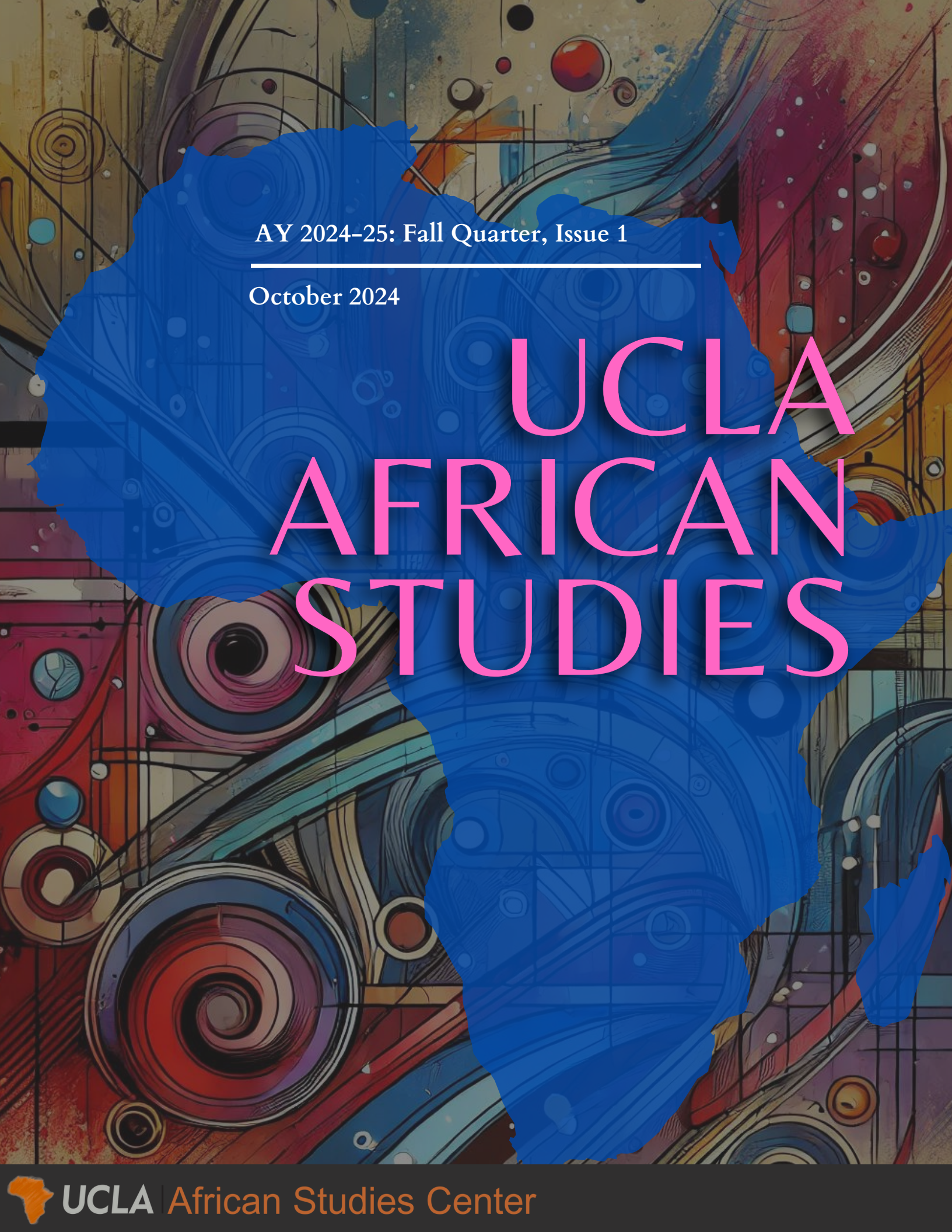


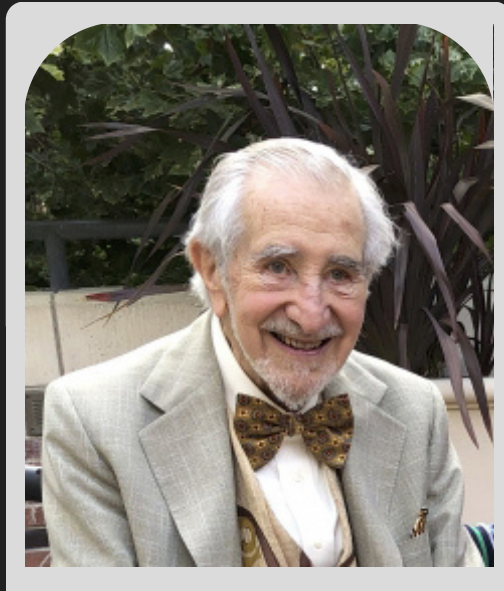


AY 2024-25: Fall Quarter, Issue 1

October 2024

UCLA AFRICAN STUDIES

IN MEMORIAL



Merrick Posnansky

1931 - 2024

“Merrick Posnansky, Professor Emeritus in the Departments of History and Anthropology, passed away September 29, 2024, at the age of 93. He had been a faculty member at UCLA since 1977 following twenty years in Kenya, Uganda and Ghana where he conducted research and taught. Merrick’s interests included the archaeology of state formation and urban growth in Ghana and Togo; archaeology of the African Diaspora; cultural conservation and archaeological education in tropical Africa; postage stamps and national cultural policy; and his publications include [Africa and Archaeology: Empowering an Expatriate Life](#) (2009), and [The Origins of West African trade](#) (1971).”

OPPORTUNITIES

FUNDING FOR UCLA TENURE-TRACK JUNIOR FACULTY

The African Studies Center is soliciting proposals for collaborative Africa-focused research projects through its Equity and Diversity Initiative (“Supporting URM Faculty Retention Through Active Research Generation”). The focus of the Initiative is to support UCLA junior faculty from underrepresented groups in Academia by helping them develop their research programs. The goal of this initiative is to fund pilot research projects that will lead to competitive external grant proposals by junior faculty.

Each project will pair a UCLA junior tenure track faculty member (PI) and senior faculty mentor (co-PI). The two will collaborate to develop the pilot project proposal for submission to the ASC. Each successful proposal will be awarded \$5K, with a total of 5 awards being made. Proposals from all fields are welcome.

The proposal narrative should minimally specify the goal(s), significance, timeline, and budget for the project. It should also clearly indicate how the pilot project will feed into an external grant, and identify specific external grants that would be a good fit for a future project based on the pilot.

[UCLA junior tenure-track faculty are encouraged to apply here. Applications are due by 11:59PM, November 15, 2024.](#)

SAVE THE DATE: TUE OCTOBER 29



UCLA African Studies Center

Fowler

MUSEUM AT UCLA

African Food Legacies in the Americas

with Distinguished Research Professor Emerita Judith Carney



Professor Judith Carney will present a talk on African agency in creolizing the foodways of the Americas, the ways the enslaved made African foods part of the New World dietary traditions, and the role of subaltern food plots in making this possible in plantation societies. Light refreshments will be served.



Distinguished Research Professor Emerita Judith Carney's research centers on African ecology and development, food security, gender and agrarian change, and African contributions to New World environmental history. She is the author of over 100 scholarly articles and two books, *Black Rice: the African Origins of Rice Cultivation in the*

Americas (Harvard University Press, 2001) and *In the Shadow of Slavery: Africa's Botanical Legacy in the Atlantic World* (UC Press, 2009).

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 29,
5:30-7:30PM
THE FOWLER MUSEUM AT
UCLA**

