

**LABAF**<sup>25</sup>

 **November  
13-19, 2023**

THEME:

# THE RESET:

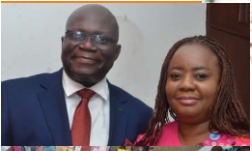
*History and the Darkling Plain*



 **Nov 13-19**

 **9am-10pm (Daily)**

 **Freedom Park,**  
1 Hospital Road, Lagos Island



## LAGOS BOOK & ART FESTIVAL, LABAF 2023

The theme for the 2023 edition is *THE RESET: History and the Darkling Plain*, and it is designed to reflect on the various critical points in the history of Nigeria-and by extension the histories of rest of Africa and the world- through written texts and performances in drama, music, poetry and the visual arts etc . The essence is to mine those lessons in the political and cultural history of the nation to plot a progressive direction for its future, as we settle into, and navigate the constructs of a new political dispensation.

*NB: Please see full narrative on the theme below*

LABAF commenced in 1999, the year of the nation's return to civil rule.

Though a literary feast of ideas and life in outlook, the festival has over the years, metamorphosed to being a Campaign for LITERACY devoted to heightening interest of the populace to be active participants in the knowledge economy that currently rules transactions in global political, economic and cultural affairs. The festival is focused on three thematic elements: EDUCATION. ENLIGHTENMENT. EMPOWERMENT.

LABAF's main programme iterations include:

- Conversations around ideas contained in the books of the festival – relevant to the theme of the festival
  - Readings, Reviews and sessions on Writing and Publishing
  - Exhibitions of Books and Visual Arts
  - Workshops and Mentoring Sessions for young people
  - Performances in Poetry, Drama, Music, Dance etc
  - Arthouse celebrations of eminent artistes and culture workers who have registered their names and footprints in the cause of nation building – the idea is to set them up as role models for both old and young people – to inspire hope, motivate them to aspire to greater accomplishments in their chosen careers or vocation
- Specifically for young people, the festival also stages
- ***Green Festival*** - devoted to students in Junior and Senior Secondary schools. This is in partnership with **Children And The Environment, CATE**.
  - ***CORA Youth Creative Club*** -- which yearly congregate youths and young adults from different parts of the countries for mentoring and training in their natural talents and acquired skills. This is in partnership with **Events By Nature**.

## NARRATIVE ON THE THEME

### *The Reset: History and the Darkling Plain*

With *The Reset*, LABAF continues the debate around the national question through reviews and discussions of selected books that speak to the theme. The basic tenet is that a nation is imagined at the level of ideas, before it is physically constructed.

The conversations at every LABAF since 2005 have been a set of reviews of arguments about the nation building project and the current status of our collective humanity.

LABAF started in 1999, the year of Nigeria's return to democracy, but it was in 2005, at the 7th edition, for which we chose the theme: *Narrations of Survival*, that we began to purposefully set a theme around which the festival-long conversations would coalesce.

In the last five years however, every theme has been a takeoff, or a riff off the prior year's theme.

In 2020, we examined the nation/the world in a state of flux, a period of languor, so the theme was *A State of Flux*.

In 2021, we (the nation/the planet) had left the state of flux, but we were at a crossroad. So, the festival chose: *A Fork in the Road*.

In 2022, we were glimpsing 2023, a year in which we would go for elections. What better way to prepare everyone's mind for the choices to be made at the polls, than examine the kind of future we wanted for ourselves? LABAF's 2022 theme was thus "*Pathways to the Future*".

### 2023...

NOW we have a newly elected government which has taken over an estate nearing a Failed state. The world abroad is in a bigger turmoil than the one that greeted Donald Trump in 2016. To get a grip on how we can reclaim our country, we have to examine where we are coming from.

It is those historical texts that we hope to engage more at the 2023 feast. LABAF 2023 seeks to engage with the past, learn and relearn from it and organize the future. That is why we chose the theme *The Reset: History and the Darkling Plain*.

The word is a much darker plain than Ken Saro-Wiwa glimpsed when he wrote *On A Darkling Plain*, an extended argument against the Biafra war, one of the few texts about the war from the perspective of a minority.

By gifting the festival its theme, the book becomes one of the 15 books of LABAF 2023. Other books that will be discussed in the course of the seven days include



**FICTION:** *SARO*, by Nike Campbell | *Little Suns*, by Zakes Mda | *Dust Child*, by Nguyễn Phan Quế Mai

**NON-FICTION:** *A Measure of Grace*, by Akin Mabogunje | *I'm Still with You*, by Emmanuel Iduma | *Then Spoke the Thunder*, by Peter Enahoro | *The New Map*, by Daniel Yergin | *A Shred of Fear*, by Uche Nwokedi | *An African Abroad*, by Olabisi Ajala | *On a Darkling Plain*, by Ken Saro Wiwa | *My Odyssey*, by Nnamdi Azikiwe | *Formation: The Making of Nigeria from Jihad to Amalgamation*, by Fola Fagbule & Feyi Faweyinmi

**CORA BOOKTrek:** *Obalende: A Nation in Motion*, by Wale Adeduro | *There's a Heaven for Bad Girls*, by Denrele Niyi | *Time & Chance*, by Adebayo Olowoake | and more

\*\*\*\*\*

### **GREEN FESTIVAL (Students & Youths)**

*Native Tales*, by Olamidé Adams | *Cracked*, by Funmi Ilori | *The Green Advocate*, by Alexander Akhigbe | *Bisi Recycle*, by Temiloluwa Adesina | *Captain Excellence and The Great Hall of Knowledge*, by Izehi Anuge | *Mma Made*, by Chinyere Evelyn Ifedora | *Dear Mother*, by Nora Sanya | *How to Talk to Your Child About SEX Without Shame*, by Funmi Alagbe | *The Money People*, by Gbemi Shashore | *The King & the Colony*, by Olasupo Shashore | *Màmá, It's a Girl*, by Stella Damasus | *Not Too Young To Run*, by Ogbu Eme | *NALA - I am Black and Proud*, by Seyi Odewoye | *Better Tomorrow*, by Dotun Famoriyo

