

Introduction

Fed Up: Creating a New Type of Senegal Through the Arts

MOLLY KRUEGER ENZ and DEVIN BRYSON

Present-day Senegal is home to a vibrant cultural milieu that, in many respects, is reflective of that which its first president, Léopold Sédar Senghor, and the Senegalese cultural *eminences grises* endeavored to promote during the early postcolonial period. As Elizabeth Harney has noted, Senghor “regarded art as a medium of change—a tool that could be used to advance his cultural, political, and economic development plans. Consequently, he envisioned the artist as a representative of and advocate for a new nation.”¹ Today, there exists a burgeoning scene of young authors, artists, actors, and musicians who are continuing in this Senghorian cultural tradition by envisioning art as the means to produce social change, but who are also rethinking the type of nation and citizen that would be formed through this intersection of culture and politics. This is not Senghor’s Senegal however. For one thing, the country’s cultural production reflects the fact that over 63 percent of the population is under the age of twenty-five. Furthermore, whereas Senghor generously supported the arts and successfully channeled them to further political stability, Senegal in the twenty-first century has been marked by a more overt tension between politics and the arts. In fact, young Senegalese artists, authors, filmmakers, and musicians are reworking the relationship between politics and the arts to strike against the injustices and indifference they see as endemic to the social and political norms of contemporary Senegalese society.

Nowhere was the rise of young, politically engaged Senegalese artists more evident than during the last reelection campaign of the country’s third president, Abdoulaye Wade, who initially served as an important figure of change from the prevailing political paradigm in post-independence Senegal. Wade was first elected in 2000 thanks to the *Sopi* (Wolof for “change”) Coalition that he formed between his *Parti Démocratique Sénégalais* and several other smaller political parties. This was the first time that the country had seen a unified political opposition. After four unsuccessful runs for president, he was finally able to win in 2000 by garnering the support and endorsement of all the other opposition candidates. Furthermore, Wade maintained this coalition of opposition parties through the 2001

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<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v14/v14i3a1.pdf>

parliamentary elections, giving the *Sopi* Coalition a majority in the legislature and Wade full control of the government.

This hope for change was especially prevalent among young people who “massively participated in 2000 to bring to power the champion of *Sopi*.”² Their excitement for change, however, quickly curdled into disillusionment as Wade and his administration failed “to understand and to translate into a type of program, especially in a popular and accessible manner, the daily and ordinary demands of the immense majority of the population in terms of basic needs.”³ By the time that Wade attempted to rewrite the Senegalese constitution to gain a third term in office in 2011, the circumstances and prospects for young Senegalese caused them to become fed up with Wade’s presidency and established politics in general. Consequently, many of these young people took part in the *Y’en a Marre* (“We’re Fed Up” / “Enough is Enough”) youth movement that rose to prominence during Wade’s bid for a third term. This movement, in particular, provided the means for young Senegalese to respond to Wade’s power grab from artistic and cultural positions rather than in the more traditional form of political opposition, seeking to create a new type of Senegal in the process.

The primary objective of this collection of essays is to present the shifting political and social landscape in contemporary Senegal led by artists/activists, to introduce new and innovative forms of musical, literary, theatrical, and artistic expression existing in Senegal today, and to analyze the intersections between the political and the arts in the attempts by artistic creators to transform Senegalese culture, society, and politics. We believe that the articles demonstrate that contemporary Senegalese artists are working through their artistic and cultural creations to empower ordinary citizens who are fed up with the calcification of conventional political avenues to create a new type of Senegal. Furthermore, this guest-edited issue of the *African Studies Quarterly* will show that the mentality among these artists to reform Senegalese society through the arts is a uniquely Senegalese philosophy that can be traced back to the birth of Senegal’s independence.

