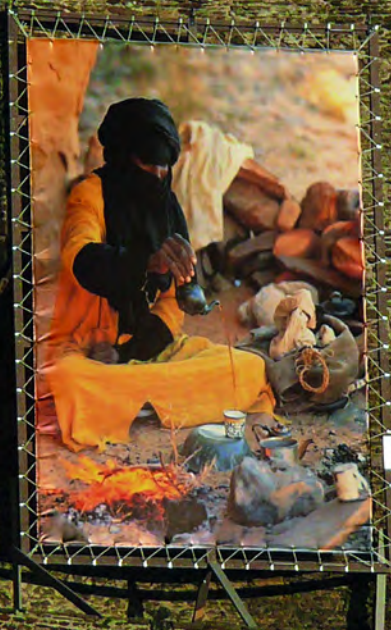


# SAHARA OASIS DE VIE

*A unique street gallery exhibition  
featuring images by Alain & Berny Sèbe*

**City of Saint-Lô / 30 June to 30 September 2011**



*A major summer cultural event in the Normandy region (France)*

# The concept

A city: Saint-Lô (Manche department, Normandy, Northern France)

A captivating world: the Sahara

A unique gaze: the artistic vision of

multiple award-winning photographers Alain & Berny Sèbe

who have been travelling the Sahara for 45 years



## The exhibition

83 billboard-size photographs, exhibited outdoors throughout the summer

Three sites: city wall of Saint-Lô, rue Torteron in downtown Saint-Lô and on the buildings of the *Conseil Général de la Manche*

The project builds on the success of the precedent exhibition of the Franco-Iranian photographer Reza in 2009

# City walls of Saint-Lô

5 giant canvas enlargements:

5.60 x 4.20 m., 10.00 x 2.50 m., 5.30 x 4.00 m. et 6.00 x 4.70 m.



## City walls of Saint-Lô (continued)



## A unique encounter

between a city laden with history  
and the **timelessness** of a selection of breathtaking images  
of the **most beautiful desert on Earth**

# Site of the *Conseil Général de la Manche*

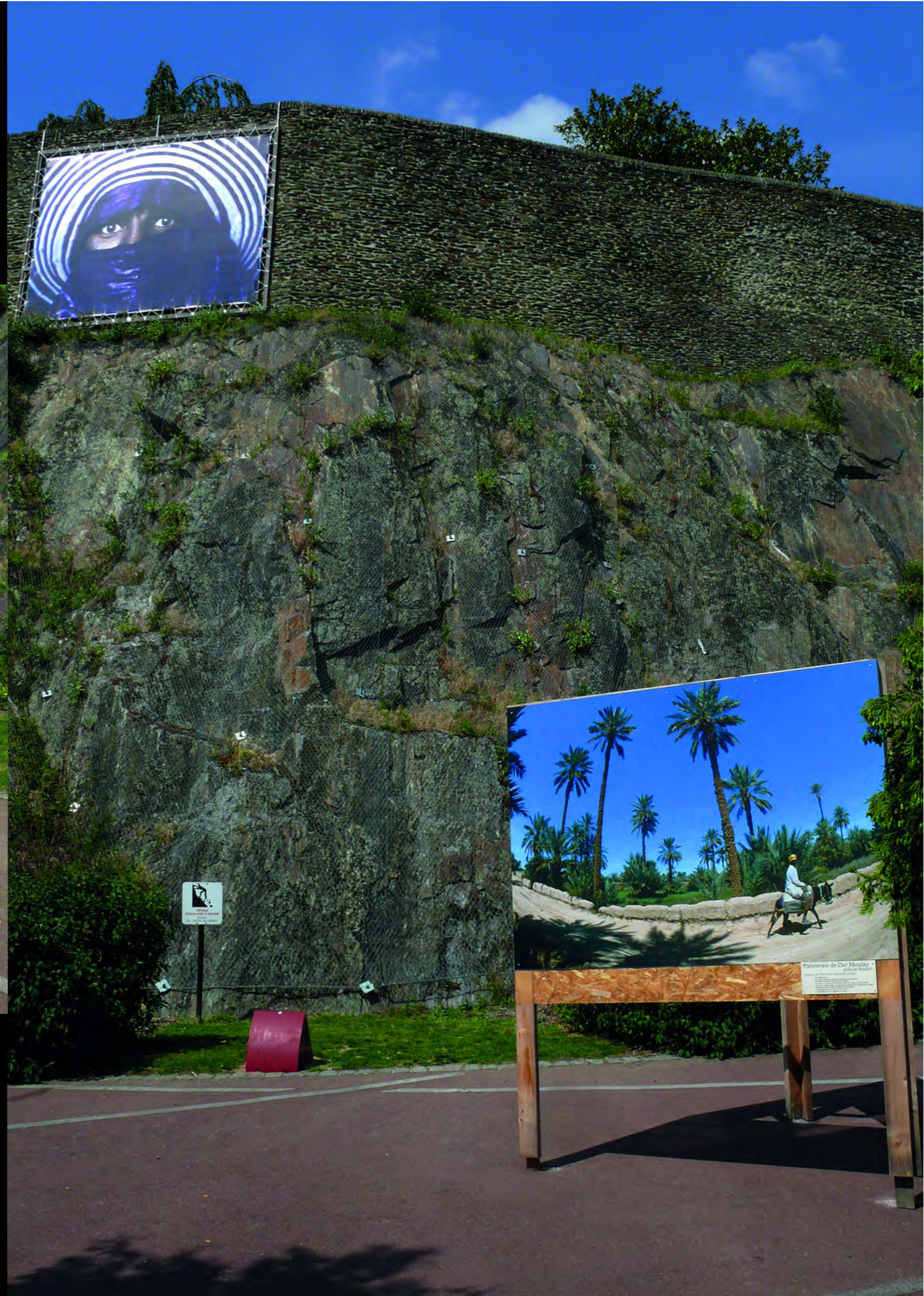
11 giant canvas enlargements: 4.68 x 1.68 m. and 3.00 x 1.80 m.

