Festac 77: A Black World's Fair

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Summary

From January 15 to February 12, 1977, Nigeria hosted an extravagant international festival celebrating Africa's cultural achievements and legacies on the continent and throughout its diaspora communities. Named the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (or Festac 77), it was modeled on Léopold Senghor's inaugural Festival Mondial des Arts Nègres (World Festival of Black Arts, or Fesman) held in Dakar in 1966 but expanded its Atlantic horizons of Africanity to include North Africa, India, Australia, and Papua New Guinea. Festac's broader vision of the Black and African world was further bolstered by Nigeria's oil boom, which generated windfall revenues that accrued to the state and underwrote a massive expansion of the public sector mirrored by the lavish scale of festival activities. Festac's major venues and events included the National Stadium with its opening and closing ceremonies; the state-of-the-art National Theatre in Lagos, with exhibits and dance-dramas linking tradition to modernity; the Lagos Lagoon featuring the canoe regattas of the riverine delta societies; and the polo fields of Kaduna in the north, celebrating the equestrian culture of the northern emirates through their ceremonial durbars.

If Festac 77 invoked the history of colonial exhibitions, pan-African congresses, Black nationalist movements, and the freedom struggles that were still unfolding on the continent, it also signaled Nigeria's emergence as an oil-rich regional and global power. Festac's significance lies less in its enduring impact than in what it reveals about the politics of festivals in postcolonial Africa.

Keywords: Festac 77, African festivals, cultural production, pan-Africanism, international expositions, Nigerian National Theatre, African diaspora, Kaduna Durbar, Lagos Regatta

Subjects: Cultural History

Producing, Performing, and Debating the Black World

From January 15 to February 12, 1977, Nigeria hosted an extravagant cultural festival that produced a new vision of postcolonial Africa and redrew the map of the pan-African world. Originally scheduled for 1974 but delayed by poor planning and two military coups, the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture, otherwise known as Festac 77, ultimately succeeded as a formidable logistical achievement, deploying hundreds of millions of

naira; thousands of artists, staff, and official personnel; as well as participants and visitors from home and abroad to celebrate Black cultural heritage. An estimated seventeen thousand Black and African participants from fifty-six countries and diaspora communities arrived in Lagos as painters, sculptors, musicians, dancers, writers, poets, journalists, photographers, and scholars to express, debate, and reaffirm their collective cultural consciousness. Les Ballets Africains (Guinea) shared the limelight with the Danza Nacional de Cuba and the Chuck Davis Dance Company (United States), while Nigerian musicians Fela Kuti and King Sunny Adé played host to the likes of Mighty Sparrow (Trinidad), Tabu Ley Rochereau and "Franco" Luambo Makiadi of (then) Zaire, Giberto Gil (Brazil), Hugh Masekela, and Miriam Makeba, as well as a robust contingent of North American musicians that included Stevie Wonder, Sun Ra, Randy Weston, Donald Byrd, and The Carrol Gospel Singers. Intellectuals like Wole Soyinka (Nigeria), Jacob Festus Adeniyi. Ajayi (Nigeria), and Joseph Ki-Zerbo (then Upper Volta) were joined by Malauna Ron Karenga as spokesperson of the US Colloquium delegation. Other notable African Americans who attended Festac included writers Alice Walker, Audre Lorde, Paule Marshall, and Louise Meriwhether, and artists Faith Ringgold, Samella Lewis, Barkley Hendricks, and Betye Saar.[1]

The story of Festac as a state-sponsored extravaganza both on stage and behind the scenes offers a fascinating case study of pan-African cultural production; a project beset by false starts, conflicts, and no small measure of intrigue; framed by a complex administrative infrastructure headquartered in Lagos; shaped by master narratives and counter narratives; destabilized by regional and global politics; yet triumphantly successful at the end of the day. It is also the story of competing visions of global Blackness and Africanity pertaining to ideologies of race, citizenship, and revolutionary struggle as Cold War rivalries and liberation movements continued to play out in South Africa, Namibia, Angola, and Mozambique. Indeed, Thabo Mbeki led the African National Congress (ANC) delegation to Festac while David Sibeko represented its more radical breakaway Pan-African Congress (PAC). Liberation Front of Mozambique (FRELIMO) and South West African People's Organization (SWAPO) delegations also participated. Placed within the longue durée of imperial world's fairs and colonial exhibitions, and the contemporaneous context of Nigeria's oil boom that lavishly financed the "Grand Jamboree," Festac 77 speaks more broadly to the history and politics of international festivals in postcolonial Africa.[2]

