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Centre for Black Culture and International Understanding, Osogbo

41st Meeting of the Board of Trustees



Report of the Director Jan. 2024 – Dec. 2024

Website: centreforblackculture.org

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INTRODUCTION

The Centre for Black Culture and International Understanding (CBCIU), Osogbo, was set up in 2009, with the administrative building officially commissioned on January 7 by Koichuro Matsuura, the then Director-General of UNESCO. But the grand-opening ceremony had been preceded by years of hard planning and by several visits by UNESCO officials to both Osogbo and Sydney, Australia, as well as by Prince Olagunsoye Oyinlola, the Chairman of the organisation and the then Governor of Osun State, to Paris. The establishment of CBCIU was fully backed by the Federal Government of Nigeria.

VISION STATEMENT

To elevate Black culture, by focusing on its recovery, preservation, promotion, and utilization of its enduring ways of being for the purposes of holistic development, appreciation, and international understanding.

MISSION STATEMENT

To initiate, facilitate, and support programmes that will realize the vision for which the Centre for Black Culture and International Understanding (CBCIU) was established in January 2009.

GOALS

1. To retrieve, curate, and sustain historic cultural assets;
2. To foster cross-cultural and inter-generational engagement for global harmony;
3. To encourage and promote local culture producers in whatever field of creativity by way of exhibitions, workshops, culture fairs, etc.;
4. To encourage and promote interactions and exchanges between local and foreign artists;
5. To forge cultural linkages and interactions with black cultures in Europe, Americas and the Caribbean Islands inclusive.

Objectives of the Centre

The 'remote' cause of the establishment of CBCIU in Osogbo goes back to the 1950s, when Ulli Beier, then living in Osogbo, became a good friend of Oba Moses Oyinlola, the then Olokuku of Okuku. Their friendship was such that, even though Oba Moses Oyinlola died in 1960, Ulli Beier never forgot him, still writing copiously and glowingly about him in his numerous publications on the Yoruba society and culture decades after. By 2005, Chief Ulli Beier had considered his life's work done, and wanted to have his archival materials transferred from Sydney, Australia to Nigeria, for proper safeguarding preferably in Osogbo, where he and his wife –Georgina – lived the happiest and most productive years of their lives. He got UNESCO involved so as to guarantee the safety and integrity of the materials and, eventually, the materials came back to Osogbo.

Based on a feasibility report submitted by the team that Governor Oyinlola had put together, UNESCO sent two different teams between 2007 and mid-2008 to evaluate CBCIU's proposed programme of activities, assess facilities on ground, advise, and make recommendations to UNESCO's Executive Board for its enlistment as an affiliate to the Institute for African Culture and International Understanding, Abeokuta, a UNESCO Category II Centre. All of these culminated in a visit by the home team to UNESCO in 2008. The Africa Forum of the Executive Board formally presented the case, and it was duly granted. The Centre became operational in March 2009. The Centre was established owing to the principle and objectives of safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage resources collected over the years by Ulli Beier. The collections are displayed and used as historical references for cultural education to enhance international understanding of the Black Culture.

The Centre also carries out many cultural activities that are geared towards revitalizing and updating cultural practices that are in need of urgent safeguarding. The Centre carries out research, produces documentaries and documentations of most of the intangible cultural practices of the black people. These are done to enhance international understanding and encourage sustainability of these cultural practices.

PROGRAMMES

We have successfully organized, or part-organized and participated, the following programmes so far:

CBCIU CELEBRATE 2024 BLACK HISTORY MONTH



Every February, Black History Month (BHM) is celebrated to reflect on the history, stories, and contributions of Blacks across the globe and in different fields. On 27th February 2024, the Centre for Black Culture and International Understanding (CBCIU), Osun State, observed the 2024 Black History

Month (BHM) titled “The Art of Blackness” in accordance with the global theme that focuses on “African Americans and the Arts.”

The Centre for Black Culture and International Understanding theme “Art of Blackness” focused on the diverse aspect of Art by focusing on African Visual Arts, Films and Music, which are essential to blacks identity across various epochs of African history as we reflect on the legacies and achievement of generations of the past, and the events of the presents.

As the CBCIU community gathers to commemorate Black History Month, The CBCIU-BHM panel also had in attendance Dr. Oluwafunmiyi Raheem (Osun State University, Osogbo), Olawale Yemisi (University of Ilorin, Kwara State) Dr. Mojeed Animashaun (Fountain University, Osogbo), and Dr. Charles Omotayo (Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo).