\*\*\*\*\*

### **VISUAL ARTS SECTION**

- *Timeless Memories: Elastic Effects 2023 - The Man Who Didn't Die in the Face of Tyranny* -- Conceptual/Installation by **Oludamola Adebowale**
- *Boarding 2023* -- conceptual art by **Dili Humphrey Onuzulike (Junkman)**
- *NOTICE, We are here?* Ceramic exhibition by the Visions in Clay Community of ceramic artists
- **Drawing Attention** – Exhibition by the Cartoonists Association of Nigeria, **CARTAN**
  - *I Am A Fish From the Sea* – Performance art by **Jelili Atiku**
  - Performance art by **Yussuf Durodola & Friends**

*continue'd on page 4*



### ARTHOUSE CELEBRATION

The LABAF is also a platform to celebrate eminent workers in, and patrons of, the culture sector who clock milestone ages of 60s and above. These are people adjudged by the **CORA ThinkTank** to have used their natural and material resources to contribute to the flowering of the creative space. The idea is to set them up as models of emulation for young and old members of the society to find value in contributing selflessly to the growth of the national economy through the creative industries.

## DAY 1: MONDAY NOVEMBER 13 (Youths Day)

### 9am: CORA YOUTH CREATIVE CLUB @The Garden

Workshops, Mentoring and Free expressions by students and young adults begins  
(Produced by **CORA & Events by Nature**)

### 10am: AUTHOR'S SHOWCASE @1<sup>st</sup> Floor: Kongi's Harvest Gallery

US-based poet, playwright and philosopher '**Aiyeko-Ooto Cash Onadele** presents his latest publications and engage audience on his works and thoughts  
(Produced by **Adubiifa Network Company**)

### 2pm: CORA YOUTH ASSEMBLY @CORAVille

Frontline culture advocacy group, the **Committee for Relevant Art, CORA**, runs fully on a tank of youthful energies and resources. Essentially, the young literary-culture activists and intellectuals determine the direction character and contents of the various initiatives of CORA. At this kick-starter Assembly, the youth largely members of the CORA Volunteers Corps, CVC, congregate to explore the theme of the festival in the context of the social-political and cultural happenings in the society. It is the Festival's **PLENARY Kickstarter**

Special Guest Honour: **Chief Josephine Oboh-Macleod**, CEO, *Kakofoni Art Centre*,

Chair: **Dame Taiwo Ajai-Lycett OON**, '*Mama CORA*'

Guest of Honour: **Chief Kayode Aderinokun**, *Chair of CORA Trustees*

Anchor: **Noah Ibitoye**, *CORA Volunteers Corps (CVC)*

Curator: **Segun Aribisala**, *CORA Volunteers Corps (CVC)*

### 4pm: CONVERSATION @Kongi's Harvest Gallery

Author **Aiyeko-Ooto** in interactive session with audience on his writings, society and humanity in general.  
(Produced by **Adubiifa Network Company**)

### 7pm: FILM SCREENING @ FoodCourt

Screening of Documentaries on Nigerian Literature

Special: **LABAF @25: The Journeys so far**

*Light Wining & Dining*



## DAY 2: TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 14 (Visual Arts Day)

**9am: CORA YOUTH CREATIVE CLUB @The Garden**  
Workshops, Mentoring and Free expressions by students and young adults continues  
(Produced by **CORA & Events by Nature**)

**10am: CONVERSATION @CORAville Library& Resource Centre**  
US-based poet, playwright and philosopher 'Aiyeko-Ooto **Cash Onadele** in interactive session with the audience on his writings, society and humanity in general.  
(Produced by **Adubiifa Network Company**)

**11am: SPECIAL PROJECT @ 1<sup>st</sup> floor, Kongi's Harvest Gallery**

Theme: *Celebrating William Yeats*

Event: Public presentation of

*"Things Fall Apart: The Centre Cannot Hold"*

*Exciting modern works by contemporary Irish and*

*Nigerian voices, inspired by WB Yeats' 'A Second Coming'*

Host: **Peter Ryan, Amb. of Embassy of Ireland to Nigeria**

Curator: **Aduke Gomez, Editor of the collection**

(Host: **Embassy of Ireland to Nigeria**)

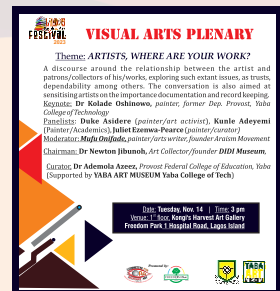


**3pm: VISUAL ARTS PLENARY @Kongi's Harvest Gallery**

Theme: *ARTISTS, WHERE IS YOUR WORK?*

Synopsis: A discourse around the relationship between the artist and patrons/collectors of his/works, exploring such extant issues, as trusts, dependability among others. The conversation is also aimed at sensitising artists on the importance documentation and record keeping.

Keynote: **Dr Kolade Oshinowo, painter, former**  
*Dep. Provost, Yaba College of Technology*





Panelists: **Duke Asidere** (*painter/art activist*) | **Kunle Adeyemi** (*Painter/Academics*) | **Juliet Ezenwa-Pearce** (*painter/curator*)  
Moderator: **Mufu Onifade**, *painter/arts writer, founder Araism Movement*  
Chairman: **Dr Newton Jibunoh**, *Art Collector/founder DIDI Museum*  
Curator, **Dr Ademola Azeez**, *Provost Federal College of Education, Yaba*  
 (Supported by the **Yaba Art Museum, Yaba College of Technology**)

**5pm: FESTIVAL EXHIBITIONS OPEN @ Various Sites**

1. **2.30 pm @FoodCourt**

Title: *Boarding*

Outdoor installation by thejunkmanofafrica

2. **4.30pm: @Kong Harvest's Gallery**

Title: *Drawing Attention*

Exhibition of Political cartoons by the Cartoonists Association of Nigeria, CARTAN

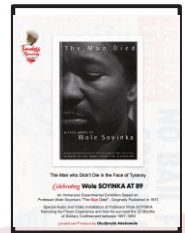


3. **5pm @Ground floor, Kongi's Harvest Gallery**

Title: *Timeless Memories: Elastic Effects 2023 - The Man Who Didn't Die in the Face of Tyranny*

Immersive experimental exhibition on the prison memoirs of Wole Soyinka

Curator: **Oludamola Adebowale**, *director, ASIRI*



4. **5.30pm @Museum Building**

i. *Notice, We are Here*

Exhibition of Ceramics by the **Visions In Clay Collective**



ii.