Festac's Predecessors: A Genealogy of the Genre

If Festac 77 was the Second World Black and African Festival of African Arts and Culture, which was the first? Technically Festac was self-consciously fashioned after its predecessor, Léopold Senghor's Premier Festival Mondial des Arts Nègres (First World Festival of Negro Arts), or Fesman, held in Dakar in April 1966.[3] Celebrating the wave of independent new nations that swept the continent in the late 1950s and early 1960s, Senghor used Fesman to wrap these developments within his philosophy of Négritude, inviting 2,500 delegate-participants from thirty African nations as well as Europe, the United States, Latin America, and the Caribbean to express and reflect on the unifying principles of "Negro" art and culture. Fesman's key events and venues included an opening *colloque* of established academics and intellectuals convened in the National Assembly where they engaged "the function and significance of Negro-African art in the life of the people and for the people"; a newly built Musée Dynamique exhibiting Negro visual and plastic arts; a newly constructed National

Theatre where Senegal's *ballet national* set the stage for visiting national dance companies (with America's Katherine Dunham performing central advisory roles); and multiple exhibits featuring Negro African theatre (including Aimé Césaire's *La Tragédie du Roi Christophe* and Wole Soyinka's *Kongi's Harvest*), literature, cinema, music, and even handicrafts in a redeveloped artisans' village.[4] Notable North American musicians, writers, and dancers included Duke Ellington, Marion Williams, Langston Hughes, Amiri Baraka (then Leroi Jones), Josephine Baker, Arthur Mitchell, and Alvin Ailey.[5]

In many ways Fesman saw culture like a state; that is, it objectified the bureaucratic and administrative categories through the festival's architecture, organization, and classificatory schemes.[6] It also reinforced hallowed colonial contrasts between tradition and modernity, rural and urban, male and female, center and periphery, primitive and civilized, not to mention the very opposition between (White) European and (Black) African that Négritude so emphatically essentialized in order to dialectically transcend.[7] Fesman further incorporated these contrasts within formal axes of vertical inclusion and horizontal equivalence according to ethnic (tribal), cultural, national, diasporic, and racial frames, thereby reworking the historic colonial and imperial expositions dating back to Britain's Crystal Palace Exhibition of 1851. Within the pan-African parameters of Négritude, the nation form remained supreme.[8] With a few exceptions, foreign participants arrived in *national* delegations interpolated into Senegal's National Theatre and Assembly. Ethnic cultures showcasing their specificity were absorbed into widening frames of Black national and global unity, as tokens of a type.

The first major Black cultural festival held on independent African soil, Fesman appropriated the very technologies of imperial spectacle that literally gave shape to colonial Africa in its metropoles. Looking backward, it directly descended from a distinguished francophone festival lineage that includes the 1937 Exposition Internationale with its French West Africa exhibition of handicrafts, sculptures, and "tam-tam" drummers; the 1931 Exposition Coloniale with its Senegelese *tirailleurs* and Sudanese village; the 1900 Exposition Universelle, displaying Dahomean, Wolof, and Bambara "native races"; and the Exposition Universelle of 1889, with its inaugural Village Nègre that corralled France's newly colonized African subjects together with their Indochinese and South Pacific counterparts of color.[9] The importance of these collective "hallucinations" in naturalizing France's "mission civilisatrice" is now well understood, as are the pseudo-scientific evolutionary pathways and hierarchies of racial difference on which it rested.[10] Colonial and universal expositions fused ideas with feelings, spectacles with desires, and European disdain for the racially inferior with exotic, erotic, and patriotic passion for possession. Scientific and ethnographic tracts "objectively" ratified the political and economic relations of overrule otherwise experienced through sight, sound, taste, and smell, particularly when "native" foods were cooked and consumed on site.[11] Not a few memoirs of colonial officers identify childhood visits to these "ephemeral vistas" as key triggers of their future careers.[12] But if the literature on world's fairs and expositions underscores their importance in solidifying empire, less attention has focused on their afterlives in the former colonies themselves. Fesman stands out in this respect as an important link between the cultural spectacles of European colonization in the metropoles and those of African self-determination on the continent.

