

With the Best Wishes from OCPA for 2024

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Observatory of Cultural Policies in Africa

The Observatory is a Pan African international NGO created in 2002 with the support of African Union, the Ford Foundation, and UNESCO. Its aim is to monitor cultural trends and national cultural policies in the region and to enhance their integration in human development strategies through advocacy, information, research, capacity building, networking, co-ordination, and co-operation at the regional and international levels.



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OCPA News aims to promote interactive information exchange within Africa and between Africa and the other regions. Please send us information for dissemination about new initiatives, meetings, research projects and publications of interest for cultural policies for development in Africa. Thank you for your co-operation.

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CBAAC



Le Mont des Arts, Kinshasa



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Editorial

The year 2023 which is coming to an end will have been a turning point in the history of humanity in more than one way.

On the one hand, the geopolitical upheavals that have appeared in the world have imposed the recomposition of alliances, returning strategic questions about balance and deterrence to the realm of the improbable.

On the other hand, the arrival or affirmation of new powers, undoubtedly regional at the start, with avowed ambitions to influence the future of the world, as so eloquently demonstrated by the UN world meetings in Dubai, of UNESCO in Riyadh and soon in Abu Dhabi, leads still dependent regions, such as Africa, to try new openings of cooperation and to establish “win-win” type relationships with the risks that this entails.

With this new data a significant crack appeared in a long-protected area which had made it possible to curb crises and conflicts, the impasse on the fundamental values of human rights at the level of States and Nations with the approval of a significant segment of humanity, precisely that which had been at the origin of their foundation!

Fortunately, the fundamental principles of humanism, inscribed in the order of things, taught and transmitted from generation to generation throughout human history, remain. Indeed, the independence of creation and culture remains. Thus remain the bases of the charter on which the OCPA since its beginnings has built its strategy of defense and illustration of the cultural factors of human development. This is the chance he had to continue his mission throughout the past year. This is the chance he will have to continue this action in the new year that is coming, the 3rd of his 5th medium-term plan.

Maputo, December 23, 2023

Lupwishi Mbuyamba

A. News from OCPA

Activities of the Executive Director and members of the OCPA Secretariat

A.1 Training mission of the Cultural Heritage Center (WHC) in Port Louis

At the invitation of the government of Mauritius, the Program Manager at OCPA, Maria Manjate, participated in a training mission of the UNESCO Cultural Heritage Center (WHC) in Port-Louis, with the aim of strengthening the capacities of managers of classified sites in the Eastern Africa Region in order to assess their impact.

A.2 FEMICC meeting (Maputo)

Before this mission, Maria had represented OCPA at a meeting of the Mozambican Federation of Cultural and Creative Industries (FEMICC) organized at the end of November in Maputo with the objectives of presenting the activity plan and strategy for 2024.

A.3 Participation in sessions of the new CERAV Board of Directors

Estevao Filimao, Deputy Research Coordinator in charge of training at OCPA, inaugurated on December 19 his participation in the sessions of the Board of Directors of the Regional Center for Performing Arts in Africa (CERAV Africa, Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso) replacing Mr. Lupwishi Mbuyamba, on behalf of African civil society.

A.4 Participation in the activities of OCPA partners

During the same period, Lupwishi Mbuyamba participated in

- Maputo, at the graduation ceremony of ISArC, partner of OCPA, on December 1, at the invitation of the Director General of the Institution;
- Rabat, from December 10 to 12, at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the CAC (African Capitals of Culture) at the invitation of the Minister of Culture of Morocco;
- Paris, December 14, at the International Music Council at UNESCO, of which OCPA is a member, for a technical consultation concerning the functioning of the African Music Council.

Activities of Ricadia (Network of Cultural Institutions of Africa and the Diaspora)

During this time, the network of institutions coordinated by OCPA continued to operate. The selection of a few salient events could illustrate this:

A.5 List of institutions that can serve as reference for the African Capitals of Culture project (ACC)

The OCPA submitted to the African Capitals of Culture CAC a first list of institutions which could serve as references in the 5 regions of the continent. It will continue this task with the submission in the first quarter of 2024, of a table of proposed criteria to be taken into account for the rotation of candidate cities as required by the African Union;

A.6 Inauguration of the first CERDOTOLA liaison office outside Africa in Luxembourg

The Executive Secretary of CERDOTOLA informed OCPA of the inauguration of its first liaison office outside Africa in Luxembourg. On this occasion, he received a recognition decoration from the African diaspora living in the Grand Duchy, an event that the OCPA welcomed;

A.7 Election of the president of the Niger Festival Foundation to the IMC Board of Directors

The president of the Niger Festival Foundation, Mr. Mamou Daffé, was elected member of the Board of Directors of the CIM (international music council) during its general assembly meeting in Rabat and in which the OCPA took part ;

A.8 Proposal for the application of the Mont des Arts to organize an event on the sidelines of the UNESCO World Conference on Culture, Art and Education

On the advice of OCPA, “Mont Des Arts” in the Democratic Republic of Congo, in cooperation with OSISA and participation from the African Union, submitted, on December 14, its application to UNESCO to organize an event in on the sidelines of the UNESCO World Conference on Culture, Art and Education in February 2024 in Abu Dhabi.