*Boarding II:*

Conceptual & Installation art by thejunkmanofafrica



5. **6pm @Arena**

Title: *I Am A Fish From The Sea*

*Reading and walking through the minds of political leaders*

Performance art by **Jelili Atiku**



**7pm: JP Clark POETRY NITE @Foodcourt**

An evening of poetic flights in written and performance mode dedicated to the memory of the preeminent poet, **John Pepper Clark- Bekederemo**

Theme: *POETIC FLIGHTS FOR THE 'MERCHANT OF POETRY'*

Feature: CORA celebrates and honours the contribution of **ERIATA ORIBHABOR**, founder of the **Poets in Nigeria (PIN) Initiative** and other projects “on his attainment of the Diamond age. Fondly called “Merchant of Poetry”, Oribhabor has through sheer passion, commitment to a vision, and personal investments created a national community/movement of young poetry “warriors” – thus helping to secure the future of the literary genre in the cause of nation-building  
Chairman: **OmoOba Yemisi Shyllon, Patron, PIN**



**8.30pm: PERFORMANCE @ FoodCourt**

Title: *Oga Dem Plenty*

Dramatisation of Oribhabor's prose work in Pidgin -- depicting the horror of soldiers' lives in the jungle fighting against insurgents. The performance, a monologue by **Oko Owi Ocho Afrika** is a poetic potpourri with songs and dramatic rendition.

NB: Cocktail of Palmwining & Snacking



## DAY 3: WED NOVEMBER 15 (Readers Day)

9am: CORA YOUTH CREATIVE CLUB @GreenGarden  
Workshops, Mentoring and Free expressions by students and young adults  
(Produced by CORA & Events by Nature)

2 pm: SPECIAL EXHIBITION PROJECT @ Esther's Revenge  
Theme: Connecting the Past, Present & Future

Archivist-culture activist **Oludamola Adebowale** presents his latest project *The 1851 Agidingbi Chase Game*. The immersive exhibition brings the audience into encounter with a significant bit of history of colonial Lagos and Nigeria. *The 1851 Agidingbi Chase Game* takes chess enthusiasts, history buffs, and gamers on a riveting adventure, based on the historical events surrounding the history of Lagos in 1851. This period marked a significant turning point in the history of Lagos, and the game seeks to educate, entertain, and challenge players through the intriguing backdrop of this tumultuous year.

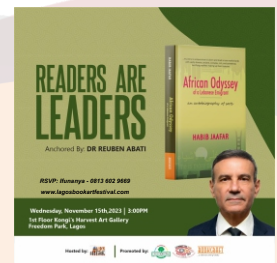


2.30 pm: READERS' FORUM @ 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Kongi's Harvest Gallery  
Formal conferment of award to the winner of the inaugural *LABAF -The Book Critic's Award*  
Guest of Honour: Odiá Ofeimun, poet, essayist, polemicist

3 pm: CONVERSATION @1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Kongi's Harvest Gallery  
Theme: LEADERS ARE READERS: WHY I READ WHAT I READ

Synopsis: A notable Business Leader in Nigeria's economic space, shares his Literary taste and preferences with the audience.

Feature: Author of *African Odyssey of a Lebanese Immigrant*, **Habib Jafaar**, in conversation with the journalist-writer- public intellectual, **Dr Reuben Abati**.  
(Produced by CORA with support of **BookCraft Africa**)



### 5pm: BOOKTREK (1) @CORAVille

The CORA BOOKTrek is a focal project of the **Committee for Relevant Art (CORA)** that features book reviews and readings by some of Africa's most engaging literary writers. It is part of CORA's extension services to promoting READING CULTURE, deepening LITERARY APPRECIATION and AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT with the published text, as well as spreading campaign for LITERACY towards boosting citizens' EDUCATION, ENLIGHTENMENT and EMPOWERMENT, ostensibly to achieve CORA's fundamental mission of building HUMAN CAPITAL capacity of the nation and the continent.

In the first BookTrek for the LABAF 2023, two authors engage the audience on the contents of their books:

- i. 2WHYT Gbedu Poet: *Usokun Boy* (2023)
- ii. Joshua Omeke: *Joe's Collectanea* (2023)

Special Feature: Masterclass for young writers on developing skills for literary career by Joshua Omeke

### 6pm: PERFORMANCE ART @ FoodCourt

Title: MAAMI DEH CHOP AKARA –

performance by **Olufela Omokeko**

Inspired by Ben Okri's work – *Food, Ritual and Death* - and the utilisation of the bean cake as a point of departure from the earth. It involves the audience joining the artist to partake of the ritual of baking and frying 'akara' for communal feasting.

Curator: Yusuf Durodola of YD Studios



### 7pm: THEATRE @FoodCourt

Presentation of a series of drama and dance skits in the democratic journeys of Nigeria since 199 till date.

Special: Invoking the memories of performing artists who have used their talents and resources to capture the stories of Nigeria in their works at various times.

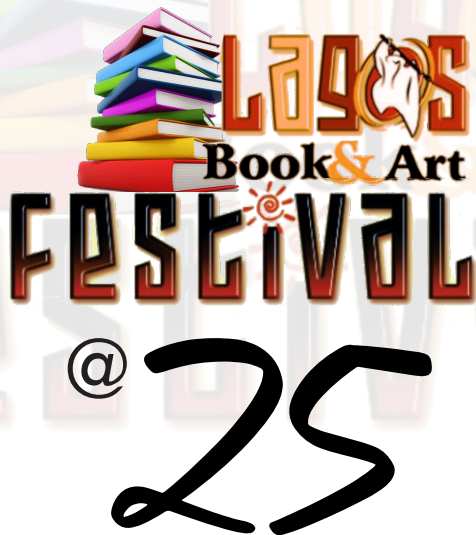
### 9pm: MUSIC IN THE PARK @ FoodCourt

Theme: TRIPPIN' BACK ON WINGS OF TUNES

**DJ Bola Browne** takes the festivalia on a trip with Ol'Skool tunes carefully curated to trace the fascinating history of Nigerian music.