Leftist critics of Négritude characteristically complained of its essentially conservative politics, seeking liberation through cultural affirmation rather than overt political action. Even Wole Soyinka, who participated in Fesman, famously intoned that "a tiger does not proclaim

its tigritude; you know it when he pounces."[13] Indeed, Senghor's valorization of Negro-African civilization as a fusion of reason and emotion, poetics and practice, rhythm and sensibility, even individual and collective personality contra the isolated cogito of Western hyperrational individualism—his critics maintain—ultimately reinforces imperial stereotypes of racial difference and alterity ("emotion is Negro, as reason is Hellenic"), despite his best intentions and philosophical refinements drawing on Karl Marx, Henri Bergson, and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.[14] Similar misgivings applied to Fesman itself. Whether it was the whiff of cultural elitism that accompanied the Dakar festival's classical genres of music, art, and dance; the VIP events that accompanied them; or the philosophy of Négritude that it enshrined, Fesman remained trapped within France's enduring grip. Real liberation would require revolutionary struggle and a more militant notion of Black and African culture.

From July 21 to August 1, 1969, Algeria hosted the First Pan-African Cultural Festival (Panaf) under the auspices of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), inaugurating a Fanonian model of revolutionary culture that broke from Senghor's idea of Négritude to chart an alternative pathway toward Black liberation.[15] Hosted by Colonel Houari Boumédiène, then Chairman of Algeria's revolutionary council, Panaf promoted a new wave of scientific socialism along Marxist-Leninist lines, which was supplanting the more populist socialism of the late 1950s and 1960s modeled on the communalism and humanism of "traditional" African societies to which Fesman's overall vision subscribed.[16] Prominent guests included radical luminaries such as Amilcar Cabral of Guinea-Bissau, Mamadi Keita of Guinea, Stanislas Adotevi of Dahomey, and Miriam Makeba (exiled from South Africa) as well as prominent figures in the Black Panther Party including Stokely Carmichael (then married to Makeba), Emory Douglas, David Hilliard, and the Black Power couple Kathleen and Eldridge Cleaver. The "transnational solidarity" established between these figures and their constituencies extended to the liberation of Palestinians in the Middle East, framing Blackness and Africanity within the primary parameters of colonial and neocolonial occupation and struggle.[17] The Algiers festival struck a double blow against Négritude, challenging its phenotypically restrictive definition of Black culture while disclaiming its reactionary politics and "racist" ideology in heated exchanges and papers delivered during the symposium on "The Role of African Culture in the Struggle of Liberation and African Unity."[18]

The organizers of Festac 77 thus found themselves caught between two competing visions of Black cultural emancipation; Fesman's cultural revolution with its socialist humanism and Panaf's revolutionary culture with its scientific socialism. Officially designated the Second World Black and African Festival, as adumbrated by the Nigerian delegation's "star status" during the Dakar festival, Festac 77 was actually the third, emerging as something of a synthesis from its predecessors. Concretely, the diplomatic challenges of negotiating a middle ground erupted into a widely publicized fracas during the planning stages when Senghor, who was originally recognized as Festac's co-patron (with Nigeria's grand patron Brigadier Murtala Muhammed), threatened to boycott the festival. Still stinging from the Panaf attacks against Négritude, Senghor insisted on relegating North Africans to the status of "nonparticipating observers" in the Festac Colloquium, claiming that Arab-Berber cultures were not fully Negro-African. Nigeria countered by firing Senegal's Alioune Diop as secretary-general of the International Festival Committee, reaffirming Festac's principled commitment to all OAU member states as well as Black countries and communities throughout the diaspora as equal citizens. Senghor eventually backed down from his boycott but lost his prestige and position as co-patron. The decisive resolution of this conflict over culture

represented Senegal's eclipse by Nigeria's growing regional influence, as the headquarters of the Economic Community of West African States shifted from Dakar to Lagos and the rising petro-nation became a global economic power.

Festac's Global Horizons

In many respects the new global parameters of Festac's Black and African world mirrored the powerful pathways of its booming oil economy, which—bolstered by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)—connected Nigeria's high-grade crude to the world's industrial markets according to newly favorable terms of trade. What emerged was less a new definition of Blackness than a shift in the coordinates of racial difference, emphasizing a horizontal axis of Black-White equivalence and inclusion over a vertical axis of oppositional struggle. Underwritten by petro-dollars, Festac was for "Africa," "Black people," and "everybody," as proclaimed on the airwaves in King Sunny Ade's hit Festac song. Festac's capacious vision of Black culture and civilization was less concerned with policing boundaries and more about expanding them. Ideologically, communists from Cuba, capitalists from Côte d'Ivoire, and Marxists from Mozambique could promote competing political economies of culture within a welcoming celebration of common heritage. Heated debates might flare up in the Colloquium, but its *Colloquium Proceedings of the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture* subsumed dissenting voices within a master narrative of Black manifest destiny marching from tradition to modernity.