Intersection Among Culture, Society, and Politics

Following Senegal’s independence from France in 1960, the country quickly gained international prominence due to Léopold Sédar Senghor. A well-respected poet, a member of the French colonial government, and one of the founders of the literary, intellectual, and political Négritude movement, Senghor understood the need and had the means to strengthen the global image of Senegal. One of the principal ways in which he was able to accomplish this feat was via the arts. Souleyman Bachir Diagne describes Senghor’s strategy as “assigning to cultural politics the primary mission to forge a national consciousness... Overall, culturalism is explained first and foremost as a will for national construction.”⁴ Harney articulates Senghor’s philosophy towards culture in a similar manner: “The new president placed the arts at the center of his attempt to craft a salient nationalist narrative and to promote a coherent representation of modern Africanness.”⁵ Throughout Senghor’s two-decades long presidency, Senegalese society enjoyed relative prosperity while rising to the fore of West African literature, art, cinema, and music. Senghor held office from 1960 until 1980, and his successor Abdou Diouf, also a member of the *Parti Socialiste du Sénégal* (PS), was in power from 1981 through 2000. Diouf faced more dire economic circumstances than his predecessor but maintained a political commitment to the arts, although it was more rhetorical than financial. During the forty years that Senghor and Diouf held the

presidency, the PS also maintained a majority in the legislature. This political homogeneity led to legislative stagnation and disillusionment among the citizenry, setting the stage for Wade's election.

When Wade was first elected president in 2000, breaking forty years of one-party rule, there was much enthusiasm and hope for improvements in the country, especially among young voters, who strongly supported him. However, despite Wade's constant call for change and overt courting of young voters during the 2000 campaign, these same young citizens were the ones who eventually turned on him just over ten years later: "Those among them who, at his invitation, raised their arms in the air to testify to the unemployment in which they lived and to nourish the hope of a change of direction with the arrival of their leader, were disillusioned."⁶ Young Senegalese were especially frustrated by the inertia of Wade's presidency due to the bleak social circumstances in which they now found themselves. According to the *Agence nationale de la statistique et de la démographie*, six out of every ten unemployed Senegalese were young citizens between the ages of fifteen and thirty-four at the end of Wade's presidency in 2011. Despite instituting social structures and government agencies that were intended to create employment for the youth, the high level of unemployment among young Senegalese only increased under Wade. Understandably, by 2012, young people across the country held a grim outlook toward Wade, politics in general, and the state of their country: "Whatever their conditions, young people in the capital area of Dakar, Thiès, Kaolack, Ziguinchor, Tambacounda, Saint-Louis, just like those in the rural areas, are in large numbers prey to a certain despair."⁷

Senegalese citizens were as dismayed with Wade's handling of the country's cultural policy throughout his tenure in office as they were with his failures in the economic realm. From the beginning of his presidency, Wade was conscientious of the need to reinforce how he differed from his predecessor Diouf. One of the principal ways he did this was to affirm his commitment to the arts since governmental funding and support for the arts had notoriously diminished under Diouf. However, instead of concretely supporting the arts, Wade used hollow rhetorical maneuvers and unfeasible plans of cultural construction to consolidate his power and to enlarge his personal coffers. Early in his first term he announced seven *grands projets culturels*, of which only two were ever completed during his twelve years in office. He constructed the massive and controversial *Monument de la Renaissance africaine* for twenty-seven million US dollars using the state revenues. He owns the copyright for this gigantesque statue, however, which allows him to take a hefty slice of whatever profits it might bring in. Faced with his inability to decrease the unemployment rate among young people, Savané and Sarr argue that Wade "attempted to mask his failure to create jobs by promoting wrestling, dance, and music, which are extremely popular, especially in urban areas."⁸

Throughout his presidency, Wade manipulated for his self-interests the unique relationship in Senegal between artists and the state that was first instituted by Senghor. By the time he left office, the remains of Senghor's postindependence cultural plan to stabilize the country and make it a player on the international stage through the arts were left dilapidated, at best. One recent example of this transition in Senegalese arts from Senghor to Wade can be found at *Les Manufactures sénégalaises des arts décoratifs*, a tapestry school instituted by Papa Ibra Tall under the behest of Senghor in 1965. At its peak under the Senghor government, the *Manufactures* produced a number of annual graduates who went on to gain employment in government ministries. Additionally, it provided an artists-in-residence program for future renowned painters and generated up to one hundred