Thus the OCPA, from January to December 2023, will have been on the ground of action for the definition, adaptation and implementation of cultural policies supported by research and cooperation with an active partnership across the continent and beyond.

The annual report for this third year of its medium-term plan will provide the essential elements.

A.9 Hamadou Mande's research mission to Benin

At the invitation of the rector of Abomey-Calavi University, Hamadou Mande, deputy coordinator in charge of research at OCPA, carried out a research stay in the Republic of Benin from November 25 to December 12, 2023.

During his stay, he visited important places and exchanged with important scientific and cultural personalities of Benin. He thus met, among others, university authorities, teacher-researchers and students from the University of Abomey-Calavi, major cultural actors such as Alougbine Dine from the International Theater School of Benin, Ousmane Aledji from Afrika Artistic Cultural Center, Emmanuel Tometin from the Dekartkom Agency, Dr Pascal Zantou, communications expert, Eliane Chagas, artist and Dr OusséniSoubeirou, cultural expert.

With the latter, discussions focused on various projects including his desired involvement in the activities planned by the Observatory of Cultural Policies in Africa (OCPA) during the year 2024. This stay also gave him the opportunity to lay the foundations for future institutional collaborations in view of the upcoming holding of the 7th Summit of Cultural Institutions of Africa and the Diaspora (SICADIA 7).

A.10 OCPA Publications

In relation with its research activities OCPA has produced some **25 books and publications** such as a strategy document (2004) and a research programme (2007 and 2010) on the cultural indicators of human development in Africa, a book on “African Musics – New Stakes and New Challenges” (with UNESCO, 2005), the Observatory's 1st and 2nd Medium Term Strategy and Plan of Action (2006 and 2011), the Compendium of basic reference texts for cultural policies in Africa (E/F/S, 2006 and 2009), the Guidelines for the Design and Evaluation of National Cultural Policies in Africa (2008 and 2009). The Proceedings of the International Symposium on Policies, Strategies and Experiences in Financing Culture in Africa was published in 2010, the Manual for Training Specialist of Cultural Policy and Management in Africa and the book on the Contribution of Culture to Poverty reduction in Africa were produced in 2013. More recently, in 2019, OCPA published with the support of UNESCO a book entitled Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue: An African Experience as well as the book prepared and published with the support of Africalia on “Anticipating Cultural Policies in Africa by 2030”.

Most of the Reports of some 25 meetings and training sessions organized by OCPA are published at <http://ocpa.irmo.hr/activities/meetings/index-en.html>.

Some 25 articles published in books and reviews of the OCPA Partners (Culturelink, AFRICOM, Interarts - Barcelona, África e Mediterraneo, Wale keru, Arts Management, Itau Cultural – Sao Paolo, Brazil, University of Pécs – Hungary, University of Gerona – Spain, Catalonia, Institute for African Culture and International Understanding - IACIU, Abeokuta, Nigeria, African Institute of the United Nations for Economic Development and Planning - IDEP, Dakar, etc.

For previous news and OCPA activities click on



B. News, events and projects in Africa

B.1 Ivory Coast: MASA, An edition focused on parity issues

The 13th edition of the Abidjan Performing Arts Market (MASA) will take place from April 13 to 30, 2024. The theme of this edition is “youth, innovation and entrepreneurship”. In total, around a hundred artists from Europe, Africa and the Americas were selected.

This biennial of living arts has been an institution on the continent for thirty years. MASA has selected 63 artistic proposals ranging from storytelling to dance, including theater and comedy shows. This formula allows artists to get noticed and sell their creations to artistic directors of events or to presenters.

Basically, one theme comes up regularly, that of parity. Hassane Kassi Kouyaté, who chairs the international artistic committee, explains: “This center has 65% of proposals that talk about women, the conditions of women. Whether it is the men who play, who write, who direct, the concern is based on these questions. Afterwards, we see that our creators, on our continent, are starting to really want to integrate new technologies into their creations.»

At the same time, the MASA festival presents creations from around thirty groups from the four corners of the world. The goal is to make these services accessible to a younger audience.

“We have scenes in which the audience will come to us, but we also think that it should be a two-way street, that the creation should also go to the audiences that interest it, so that we can expand that palette,” tells us Abou Kamaté, general director of MASA.

Read the article at <https://www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20231215-c%3%B4te-d-ivoire-un-march%3%A9-des-arts-du-spectacle-d-abidjan-2024-more-focused%3%A9-on-parity-questions%3%A9>

Web site: https://www.fr.masa.ci/event/masa-2014?event_date=2024-04-13

B.2 Zanzibar: Celebration of Stone Town Day to raise awareness on heritage conservation

Every 2nd December, the Stone Town Conservation and Development Authority organizes Stone Town Day to celebrate the iconic site and raise awareness on the conservation and development of the site. In 2023, celebrations were graced by the Second Vice President of Zanzibar, Hon. Hemed Suleiman Abdalla.

