



## BLACK MUSE ART FESTIVAL GUIDE

**Benin City | November 8 – 12, 2025**

**Theme:** Let the Forest Dance

**Venue:** Angels and Muse, 15 Ehikhamenor Avenue, Okhoromi Community, Airport Road, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria

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### WELCOME TO THE BLACK MUSE ART FESTIVAL

Angels and Muse is pleased to invite you to the inaugural edition of the **Black Muse Art Festival**, a five-day celebration of contemporary art, literature, and culture taking place from **November 8-12, 2025**. This program is a gathering that brings together artists, writers, curators, and cultural thinkers from across Africa and its diaspora into a convergence of conversations, exhibitions, performances and communal experiences.

Titled “**Let the Forest Dance**”, this theme borrows inspiration from Wole Soyinka’s seminal play *A Dance of the Forests*, reimagining art as a transformative lens for conservation, community, and cultural continuity. Guided by the objectives of Angels and Muse, the Black Muse Art Festival honours the legacy of ancient practices while embracing contemporary innovation. Through its commitment to supporting creatives, foster experimentation, build dialogue across disciplines, and connect local contexts to global conversations, this festival positions art as a force for preserving memory, collaboration, and imagining sustainable futures.

From sculpture exhibitions and artist talks, to food tasting experiences, film screenings, and open mic nights, the festival invites you to encounter the many ways art can serve space for learning, preservation, and belonging.

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### FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS

The festival program unfolds across multiple sites. At the heart of the festival is the long-awaited unveiling of the Black Muse Sculpture Park, a landmark cultural site envisioned as a living space for public art, dialogue, and gathering. Rising at its centre is the *Ázágbà* Pavilion, a bamboo architectural masterpiece designed by Architect-in-Residence James Inedu George. Named after the Esan word for *compound*, the pavilion captures the essence of communal life while its stained-glass windows, created by Victor Ehikhamenor, will adorn the space in shifting colours of light, offering a dialogue between tradition and innovation.

The pavilion will also come alive with an audio installation by Grammy-nominated singer Somi Kakoma and Prof. Josephine Abbe, Head of Theatre Arts at the University of Benin. The sound piece will weave indigenous sound traditions into an immersive sonic performance, animating the structure with a lyrical exploration of interconnectedness and belonging.



### ***Today, Tomorrow, the Moon Will Still Be***

Surrounding the pavilion, the park will host a major sculpture exhibition curated by Kenyan curator Renée Mboya, titled *Today, Tomorrow, the Moon Will Still Be*. Sculpture has always been a constant presence in African art and life. From ancestral bronzes and terracottas to contemporary experiments in form, material, and concept, the practice of sculpting has carried memory across generations, embodying both permanence and transformation. *Today, Tomorrow, the Moon Will Still Be* speaks to this continuity — a reminder that while times change, the impulse to shape, carve, mould, and cast remains.

This inaugural exhibition at the Black Muse Sculpture Park brings together works from Olanrewaju Tejuosho, Osaru Obaseki, Ayobami Ogungbe, Uzor Ugoala, Kelly Omodamwen, and Seidougha Linus Eyimiegba (Mr. Danfo) that reflect on sculpture's long arc, celebrating its histories while engaging its present possibilities. It considers how sculptural practices in Africa and its diaspora have evolved, shifting in response to political realities, new materials, technological advancements, and expanded notions of space.

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## **GETTING TO AND AROUND BENIN CITY**

### **By Air**

Benin City is accessible via the Benin Airport, located about 15–20 minutes from the festival venue. Daily flights operate from Lagos, Abuja, and Port Harcourt through major carriers such as Air Peace, Arik Air, and United Nigeria Airlines.

Kindly book your air ticket in time to avoid unavailability of flight travel nearer the dates.

### **By Road**

Benin City can also be reached by road:

**From Lagos:** Approximately 5–6 hours via the Benin–Ore Expressway.

**From Abuja:** Approximately 7–8 hours via Lokoja–Auchi–Benin route.

**From Port Harcourt:** About 5 hours via Warri–Sapele–Benin route.

### **Local Transportation**

From Benin Airport or the city center, taxis, Bolt, and local car hires are available. Simply request a ride to:

**📍 15, Ehikhamenor Avenue, Okhoromi Community, Off Airport Road, Benin City.**

(Okhoromi Community is a short drive past Ogba Zoo and Nature Park. Directional signage for Black Muse Residence and the Sculpture Park will be visible along the road at Okhoromi Community during the festival.)