21 billboard-size enlargements: 1.20 x 1.80 m.



## Street gallery in *Rue Torteron* (Saint-Lô city centre)

46 billboard-size enlargements 1.20 x 1.80 m.



## A journey from the Atlantic to the Nile

At the foot of the city walls, the gardens of the *Rue Torteron* boast over the summer some fifty large-format enlargements that allow passers-by and visitors to follow Alain & Berny Sèbe for a journey from the Atlantic to the Nile.

The exhibition draws upon [their unique photographic collection](#), patiently built over almost fifty years of expeditions to the Sahara.

# Street gallery in Rue Torteron (continued)



## A desert *flânerie* in Normandy

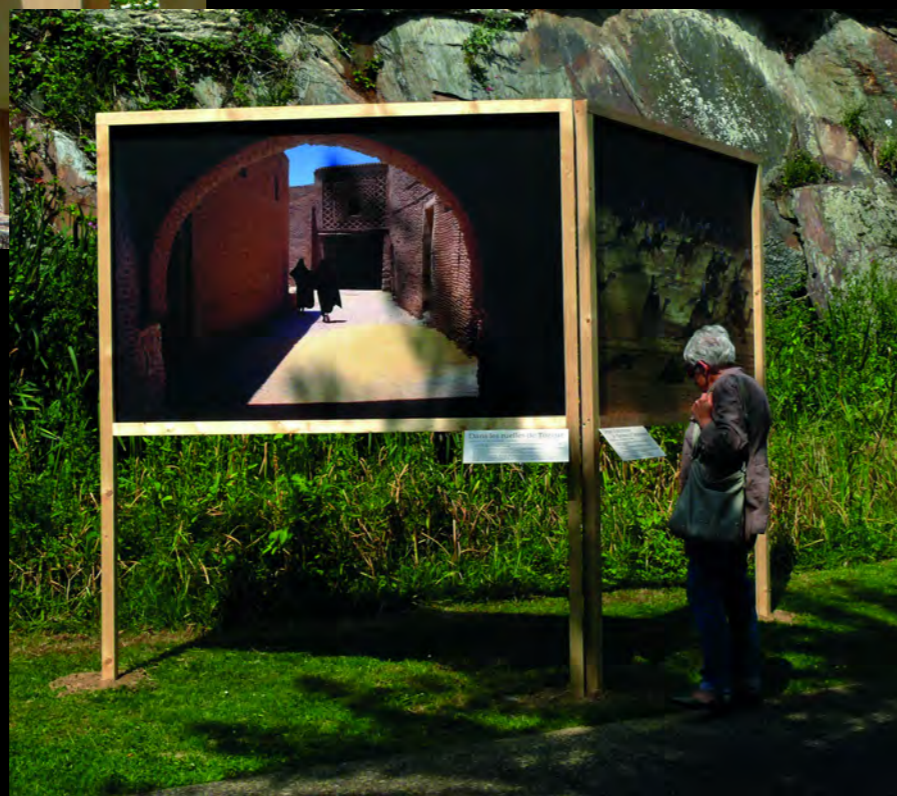
The local public enjoys the photographs and reads the explanations provided in the **detailed captions** which allow the photographers to explain their **unrelenting passion** for the Sahara and its inhabitants since 1966.





## Rhythms

Visitors enjoy the exhibition  
leisurely,  
studiously,  
or even  
from their bicycles!