Festac's global scope and scale was institutionalized by the extensive administrative structure that brought it into being. Two secretariats, national and international, housed corresponding festival committees that oversaw Festac's planning and execution, generating a rich documentary record of its meetings and correspondence.[19] Both committees answered to Nigeria's head of state, who served as Festac's grand patron, and each presided over its corresponding cultural territory. Dr. Garba Ashiwaju, secretary of the National Participation Committee (NPC) and director of the Department of Culture in the Federal Ministry of Information and Culture, recruited representatives of Nigeria's Black cultural heritage to best represent the federal character of the nation from its then nineteen states. The president of the International Festival Committee (IFC), Naval Commander O. P. Fingesi, presided over Festac's Black global empire, divided as it was into sixteen zones comprised of countries or Black communities (see Fgure 1).

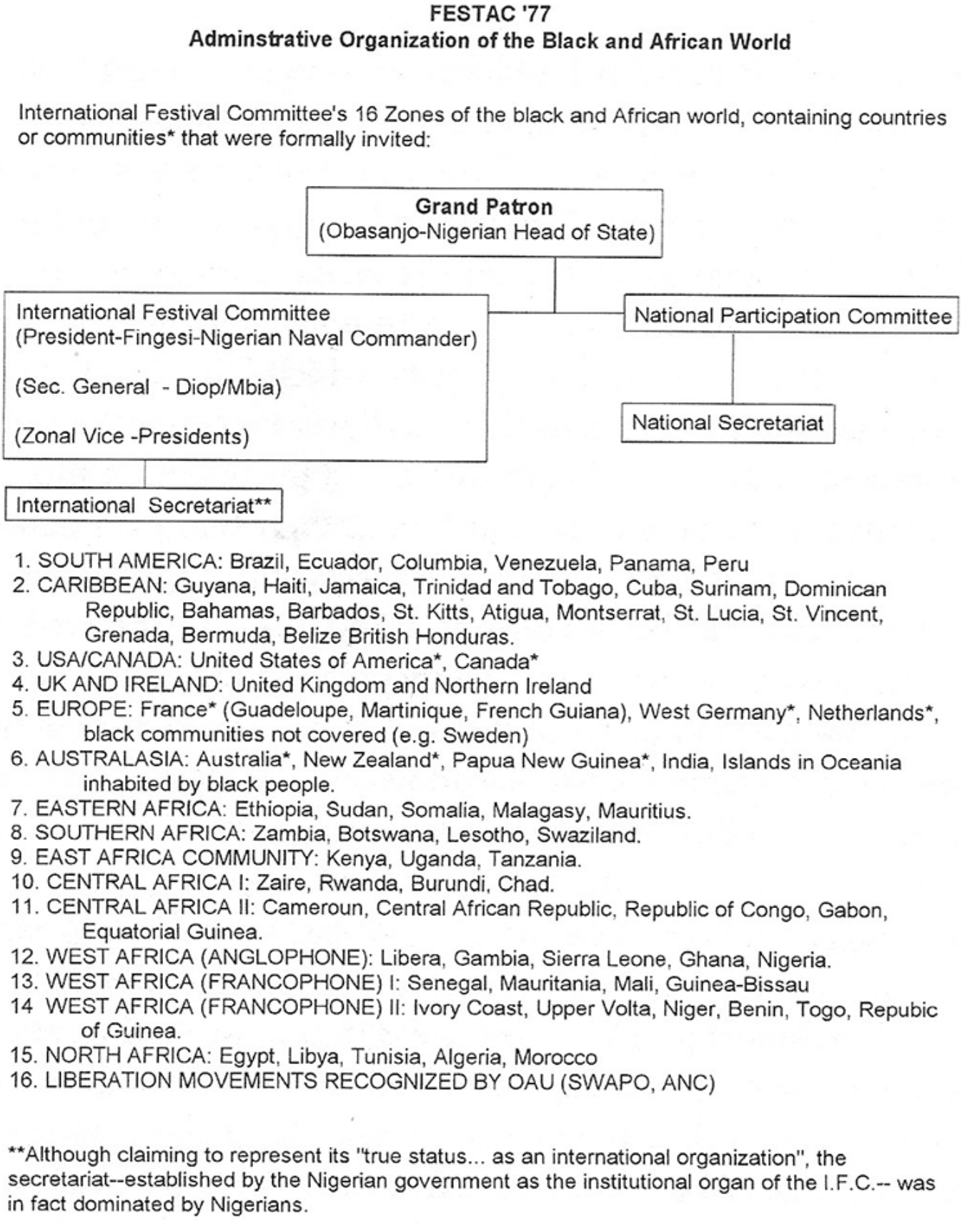

Figure 1. Zones of the Black and African world.

Source: Andrew Apter (2005, p. 57).

Two aspects of this zonal system stand out. First is its expansive horizon of Blackness remapping the African diaspora more fully throughout Latin America, North Africa, and most significantly “Australasia,” which as the sixth zone included Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, India, and “islands in Oceania inhabited by black people.” Indeed, in its widest conception, proposals in the planning meetings to include “four black states” of the Soviet Union and expand the North Africa Zone to include Black communities of the Middle East were advocated but ultimately tabled as too politically explosive, thus revealing the limits of Festac’s imperial ambitions. Second, the distinction between Black countries and communities reveals a subtle but important dimension of the zonal system itself; namely, its status as a primary quasi-political framework taking precedence over the sovereign authorities of the nation-states themselves. Invitations to participate in Festac were extended by the IFC directly to the vice presidents of each of the sixteen zonal committees, thus bypassing heads of state and official diplomatic channels. Such “end runs” around state chains of command angered officials in the US State Department, who withdrew a grant for the North American Zone, and infuriated Sekou Touré of Guinea as well, who demanded direct relations with the IFC instead. For “Festac nation,” primary affiliation was with Black communities rather than the nation states in which they were located, including the freedom fighters of FRELIMO, SWAPO, and the ANC. The “cultural citizenship” of Festac’s estimated seventeen thousand participating artists and intellectuals was further reflected by the Festac identity cards they received in Lagos (referred to as “passports”), the Festac Flag proclaiming pan-African nationhood, and the Festac Anthem evincing allegiance and evoking the imperial anatomy of Marcus Garvey’s Back to Africa movement.