tapestries a year. These works of art were primarily purchased by the presidential and ministerial offices in order to display them publicly in governmental buildings or to give them as gifts to visiting foreign dignitaries as demonstrations of Senegalese culture. When we visited the site in June of 2012, a neglected, unfinished tapestry rested on a deserted loom. Alongside the rolled up tapestry was a dusty sign indicating that this particular product of the *Manufactures* had been commissioned by and was destined for “his eminency President Abdoulaye Wade.” A guide explained that after Wade lost the presidency in the heated election earlier that year, he abandoned completion of the tapestry as well as its payment. Unlike post-independence Senegal under Senghor, culture and the arts under Wade became one more tool for self-gain and self-aggrandizement, no longer one of the means to move Senegal forward.

The Birth and Rise of *Y'en a Marre*

Given Wade’s manipulation of the arts, in 2011 when he attempted to rewrite the constitution and seize a third term in office, young Senegalese responded from artistic and cultural positions rather than from the traditional political opposition. They were able to utilize artistic tools to express their frustrations and combat Wade’s grasp for further control of the country. The diverse groups of protestors were made up of:

artists, writers, or “parliamentarians of the street,” those popular singers, those numerous “carriers of signs” (which sometimes contained whimsical messages) who took over public space to craft demands that were tied up with wants of the central political system...This new avant-garde was built from the arts, but also from a radical critique of society that had been voiced for years by Senegalese rap music.⁹

Hip-hop culture and rap music played a key role in these protests and many activist collectives were formed around hip-hop. Longtime Senegalese hip-hop scene stalwart DJ Awadi formed a collective named *Yewoulen* (“Wake Up”), while musician Daddy Bibson started NON (*Nouvelle orientation nationale*; “New National Direction”).

Among the many actors protesting against Wade through the arts, the most visible group was the *Y'en a Marre* youth movement, formed when several Senegalese journalists and hip-hop artists banded together. Using music, written manifestoes, oratory, and striking visual imagery, *Y'en a Marre* quickly garnered the support of Senegalese youth from various walks of life and successfully prevented Wade from regaining office. According to Savané and Sarr, “it [the group] knew how to unite a community of young people who had been broken by the steamroller of unemployment. Young dynamic managers, journalists, the unemployed, workers, students, musicians, basically all social categories were part of their cry of revolt.”¹⁰ The movement’s members continually urged their countrymen and women to become a *Nouveau Type de Sénégalais* (“A New Type of Senegalese”) and thus to serve as catalysts for social and political reform. Savané and Sarr highlight the goals of the *Y'en a Marre* movement: “its primary mission is...to offer itself in the service of the people, notably the disenfranchised, by helping them to help themselves, by rendering them capable of seizing the opportunities that are offered to them.”¹¹ The founders of *Y'en a Marre* understood how they could use their celebrity in order to convince their compatriots to become active members of their society: “The value of *Y'en a Marre* is in having succeeded in breaking the inertia, the indifference, and the inaction of Senegalese. Having understood very early on that a social movement needed visibility and concrete action on the ground, it

initiated a program to make its cause understood and to make it heard by those who held public power."¹² Building upon the socially engaged music many of the members had already created, *Y'en a Marre's* use of the arts to engage with Senegalese citizens during the protests against Wade and his election campaign was essential. This strategy allowed the members to connect with the populace on a personal, intimate level and to encourage individuals "to express the conditions of their souls and to denounce the struggles of daily life."¹³ The arts stood at the heart of the movement and its success, which exemplified the shifting identity between various artistic communities and politics in contemporary Senegal.

Social Engagement Beyond *Y'en a Marre*

Young authors, visual artists, actors, directors, and musicians of all genres are also rethinking traditional models of artistic creation in order to examine the Senegal in which they live and inspire social engagement among their audience. While Senegal has a strong tradition of socially aware writers like Aminata Sow Fall and Ousmane Sembène, contemporary authors are reworking this lineage for the twentieth-first century. Felwine Sarr is an author and professor at Gaston Berger University in Saint-Louis who organized a group of university instructors and researchers called *Devoir de résistance* ("Responsibility of Resistance") to oppose Wade's attempt to secure a third term. In an essay published in the daily Senegalese newspaper *le Populaire*, Sarr writes: "There are moments in the life of a nation when silence is complicit and inaction is guilty. Senegal is faced with an unprecedented strike of strength, which appears to be a constitutional coup d'état."¹⁴ Since 2012, the association has remained active by proposing citizen-led solutions to public issues.