## Alain & Berny Sèbe : Drawn by the Call of the Desert

For more than 40 years, the life of Alain Sèbe has been shaped by his love for the Sahara. A professional photographer trained at the prestigious photographic school of Vevey (Switzerland), he decided to dedicate his artistic life to the largest and most beautiful desert in the world after he made his first trip there in 1966. He discovered unspoilt oases, pristine landscapes, sharp lights and bright shadows which matched his aesthetic feelings. Between the Sahara and him, it was love at first sight. He befriended Tuareg nomads or oasis-dwellers, learning their way of life, joining them in their everyday life to capture the essence of their existence. He walked endlessly in search for the best angle and light or lived with the nomads to document their traditional way of life, sensing as early as the 1970s that it was threatened by extinction. Besides organising countless month-long camel rides or vehicle-dependent expeditions, he flew over the Sahara in a private plane chartered by the Algerian government and even in balloons as the official photographer of a Jules Verne-style aeronautical trans-Saharan crossing.



Alain soon realised that 'the Sahara [had become] a way of life' for him. He sold his leading photographic lab and studio on the French Riviera, to launch his own desert-focussed publishing house in 1978. His first book *Tagoulmoust, the men of the Veil*, soon translated into German and Italian, was an immediate success and set the trend for large format, high-quality photographic books in Europe. He went on publishing carefully crafted books at a rhythm of little less than one per year, gleaning on the way awards celebrating the quality of his work: his book *Moula-Moula, the Sahara as the crow flies*, published in 1982, obtained the prestigious *Kodak Fotobuchpreis*, while *Issoulane, the Tassili mountains of the Sahara* was awarded the *Vasari* prize by the Paris Town



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Council, and *Tikatoutine, 6000 years of Saharan rock art* obtained the Prix Louis Castex of the French Academy.

The Sahara also weaved the thread of a unique human story for the Sèbes. During his months in the wilderness, Alain was always accompanied by his wife, Chinese-born Mitsou, and their son Berny, also known as 'The Little Prince' in his early years, a reference to his innocent and lively silhouette when he walked on the back of sand dunes. From his first trip as a nine-month old baby, he learnt life through extended contact with the desert and its inhabitants.



The Sahara became a second nature, to such an extent that he did not attend school and opted for



distance learning instead, to gain the freedom to remain constantly on the move while in Africa. Today, having taken part in more than twenty Saharan expeditions, and with a doctorate from Oxford under his belt, he is a Lecturer in Colonial and Postcolonial Studies at the University of Birmingham. Still, he

remains also an active desert photographer.

Alain and Berny combine their talent to provide one of the most extensive depictions of the variety of landscapes, peoples and historical heritage that make the Sahara one of the most fascinating places on Earth. Their archive, which covers 5,000 km from the Atlantic to the Nile along the Tropic of Cancer, includes modern depictions of the Sahara, unique aerial views, as well as rare documents about the bygone era of nomadic ways of life. Not only are their images visually striking, but they also testify an exceptional human adventure spanning more than four decades of an ever-changing desert.

'A remarkable new book explores a father and son's love affair with the Sahara Desert that also inspired a publishing phenomenon'

*Sarah Jackson (Amateur Photographer, UK) about Sahara, The Atlantic to the Nile*



• [www.alainsebeimages.com](http://www.alainsebeimages.com) •



Alain Sèbe

Multiple award-winning photographer Alain Sèbe graduated at the College of Applied Arts in Vevey, Switzerland, in 1961. He then set up a professional studio in Nice, France, and discovered the Sahara desert five years later under the auspices of the Algerian Ministry of Tourism. This commission started his love-affair with the Sahara which has guided his life for more than forty years now. In 1978, he sold his studio to create his own publishing house dedicated to the greatest desert of the world. He has authored some 25 photographic books on the Sahara and its inhabitants, which have sold in total several hundreds of thousands. His photographic archive, which covers Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt, is considered the largest collection of artistic photographs on the subject. His work has been awarded prizes by Kodak Germany, the Council of Paris and the French Academy, among others.

#### Awards

*Aigle d'or* to *Tagoulmoust*, Nice Book Festival (1978).

*Fotobuchpreis* to *Moula-Moula*, Kodak Germany (1982).

*Prix Vasari* to *Issoulane*, Paris City Council (1988).

*Prix Louis Castex* to *Tikatoutine*, French Academy (1992).

*Lumières d'eau* for the entire work of Alain Sèbe, Cannes Water Symposium (2004).

*Bouclier saharien* awarded by *La Rabla, amicale des Sahariens* (French Sahara Club) (2011).



