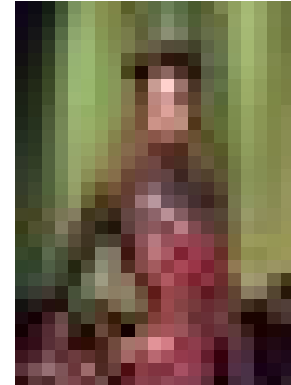


## WARC serves as Dak'art OFF Site Celebrating the Arts

### Inspired by signs & symbols of N'ko, and honoring the memory of super model and activist, Katoucha

On the evening of Saturday, May 15, WARC, as a site of Dak'art OFF (the open studio sites of Dakar's Biennale) was transformed into a garden of light, image and sound inspired by the signs and symbols of **Nk'o**, the writing system developed by Souleymane Kante in 1949. Organized by Mme. Bangoura, sister to the late supermodel, **Katoucha**, the event was a tribute to her art, and to her activism.

WARC was, for the evening, a veritable workshop of artists—fashion designers, painters, video artists, musicians, and graphic designers, gathered to pay tribute to the memory of the famous Senegalese model, Katoucha and inspired by the signs and symbols of N'Ko.



*Katoucha Niane*

After welcoming remarks from the WARA and WARC Directors, the event was opened by Katoucha's father, the celebrated Guinean historian Djibril Tamsir Niane who wrote

*Soundiata Keita ou l'Epopée mandingue*. He, in turn, introduced Ibrahima Doumbouya who gave an informative presentation on the history and current status of N'ko. Developed principally for writing Mande languages, its popularity has grown over the years and it is now being used for languages beyond the Mande group, including Pulaar and Wolof, among others. Dr. Doumbouya sketched a brief biography of Souleymane Kante who developed Nko as a sort of reaction against graphic colonialism of the Latin and Arabic scripts, neither of which adequately captures the linguistic character of



African languages. Kante, a Guinean linguist and educator (1922-1987), developed the N'ko alphabet as a means of affirming and preserving languages which were principally oral in nature and which demanded a writing system that reflected their unique sound systems. Dr. Doumbouya provided examples of the growing literary production in N'ko, including translations of the Qur'an and the Bible, newspapers and treatises on various topics.

Presentations were also made by Mme Anta Gueye, well-known and loved Senegalese suwer artist and a number of other luminaries from the Senegalese art scene.



*Painting in progress, inspired by N'ko characters*



*N'ko expert, Ibrahima Doumbouya with WARA Director Jennifer Yanco, showing an N'ko newspaper*

WARC was pleased to sponsor this event, which attracted a large and diverse group of artists from the region, as well as many people visiting Dakar for the Biennale des Arts.



Figure 1 A textile display