Nafissatou Dia Diouf is another socially engaged author who does not hesitate to articulate her vision for Senegal or criticize her country's leadership. In her most recent publication *Sociobiz 2*, which includes a postface by Felwine Sarr, Diouf campaigns for a new type of Senegalese citizen who takes pride in his or her country. She argues that if every Senegalese citizen worked to better his or her homeland, Dakar would be comparable to New York, but without violence or indifference. Her vision for the future is one of optimism: "Prosperity is finally at our door because we will have exploited and transformed our own human resources (and God knows we have some), but also our mineral, water, agricultural, etc. resources... We will have invented our own model of development based upon our values with our History and our rich and diverse civilizations as our common ground."¹⁵

Like their literary counterparts, visual artists are extending the traditions inherited from their forebears into more socially engaged spheres. Amadou Kane Sy, known as Kan-Si, has been a very active leader and organizer of socially conscious art both in urban and rural areas of Senegal. In 1996, he was one of the founding members of the Senegalese Artist Association *Huit Facettes* (Eight Facets). The Association is known for its socially interactive work and has organized international artist workshops in Senegal, the United States, and Europe. Since 1999, Kan-Si has led the Gorée Institute Printmaking Workshop, which has brought together artists and instructed them in the practices of etching, lithography, and woodcut, and then allowed them to produce works around a single social issue, including HIV/AIDS, peace and conflict resolution, and gender and sexual freedom. Another socially engaged artist working in a visual medium is the young filmmaker Adams Sie. Faced with the deteriorating Senegalese cinema industry, Sie has begun his own production company through which he has written, directed, and produced a number of short films focused on important social issues such as albino social integration, homeless children, sexual abuse,

female genital mutilation, alcoholism, and gender parity in politics. Confronting a stagnant political culture, young Senegalese are engaging with their society and expressing their concerns with social ills through artistic mediums. As a result, they are refiguring the role of the arts from their traditional antecedents.

These socially engaged Senegalese artists show that their work has not been confined to opposing Wade's attempt to win a third presidential term. Even *Y'en a Marre*, whose initial objective was to remove Wade from office, has worked diligently to expand its perspective to include a range of social problems. Therefore, the election of Macky Sall, the presidential candidate who defeated Wade in 2012, is simply a by-product of a far-reaching intersection of the arts and politics in contemporary Senegal.¹⁶ Many Senegalese viewed Sall as nothing more than the lesser of two evils upon his election. Nevertheless, he now stands as the most public representation of the flashpoint at which *Y'en a Marre* coalesced and rose to prominence, at which Senegalese society took to protest, and at which contemporary politicized art reached its apotheosis.¹⁷ Consequently, it is important in this introduction to survey the artists/activists and their communities two years after the election of President Sall.

Macky Sall and the Continued Relevance of Socially Engaged Artists

Sall's presidency serves to outline the consolidated strength and permanence of socially engaged art among young Senegalese as well as its growth beyond simplistic political denunciation. Many of these artists/activists speak plainly about the public's newfound vigilance toward its president and its readiness to remove him if he has not provided the desired societal changes. They are ready to do this either by revolts in the street or through the electoral process at the end of his first term.¹⁸ When asked to iterate their opinion on the status of Sall's presidency, however, these same artists/activists quickly dismiss him as irrelevant and just another politician who will see his time end one way or another. Furthermore, they prefer to speak of the ways they and their communities are using their own art, means, intelligence, and self-reliance to improve Senegalese society. In the wake of their efforts to bring about the peaceful removal of Wade from the presidency, young artists in Senegal have taken on a confidence in their ability to engage the public and to critique political malfeasance effectively and quickly, freeing them to focus on deploying their art to build substantial social change.

