touching on subjects of their concern;
- Give the audiences the opportunity and incentive to become architects of their own lives through the emotions and reflections sparked by coming in contact with contemporary artistic creation rooted in their culture and reflecting on their experiences.

AFRICA SIMPLY THE BEST 5th EDITION

The fifth edition of *Africa Simply The Best* took place on December 16th – 19th, 2023, in Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso. It brought together talented finalists from eleven countries. The event highlighted the diversity and excellence of artistic expression in contemporary African dance.

As the preselection was open to young choreographers from the entire continent, the 2023 edition welcomed 117 submissions from 19 African countries, demonstrating the growing scope and impact of the competition over the years. After a careful assessment, the jury selected 14 projects from 11 countries for the final in Bobo-Dioulasso:

ARTIST	COUNTRY	PERFORMANCE
KABORE KEVIN CHARLEMAGNE	BURKINA FASO	EFFET MIRROIR
KABORE WENDINMI JÉRÔME	BURKINA FASO	LES OMBRES QUI CHANTENT
ZOUNDI B. ABDOUL AZIZ	BURKINA FASO	CHUTE PERPÉTUELLE
FALL KADHER RASHAD BÉCHIR	CAMEROUN	WOLWOU'GOH
MOUSSI SIMON BRICE	CAMEROUN	MESSAGE DES ANGES
N'DA ELOI HORTENCE	COTE D'IVOIRE	LE PALMIER
AMANY ATEF TAHA IBRAHIM	ÉGYPTE	Bluebottle FLIES
TIEMANTA KADIDJA	MALI	BANBALI 100fin
NHAPULO MAI- JÚLI MACHADO	MOZAMBIQUE	SINAIS PARTICULARES
OLUKITIBI OLUWABUKUNMI	NIGERIA	ÌRÌRÌ
LOU DJEHINON VÉRONIQUE	NIGER	VOIX D'ELLE
TEBANDEKE JOSEPH	OUGANDA	TIME MACHINE
SARR ROGER	SENEGAL	AU-DELA D'UNE APPARENCE
AFIADEGNIGBAN KOFFI KEGOU	TOGO	LA QUATRIÈME

With these different projects, the whole of Africa comes together in one place to celebrate contemporary creation under the supervision of a multi-disciplinary international jury.

THE JURY

A jury of renowned dance, theatre, film and audiovisual experts, as well as cultural professionals, evaluated the performances on the basis of criteria such as creativity, technique, emotional expression and originality. The members 2023 committee were:

MARGUERITE DOUANIO/SOU, journalist

ARISTIDE TARNAGDA, writer and dramaturg

SALIA SANOU, choreographer

CLAUDE GUINGANE, director of Centre Culturel Gambidi

OLIVIER TARPAGA, choreographer, composer

ASSIATA ROSINE BANDE, director general of Arts, Culture and Tourisme of the Houet region

AGATHE DJOKAM TAMO, choreographer

THE LAUREATES

The laureates will each benefit from personalised mentoring and a tour of Africa and Europe in 2024 and 2025.

Koffi-Kégou Afiadegnignan (Togo)

laureate of the fifth edition of *Africa Simply the Best 2023* with his project *La Quatrième*.



Koffi-Kégou Afiadegnignan is a Togolese dancer and choreographer. In 2009, he joined the group AMENOUVEVE, where he developed his skills in traditional dance. He furthered his training in Ouagadougou by enrolling in the "YELEN DON #3", a three-year contemporary dance programme in 2018. Throughout his studies, he collaborated with renowned choreographers, thus enriching his artistic experience.

La quatrième explores the topic of polygamy. Koffi-Kégou, who comes from a polygamous family of five wives and twenty-three children, shares his intimate experience in his touching solo. He recalls his childhood marked by jealousy, rivalry and hatred within his family, seeking to exorcise his demons and give a voice to all the affected children. This personal, introspective show takes an insightful look at the far-reaching consequences of polygamy for individuals.

[Click here](#) to get a sneak preview of *La Quatrième*.

Aziz Zoundi (Burkina Faso)

Second laureate of *Africa Simply the Best 2023* with his project *Chute Perpétuelle*



Chute Perpétuelle explores the personal story of Abdoul Aziz Zoundi. The show was born out of his hardest personal trials, including the heartbreaking loss of his aunt Aminata to cancer.

In this introspective piece, Aziz explores the pains and challenges of his journey, from his struggle to make dance his profession to the daily confrontation with his innermost emotions. In the face of obstacles and criticism, he drew on the strength within himself to stay authentic and persevere despite the prejudices of the Burkinabè society towards artists. Inspired by the invaluable support of his aunt, the show has become a way for him to heal his wounds. By revealing his inner struggles, the artist found a way to stay on his feet and rediscover hope.

[Click here](#) to get a sneak preview of *Chute Perpétuelle*.

Kadidja TIEMANTA (Mali)

the third laureate of *Africa Simply the Best 2023* with her project *BANBALI 100 fin*



Inspired by the artist's mother, who suffers from Parkinson's disease, this performance explores the themes of resilience and powerlessness in the face of illness.

Tiemanta expresses her anguish, determination and personal transformation through a physical dialogue and an emotional choreography. The performance takes us on a journey through the different stages of this struggle, from the search for hope to torment, from confusion to resilience. Using movements inspired by the gestures of people with Parkinson's disease, the artist addresses existential questions and seeks to heal the soul. The set and choreography create a world in search of healing, offering a glimmer of hope in the midst of pain.

[Click here](#) to get a sneak preview of *BANBALI 100 fin*.

OTHER DISTINCTIONS

The fifth edition of the 'Africa Simply the Best' solo choreography competition succeeded in promoting the art of dance in Africa by showcasing the exceptional talent of the continent's dancers. The competition's position as an important catalyst for the development and promotion of dance in Africa has been reinforced.

The jury's special mention went to MAI-JULI MACHADO NHAPULO from Mozambique, for the project *Sinais Particular*.

The Yongonlon Prize was awarded to JEROME KABORE from Burkina Faso for his project *Les ombres qui chantant*.

The Art Beyond Disability prize was awarded to JOSEPH TEBANDEKE from Uganda, who performed his solo *Time machine*.



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