## WHERE TO STAY

A range of comfortable accommodations are available within proximity to the venue:

- **Protea Hotel by Marriott, Benin City** – Airport Road (5 minutes away)
  - **Randekhi Royal Hotel** – GRA (15 minutes away)
  - **Edo Heritage Hotel** – Ihama Road (20 minutes away)
  - **Smaller guest lodges and apartments** are also available near Airport Road and Okhoromi. See more accommodation options [here](#).
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## FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS

### **Day 1 – November 8: Artist Talk & Welcome Reception**

Welcome reception for friends of Angels and Muse, and art community in Benin City

### **Day 2 – November 9: Opening of the Black Muse Sculpture Park**

**Ázágba Pavilion** by commissioned architect-in-residence, James Inedu George (A bamboo structure with incorporated stained-glass windows by Victor Ehikhamenor)

### **Sculpture Exhibition: “Today, Tomorrow, The Moon Will Still Be”**

Featured artists: Olanrenwaju Tejuosho, Ayobami Ogungbe, Osaru Obaseki, Uzor Ugoala, Seidougha Eyimiegba (Mr. Danfo), and Kelly Omodamwen.

### **Day 3 – November 10: Bronze-Making Workshop (I) with Kelly Omodamwen**

Maximum participants per time: 10-15 people

Registration required

Cost – N100,000

(Includes materials, full access and a bronze piece for each participant to leave with)

Duration: 3-4 hours

### **Day 4 – November 11: Edo on the Tongue: An Evening of Taste, Memory, and Conviviality**

An intimate evening of culinary cultural experience celebrating the flavours, stories, and spirit of Benin City through food, music, and palmwine exploring the language of taste that connects us all.

### **Day 5 – November 12: See Benin, Feel Benin**

An immersive city and cultural tour around Benin-City

Registration Required

Number of participants: 20



### Verses After Dark

An open mic and literary evening of poetry, readings, and music at Black Muse to celebrate the closing of the 5-day festival

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## OTHER SIDE ATTRACTIONS OF THE FESTIVAL

- **The Art of Okuku:** A participatory workshop for women art session exploring local craft of the iconic Benin traditional hairstyle dating as far back as the Ogiso era
  - **The Taste That Remembered Me** – A performative food presentation and reading blending sensory memory and artistic practice.
  - **Book Nook:** Browse through publications, limited editions and selected from across contemporary art, literature and culture.
  - **The Artisans' Corner:** Visitors will encounter finely crafted bronze pieces, intricate beadwork, wood carvings, and decorative ornaments — each telling its own story of tradition, identity, and innovation.
  - **Cultural Immersion Tours** – Visits to historic Benin landmarks including the Oba's Palace, Igun Street Bronze Casters Guild, and Ogba Zoo & Nature Park.
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## PRACTICAL INFORMATION

### Festival Hours

Daily Events begin daily at **10:00 AM** and run through **8:00 PM**, with intermissions and evening programs.

### Food & Refreshments

Light meals, snacks, and beverages will be available for purchase at the venue and pop-up stalls.

### Registration & Access

Admission to most programs is free but **registration is required** for limited-seating events such as workshops and food presentations.

Visit [www.angelsandmuse.org](http://www.angelsandmuse.org) for full schedule and RSVP options.

### What to Bring

- Light, breathable clothing
  - Comfortable shoes (some events take place outdoors)
  - Sunscreen or hats for daytime programs
  - Curiosity, openness, and a spirit of community
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## CONTACT & SUPPORT

### Angels and Muse – Benin City

📍 15, Ehikhamenor Avenue, Okhoromi Community, Off Airport Road, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria.

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🌐 [www.angelsandmuse.org](http://www.angelsandmuse.org)

📷 @angelsandmuse | @blackmuseartfestival | #BlackMuseFestival2025

As you journey with us through Benin City, we invite you to encounter not just the art, but the spirit that sustains it.

**Welcome to Benin. Welcome to the Black Muse.**

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