**FREE AND OPEN
TO THE PUBLIC**

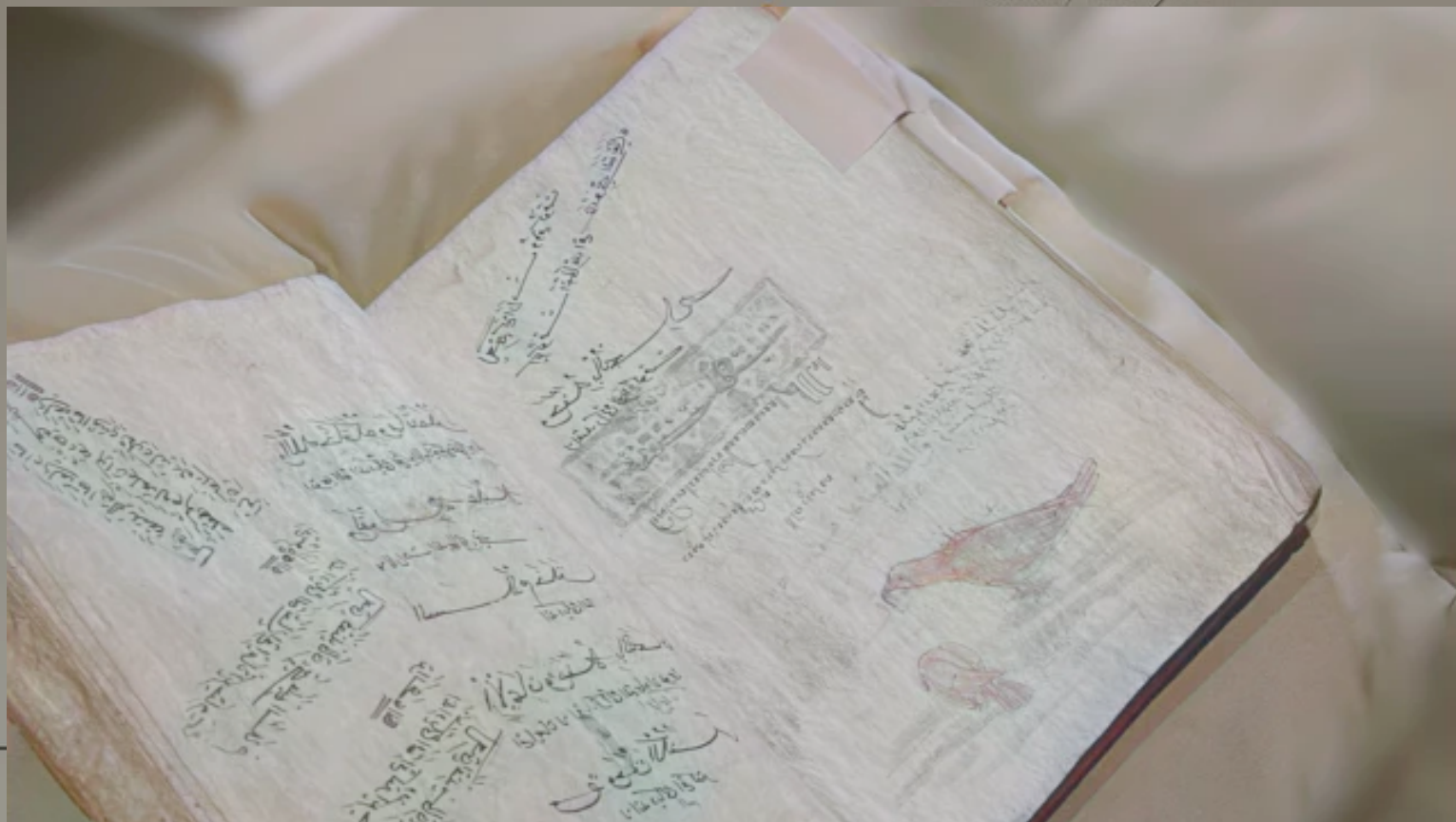
SCAN HERE TO RSVP



OR VISIT:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/lecture-african-food-legacies-in-the-americas-tickets>

SAVE THE DATE: FRI OCTOBER 18



ASC is a co-sponsor for a conference organized by the UCLA Center for Near Eastern Studies and Ibn Khaldun Endowed Chair in World History. This hybrid conference explores the parameters of the 'Arabicate' as a corresponding world historical process that unfolded across specific sectors of Africa, the Indian Ocean, and the Mediterranean, constituting a region that partly overlapped but was by no means coterminous with Hodgson's 'Arabic zone.'

Friday, October 18, 2024

8:30 AM - 4:45 PM (Pacific Time)

Royce Hall, Rms 306 & 314 and Online

For more information and to register click [here](#)

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT



AL Roberts (Distinguished Professor Emeritus, World Arts and Cultures) has composed several essays these last months, with posthumous contributions from Mary “Polly” Nooter Roberts (d.2018). “‘Brainsmithing’ African Material Religion” was published in *The Routledge Handbook of Material Religion* in 2023 but the volume was not available until 2024.