The lecture had in attendance the **Curator, National Gallery of Art, Mr. Adodo Sunday and staff of the National Gallery of Art, Osogbo; Chief Faniyi Fakayode, Agbongbo Awo of Osogboland; Chief Mrs. Adedoyin Faniyi; Mr Fatai Adekunle, former Curator, National Commission for Museum and Monuments and staff of National Commission for Museum and Monuments; Mr. Stephen Oni; students of the Department of Tourism and Department of Philosophy, Osun State University, Osogbo, and many others.**

The lecture under the auspices of the Chairman, Board of Trustees, Chief Olagunsoye and the Executive Director of CBCIU, Professor Siyan Oyeweso.

At the end of the lecture, the following observations were made at the lecture:

1. African visual arts cover a rich and diverse range of traditions, styles, and techniques that diverge across different regions and cultures of Africa
2. Although globalisation has fostered greater appreciation and understanding of black cultural contributions, it has sparked deeper conversations about cultural appropriation and representation.
3. Films are an essential aspect of African Art that has continued to contribute deeper meaning to the identity of Africa.



4. African films must focus on reengineering their content and approach, presenting Africa's history and identity in global space as a force to reckon with.
5. African governmental and non-governmental institutions in the field of Art must focus on investing in African Artists through the provision of sustainable and accessible finance, the provision of infrastructure and platforms for international engagements and collaborations.
6. African music remains a powerful representation of the Blacks' identity across various epochs. Hence, appropriate attention to the music field will situate African identity and contributions to global affairs.

At the end of the lecture, the following reductions were made:

7. The delegate led by **Chief Faniyi Fakayode, Agbongbo Awo of Osogboland** reiterate the importance of films, Africa literature, poem, oral traditions as the basis of reconstructing the identity of Africans and Blacks globally
8. The delegate led **Mr. Adodo Sunday** also emphasised the need for a change in the current narrative of the African music industry where content that promotes wisdom, knowledge and the African culture of Omoluabi are prioritised.
9. The Executive director of CBCIU also pledged its readiness to provide elders in African history and culture the opportunity to document important aspects of African identities fading away due to the effect of globalisation.

The CBCIU-BHM ended with closing remarks and a vote of thanks from the CBCIU Executive Director, Professor Siyan Oyeweso.



ODUAFEST 2024 IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OSUN STATE TOURISM BOARD

In June 2024, the Osun State Tourism Board in partnership with Federation of Tourism Associations of Nigeria and Centre for Black Culture and International Understanding organized 2024 Ooduafest.

This landmark event, held from 23-25 June, 2024 at the Centre for Black Culture and International Understanding, marked a significant milestone in our journey to promote and develop tourism in our beloved state. The discussions, presentations, and networking opportunities at Ooduafest 2024 have set the stage for a brighter future in tourism, fostering innovation, collaboration, and sustainable growth.



Wole Soyinka: Culture, Social Activism and Social Justice

On July 18, 2024, the Centre for Black Culture and International Understanding celebrate Professor Emeritus Wole Soyinka in recognition of his role as the first in sub-saharan African to win Nobel Prize in Literature. The Centre also recognizes his giant strides as a Nigerian playwright, novelist, poet and essayist in English Language. The theme of the International Colloquium is Wole Soyinka: Culture, Social Activism and Social Justice.

The Speakers at the event are Prof. Tunji Azeez from Lagos State University; Prof. Sunday Ododo FNAL; Prof. Olaoluwa Senayon, University of Ibadan; Prof. Sola Olorunyomi, University of Ibadan; Dr. Abiodun Olayiwola, Obafemi Awolowo University and Dr. Yusuf Abdulganiyu Aderemi, Fountain University.







OSOGBO ARTS AND CULTURAL RECOGNITION AWARDS BY KUNLE BURAIMOH FOUNDATION IN PARTNERSHIP WITH KUNLE BURAIMOH FOUNDATION

On August 6, 2024, Kunle Buraimoh Foundation in partnership with the Centre for Black Culture

and International Understanding hosted Cultural Osogbo Arts and Recognition Awards. The Centre for International Understanding honoured individuals who have made significant contributions



to arts, preservation and promotion of Yoruba heritage across the globe. The theme of the event is “Honouring and Commemorating Our Heroes”.

Among those recognised were Pa Duro Ladipo, Toyin Olaitan, Alhaji Yekini Ajileye, Jide Lawal, Iyabo Ajani, Rabi Abesu, Chief Ifayemi Elebuibon (the Chief Araba of Osogbo land), Chief Jimoh Buraimoh, Grace Oyin-Adejobi (popularly known as Iya Osogbo), Alhaji Kareemu Adepoju (Baba Wande), Pa Adebisi Akanji, and Toyin Oladiran (Abeni Agbon), among others.