*Inaugurates*

**Library  
&  
Resource Centre**

*Friday, Nov. 17, 2023*

@ CORAVille,  
Freedom Park, Lagos Island



# The CORA LIBRARY & RESOURCE CENTRE

CORAVille  
Freedom Park

On occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its flagship programme, *Lagos Book & Art Festival, LABAF*, the CORA inaugurates its **Library & Resource Centre**. Located in named **CORAVille** -- a section of the monumental space for creative production and expression, **Freedom Park**, the CORA L&RC is expected to serve the interest of the general public, in particular students and youths.

The intention is to continue to encourage the citizenry to see **EDUCATION** as the singular key to **ENLIGHTENMENT** and **EMPOWERMENT** – all in the cause of **Nation-Building** and **Human Capital Development**.

The Library will hold regular literary activities, especially the flagship **CORA BOOKTrek**, the Literacy Campaign project, which brings authors into direct encounters with readers of their works.

The LR &C will also stage regular programmes on such key literacy-improvement engagements as workshops and seminars on writing, reading, speechmaking among others. It will be a home to fellow artists organisations committed to deepening **LITERACY** in the national consciousness.

The Project enjoys the benevolence of several organisations notable **Freedom Park**, **Chief Kayode Aderinokun** (Chair CORA Trustee), the esteemed CORA Board members, subscribers and volunteers, and, especially the support of **Hawthorden Foundation**. Essentially, it benefits from donations by authors, publishers, bookstores, and members of the public in general.

For enquiries: Please contact: [coralibrary@gmail.com](mailto:coralibrary@gmail.com)/[info@coraratfoundation.com](mailto:info@coraratfoundation.com)  
Tel: 08136029669



# READERS *are* LEADERS

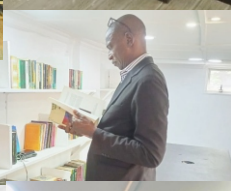
*respect their space*



## Library & Resource Centre

C/o Freedom Park, 1 Hospital Road,  
by Broad Street, Lagos Island  
Phone: +234 813 602 9669

[www.lagosbookartfestival.org](http://www.lagosbookartfestival.org)   [coralabaf@gmail.com](mailto:coralabaf@gmail.com)   [@labaf1](https://twitter.com/labaf1)   [labaf1](https://www.facebook.com/LagosBookArtFestival)   [facebook.com/LagosBookArtFestival](https://www.facebook.com/LagosBookArtFestival)



## DAY 4: THURSDAY NOVEMBER 16

### (Literacy Day)

**9am: CORA YOUTH CREATIVE CLUB** continues @GreenGarden Workshops, Mentoring and Free expressions by students and young adults  
(Produced by CORA & Events by Nature)

**10am: PUBLISHERS' FORUM @ 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Kongi's Harvest Gallery**  
(In association with Network of Reading Clubs of Nigeria)  
(In honour of Mrs. Gbemi Shasore @ 60)

**Theme:** *The Nigerian Books Ecosystem: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow*

**10am: Opening Remarks:**

Mrs Gbemi Shasore, CEO Quramo Books/Founder Q Festival of Words



**10:15 am-11.30am: First panel**

Topic: *Artificial Intelligence: Thrills and Perils: A Publishing Industry perspective*

**Panelists:**

Eghosa Imasuen | Nkem Osuigwe | Adachukwu Onwudiwe

Moderator: Fred Chiagozie Nwonwu

**11.30-1.00pm: Second Panel**

Topic: *From Ife till Today: Nigeria's Book Fairs, Festivals and the Reading Culture*

**Panelists:**

Dapo Adeniyi | Adegbola Adesina | Abiodun Omotubi  
| Olatoun Gabi-Williams

Moderator: Uzezi Ekere Adesite

**1.00pm-230pm: Third Panel**

Topic: *Winning with Book Publishing and Marketing: An Insider's lens*  
(Running successfully. Achieving goals. Rising above limitations.  
Tapping opportunities and advantages....)





Panelists:

**Dotun Eyinade | Awele Ilusanmi | Yomi Ogunlari | Mike Ekunno**  
Moderator: **Funmi Ilori**

**2.30pm-3.30pm: Fourth Session**

Topic: *The Guinness World Record and the Reading Culture in Nigeria.*

Featuring:

**Bayode Treasures Olawumi (GWR2018) | John Obot (GWR2023)**  
in conversation with **Amara Chimeka**

----- *Publishers-Readers' Forum ends* -----

**2pm: CAPACITY BUILDING @CORAVille**

Event: *Workshop on Arts Reporting/Art Criticism*

Designed to introduce participants to the rudiments of art reporting and criticism. The ideal participants will have a passion for -- and interest in -- the creative arts, including (but not limited to): visual arts, literature, stage performance, dance, festivals, fashion, exhibitions, and museums, music, etc.

Participants are between the ages of 18 and 30.

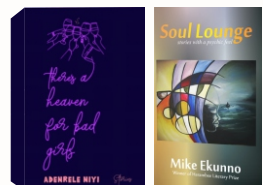


**3pm: BOOKTREK (2) @CORA Library & Resource Centre**

Synopsis: The CORA Book Trek is a focal project of the CORA that features the work by some of Africa's most engaging literary writers. The idea is to bring sharper focus and attention to new titles to enable the audience engage the contents and have opportunity to debrief or interact with the authors. In particular, this iteration of the BookTrek focuses on two newly published short story books that engage different themes dealing with lives of the ordinary folks.