Y'en a Marre remains an active, engaged collective that continues to draw the attention of both the public and the government. The movement still holds its weekly Tuesday meetings in the old apartment owned by Fadel Barro, a journalist and one of the founders of the group, in the Parcelles Assainies neighborhood of Dakar. The door remains open throughout the day for groups and individuals to come, share ideas, and benefit from *Y'en a Marre's* experiences and perspectives. On Tuesday, July 2, 2013, members of Mali's community of civic groups, preparing for the country's elections after its recent civil war, came to the headquarters to hear Fadel Barro and fellow journalist and *Y'en a Marre* founder Aliou Sané's suggestions for stoking voter participation and ensuring fair results. *Y'en a Marre* has become an example of social engagement to citizens of other African nations, but is still focused primarily on Senegalese issues. In August 2013 the group announced the launch of its Observatory of Democracy and Good Governance (*Dox Ak Sa Gox*), which will initially function in areas outside of Dakar, such as Saint Louis, Ziguinchor, and Thiès. Its primary goal is to provide citizens with a means both to express their own local concerns to

politicians and to monitor the efficacy of how politicians address those issues. Not surprisingly, *Y'en a Marre* released a new group CD track, "*Dox Ak Sa Gox*," to promote the Observatory.

Individual members of the movement remain active in endeavors outside of the confines of official *Y'en a Marre* programs. Foumalade, one of the founding rap artists of the collective, engages with social issues both through his music and social organizing. His group, Bat'Haillons Blin-D, was the first *Y'en a Marre*-affiliated rap group to release an album after the protests with its 2012 release *RésistaNTS*. Even before the release of that album, Foumalade and his group were active in the area of prison reform. In 2005, they toured prisons and heard from prisoners after the concerts that they needed help beyond musical distraction, that they needed assistance to improve their living conditions and the possibility of continuing their lives after their imprisonment. Bat'Haillons Blin-D followed this tour by publicly speaking out against excessively long detentions, overcrowding in prisons, unequal sentencing dependent upon the social backgrounds of defendants, and for the need for alternative forms of rehabilitation for non-dangerous prisoners, such as job training. Foumalade says of this message he has expressed, "Only hip-hop can express it. This is why I say, 'Hip-hop is a power.' I believe fundamentally that hip-hop is a power."¹⁹ In 2013, Foumalade established a youth center called G-Hip-Hop in the Dakar suburb of Guédiawaye whose main purpose is to provide a location for at-risk youth to expend their energies on hip-hop creation, rather than on criminal activities that will lead to imprisonment. In regards to the purpose of this center, he states: "We want hip-hop and the activities at the center to impact the social and economic life of the population... In the street they [inhabitants of Guédiawaye] encounter drugs, prostitution, delinquency. But they also encounter hip-hop. How can we use the hip-hop that they encounter in the streets? Because what hip-hop shares with delinquency is language. Also, this contesting, revolutionary aspect."²⁰ In addition, the center has also served as a site for forums on poverty and illiteracy among women.

Thiat, perhaps the most outspoken member of *Y'en a Marre*, continues to perform with his hip-hop group Keur Gui, which is in the process of recording a double album in Dakar, Paris, and New York. This album will make the case for the diasporic, cross-cultural nature of the group's and, by extension, *Y'en a Marre*'s artistic and political strategies. Individually, Thiat was selected as a Reagan-Fascell Democracy Fellow by the National Endowment for Democracy in Washington, D.C. This fellowship, which took place from October 2013-February 2014, supports his work to establish a program he is calling "100% Democracy by Youth," which would provide funding to socially engaged artists throughout Africa. He works to transmit his message wherever he goes and has a multifaceted identity as an artist, activist, and missionary: "Activism is inside of me, in my blood. For me, the message is the most important... I am an activist who uses music, hip-hop, to give a message. My mission is to get people involved... I am a missionary... my weapon is my mouth and my bullet is my word."²¹