As part of the celebrations, the Ministry of Tourism and Heritage launched a film on the impacts of Climate Change in Stone Town. UNESCO Dar es Salaam Office represented by Ms. Nancy Mwaisaka, Head of Sector for Culture, commended efforts by the Government of Zanzibar in ensuring one of their top priority is protecting and preserving cultural heritage and conserving and developing Stone Town of Zanzibar, World Heritage site. She also mentioned that no development can be sustainable without a strong element of culture. Ms. Nancy Mwaisaka assured the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar of UNESCO’s continuous support in protecting the Stone Town in collaboration with the stakeholders, including youth and women.

The Stone Town of Zanzibar is a fine example of the Swahili coastal trading towns of East Africa. It retains its urban fabric virtually intact and contains many fine buildings that reflect its particular culture, which has brought together and homogenized disparate elements of the cultures of Africa, the Arab region, India, and Europe over more than a millennium.

Stone Town was recognized as a World Heritage Site in 2000 in recognition of its Outstanding Universal Value arising from its cultural diversity and harmony; its historic part in the Indian Ocean maritime trading activity expressed through architecture and its symbolic role in the suppression of slavery.

Web site: <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/unesco-celebrates-stone-town-day>

B.3 Morocco: HM the King's committed to preserv historic urban heritage

The commitment of His Majesty King Mohammed VI to the preservation of historic urban heritage is a "gage of pride", underlined, n Marrakech, the director of the Department of Economic and Social Infrastructure of the Islamic Bank of Development (BID), Idrissa Dia.

"Morocco's experience in the preservation of historic urban heritage is pioneering and we welcome the commitment of HM King Mohammed VI which demonstrates that the first commitment in favor of the preservation of this legacy can only come from the States themselves. same", added Mr. Dia in an interview with MAP, on the sidelines of a regional conference under the theme "Rehabilitation of housing in historic establishments in the Arab region: Challenges and opportunities".

Certainly, institutions such as the IDB, UNESCO and UN-Habitat can accompany and support this enterprise, but the fine example given by Morocco has shown that the foundation of heritage preservation must emanate from will and commitment. of the State itself, he continued.

The earthquake of September 8 in Morocco "leads us to remember the importance of ensuring that this heritage is still preserved for future generations," he concluded.

This meeting aims to exchange international experiences, highlight good practices and define a road map for the rehabilitation of housing in several countries in the Arab region (Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Bahrain, Egypt, Yemen, Jordan , Tunisia, Lebanon and Oman.

Web site: <https://www.mapnews.ma/fr/actualites/economie/marrakech-lengagement-de-sm-le-roi-pour-la-pr%C3%A9servation-du-patrimoine-urbain>

B.4 Moroccan Forum for Cultural and Creative Industries - a success revealing the growing importance of the cultural sector in Morocco

This Forum, which brought together more than 2,300 participants from December 7 to 10 in various emblematic places in Rabat, was a success revealing the growing importance of the cultural sector in Morocco, indicates the Hiba Foundation, initiator of the event. Organized with the support of the European Union, the French Institute of Morocco and the Ministry of Youth, Culture and Communication, in partnership with the Federation of Cultural and Creative Industries, this event was marked by the distinguished participation of several personalities, and an audience of more than 350 people.

The thematic sessions, focused on specific sectors, sparked the interest of 255 curious participants, delving into emerging trends in the field, the press release said, adding that the practical workshops, in turn, constituted valuable learning moments and exchange, bringing together 251 participants eager to discover and share enriching experiences, closely linked to the daily challenges and needs of entrepreneurs.

Read the article at <https://www.mapnews.ma/fr/actualites/culture/le-forum-marocain-des-industries-culturelles-et-cr%C3%A9atives-un-succ%C3%A8s-r%C3%A9v%C3%A9lateur-de>

B.5 Algeria: Towards the opening of a permanent market for the promotion of crafts

The Minister of Tourism and Crafts, Mokhtar Didouche affirmed that the sector intended to open, in Algiers, a permanent market dedicated to artisanal products.

Visiting an exhibition of handicraft products as part of his working visit to Timimoun, the minister indicated "that the sector is preparing to open a permanent market in Algiers for the exhibition of different handicraft products and other trades including abounds the country, with the aim of promoting them at national and global levels", adding that this operation is part of the sector's strategic plans.

This space will consist of open halls to present and sell artisanal products, providing an opportunity to promote local production and encourage marketing. National and foreign visitors will thus have the opportunity to discover the jewels of craftsmanship in Algeria.

Mr. Didouche recalled that the wilaya stood out for the diversity of artisanal products, including the Fatis carpet, products made from palm leaves, as well as the manufacture of jewelry and traditional clothing.

At the same exhibition, the minister discovered an innovative model of a digital platform developed by a young citizen, for the promotion of the craft "Takalidi Hawiyati", (My traditions, My identity). It is a platform bringing together artisans to market their artisanal products.

Read the original article <https://www.aps.dz/economie/164042-vers-l-ouverture-d-un-marche-permanent-pour-la-promotion-de-l-artisan>



C. News about cultural policies, institutions and resources in Africa

C.1 UNESCO's Intergovernmental Intangible Heritage Committee (Kasane, Botswana 5 – 8 December 2023)

The Committee has inscribed 55 new cultural practices to its Intangible Cultural Heritage List, in response to nominations submitted by 72 countries.

The Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention's 20th Anniversary was also celebrated at the Committee Session. The convention is now ratified by 181 State Parties, and the list now includes more than 700 traditions and cultural practices.

Following debates, the 24 State members of the Committee decided to inscribe 55 new cultural practices:

- 6 practices were inscribed on the Intangible Heritage List of Urgent Safeguarding
- 45 practices were inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage
- and 4 were inscribed on the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices

Including these new inscriptions, 730 cultural practices spread across 145 countries now make up UNESCO's living heritage.

The Committee also awarded two international assistance grants: one to Zimbabwe for 321.300 USD, and the other to Paraguay, for 74,500 USD. Since the Convention was created,

UNESCO has financed more than 140 safeguarding projects in over 70 countries, totaling over 12 million US Dollars.

New inscriptions concerning Africa are as follows:

- Xeedho Wedding ceremonies (Djibouti) - Xeedho is a dish given by a mother-in-law to her son-in-law to celebrate the first week of her daughter's marriage.
- Ingoma Ya Mapiko (Mozambique) - The mapiko dance practiced by the Makonde people. It is performed to celebrate the traditional rite of passage from puberty to adulthood.
- Sango Festival, Oyo (Nigeria) - The annual Sango Festival of Oyo marks the beginning of the Yoruba Traditional New Year in August.
- Procession and celebrations of Prophet Mohammed's birthday (Sudan) - Al-Molid procession is a celebration of the Prophet Mohammed that takes place in Sudan.
- Sona, drawings and geometric figures on sand (Angola) - Practised by the Lunda Cokwe, East Angola, Sona seeks to convey emotions through drawings geometric figures on sand.
- Shuwalid festival (Ethiopia) is an annual three-day event celebrated by the Harari people. It marks the end of six days of fasting to compensate omissions during Ramadan.
- Arts, skills and practices of engraving on metals - gold, silver and copper (Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Mauritania, Morocco, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia, Yemen)
- Hiragasy, a performing art of the Central Highlands (Madagascar) composed of storytelling, song, dance and speech that originated in the central highlands.
- Mahadra, a community system for transmission of traditional knowledge and oral expressions (Mauritania) - Called 'the university of the desert', it is a community framework for education.
- Nguon, rituals of governance and associated expressions in the Bamoun community (Cameroon) - Nguon is a series of rituals between the Mfon, or monarch, and his people.
- Traditional skills of loincloth weaving (Côte d'Ivoire)
- Malhun, a popular poetic and musical art (Morocco)
- Midwifery: knowledge, skills and practices (Colombia, Cyprus, Germany, Kyrgyzstan, Luxembourg, Nigeria, Slovenia, Togo)

Further information at <https://www.unesco.org/en/intangible-cultural-heritage/committee-2023>

C.2 Kenya: The Govt to Create Jobs for the Youth in Sports, Creative Industries

Nairobi, 9 December - According to the President Ruto, the sports and creative industries have an enormous potential that will boost investment and economic development in the country.

"The potential contribution of sports and creative industry to investment and economic development is staggering. We must empower our young people to drive innovation, entrepreneurship, and job creation within these sectors," said the president.

The president has spotlighted that Kenya has invested in developing a cultural infrastructure that will enable artists and performers to showcase their talent.

"Kenya has invested in arts and culture infrastructure through the contraction of a new stadium and that are providing platforms for artists and performers to showcase their talents," he said.

He has also emphasized that initiatives like the Kenya Creative Industry Development Authority, will greatly boost the creative industries by providing mentorship and resources to creative entrepreneurs and enable them to expand their businesses.

"The government has supported the development of creative industries through initiatives like the Keny Creative Industry Development Authority providing resources and mentorship to

creative entrepreneurs to expand their businesses and reach a global audience." The president has also stated that the Atlanta hela app that was unveiled in October will enable talented, creative Kenyans to upload, their videos so as to be assessed by experts for mentorship.

Read the article at <https://www.capitalfm.co.ke/news/2023/12/president-ruto-says-govt-committed-to-creating-jobs-for-the-youth-in-sports-creative-industries/>

C.3 Mauritius: Prime Minister Qualifies Creole Language is a Link Between Communities

"The Mauritian Creole Language stands out as a connecting link between communities that fosters unity and brotherhood, reinforces mutual respect and tolerance, and unites the people to work together for a common goal", stated the Prime Minister, Mr Pravind Kumar Jugnauth.

He was participating at the workshop on Mauritian Creole - Atelié Hier zordi diman, organised by the Ministry of Tourism in the context of the 2023 Edition of the 'Festival Kiltir Ek Langaz Kreol Morisien', held from 02 to 10 December on the theme "Nu langaz siman linité".

The event took place with the participation of the Minister of Arts and Cultural Heritage, Mr Avinash Teeluck of Members of Parliament and other eminent personalities.

The Prime Minister highlighted the significance of the Creole Language in building our national identities. He qualified Creole as a unifying language which strengthens the bonds between the people of Mauritius and enables them to co-exist in peace and unity. He remarked that the festival has become an annual feature and is testimony to the importance that Government attaches to the Creole Language and culture.