Features: Readings, reviews and discussions around

- i. **Denrele Niyi: *There's a Heaven for Bad Girls***
- ii. **Mike Ekunno: *Soul Lounge***



## **5pm: ARTHOUSE FORUM @Kongi's Harvest Gallery**

**Theme: THE STORYTELLER AS EVANGELIST OF**

### **CULTURAL RECENTERING: A celebration of Femi Odugbemi @60**

**Synopsis:** CORA celebrates and honours the quintessential Storyteller and Content Producer, FEMI ODUGBEMI, who clocked the diamond age of 60 in May 2023. Through his well-applauded and travelled body of work Odugbemi has shown how the Film medium, especially the documentary format, could help to deepen the spread of LITERACY among the citizenry, and as well help to increase in effect, bolster Human Capital Development in the course of Nation-building. Odugbemi has been a consistent advocate for African storytelling to be authentic in content and context; to dig deeper into the cultural environment from which they are produced, and in which they are first consumed before they become global products. His argument segued in to the critical conviction that an artist or creative producer must be conscious of the cultural and environmental universe of his/her work to gain relevance and acceptability in the global market. His argument challenges the nature, texture and character of the SCRIPTING and NARRATIVE content, form, style and technique of the extant Nigerian movie system dubbed christened NOLLYWOOD.

**Event Structure:** The session is divided into three:

#### **1. 5pm: SEMINAR:**

A panel discussion on challenges of SCRIPTING that is critically viewed as the existential problem of Nollywood. Panelists, comprising scriptwriters, directors, producers, critics and viewers will examine the issue of scripting from diverse angles

#### **2. 7pm: FILM SCREENING**

Showcase of some of selected films of the honoree Odugbemi's films:

- *Ibadan – Cradle of Literati* -- 2009
- *Oriki* – 2008
- *Bariga Boys* – 2009
- *Fagunwa: Literature, Language, and Literalism*; 2016

#### **3. 9pm: PROFILING**

Screening of the interview documentary:

*Femi Odugbemi: On The Shoulders of Giants, by Toyin Akinosho*

Followed by Q&A with the quintessential Storyteller



## DAY 5: FRIDAY NOVEMBER 17

### (Ideas Day)

#### 9am: GREEN FESTIVAL 18 @The Garden

The *Green Festival* is LABAF's gift to the children and youths of Nigeria to ensure that they become active participants in the conversations shaping their environment and country. It is an initiative of CATE (**Children and the Environment**), frontline child-friendly non-profit organisation led by **Adesola Alamutu** (aka **Green Queen**), who has spent her entire career inculcating the virtues of protection of the environment in the young ones. Now in its 18<sup>th</sup> season, the Green Festival will this year feature 18 authors -- some of them children writers, and those who write for young readers).

Aside reading and mentoring on writing and creating artworks, the session will feature creative workshops and expressions by scores of pupils/students drawn from schools around Lagos.



#### 11am: MENTORING @The Garden

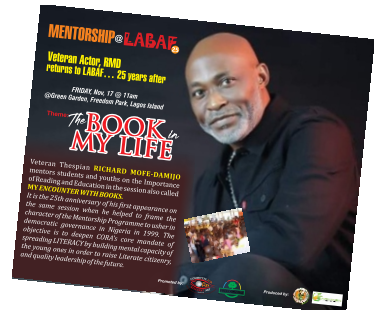
Theme: THE BOOK IN MY LIFE

Synopsis: A well-known cerebral celebrity, public intellectual /actor/writer/filmmaker, etc, mentors students on the importance of reading and education to career and character shaping. The session, also called *MY ENCOUNTER WITH BOOK*, is CORA's idea of boosting mental capacitation of the young ones in the context of human capital development, towards nation-building.

Guest of Honour: Richard Mofe-Damijo, RMD, the quintessential actor, journalist, writer and media personality.

(NB: It is 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his first appearance on same programme in 1999)

Special Guest: Obari Gomba winner of the 2023 Nigeria Prize for Literature, NPL



#### 1pm: COLLOQUIUM (1) @Kongi Harvest's Gallery

Festival Theme: The Reset: History & The Darkling Plain

Keynote: Obari Gomba, Ph.D, Deputy Dean of Faculty of Art, University of P/ Harcourt, Honorary Fellow in Writing of Univ. of Iowa (USA), winner Nigeria Prize for Literature 2023.

Chair: Femi Osofisan, playwright/poet, Emeritus Professor, University of Ibadan

### 2.30pm: OPENING CORA LIBRARY & RESOURCE CENTRE @ CORAVille

On occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of LABAF, the CORA inaugurates its **Library & Resource Centre**, located in **CORAVille** -- a section of the Freedom Park, the monumental art space. The CORA L&RC is expected to serve the interest of the general public, in particular students and youths. The intention is to continue to encourage the citizenry to see EDUCATION as the singular key to ENLIGHTENMENT and EMPOWERMENT – all in the cause of **Nation-Building** and **Human Capital Development**. The Library will hold regular literary activities, especially the flagship *CORA BOOKTrek*, the Literacy Campaign project, which brings authors into direct encounters with readers of their works. The Project enjoys the benevolence of several organisations notable **Freedom Park**, **Chief Kayode Aderinokun** (Chair CORA Trustee), the esteemed CORA Board members, and support of Hawthorden Foundation. Essentially, it benefits from donations by authors, publishers, bookstores, and members of the public in general.

### 3pm: SYMPOSIUM (1) @Kongi's Harvest Art Gallery

Theme: *Was there ever a Glorious Moment in our Postcolonial History?*

Reading and conversations around

- Peter Enahoro: *Then Spoke The Thunder*
- Akin Mabogunje: *A Measure of Grace*



Moderator: **Kunle Ajibade**, *writer/journalist, Exec. Editor, The News*

As we determine to use history as a guide to reset the path to greatness of our country, we have selected two books written by Nigerians born in the 1930s, who came of age as the ferment for independence was in full swing, had distinguished careers in the early decades after the lowering of the Union Jack and settled into fully, highly productive citizens in the three decades afterwards.