“Pape Diop’s *Mystical Graffiti: A Twenty-Year Retrospective*,” based upon new research in Dakar, will appear in this Fall’s issue of *African Arts*. Also forthcoming in 2024 (insha’Allah) are “From Chaos to Cosmos: Of Firenadoes and a Central African Eco-Gothic,” in a festshrift for John Mack produced by the Sainsbury Art Series, University of East Anglia. “‘Audacities of Memory’: Luba Mnemonic Arts and ‘Lukasa Logic’” will appear in the *Brill Handbook on Memory Studies in Africa*. And “‘Disobedient’ Perspectives on African Muslim Arts” is included in *Decolonizing Islamic Art in Africa* from Intellect as distributed by the University of Chicago Press. AL will also present “Congolese *Furta Sacra: Mystical Trajectories of Intercultural Madonnas*” at this summer’s Triennial Symposium on African Art as a glimpse of his current book project on Katangan Christian arts.

Robin Lauren Derby, a Professor in the Department of History at UCLA, recently submitted her revised book manuscript, *Bêtes Noires: Sorcery as History in the Haitian-Dominican Borderlands*, to Duke University Press. She published an article titled “Stealing the Citadel: Icons of Nationhood and Memories of Theft in Haitian Narratives of Kout Kouto” in the *New West Indian Guide* and has an upcoming piece, “Doña Picos’s Story,” in *Revue d’Histoire Haïtienne*. Last year, she served as the senior editor of the *Hispanic American Historical Review*.





Stephen Commins, a UCLA faculty member, has been co-leading an important two-year study on safety and security in African cities. His research delves into how insecurity, crime, and violence deeply affect residents' lives, particularly impacting women, children, and marginalized communities.

The study, which covers Freetown, Nairobi, Mogadishu, Maiduguri, Lagos, and Bukavu, highlights how urban insecurity limits mobility and undermines education, livelihoods, and wellbeing. By employing a mixed-methods approach, including interviews and community consultations, the research reveals that safety concerns extend beyond mere crime to include environmental, social, and infrastructural issues. It emphasizes the role of political settlements and governance in shaping security outcomes and calls for reforms that address both the root causes of insecurity and the integration of informal security mechanisms. This comprehensive analysis provides valuable insights for creating effective urban reform strategies to enhance safety in these rapidly growing cities. Click [here](#) to read more about his research!



SPRING HIGHLIGHTS

NEWS AND EVENTS

One Leg Here, One Leg There

In June, Professor Adotey presented his insightful research paper titled "One Leg Here, One Leg There."

One of the legacies of colonialism is the partition of families, communities, and ethnic groups. This work explores the salience of chieftaincy and rituals in shaping the identities of Ewe-speaking people partitioned by the Ghana-Togo border. The work argues that cultural and symbolic relations are salient in shaping and sustaining a pan-ethnic Ewe identity. This work highlights the temporal and spatial complexity of identities in Africa's past and present through critical reflection on issues of governance that relate to the co-existence of modern states and cross-border chieftaincies and rituals. Click [here](#) to read more about the event!



Professor Adotey presenting his research at UCLA



Sudan: The Lesser Known War

In May, the UCLA African Studies Center together with the Center for Middle East Development, UCLA International Institute, African Studies Center, Burkle Center for International Relations, Political Science, and Department of Public Policy held an insightful webinar discussing the ongoing conflict in Sudan, which began on April 15, 2023, between the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Response Forces (RSF). The webinar explored the state of the war, the dire humanitarian situation, and the international community's efforts to bring peace to the region. This discussion provided attendees with a comprehensive understanding of the crisis and the challenges faced in Sudan's journey towards democracy. Click [here](#) to read more and listen to the podcast.



Image Credit (all images cropped from original):
Andrew McConnell via UNHCR

In April 2024, ASC hosted a panel discussion on US-China in Africa: “Scramble for Africa:” A New Cold War between China and the US? Click [here](#) to read more about the event!

 **UCLA African Studies Center**

Panel Discussion

US-China in Africa

“Scramble for
Africa:” A New Cold
War between China
and the US?