Mauritian Creole is a means for ensuring social cohesion, shared respect, and communication. "Creole Language is part of our common heritage and we, as the Government and policy makers, have a major role in its promotion and development through the provision of appropriate frameworks and regulations, he stated. Other languages such as English and French are of equal importance, he said, while adding that the world has become a global village where communication is key to progress. To this end, he informed that the French Speaking Union Bill will soon be presented at the National Assembly.

Web site: <https://govmu.org/EN/Pages/NewsDetails.aspx?n=Prime-Minister-Jugnauth-qualifies-Mauritian-Creole-Language-as-a-connecting-link-between-communities.aspx>

C.4 South Africa: Government Announces New Awards for the Arts and Culture Sector

Minister of Sport, Arts and Culture Zizi Kodwa has announced that government will be hosting an all-encompassing awards ceremony to recognise those who exhibit outstanding artistic and technical achievement in the arts and culture sector.

"The creativity and imagination of the South African designers, artists, producers, writers, and performers are continuing to shine the light on the global stage and driving the growth of our creative economy," Kodwa said on Tuesday in Pretoria.

The Department of Sport, Arts and Culture intends to confer South African Creative Arts Awards (SACA) annually in appreciation of the outstanding contributions to the creative sector.

"This is another way in which government is developing a participatory cultural platform by supporting arts and culture initiatives, as essential elements to stimulate the growth of the country's creative economy.

"These are creatives from across cultural domains that push the boundaries of their creative ability and show devotion to excellence with uncompromising quality, ground-breaking creativity and relentless innovation that defines those that are outstanding from the best.

"The South African Creative Arts Awards are for creatives from across cultural domains who push boundaries of their creative ability and show devotion to excellence," the Minister said.

Source: <https://www.sanews.gov.za/south-africa/government-announces-new-awards-arts-culture-sector>

C.5 Senegal: Restitution of cultural property - Aliou Sow suggests “a diplomatic and persuasive approach” instead of “confrontation”

The Minister of Culture and Historical Heritage, Aliou Sow suggested, “a diplomatic and persuasive approach instead of confrontation” for the restitution of cultural property and the fight against illicit trafficking.

He was speaking in Dakar as part of a three-day regional workshop aimed at strengthening operational networks against the theft and illicit trafficking of cultural property in West Africa. “Persuasion, awareness raising and collaboration can make this task easier for us and it is better than the confrontational approach,” he insisted in front of several participants including the Gambian Minister of Culture and Tourism, Hamat Ngai Kumba Bah.

The workshop aimed to “raise awareness of the importance of ratifying the UNESCO Convention (1970) and the UNIDROIT Convention (1995) for States that have not yet done so”.

The workshop recorded the participation of sixteen countries from the sub-region, professionals from museums, police, customs, heritage, among others.

Read the original article <https://aps.sn/restitution-des-biens-culturels-aliou-sow-suggere-une-agence-diplomatique-et-persuasive-a-la-place-de-la-confrontation/>

C.6 Stakeholder consultation for Ghana’s Cultural Policy review held

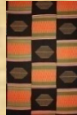
A stakeholder consultation has been held in Accra on November 21, 2023, to discuss the new draft Cultural Policy that has been developed by a twenty-member committee inaugurated on 22nd August 2023 at the Central Hotel in Accra. The Deputy Director for Arts and Culture at the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, Mr Divine Owusu-Ansah called on stakeholders to devise measures to enhance the existing cultural policies to align with the dynamic needs of Ghanaian society because society has changed with time.

The workshop brought together stakeholders including representatives of the various ministries, media, academia as well as distinguished individuals from the creative and arts industry in the Bono region, to provide inputs to support the works of the Culture Policy Review Committee.

In his opening remarks, Nana Apenteng, chair of the Review Committee said that the policy, when completed would serve as a blueprint to promote Ghanaian culture and use same for national development.

Participants, said the national culture policy would give clear action lines to encourage the chiefs and people of all ethnic groups to act together. They should also utilize the culture heritage of the country to address the fundamental needs and challenges to attain a better quality of life of the present and the future generations. They expressed their hope about the preservation of the traditional values of the Ghanaian culture exposed to the harmful influences of a globalized world.

More at <https://www.myjoyonline.com/stakeholder-consultation-for-ghanas-cultural-policy-review-held/>



D. News, Institutions, Resources and Events in Other Regions

D.1 The TV series “African Empires” explores African history before colonization

African Empires is a new series to discover broadcast on TV5 Monde and which will be available in 2024 on Canal+ Africa. This is a first season of four episodes on four emblematic personalities of the continent to discover African history before colonization.

The first episode of the African Empires series offers an immersion in Mandinka country in the 13th century with the epic of Sundiata Keïta, the Lion of Mandé. All of West Africa has heard of Emperor Sundiata Keïta who ruled a territory that stretched from the coasts of Senegal and Guinea to the Niger Desert, encompassing part of what is now Mali.

The African Empires series also traces the conquests of the Zulu people at the beginning of the 19th century led by Shaka Zulu, a military genius who reigned over what is now South Africa.

