

Tiwani Contemporary  
16 Little Portland Street  
London W1W 8BP  
tel. +44 (0) 20 7631 3808  
www.tiwani.co.uk

PRESS RELEASE

## ***Rotimi Fani-Kayode (1955 – 1989)***

**19 September – 1 November 2014**

Private View: Thursday 18 September 2014, 6.30 – 8.30pm

*“On three counts I am an outsider: in matters of sexuality; in terms of geographical and cultural dislocation and in the sense of not having become the sort of respectably married professional my parents might have hoped for...”*  
(Rotimi Fani-Kayode)

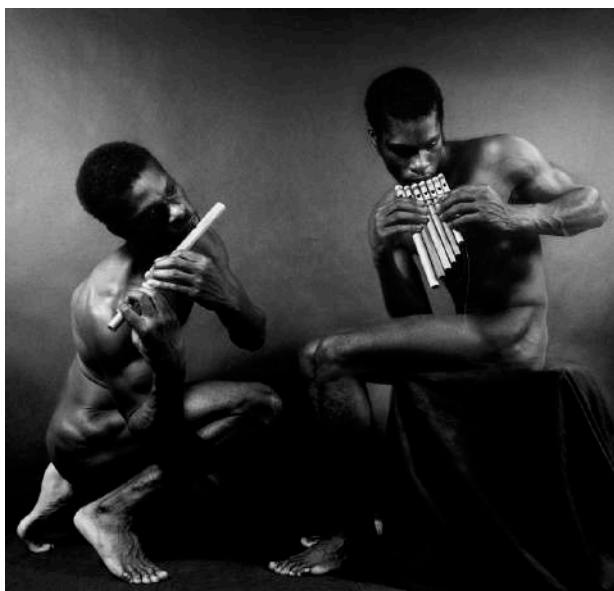
Tiwani Contemporary, in partnership with Autograph ABP, is pleased to present ***Rotimi Fani-Kayode (1955-1989)***, a solo retrospective of the work of this seminal and highly influential figure in 1980s black British and African contemporary art. Although his career was cut short by his untimely death at the age of 34, Fani-Kayode nonetheless remains one of the most significant names in the history of black photography.

Curated by Mark Sealy and Renée Mussai of Autograph ABP, whose co-founder and first Chair was Rotimi Fani-Kayode, the exhibition marks the **25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the photographer’s death**. It will feature a selection of his most important photographic works produced between 1985-1989, including large-scale colour works and arresting black and white images.

Fani-Kayode’s photographic portraits explore complex personal and politically-engaged notions of **desire, spirituality and cultural dislocation**. They depict the black male body as a focal point both to interpret and probe the boundaries of spiritual and erotic fantasy, and of cultural and sexual difference. Ancestral rituals and a provocative, multi-layered symbolism fuse with archetypal motifs from European and African cultures and subcultures - inspired by what Yoruba priests call “*the technique of ecstasy*”. Hence Fani-Kayode uses the medium of photography not only to question issues of sexuality and homoerotic desire, but also to address themes of **diaspora and belonging**, and the **tensions between his homosexuality and his Yoruba upbringing**. This exhibition coincides with the introduction in 2014 of new punitive legislation in Nigeria, as well as other countries in Africa, outlawing same-sex relationships and membership of gay rights organisations.



*Untitled, 1987 – 1988.* © Rotimi Fani-Kayode. Courtesy of Autograph ABP and Tiwani Contemporary, London



*Every Mother’s Son/ Children of Suffering, 1989.* © Rotimi Fani-Kayode. Courtesy of Autograph ABP and Tiwani Contemporary, London

**Tiwani  
Contemporary**

**A U T O G R A P H**  
A B P

**Tiwani Contemporary**  
16 Little Portland Street  
London W1W 8BP  
tel. +44 (0) 20 7631 3808  
[www.tiwani.co.uk](http://www.tiwani.co.uk)



*Every Moment Counts (Ecstatic Antibodies)*, 1989.  
© Rotimi Fani-Kayode. Courtesy of Autograph ABP and Tiwani Contemporary, London



*Dan Mask*, 1989. © Rotimi Fani-Kayode. Courtesy of Autograph ABP and Tiwani Contemporary, London

#### **About the Artist:**

Rotimi Fani-Kayode (1955–1989) was born in Lagos, Nigeria to a prominent Yoruba family who left Africa as refugees in 1966 and moved to Brighton in the UK. He later studied at Georgetown University and the Pratt Institute in the USA, before settling permanently in the UK in 1983 where he lived and worked until his early death in Brixton, London from a short and unexpected illness on December 21, 1989.