#### 4pm: JOY OF READING @The Garden

##### Concept: ABE-IGI... The Act

The event is curated in the format of theatrical agit-prop – which means that the reading and conversations can happen in unusual spaces. This maiden edition features 'Sixty Percent of a True Story' by

'*Sixty Percent of a True Story*' follows three undergraduates, Osisiye, Korede, and Chris, as they navigate the challenges of university life in Lagos, Nigeria. Osisiye dreams of high grades, while Korede is a depressive introvert. Chris, an internet fraudster, is a staple in Nigeria's urban lore. The story explores personal choices, societal expectations, and the complexities of Lagos.

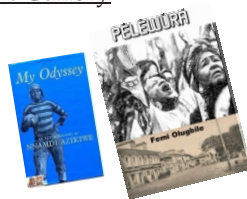
(Curated by **Lucia Ikediashi** for **Shimmers & CORA**)

#### 4.30 pm: COLLOQUIUM (2) @Kongi's Harvest Art Gallery

##### Theme: The Future Glimpsed in the Past

##### Reading and conversations around

- Nnamdi Azikiwe: *My Odyssey*
- Femi Olugbile: *PELEWURA*



What would history, as we know it, be without the cult of the personality? In the Festival's choice of historical texts as tools to examine how the Nigerian state can reset its governance machinery to serve the people better, we have chosen to engage with the sagas of two individuals, preferably non-monarchical, who championed rights of the people in different ways. Their stories offer us different compasses to navigate how constructs of statehood should have, or not have been.

Pelewura was the first Iyaloja of Lagos. In telling her story in factional form, the author Femi Olugbile weaves a fascinating narrative of colonial Lagos, Nnamdi Azikiwe's transverses were more of a global nature; including the Gold Coast, the United Kingdom, the United States, before returning to Nigeria to play a key role in the independence movement.

From the history and herstory, we ask a simple question: How differently could it all have turned out? What alternative future can we extract from these trajectories?

**5.30 pm: BOOKTREK (3) @CORAVille**

Event: Authors Assembly

Feature three authors:

- Wale Adeduro: *Obalende: A Nation in Motion*
- Bayo OlowoAke: *Time & Change*



**6.30 pm: KEN SARO WIWA PRIZE FOR REVIEW....**

Event: Unveiling KS-W Competition winner

*Synopsis:* Dedicated to celebration of the life and career of the famous writer and environmentalist, **Ken Saro-Wiwa**, who was killed by the Nigeria State on November 10, 1995, the Prize is designed to encourage reading and engagement of the published text, which is in tandem with the core objective of the CORA and its prime project, the LABAF. prize project was launched in 2015 on occasion of the 17th LABAF, which was dedicated to mark the 20th anniversary of the state killing of Saro-Wiwa, himself a keen observer, commentator, and critic of the quality of literature being produced in the country in his time.

Guest of Honour: *Obari Gomba, PhD, winner of the*

*2023 Nigeria Prize for Literature*

**7 pm: LABAF JAMS @FoodCourt**

Theme: Dancing New in Old Tunes

**Gerard Eze Oja Flute n' 4**

**DJ Browne** in afro-fusion, highlife and jazz conversation



## DAY 6: SATURDAY NOVEMBER 18 (Culture Icons Day)

### 9am: GREEN FESTIVAL @ The Garden

The session will feature creative workshops and expressions by scores of pupils/students drawn from schools around Lagos.

### 11am: MENTORSHIP @ The Garden

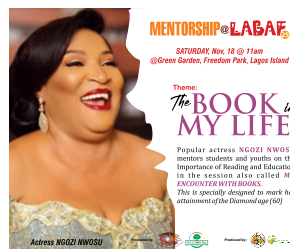
Theme: THE BOOK IN MY LIFE

Synopsis: A well-known cerebral celebrity, public intellectual /actor/writer/filmmaker, etc, mentors students on importance of reading and education. Session is also called *MY ENCOUNTER WITH BOOK*. It is CORA's idea of mental capacitation of the young ones in the context of human capital development, towards Nation building.

Guest of Honour: Ngozi Nwosu, the veteran actress, and matronly media personality

*(This is an extension of celebration of her attaining the Diamond age of 60)*

Special Guest: Obari Gomba Professor of English, winner of the 2023 Nigeria Prize for Literature, NPL



### 1.30pm: COLLOQUIUM @ Kongi's Harvest Gallery

Theme: Biafran Narratives: War without End

Reading and conversations around

i. Ken Saro Wiwa: *On a Darkling Plain*;

ii. Max Siollun: *Oil, Politics & Violence: Nigeria's Military Coup Culture, 1966 -1976)*

The Nigerian civil war has remained, stubbornly, the most defining episode in the shaping of Nigeria's postcolonial history. Its textual narratives-direct and derived-constitute, perhaps, the largest group of literary material in the country's modern historical library. The trauma and scars of the three-year war fought in the 1960s, define Nigerian politics till this day and was effectively the back drop against which the last elections to the national offices were fought. A Nigerian literary festival which uses history as the peg for its main discourses cannot disclaim a robust discussion of the *raison d'être* for the hostilities



### 3.00pm: AUTHOR'S ASSEMBLY @CORAVille

Event: Authors of books that have featured in past CORA's *Community Literacy Outreach* engagement are presented to new audiences attending the festival. Here the contents of the book is further exposed to the general public.

Reading and conversations around

- i. Dotun Famoriyo: *Better Tomorrow*
- ii. Nora Sanya: *Dear Mother*



### 4.00pm: SEMINAR @CORAVille

Theme: *A Fourth Generation of Nigerian Writers? Trends and Times*

Several discourses have arisen in recent times concerning the trends and issues of contemporary Nigerian literature. Some observers note that Nigerian writing has deviated from the marks set by the Soyinka, Achebe to Osundare, Ofeimun, and Ojaide generation. This conversation is still ongoing on social media platforms but has not been engaged in any physical event in the country.

The session will feature both physical and virtual sessions, have contemporary young writers from all over the country engage on the trends of their time, their scope and aesthetic rupture.