Then comes the legend of the impetuous princess Yennenga who founded the Mogo kingdom between the 11th and 15th centuries in the present territory of Burkina Faso and Ghana.

Finally, the fourth episode will take the viewer to the heart of the palace of Meroe during the reign of the sovereign Amanirenas in the 1st century BC who administered the kingdom of Kush in present-day Sudan.

Read the article at [https://www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20231211-la-s%C3%A9rie-african-empires-part-%C3%A0-la-d%C3%A9couverte-de-l-histoire-africaine-d-avant-la-colonisation](https://www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20231211-la-s%C3%A9rie-africain-african-empires-part-%C3%A0-la-d%C3%A9couverte-de-l-histoire-africaine-d-avant-la-colonisation)

D.2 UNESCO Launches Funding Scheme To Safeguard Documentary Heritage at Risk

This initiative aims to protect the world's documentary items at risk of loss as a result of natural or human-induced threats by granting financial support to cover specific needs on the ground.

To address the imminent threats posed by environmental issues, wars and conflicts, UNESCO, through its Memory of the World Programme, is initiating a funding scheme. The Organization is allocating grants ranging from USD 15,000 to USD 70,000 for projects aiming to tackle specific challenges on the ground to safeguard vulnerable documentary heritage.

Memory institutions, including archives, libraries, museums and research centres, are invited to apply for funding to enhance the protection of documentary heritage holdings (ancient books and manuscripts, government records, audiovisual materials and digital documents) at risk of deterioration or loss. The initiative “UNESCO Memory of the World Initiative to Safeguard Documentary Heritage at Risk” extends its support not only to public or private holding institutions but also to professional associations, NGOs and other established entities.

A disaster risk reduction is therefore central to the initiative. Projects focusing on the main areas of disaster management - mitigation, emergency preparedness, emergency response and recovery - are strongly encouraged to participate in this initiative through the Call for proposals.

Call for Proposals: Applications for funds can be submitted until 16 February 2024

Read more at <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/unesco-launches-funding-scheme-safeguard-documentary-heritage-risk>

D.3 Call is Open for Applications: 2024 World Heritage Residence Scholarship

In 2018, the region of Gävleborg, Sweden, created the international World Heritage Residence Scholarship at the World Heritage site 'Decorated Farmhouses of Hälsingland'. The 6th call for applications is now open until **15 February 2024**.

One aim of UNESCO's World Heritage Convention is to create links between people and promote international cooperation with peace as a central concept. The World Heritage Residence Scholarship supports these important ideas and aims at generating interest and understanding for humankind's common memory through World Heritage sites. Gävleborg therefore regularly searches for new ideas to establish artistic and creative contacts between the Decorated Farmhouses of Hälsingland with other World Heritage sites around the world combined with culture, music, art and much more.

The World Heritage Residence Scholarship consists of two parts: a one-month residence at one of Hälsinglands seven World Heritage farms, and a sum of approximately 4.500 Euros (50.000 SKR) to cover living and work expenses for the suggested project. It is important to illustrate the idea behind the project clearly and to describe well how it connects World Heritage sites. Meanwhile, the Decorated Farmhouses of Hälsingland should be a source of inspiration.

The scholarship is international and can be applied for by people from all over the world. Only last year, more than 350 researchers, artists and other cultural actors applied from 60 different countries and submitted applications showcasing projects in all different shapes, including research, virtual reality, conservation, film, audio, dance, photo, storytelling, communication, sculpture, teaching, and handicraft.

Applications can be made through Gävleborg Region's website until 15 February 2024.

For more information and how to apply, visit: www.regiongavleborg.se/en/scholarship

D.4 Beyond the Obvious (Culture Action Europe, Malmö, Sweden, May 29 to June 1 2024)

After "Beyond the Obvious: Handle with Care | Culture for Social Well-being" which examined the concept of care from various perspectives in Elefsina, Greece, the 2024 edition of Culture Action Europe's Beyond the Obvious will address questions on how to rethink the future of cities as places for collective living with culture as the guiding principle

The Malmö gathering will also question how the European cultural sector can propose new narratives and images for sustainable futures.

Web site: <https://internationalfederationofartscouncilsandcultureagencies.cmail19.com/t/i-l-aihtyx-tukdkttyq-ti/>

D.5 EU agrees 'historic' deal with world's first laws to regulate AI

Agreement between European Parliament and member states will govern artificial intelligence, social media and search engines

The world's first comprehensive laws to regulate artificial intelligence have been agreed in a landmark deal after a marathon 37-hour negotiation between the European Parliament and EU member states.

Carme Artigas, Spain's secretary of state for AI, who facilitated the negotiations, said France and Germany supported the text, amid reports that tech companies in those countries were fighting for a lighter touch approach to foster innovation among small companies.