The main body of Fani-Kayode's work was created between 1983 and 1989. His photographs have been exhibited internationally since 1985, including several solo exhibitions presented by Autograph ABP, at Harvard University, USA in 2009; Rivington Place, London in 2011; and Iziko South African National Gallery, South Africa in 2014. In 2003, his work featured in the African Pavilion at the 50th Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy, and in 2011 in *ARS 11* at Kiasma-Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki, Finland. His works are represented in the permanent collections of the V&A Museum in London, the Artur Walther Foundation, NY/Neu-Ulm, and in numerous other international private and public collections.

***Rotimi Fani-Kayode (1955-1989)***  
runs **19 September – 1 November**  
at Tiwani Contemporary,  
in partnership with Autograph ABP

**Tiwani Contemporary cordially invites you to the exhibition Private View on:**

**Thursday 18 September 2014, 6.30 – 8.30pm**

Tiwani Contemporary | 16 Little Portland Street | W1W 8BP  
T: + 44 (0) 207 631 3808 | Directions (Oxford Circus tube)  
@Tiwaniart | [www.tiwani.co.uk](http://www.tiwani.co.uk)

Gallery Hours:

Tuesday to Friday 11am - 6pm; Saturday 12pm - 5pm

**Tiwani  
Contemporary**

**A U T O G R A P H**  
A B P

**Tiwani Contemporary**  
16 Little Portland Street  
London W1W 8BP  
tel. +44 (0) 20 7631 3808  
[www.tiwani.co.uk](http://www.tiwani.co.uk)

## Notes to Editors

**\*For additional information and a detailed biography please contact\***

Eva Langret, Tiwani Contemporary | T. 0207 631 3808 | [eva@tiwani.co.uk](mailto:eva@tiwani.co.uk)

**\*For all press enquiries please contact\***

Jenny Prytherch, Flint PR | T. 0203 463 2087 | [jenny.prytherch@flint-pr.com](mailto:jenny.prytherch@flint-pr.com)

### **About Tiwani Contemporary**

Founded in 2011, Tiwani Contemporary exhibits and represents international emerging and established artists, focussing on Africa and its diaspora. The gallery presents work through its exhibition programme and participation in art fairs.

In addition to its commercial activities, Tiwani Contemporary runs a public programme, Art Connect, supported by the A.G Leventis Foundation. This provides a platform for discussing contemporary artistic practice through publications, talks and projects, both within the gallery and in association with other organisations.

Tiwani Contemporary works in collaboration with the Centre for Contemporary Art, Lagos (CCA Lagos) on both its exhibition and public programmes.

### **About Autograph ABP**

Established in 1988 with the mission of advocating the inclusion of historically marginalised photographic practices, Autograph ABP is a charity that works internationally in photography, cultural identity, race, representation and human rights. Based at Rivington Place, Shoreditch, Autograph ABP produce their own programme of exhibitions, educational events and publishing, and collaborate with other arts organisations and academic institutions nationally and internationally. The Autograph ABP Archive & Research Centre serves as a research facility to address a gap in the visual representation of Britain's cultural history and its diverse communities, and houses their unique collection of global photography. Their remit is to build strategic alliances across the broad arena of contemporary photographic art practice, aiming to advance public debates relating to representation, cultural difference and social change. Their programmes are supported by Arts Council England, Heritage Lottery Fund, and other trusts and foundations.

**Autograph ABP and Rotimi Fani-Kayode** Since 1992, Autograph ABP has preserved and promoted the photographic legacy of Rotimi Fani-Kayode, its co-founder and first Chair. Autograph ABP is proud to have carried out a sustained programme of work over a number of years to ensure wider appreciation of the output of one of the leading artists of his generation. Since being entrusted with this task by Fani-Kayode's late partner and collaborator, Alex Hirst, Autograph ABP has promoted their work, and the issues with which they dealt, to an extensive public in the UK and abroad. [www.autograph-abp.co.uk](http://www.autograph-abp.co.uk)

**Tiwani  
Contemporary**

**A U T O G R A P H**  
**A B P**