Moderator: **Oko Owi Ocho**

### 5pm: BOOKTREK (3) @CORAVille

The CORA Book Trek is CORA's extension services to promoting READING CULTURE, deepening LITERARY APPRECIATION and AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT with the published text, as well as spreading campaign for LITERACY towards boosting citizens' EDUCATION, ENLIGHTENMENT and EMPOWERMENT, ostensibly to achieve CORA's fundamental mission of building HUMAN CAPITAL capacity of the nation and the continent.

In the second BookTrek for the LABAF 2023, two authors engage the audience on the contents of their books:

Featuring authors:

- i. Aaze Tom Adaba: *But For God*
- ii. Vincent Osatohan Azeta: *The Mercy Streak*



### 3.30pm: COLLOQUIUM @Kongi's Harvest Art Gallery

Theme: *Revisiting the Future in the Past: Biafran Narratives*

Reading and Discussions around:

- i. Uche Nwokedi: *A Shred of Fear*
- ii. Emmanuel Iduma: *I am Still with You*





Can personal stories of loss unleash the collective empathy of compatriots from across the nation in ways that textual engagements with the purpose and conduct of the war by generals, politicians, even novelists cannot? How do individual journeys into the familial and communal experiences of the Biafran war help the purpose of a national reset?

### **5pm: AUTHORHOUSE CONVERSATION @Kongi's Harvest art Gallery**

**Event:** The Memoirs Session

**Theme:** *Is the Future Bound to The Past?*

iii. Jide Ajide, John Ashima, Oluwole Agunbiade:

*No Good Deed Goes Unpunished*

iv. Simon Kolawole: *Fellow Nigerians It's All Politics*



### **8pm THE FESTIVAL PARTY @ FoodCourt**

Event: An arthouse party celebrating landmark birthdays of distinguished contributors to the *Nigerian Cultural Life*

The LABAF is also a platform to celebrate eminent workers in, and patrons of the culture sector who clock milestone ages of 60s and above. These are people adjudged by the **CORA ThinkTank** to have used their natural and material resources to contribute to the flowering of the creative space. The idea is to set them up as models of emulation for young and old members of the society to find value in contributing selflessly to the growth the of the national economy through the creative industries.

### **9 pm: DRAMA @FoodCourt/Amphitheatre**

(To be confirmed)

## DAY 7: SUNDAY NOVEMBER 19 (Advocacy Day)

### 11am: FILM SCREENING @Kongi's Harvest Gallery

Theme: *A Trip to the past...*

Title: *Lagos The Birth of a City of Style 1861 – 1967*

The documentary celebrates the *avant-garde* spirit of an enigmatic, iconic city, spanning its journey from a small uninhabited farm of the Awori people, through its metamorphosis as a small trading centre and seaport, and on to its stellar status as the much sought-after pearl of the Colonial powers, and into its present status as a vibrant, prosperous, energetic economic and cultural powerhouse.

Directors: **Emeka Ed Keazor & Muni King-Keazor**

Executive Producers: **Ugoma Adegoke and Bloom Art**



### 1pm: SEMINAR @Kongi's Harvest Gallery

Screening of documentary on the journeys of the CORA & LABAF.

Followed by reviews of the 25<sup>th</sup> edition by members of the CORA Volunteers Corps

Anchor: **Segun Aribisala**

### 2pm: BOOKTREK @Kongi's Harvest Gallery

Event: **CORA VOLUNTEERS' CORPS Converge**

Theme: *Contemplating the Future*

The young literary-culture activists and intellectuals that constitute the **CORA Volunteers Corps, CVC**, engage texts that discourse prospects of Nigeria's future.

Featured Texts:

- i. *Sycamore*, by **Betty Zainab**
- ii. *The Sun Shall Soon Shine*,  
by **Adejoke Ajibade--Bakare**



### 3pm: SEMINAR @Kongi's Harvest Gallery

Theme: *From History to Here: Birth by LABAF*

**Oko Owi Ocho, Kemi Bakare, and Kiki** -- three writers and resource persons who attended LABAF as teenagers and were inspired by the different activities reflect on how the festival has impacted their lives and careers. It is a 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary special tribute to the LABAF.

**4.30m SEMINAR @Kongi's Harvest**

Theme: **Keys to the Knowledge Economy**

Readings and discussions around:

Lawson Omokhodion: *Powered by Poverty: a story of adversity, ambition, diligence and triumph*

**5:30pm: ART STAMPEDE @FoodCourt**

Theme: **Memo to the Ministry of Arts, Culture & Creative Economy**

Stakeholders in the Culture sector dissect the current state of the Nigerian creative economy sector; offer blueprints on how the sector could tap into local and global resources to maximize gains and opportunities.

Featuring: Heads of Artists organisations, guilds, cohorts, advocates and activists. It is the Festival's PLENARY Wrap-up.

**8pm: FESTIVAL WRAPS @ FoodCourt**

LABAF 25.0 strolls into history on the wings of poetry.

The 2024 season begins with announcement of date and theme for next edition

The last dance by CVC

-----LABAF adjourns to 2024-----



## About CORA

**M**ISSION: *To Create Enabling Environment for the Flourishing of the Contemporary Arts of Nigeria & the Continent.*

VISION: *To Make Art & Culture the Prime Destination for Investment in Nigeria and Africa.*

DEFINITION: *We Are 'Cultural Landscapists.'*

**CORA is the Winner of the Prince Claus Award, 2006.**

**History:** The **Committee for Relevant Art (CORA)** came to life on June 2, 1991. It's a culture activist organisation with the agenda to facilitate creation of an enabling environment for the flourishing of the contemporary arts of Nigeria, in the forms of Literature, Theatre, Fine Art, Music, Movie as well as TV Programme Design and Production.

In the past three decades, CORA has been at the forefront of championing the major issues that have shaped – directly or otherwise – the cultural landscape of Nigeria. Some of the most forward-looking initiatives in the Nigerian culture environment came out of CORA-organised fora.