Despite the success of *Y'en a Marre* and its founding members, not all Senegalese are enamored by the movement's rhetoric and tactics. Some young people express doubts about the group's motives, are convinced that the members are being paid for their activism, and are displeased with the movement's forceful denunciation of Wade. Many of them were even active participants and members of *Y'en a Marre* during the presidential campaign of Wade, but have come to disagree with the direction the group has taken since then. However, these same young people who oppose *Y'en a Marre*'s debated tactics and

disrespect of Wade are themselves engaged in thoughtful activism to improve their country, often through artistic mediums. Those ex-members of *Y'en a Marre* acknowledge the power and inspiration that they took from the initial stages of the movement and that they are applying to new endeavors. Thus, they prove that *Y'en a Marre*, while an influential turning point, is just one iteration of a widespread current running through contemporary Senegal that unites the arts and politics. One such group, *Eaux secours*, works in the Pikine/Thiaroye region of the greater Dakar area and uses rap music, video clips, on-line interactions, and social gatherings to promote the need for a greater consciousness and a stronger infrastructure towards flood prevention and relief.²² Kal'z, a member of the rap group Flamm J that is at the center of *Eaux secours*, posits: "The problem of water is eternal. Without water there is no life. Water is our aid. In these areas where water is lacking, we are going to mobilize."²³ The group recently created a compilation of hip-hop songs called *Zero Mbeund* with contributions from rappers such as Xuman, Matador, and Foulalade. On the back cover of the CD, the group articulates its view regarding the unnatural disaster: "Flooding is not a catastrophe, but moreso an abundance that has been poorly managed."²⁴ Profits from the CD will go toward raising awareness about water issues in Thiaroye and Pikine and ideally finding a solution to the problems.

Of course, all of these actions need to be promoted to the public in order to have a real impact. While the individuals and organizations themselves take on this task, they are still extremely reliant upon traditional media since digital technology and media are not widespread in Senegal. The artist/activists themselves have thus attempted to intervene in mainstream media outlets as much as possible. If one turns on the local television news in Dakar on a Friday evening, the viewer might come across the *Journal rappé*, a news segment during which two rappers present the most important news items from the past week by rapping them: one in French, one in Wolof. Rappers Xuman and Keyti are dressed in suits, seated behind a news desk, and the segment is obviously produced and presented with high-quality production techniques. Clearly, the *Journal rappé* is not an ironic curio but rather a genuine attempt to keep young Senegalese informed of current events through an original, engaging format. Both the organizers of *Eaux secours* and the rappers of the *Journal rappé* speak about receiving inspiration for their work from the social engagement of *Y'en a Marre* through hip-hop. All of these artists continue to remain active and engaged because they believe in the emergence of a new generation and the importance of profound change in Senegal.

Intersection of the Arts and Politics in Contemporary Senegal

The five articles in this special issue of the *African Studies Quarterly* examine the ways in which diverse musical, literary, theatrical, and visual artists use their work as a medium to bring about change that will result in a "new type of Senegal." The first two articles outline a historical, political, and cultural context for the recent *Y'en a Marre* movement from varying perspectives: one dealing with the principle spokesmen and writers of the group, the other concerned with the historical contextualization of the movement's use of culture. In her article, "The New Type of Senegalese under Construction: Fadel Barro and Aliou Sané on *Yenamarrism* after Wade," Sarah Nelson presents an interview with two of the founding journalists of the movement, Fidel Barro and Aliou Sané. In it, they discuss the formation and the evolution of *Y'en a Marre* since the 2012 presidential election as well as their vision for the future of the movement, Senegal, and Africa as a continent. In the second

contribution devoted to *Y'en a Marre*, "The Rise of a New Senegalese Cultural Philosophy?" Devin Bryson begins by questioning the tendency of observers to focus on the newness of the group and then proceeds to place the movement in a Senegalese historical context. He argues that the collective uses cultural interventions in Senegalese society in a manner that is consistent with the cultural continuum that was first conjured under Senghor, but that the *Yenamarristes* also render this cultural philosophy more inclusive of and useful for the people of Senegal.