Web site: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/dec/08/eu-agrees-historic-deal-with-worlds-first-laws-to-regulate-ai>



E. Cultural Agenda in the African Press

E.1 Links to portals

<https://allafrica.com/arts/>

<http://www.africaonline.com/site/africa/arts.jsp>

<http://www.apanews.net/news/fr/rubrique.php?id=65>

<http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2003/646/culture.htm>

<http://english.alarabonline.org/display.asp?code=zculturez>

<http://abidjantv.net/category/art-et-culture/>

E.2 Selected information from AllAfrica/Selected information from AllAfrica

Madagascar Cave Art Hints at Ancient Connections Between Africa and Asia

Unique, prehistoric rock art drawings have been discovered in the Andriamamelolo Cave in western Madagascar. I was part of a team that discovered and described these ancient treasures. They're the first truly pictorial art, depicting images of nature with human-like and animal-like figures, to be seen on the island. Until recently, rock art in Madagascar had only yielded a few sites with basic symbols. The dramatic discoveries contained several surprises, including hints at some remarkable cultural connections. First, scenes depicted in some cases linked up fairly directly to Egyptian religious motifs from the Ptolemaic period (300-30 BCE). Second, other inferences from symbols and writing on the walls showed connections to the Ethiopian and Afro-Arab worlds. Finally, prevalent symbology and motifs evoked a two-millennia-old cave art style from Borneo. An additional realm of surprises: at least three extinct animals of Madagascar (thought to have been extinct for many centuries) may be depicted - a giant sloth lemur, elephant birds and a giant tortoise. Direct dating of cave art is notoriously difficult, and proved so in this case as the black pigment was made from dark inorganic minerals with only a small component of charcoal we could use for radiocarbon dating. The presence of extinct animals, and the lack of modern motifs and the alphabet used in modern Malagasy, weigh heavily against the notion of a recent origin for the art. Web site: <https://allafrica.com/stories/202312130004.html>

Morocco: The Lure and Lore of Gnawa

The Gnawa musical healers of Morocco are a perennial fascination within the broad tableau of the Afropop story. They bring together potent themes-slavery and its legacy of displacement and diaspora, music that induces trance and even spirit possession, and the paradox of ancient African realities finding their place in the contemporary world. The music is instantly recognizable. Even the word itself, "Gnawa," probably means Guinea. The word itself shows the origins of these Blacks who came across the Sahara to Morocco. The history of the Gnwa music is linked to the evolution of the the slavery. The best known period begins with the Saadians in the 16th century, but slavery continued until the 20th century. Today there's a real professionalization, and the meaning of the words is not the same as before. They sell words in

songs like merchandise, and the singing is no longer the same. Because before, they were slaves, at the very least disenfranchised. They sang their songs and asked for forgiveness from God. Today Gnawa songs do very well in the market. It completely changes the context of the songs. Before, they were about healing, today they are spectacles in fashion.

Web site: <https://afropop.org/articles/the-lure-and-lore-of-gnawa>

Algeria: Rich program for the celebration of the Amazigh New Year Yennayer 2974

A rich and varied program celebrating the Amazigh New Year (Yennayer 2974) has been developed at the level of the wilaya of Algiers, the committee in charge of the organization under the High Commission for Amazighity (HCA) indicated on Thursday. During a meeting at the headquarters of the wilaya of Algiers, the Secretary General (SG) of the HCA, Si El-Hachemi Assad announced that the program of festivities which will coincide with the 4th edition of the President of the Republic of Amazigh literature and language, plans several activities. Among the workshops planned for January 10, is a workshop on the role of translation in the publication and circulation of literary works and scientific and cultural production in the Amazigh language, he continued. On this occasion, the "Yennayer Market" will be inaugurated at the Place de la Grande Poste in Algiers, a space which will host the products and services of artisans and startups, in addition to the presentation of an educational course on the festival of Yennayer and its symbolism at the level of a primary school.

Source: <https://www.aps.dz/culture/164008-programme-riche-et-varie-pour-la-celebration-du-nouvel-an-amazigh-yennayer-2974>



F. Info from newsletters and information services

F.1 News from the International Federation of Arts Councils and Cultural Agencies (IFACCA – ACORNS)

Recognition of Culture's vital role for sustainability in an increasingly fragile world

In 2023, the acknowledgement of culture as a global public good and a standalone sustainability goal, as advocated by the **MONDIACULT Declaration 2022**, has reverberated in the discourse of governments, policy makers and sectors beyond the cultural field. This acknowledgment is consistent with mounting evidence regarding the critical role of cultural and creative sectors (CCSs) in shaping post-COVID society, contexts and economies. In addition, the increasing emphasis on culture's impact on people's well-being and health has been particularly significant.

At the same time, there is substantially more evidence that underscores the vulnerabilities within the cultural ecosystem itself. As emphasised at our **9th World Summit on Arts and Culture**, organised in partnership with the Swedish Arts Council in Stockholm, the impact of the global polycrisis has been detrimental to culture and artistic freedom worldwide, eroding the diversity of cultural expressions and impeding the social and economic rights of cultural workers.

The increased awareness about deficiencies in the cultural ecosystem has propelled structured changes in policies, regulatory frameworks, and operational landscapes, advancing the shift from symbolic acknowledgement of culture to tangible actions. Significant emphasis was placed on improving working conditions in CCSs and reining the digital transformation, in particular the unprecedented advancements of AI and the acute disparities in the digital space.