The president of the Kunle Buraimoh Foundation, Mr. Kunle Buraimoh, highlighted the motivation behind the awards, stating, “We realised that our people are not being celebrated enough, especially here in Osogbo. At the Buraimoh Foundation, we felt it was necessary to celebrate these legends while they are still with us. We also aim to inspire the younger generation, showing them that they too can become legends like those we are honoring today.”

The keynote Speaker who is also a Member of the Board of Trustees of CBCIU, Prof. Aderemi Ajala emphasised the need for government and other stakeholders to establish museums dedicated to preserving cultural heritage and historical sites in Osun State. He urged for increased efforts to protect and promote the rich cultural legacy of the Yoruba people.



2024 OSUN OSOGBO FESTIVAL IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CBCIU

The CBCIU-Annual Osun Osogbo Festival in commemoration of the 2024 Osun Osogbo Festival reflected on the importance of Osun Osogbo in the contemporary greatness of Osogbo and the role of Susanne Wenger in the movement towards the restoration of the Osun Osogbo Sacred Groove. Though the papers presented are sacred, their contemporary importance and future importance to Yoruba religious, spiritual, and cultural identity and development cannot be underestimated.





2024 SANGO FESTIVAL IN CELEBRATING DURO LADIPO IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OYO STATE GOVERNMENT

On August 18, 2024, the CBCIU partnered with Oyo State Government to hold a symposium to honor, the late theatre icon, Duro Ladipo. The celebration was in recognition of his contributions to the portrayal of Sango through the arts.





CELEBRATION OF TRADITIONAL RELIGION (ISESE) DAY 2024

On August 20, 2024, Isese day 2024 was celebrated at the Freedom Park, Osogbo, Osun State.



Donald Trump Presidency: Implications for Africa, African Diaspora and World Peace



On Wednesday, December 4, 2024, the Centre for Black Culture and International Understanding, Osogbo, in partnership with the Department of Political Science, Fountain University, Osogbo, organised a webinar on the Donald Trump Presidency.

The webinar welcomed presentations by renowned international scholars whose topics were woven around the theme:

Donald Trump Presidency: Implications for Africa, African Diaspora and World Peace. Some of the scholars who read papers at the webinar include Prof. Femi Mimiko, a Professor of Comparative Economy and International Relations in the Department of Political Science, Obafemi Awolowo University, Dr. Dapo Thomas of the Department of History and International Studies, Lagos State University, Ojo and Dr. A.F. Raji of the Department of Political Science, Fountain University, Osogbo.

Others include Dr. Temitope Fagunwa of the Department of History and International Studies, Osun State University, Osogbo, Mr. Mojeed Animashaun of the Department of Political Science, Fountain University, Osogbo and Omooba Wale Olayemi, a veteran journalist.

Physically present at the event were the Head of Political Science, Fountain University, Osogbo, Dr. Olatunji; pioneer coordinator of the Department of History and International Studies, Fountain University, Osogbo, Mrs. Suliyat Mohammad; staff and students of the Departments of Political Science and History & International Studies, Fountain University, Osogbo; staff of the National Gallery of Arts lead by Mr. Adodo Sunday, staff of the National Commission for Museums and Monuments, Osogbo; participants who joined virtually such as Dr. Monsuru Muritala, Dr. Rotimi Alaba Oti, Funmi Ogundare, Adodo Adekunle, Alhaji Rafiu Ayanloye, Adeyemi Emmanuel, Mariam Oluwafisayomi Bello, Felix Ayoola, Layeni Hakeem, Olakunle Makinde, Olawale Yemisi, Oyeleye Oyewale, Stephen Bolaji among others.

The webinar was held to identify the challenges and impact of Donald Trump's second presidency on the African continent, the African diaspora and also global peace. One key recommendation and take away from the webinar is that Africa

should begin to look inwards and identify internal solutions to its myriad of challenges.



CBCIU/PARTNERS HOST INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIUM IN HONOUR OF PRINCE (DR.) OYIN ADEJOBI



On Wednesday, 18 December, 2024, the Centre for Black Culture and International Understanding (CBCIU), in partnership with the Department of Theatre Arts, Osun State University, Osogbo and Redeemer's University, Ede, organised an International Colloquium to celebrate the life, legacy, and profound influence of

the iconic theatre arts practitioner, Prince (Dr.) Oyin Adejobi. The event honoured a man whose artistic genius sparked cultural awareness and transformed the landscape of Yoruba theatre in Nigeria.