The remaining articles expand our point of view from *Y'en a Marre* to other socially engaged artists. In her piece, "Nafissatou Dia Diouf's Critical Look at a 'Senegal in the Midst of Transformation,'" Molly Krueger Enz combines an interview with Nafissatou Dia Diouf and textual analysis of her writing in order to show how the internationally acclaimed author provides her readers with a comprehensive yet critical view of Senegal. Through her work that includes fiction, poetry, and philosophical essays, Diouf examines contemporary Senegalese society and portrays a country in the process of transition and transformation. The next contribution, "De-centering Theatrical Heritage: Forum Theater in Contemporary Senegal," explores the history of forum theater, also known as the theater of the oppressed, that has developed into a global phenomenon since the 1970s. Brian Quinn posits that its prominence in Senegal has led to its role as an adopted form of traditional performance in the country that presents an alternative, decentralized model directly opposed to the permanent structure of the *Grand Théâtre National*. The final article in this special issue offers a unique perspective on the artistic scene in Senegal today. Leslie Rabine's essay "'These Walls Belong to Everybody': The Graffiti Arts Movement in Dakar" draws upon extensive ethnographic research and astutely examines how graffiti artists conceive of their identity and community, and then express these ideals through their murals, transforming Dakar's urban landscape and engaging with global hip-hop dialogues in the process.

It is our hope that *Fed Up: Creating a New Type of Senegal Through the Arts* will make a significant contribution to current debates about contemporary Senegalese culture and society and shed light on the *Y'en a Marre* movement that emerged in 2011 as a political force in Senegal. Within all of the articles contained in this issue, readers will find evidence of the way in which the citizenry of Senegal, frustrated with its economic, political, and cultural marginalization, has wrested the postcolonial tradition of social engagement through the arts from the control of the cultural and political elite to use as a tool to render its society more just, more democratic, and more inclusive. Beyond those discussions specific to Senegal, we believe that this collection of essays will provide readers with galvanizing examples of the possibilities in the intermingling of the arts and politics, and will demonstrate that Senegal has, in ways its first president could not have envisioned, fulfilled Senghor's desires for his country to become a beacon to the world.

Notes

- 1 Harney 2004, p. 5.
- 2 Savané and Sarr 2012, p. 21. "ont massivement participé en 2000 à porter au pouvoir le chantre du 'Sopi'." All translations from the original French into English are by the authors.
- 3 Copans 2013, p. 19. "de comprendre et de traduire sous forme de programme, et surtout

- de manière accessible et populaire, les revendications ordinaires et quotidiennes de l'immense majorité de la population en matière de besoins de base."
- 4 Diagne 2002, p. 252. "assigner à la politique culturelle la mission première de forger une conscience nationale ... Au fond, le culturalisme se justifie avant tout comme un volontarisme de la construction nationale."
 - 5 Harney 2004, p. 49.
 - 6 Copans 2013, p. 21. "Ceux d'entre eux qui, à son invite, levaient les bras en l'air pour témoigner du chômage dans lequel ils baignaient et nourrir l'espoir de voir la tendance se renverser avec l'avènement de leur leader ont dû déchanter."
 - 7 Savané and Sarr 2012, p. 13. "Quelles que soient leurs conditions, les jeunes des capitales régionales de Dakar, Thiès, Kaolack, Ziguinchor, Tambacounda, Saint-Louis, tout comme ceux des campagnes, sont dans leur grande majorité en proie à une certaine désespérance."
 - 8 Ibid., p. 15. "tente ainsi de masquer ses échecs dans la création d'emplois par une promotion de la lutte, de la danse et de la musique qui suscitent beaucoup d'engouement, notamment en banlieue."
 - 9 Diop 2013, p. 67. "artistes, écrivains, ou 'parlementaires de la rue,' ces chanteurs populaires, ces nombreux 'porteurs de pancartes' (aux messages parfois fantaisistes) qui ont investi l'espace public pour bricoler des revendications arrimées à la demande politique centrale... Cette nouvelle avant-garde se construit à partir des arts, mais aussi de la critique radicale de la société véhiculée pendant des années par le *rap* sénégalais."
 - 10 Savané and Sarr 2012, p. 8. "il a su fédérer toute une jeunesse broyée par le rouleau compresseur du chômage. Jeunes cadres dynamiques, journalistes, chômeurs, ouvriers, étudiants, musiciens, bref toutes les catégories sociales se sont identifiées à leur coup de gueule..."
 - 11 Ibid., p. 30. "sa mission première est... de se mettre au service des gens, notamment les plus démunies, en les aidant à s'aider eux-mêmes, en les rendant capables de saisir les opportunités qui s'offrent à elles."
 - 12 Ibid., p. 35. "Le mérite de Y'en a marre est d'avoir réussi à briser l'inertie, l'indifférence et l'inaction des Sénégalais. Ayant très tôt compris qu'un mouvement social a besoin de visibilité, d'action concrètes sur le terrain, il a initié une démarche pour faire comprendre sa cause et se faire entendre par les pouvoirs publics."
 - 13 Ibid., p. 57. "d'exprimer ses états d'âme ou de dénoncer les travers du quotidien." Previous socially engaged work from the members of *Y'en a Marre* include Thiat and Kilifeu's rap group Keur Gui's first four albums, of which the debut was censored due to its virulent political critique, and Foumalade's group Bat'haillons Blin-D's tours of prisons to draw the public's attention to the condition of its incarcerated countrymen.
 - 14 Sarr 2012. "Il est des moments dans la vie d'une nation où le silence est complice et l'inaction coupable. Le Sénégal est en face d'un coup de force sans précédent, qui prend les allures d'un coup d'Etat constitutionnel."
 - 15 Diouf 2013, pp. 127-28. "La prospérité est enfin à nos portes car nous aurons exploiter et transformer nos propres ressources humaines (et Dieu sait qu'on en a), mais aussi minières, aurifères, agricoles etc.. Nous aurons somme toute inventé notre propre modèle de développement. Basé sur nos valeurs et pour socle notre Histoire, nos civilisations riches et diverses."