These trends will gain further momentum in 2024, recognising culture as a public good and granting it the place in the global policy framework that it deserves.

F.2 Music in Africa

Music and media in Sudan

Sudan has an active, resilient media landscape that has been largely shaped by the country's politics. Since independence in 1956, the country has had only two democratically elected presidents who were quickly overthrown by the military. Successive military governments have been known to exercise firm control over the media, often stifling alternative voices while creating hegemonic narratives. Political control over the media has also been strengthened through legislation, rendering existing media laws weak and largely ineffective when advocating for a free press. Despite the challenges, the media has played a key role in supporting the arts and, dating back to the pre-independence era, it has greatly contributed to the development of Sudanese music. More at: <https://www.musicinafrica.net/magazine/music-and-media-sudan>

Web site: <http://www.imc-cim.org/>

F.3 Voices of Culture

Youth, Mental Health and Culture A Brainstorming Report

Since the beginning of this century, scientific investigations on the impact of culture and the arts on health and well-being have resulted in a huge body of knowledge and a buzzing scene of activities. At the same time, the essential and systemic role that culture and the arts play in our society has not yet achieved the recognition it deserves from policymakers and the health and social sector. Culture and Health, as it is represented in the WHO Health Evidence Synthesis Report No. 67 “What is the evidence on the role of the arts in improving health and well-being?”, is a global movement. It is a fragmented carpet of numerous approaches, lacking concerted efforts and effective communication. In order to collect insights, experiences, and recommendations on this topic from civil society from the relevant sectors across Europe the European Commission Structured Dialogue platform Voices of Culture invited participants from 53 selected organisations and 23 countries from the fields of culture, health, education, and social services to brainstorm over two days - 4th & 5th October 2022 in Brussels. The focus was on one of the most pressing issues of our time: Youth Mental Health. The findings are represented in the five chapters of the report. They lay out an extensive overview of successful projects that have been carried out by the group members or associated organisations which contributed to the young to stabilising their mental health. Read more at https://voicesofculture.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/YMHC_BrainstormingReport_FINAL-1.pdf

Web site: <https://voicesofculture.eu>

F.4 Mawred – Culture resource Newsletter

Wijhat – Call to apply for grants for travelling within the Arab Region or abroad

Reminder - Arab artists and cultural actors face major challenges when it comes to traveling within the Arab region or abroad for professional purposes. Wijhat (Destinations) was developed to address these concerns. The program provides grants of up to €7,000 to artists and cultural actors from the Arab region to support their travels within the Arab region or to any destination abroad. It thereby contributes to acquainting others with the artistic and cultural production from this region while enabling the grantees to present their works to new audiences and to engage in diverse cultural exchange experiences.

Source: <https://mawred.org/artistic-creativity/wijhat/?lang=en>

Web site <https://mawred.org/>

F.5 South African Cultural Observatory

The African Journal of Creative Economy (AJCE)

The AJCE was recently launched at the ARUA conference in Lagos as part of the ARUA/The Guild new Cluster of Research Excellence: Creative Economies: Cultures, Innovation and Sustainability. The publication will encompass the full spectrum of research, on all facets of the African creative industries and cultural sector and will be fully open-access. The journal's focus is on researching and discussing theoretical and practical issues pertaining to the cultural and creative economy in Africa. Research from outside Africa will also be considered, provided it is relevant to the African creative economy in terms of policy lessons or comparative analysis. The journal is primarily aimed at those researching, studying, and developing policies and practising activities that have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent, and which have the potential to contribute to employment, economic development and wealth creation. AJCE will cover all aspects of the creative economy, including clusters, creative labour markets, creative districts, international trade in cultural goods and services, demand for and participation in cultural activities, and the creative ecosystem.

Read more at <https://ajce.africa/index.php/ajce/pages/view/journal-information>

Web site: <https://www.southafricanculturalobservatory.org.za>

Contact: info@southafricanculturalobservatory.org.za

F.6 Artmailer Art Go News (South Africa)

MOL 42: The Arak Collection Art Times Ashraf Jamal Column

The Arak Collection is housed in Doha, Qatar. An acronym for the name of the collector – Abdul Rahman Al Khelaifi – Arak is the most in-depth grouping of Sub-Saharan African art in the Gulf Region. There are over 3000 works by 250 artists. It is this respect and understanding of an artist's range, instead of cherry-picking an individual favourite, which affirms the quality of Arak's approach; its desire, first and foremost, to present the artist and their works not as a commodity, but as a cipher for a complex cultural expression. For as we well now, Africa has for centuries been the victim of an extractive colonial economy. In this regard, the Contemporary African Art Market is no different. While its goal is to champion creatives who have historically occupied a cultural periphery, in relation to an imagined centre, and now, in this revisionist era, re-integrated into a rapidly evolving global canon – one cannot ignore the fact that the African continent remains a remote fetish, a repository of colonial guilt.

Source: https://issuu.com/arttimes/docs/art_times_decjan_issuu_925ba94f20599d



Please send addresses, information, and documents for the OCPA list serve, database, documentation centre and web site!

Thank you for your interest and co-operation