Berny Sèbe (D.Phil Oxon., FRGS)

Berny Sèbe (b. 1978) has been associated to his father's activities since he was a baby. He took his first shots aged 8, and soon found himself addicted to his camera. His involvement in the paternal business increased to such an extent that he became closely associated to every project, while still in his early teens. Considering photography part of his heritage, he graduated in History, Geography and Literature in France, Spain and the UK. Wishing to improve his understanding of the historical roots of the Saharan countries he is in love with, he completed a doctorate in the colonial history of Africa at the University of Oxford. Besides being a photographer, he is also a Lecturer in Colonial and Postcolonial Studies at the University of Birmingham (UK).

## Books by Alain & Berny Sèbe

### In English

*Sahara, The Atlantic to the Nile.* London: Hachette Illustrated, 2003.

### In French

*Lumières de la Saoura.* Paris: Editions Delroisse, 1977.

*Tagoulmoust, Les Gens du voile.* Nice: Editions Alain Sèbe, 1978.

*Moula-Moula, Le Sahara à vol d'oiseau.* Nice, Editions Alain Sèbe, 1981.

*Tagoulmoust, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.* Nice: Editions Alain Sèbe, 1982.

*Le Sahara de Berny.* Le Luc: Editions Alain Sèbe, 1982.

*Kel-Essouf, Le Sahara en montgolfière.* Le Luc: Editions Alain Sèbe, 1984.

*Issoulane, le Sahara des tassilis.* Vidauban: Editions Alain Sèbe, 1987.

*Issoulane, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.* Vidauban: Editions Alain Sèbe, 1988.

*Moula-Moula, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.* Vidauban: Editions Alain Sèbe, 1989.

*Tikatoutine, 6000 ans d'art rupestre saharien.* Vidauban: Editions Alain Sèbe, 1991.

*Une traversée du désert.* Vidauban: Editions Alain Sèbe, 1994.

*En pays touareg.* Vidauban: Editions Alain Sèbe, 1994.

*Touknout, désert intime.* Vidauban: Editions Alain Sèbe, 1996.

*Redjem, Sahara garamante.* Vidauban: Editions Alain Sèbe, 1996.

*Alain Sèbe: L'image du Sahara.* Vidauban: Editions Alain Sèbe, 1999.

*Redjem: Libye des grands espaces.* Vidauban: Editions Alain Sèbe, 2000.

*Brèves de désert.* Annecy: Editions de la Boussole, 2000.

*Saharas, Entre Atlantique et Nil.* Paris: Editions du Chêne, 2001.

*Un œil qui jamais ne se ferme.* Vidauban: Editions Alain Sèbe, 2001.

*Paroles de désert.* Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 2002.

*Saharas d'Algérie: Les paradis inattendus.* Vidauban: Editions Alain Sèbe, 2003.

*Tibesti: Sahara interdit.* Vidauban: Editions Alain Sèbe, 2005.

*Le chameau le plus rapide du désert.* Paris: Editions du Chêne, 2006.

*Le Sahara des tassilis.* Paris: Editions de La Martinière, 2011.

*Sahara au jour le jour.* Paris: Editions de La Martinière, 2011.

### In German

*Tagoulmoust. Die Menschen mit dem Schleier.* Freiburg im Breisgau: Schillinger Verlag, 1982.

*Moula-Moula. Im Vogelflüß über die Sahara.* Freiburg im Breisgau: Schillinger Verlag, 1981.

*Kel-Essouf. Mit dem Heißluftballon über die Sahara.* Freiburg im Breisgau: Schillinger Verlag, 1984.

*Issoulane. Das Tassili-Gebiet der Sahara.* Freiburg im Breisgau: Schillinger Verlag, 1987.

*Tikatoutine. 6000 Jahre Felsbildkunst in der Sahara.* Freiburg im Breisgau: Schillinger Verlag, 1991.

*Touknout. Faszination der algerischen und libyschen Sahara.* Freiburg im Breisgau: Schillinger Verlag, 1996.

*Schafloses Auge.* Basel: Lenos Verlag, 2001.

*Sahara. Unbekannte Sahara von der Atlantik bis zum Nil.* Stuttgart: Besler Verlag, 2003.

### In Italian

*Uomini Blu.* Milan: Bini Editore, 1978.

*Moula-Moula, Il Sahara a volo d'ucello.* Milan: Bini Editore, 1989.

*Tikatoutine, 6000 anni d'arte rupestre sahariana.* Parma: Artegrafica Silva, 1991.

Besides books, Alain Sèbe Images has been publishing a wide range of posters, cards, postcards, greetings cards and stationery since 1978 ([www.alainsebeimages.com](http://www.alainsebeimages.com)).

Alain & Berny Sèbe are also the authors of some fifty calendars, published mainly by Ackermann Kunstverlag (Germany), Editions Phébus and Editions Boissier (France), The Ink Group (Australia, UK) and Magnum publishing (Hong Kong).





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Exposition photographique [GRANDS FORMATS]  
1<sup>er</sup> juillet au 30 septembre 2011



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