- 16 *Y'en a Marre* refused to support any of the opposition candidates in the first round of voting, preferring to stress voter participation and the need to remove Wade. It wasn't until the second round of voting that the group finally endorsed Sall's candidacy, with significant qualifications, in order to ensure that Wade was not reelected. The members of the group have said that they have refused multiple offers from Sall to join his administration since his election.
- 17 This widespread skepticism toward Sall's ability and/or desire to produce real change in the country is particularly emphasized when noting Sall's previous positions in the Wade administration: Prime Minister from 2004 until 2007 and President of the National Assembly from 2007 until 2008. He played a major role in the regime against which *Y'en a Marre* and others protested.
- 18 Removal of Sall from office through either revolt or the electoral process are both equally evoked by Senegalese, often by the same person. After campaign promises and continuing public pressure from *Y'en a Marre* and others to reduce the presidential term from seven to five years, Sall has confirmed that his term will end in 2017, though this still needs to be officially ratified, whether by referendum or the National Assembly.
- 19 Fournalade 2013. Interview with the authors. "C'est seul le hip-hop qui peut le dire. C'est pourquoi je dis, 'Hip-hop is a power.' Je crois fondamentalement que le hip-hop est un pouvoir."
- 20 Ibid. "Nous voulons que le hip-hop et les activités menées dans ce centre impactent sur la vie sociale et économique de la population... Dans la rue ils rencontrent la drogue, la prostitution, la délinquance. Mais ils rencontrent le hip-hop. Comment utiliser le hip-hop qu'ils rencontrent dans la rue? Parce que ce que le hip-hop partage avec le milieu de la délinquance, c'est le langage. C'est aussi cet aspect contestataire, révolutionnaire."
- 21 Thiat 2013. Interview with authors (in English).
- 22 The phrase "Eaux secours" is a play-on-words, with "eaux" meaning water and "secours" meaning help. The literal, though grammatically incorrect meaning is "waters help," thus referring to the group's work on flood issues. The real power of the expression comes from the combination of "eaux," a homophone for "au," with "secours." The expression "Au secours" often refers to an emergency situation where someone is in danger or needs help quickly.
- 23 Flamm J 2013. Interview with authors. "Le problème de l'eau, c'est éternel. Sans eau, il n'y a pas de vie. L'eau est notre secours. Dans ces zones-là où l'eau manque, on va mobiliser." The *Eaux secours* collective is led by the rap group Flamm J which includes members LG, Kal'z, and Daddy.
- 24 "L'inondation n'est pas une catastrophe mais plutôt une abondance mal gérée."

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