Thursday, April 25, 2024

2:30 PM

**Charles E. Young Research
Library Conference Center**

Free and open to the public

RSVP requested to:
africa@international.ucla.edu

For more information, contact the UCLA African
Studies Center

Email: africa@international.ucla.edu
Phone: 310-825-3686
<https://www.international.ucla.edu/africa/>

Panelists



**The Honorable Jordan
Garcia**
Honorary Consul General of
Guinea



**HE Ambassador Hossam
Eldeen Aly**
Consul General of Egypt



**The Honorable Thandile
Babalwa Sunduza**
Consul General of South
Africa



**The Honorable James O.
Omosa Rwoti**
Deputy Consul General of
Kenya



**HE Dr. Crisantos Obama
Ondo**
Ambassador of the
Republic of Equatorial
Guinea

AFRICAN FUTURISM: THE WORLD OF JEAN-PIERRE BEKOLO

The UCLA Film & Television Archive was delighted to present "African Futurism: The World of Jean-Pierre Bekolo" this past May, featuring films by the innovative Cameroonian writer-director Jean-Pierre Bekolo. The event included insightful Q&A sessions moderated by Professor Shelleen Greene from the UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television. Hosted at the Billy Wilder Theater at the Hammer Museum, this engaging showcase was free and open to the public, offering a unique glimpse into Bekolo's boundary-pushing cinematic vision.

Click [here](#) to read more about the event!





AFRO-AMERICAN CHAMBER
MUSIC SOCIETY ORCHESTRA
& MAESTRO VINCE WOMACK

Juilliard Trained Violinist

**ASHLEY
HORNE**

VIOLIN CONCERTO OPUS 5 NO.2 IN A MAJOR

CHEVALIER FESTIVAL
Concert

Sunday April 21, 2024 @ 3:00pm
Lenart Auditorium, Fowler Museum, UCLA
308 Charles E Young Dr N, Los Angeles, CA 90024


SHAHID OSUNA
Fidel


SHIGERU LOGAN
Violoncel


BRITANY MOORE ALEXANDER
Soprano


LETRICE LAWRENCE
Soprano

Eventbrite [HTTPS://WWW.EVENTBRITE.COM/MANAGE/EVENTS/861179209197/TICKETS](https://www.eventbrite.com/manage/events/861179209197/tickets)

This performance is supported, in part, Third Supervisor District Lindsey Horvath, African studies department UCLA, and by the Los Angeles County Board of supervisors through the department of Arts and Culture.



In April, the African Studies Center co-sponsored a captivating event celebrating the masterpieces of Chevalier de Saint-Georges. The Afro-American Chamber Music Society Orchestra, led by Maestro Vince Womack, performed with virtuoso Juilliard-trained violinist Ashley Horne. Local artists also showcased operatic arias, symphonies, and instrumental sonatas. This memorable event was proudly supported by Third District Supervisor Lindsey Horvath, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors through the LA County Department of Arts and Culture, and the UCLA African Studies Center. Click [here](#) to read more.

CULTURAL RESISTANCE ON ROBBEN ISLAND

**SONGS OF STRUGGLE AND
LIBERATION IN SOUTH AFRICA:
IZINGOMA ZO MZABALAZO
ESIQITHINI!**



In April, the UCLA African Studies Center hosted Neo Lekgotla laga Ramoupi for an enlightening discussion on his book, "Cultural Resistance on Robben Island: Songs of Struggle and Liberation in South Africa." The book delves into the vital role of izingoma zo mzabalazo (struggle songs) in the African liberation struggle against apartheid. Covering the period between the Sharpeville Massacre in 1960 and the closure of Robben Island as a political prison in 1991, it highlights the musical responses of African and black people to the oppressive apartheid regime. Robben Island, known as the Alcatraz of the apartheid state, became a crucible for African liberation movements, whose members, despite differing ideologies, found strength and solidarity in their cultural expressions. Ramoupi argues that culture became a bastion for survival, echoing Govan Mbeki's words: "Cultural activity was not provided by the authorities; we had to provide it ourselves."

CELEBRATING 65 YEARS OF AFRICAN STUDIES AT UCLA ESTABLISHED 1959



ASC Team

Harold Torrence, Director

Erica Anjum, Deputy Director

Sheila Breeding, Budget & Program Manager

Dirsa Deandaru, Communication & Outreach Assistant

Tosin Attah, Graduate Student Assistant

Clarissa Damesyn, Undergraduate Student Assistant

African Arts Journal

Leslie Ellen Jones, Editor

Alexis Coopersmith, Editorial Assistant

Visit our [website](#) for events and announcements!