In his Welcome Address, Director of the CBCIU, Professor Siyan Oyeweso, highlighted that Oyin Adejobi was more than an actor, a visionary, cultural custodian and a storyteller whose work transcended Nigeria's borders, leaving a lasting imprint on the global stage.

"Through his celebrated plays such as *Orogun Adedigba* and *Kootu Ashipa*, Adejobi brought Yoruba folklore, ethics, and worldview to life, illustrating the complexities of traditional values and the human experience. His seamless blending of entertainment with moral lessons resonated deeply with audiences, ranging from grassroots communities, academic to the elites," Oyeweso noted.

The Director further emphasized that Adejobi's works were among the pioneering voices that elevated African theatre, inspiring many to explore the richness of African oral traditions and performance arts.

"His emphasis on communal values, social justice, and personal integrity remains highly relevant in today's world, where the interplay of tradition and modernity continues to evolve."



The Chairman of the event, Chief Fakayode Faniyi, the Agbongbon Awo of Osogbo, reflected on the impact of Adejobi's film, *Kootu Ashipa* and the resonant song “Olorun maje ki ari ejo, ati ebi, ati are, Olorun maje ki ari ejo.” He also praised Adejobi’s collaboration with similar playwright, Chief

Duro Ladipo, in promoting the cultural heritage of Osogbo through their artistic talents.

The Lead Speaker, Professor Gbemisola Adeoti of Obafemi Awolowo University,



Ile Ife, described Adejobi’s work as a form of cultural resistance. He emphasized that the story of Nollywood and African Theatre cannot be fully told without acknowledging the contributions of Prince Oyin Adejobi. Professor Adeoti elaborated on the significant role Adejobi’s songs and lyrics played in enhancing the emotional

and cultural depth of his films.

The colloquium also featured five academic lectures by distinguished scholars, including Dr. Azeez Akinwumi Sesan, Head of the Department of Theatre Arts, Osun State University, Osogbo; Dr. Yinka Olarinmoye of Lagos State University, Ojo; Dr. Rantinmi Julius Adeoye, Head of the Department of Theatre Arts, Redeemer’s University, Ede; Mr. Fatai Adekunle, former Curator of National Commission for Museums and Monuments, Osogbo; and Dr. Yemi Atanda of the Department of Theatre Arts, Osun State University, Osogbo.

Goodwill messages were delivered by members of the late Prince Oyin Adejobi’s family, including Dr. Adeleke, Librarian of Redeemer’s University, Ede; Barrister

Matthew Omolade of the Federal Polytechnic, Ede; and Dr. Christopher Oyewo of the Department of Theatre Arts, Osun State University, Osogbo.

The colloquium was graced by prominent figures such as Mrs. Yemisi Adejobi, wife of late Prince Oyin Adejobi; Princess Adejoke Oyin-Adejobi, his daughter; Mr. Bola Oyin-Adejob, his son; Aramide Ogunrinde, his maternal grandchild; Mrs. Toyosi Adesanya; Professor Ahmed Yerima, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Redeemer's University, Ede; Chief Ayanda Fadara Clarke; and Mrs. Shola Duro-Ladipo. Also present were Hon. (Comrade) Abodunrin, Education Secretary of Osogbo Local Education Authority; Mr. M.A.O. Aluko, Local Inspector of Education; staff members of the National Commission for Museums and Monuments, Osun State; members of the New Sacred Art of Osogbo founded by the late Susanne Wenger; Mr. Samuel Adodo of the Nigerian Art Gallery; and Stephen Oni, among others.

The event was also attended virtually, including notable figures such as Professor Duro Oni, Professor Gbenga Fasiku, Professor Remi Ajibewa, Yinka Diamond, Omotunde Koleoso, and Afolorunso Dairo, among others.

Students from the Department of Theatre Arts, Redeemer's University, Ede and Osun State University, Osogbo, as well as students from Secondary schools in Osogbo such as Moslem Grammar School, AUD School, CAC Isale-Ijebu and Salvation Army School, were also in attendance.



Director's Report to the Governing Board of CBCIU, December 27, 2024



APPRECIATION

The Management and Staff of the Centre highly appreciate the following, among others

1. The Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Prince Olagunsoye Oyinlola for exceptional leadership
2. The Federal Government of Nigeria for grants to the Centre
3. The Federal Ministry of Information and Culture for effective performance of oversight function
4. All members of the Board of Trustees of the Centre for Black Culture and International Understanding
5. All our resource persons and experts who have offered tremendous service to the Centre.

CONCLUSION

The current Management will continue to keep in sharp focus the mandate of the Centre- the implementation of 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

PRAYER

The Board of Trustees is invited to note the foregoing report and direct as appropriate.

Prof. Siyan Oyeweso