CORA has carried out its intermediation role through the vehicle of its various programmes, projects and activities including the following:

- **ARTS STAMPEDE** (quarterly since 1991)
- **LABAF** (annually since 1999)
- **BOOKTREK**
- **ARTHOUSE FORUM** (periodic since 2005)
- **LAGOS CINEMA CARNIVAL** (on rest)
- **LAGOS THE CITY ARTS GUIDE** (on rest)

CORA also convenes regular sessions of *Lagos Circle of Critics; Culture Working Committee; Lagos Peppersoup Elites; Coalition of Nigerian Artists, CONA* etc – these are special purpose vehicles (SPV) through which it accomplishes its broader objectives.

CORA is in relationship with Artists organisations/Associations and

agencies within the culture bureaucracies; and periodically stages collaborative projects with these institutions.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **ABOUT LABAF**

**L**AUNCHED in September 1999, LABAF is a 25-year-old comprehensive week-long culture picnic. It features reading sessions, conversations around 'content and context of books', art and craft displays, children/students art workshops, Publishers-Booksellers-Writers-Readers' Forum, Writers' workshops, Book Trek, Book exhibitions, Drama skits, Live music, Poetry and Dance performances.

It is an ART festival with high BOOK content.

LABAF has over the years transformed from a Literary Festival to being a campaign for **LITERACY** – stressing on **EDUCATION** (knowledge acquisition which leads to mental capacitation), that guarantees **ENLIGHTENMENT** and ultimately leads to **EMPOWERMENT** that ensures active participation of the citizenry in discourses around the social, political, economic and cultural affairs of the nation, and the world by extension.

All of this is premised on tapping into the instrumentality of **ARTS** and **CULTURE** production and expression to deepen **CIVIC** engagement.

To this effect, the programming content at LABAF goes beyond creative writings and arts/craft materials to embrace non-fiction and other such cultural projects relevant to the theme of each edition.

LABAF in past decade and half has also gradually rebranded from being a project solely organised by **CORA**, to becoming a platform for other content producers to stage their events, or accomplish their projects. These are branded **Partners**, or **Collaborators**. Hence most of the events listed in the programme outline are by other producers who use the LABAF platform.

In fulfilment of **CORA**'s desire, many other festivals – literary and cultural – have also grown out of the LABAF platform and flowering in their own distinct form and character, but essentially using the LABAF's template of committed and resilient operations to stay the course. This is thus fulfilling the **CORA** oft-expressed dream of ultimately having a culture festival in every city of the country and Africa, by extension.

**Toyin Akinosho**  
Secretary General

**Jahman Anikulapo**  
Prog Chair




  
**PROGRAMME OF EVENTS- DAY2**
  
 SAT NOVEMBER 18
   
**DRESS CODE- TOUCH OF GREEN**
  
**ARRIVAL -9AM**





9:45am-10:45am  
**GREEN PERFORMANCES**  
(Produced by CATE/Events by Nature)



11:00am-12:30pm  
**THE BOOK IN MY LIFE**  
Special Green Guest:  
**Veteran Stage & Screen actress Ngozi Nwosu**  
mentors children on the importance of reading and Education  
(Produced by CATE/CORA/Events by Nature)



1:00pm-2:00pm  
**GREEN LEADERS - leadership series**  
(Produced by CATE/Readland)

11:45am-10:45am  
**TALKING BOOKS WITH CATE**  
NURSERY/LOWER PRIMARY PUPILS ONLY  
Reading & Discussions around selected Children's Books  
(Produced by CATE/CORA)

2:30pm-4:00pm  
**RECYCLING AND UPCYCLING WORKSHOPS**  
(Produced by House of Phoebe/ Beach Samaritans/Susty Vibes)

2:30pm-4:00pm  
**GREEN TALKSHOP**  
Gen Z discuss How To Talk To Your Child About Sex Without Shame  
(Produced by CATE/ JABEZ place / TOT)

1:00pm-2:00pm  
**TALKING BOOKS WITH CATE**  
Reading & Discussions around selected books  
(Produced by CATE/CORA)


  
**CULTURE APPRECIATION DAY (DAY1)**
  
**DATE- FRI NOVEMBER, 17**
  
**DRESS CODE-TRADITIONAL**
  
**ARRIVAL -8:45 AM**





9:00am-9:35am  
**GREEN PERFORMANCES**  
(Produced by CATE/Events by Nature)



9:45am-10:45am  
**GREEN SPELLERS CONTEST**  
A unique Spelling Competition based on History and the Environment  
(Produced by CATE/CORA/IREAD)



11:00am-12:30pm  
**GREEN SPELLERS CONTEST- Cont'd**  
(Produced by CATE/Readland)

9:45am-10:45am  
**TALKING BOOKS WITH CATE**  
Reading & Discussions around selected books  
(Produced by CATE/CORA)

11:00am-12:30pm  
**THE BOOK IN MY LIFE**  
Special Green Guest:  
**Veteran Thespian Richard Mofa-Damijo, RMD**  
mentors children on the importance of reading and Education  
(Produced by CATE/CORA/Events by Nature)

12:30pm-1:30pm  
**TALKING BOOKS WITH CATE**  
Reading & Discussions around selected children's books  
(Produced by CATE/CORA)



...helping to build a  
**better NIGERIA**



**38KM**

**BONNYBODO ROAD**  
One of the biggest CSR infrastructure project in Nigeria, initiated by NLNG to link Bonny Island to the mainland

**8,997+**

Enrollees in the Bonny Community Health Insurance programme (BCHIP)

**12**

Tertiary Health Institutions: Construction and equipping of specialised centres (6 to be delivered in 2022 and another 6 in 2023)

**18**

primary and post primary institutions to be renovated and furnished in host communities

**6**

Engineering and Research Laboratories: Construction and equipping of the labs in top Nigerian universities

**10**

GMoU with host communities

**4,000+**

Beneficiaries from post-primary, undergraduate and overseas postgraduate scholarship schemes

**3**

Prestigious prizes in Science, Literature and Literary Criticism worth thousands of dollars

**1,400+**

Youths empowered in the Youth Empowerment scheme (YES)

**1**

Malaria elimination project to rid Bonny Island of Malaria for good



...a globally competitive LNG company helping to build a better Nigeria