Festac’s expansive global vision was concretized—quite literally—in two of its most emblematic venues; the National Theatre commissioned specifically for the festival, and its accompanying Festac Village where international participants were housed. Located in Lagos, the National Theatre established the exemplary center of Festac’s Black and African world (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Nigerian National Theatre.

Source: Aldukadir N. Said (1977).

Its circular structure resembled the hub of a cosmographic wheel surrounded by the fifty-six flags of its participating countries and communities like a Black United Nations and radiating through architectural “spokes” and superhighways to embrace the global oil economy. Inside, the National Theatre offered state-of-the-art facilities. The Theatre Hall was the major showpiece, providing a well-equipped arena for cultural performances and dance-dramas with five thousand seats, a rotating stage, an orchestral stand, a rampart of stage lights, and a set of earphones at every seat that were hooked up to interpreters’ booths equipped for simultaneous translation into eight major languages. The Theatre also housed radio and television booths to broadcast Festac performances to the outside world and installed closed-circuit televisions in the hallways and foyers to project performances beyond the stage. A smaller Conference Hall with fifteen hundred seats boasted identical translation facilities for foreign delegates and visitors, for it was here that the Festac Colloquium took place, with scholars from around the Black and African world presenting papers on Black civilization. These two halls within the National Theatre served the two most basic components of Festac 77: the choreographed performances of traditional cultures and dramatic arts, and the intellectual exchange between participating scholars. Equally important, however, were two large Exhibition Halls for displaying traditional sculpture, musical instruments, and architectural technology together with modern art works.[20]

In addition to its considerable investment in the National Theatre—officially reported at 144 million naira but alleged to be much more—the petro-state poured money into Festac Village, accommodating Festac’s international participants within a modernist grid that captured the logic and spirit of statist development. An unwitting reversal of the “primitive villages” that housed “savages” in the colonial expositions and world’s fairs of Europe and North America,

Festac Village evoked the very “norms and forms” of modern urban design in the manner of the Parisian *plan masse*, with its *grille des équipements* and *zones d’habitation* imposing uniform technocratic standards over local conditions.[21] Equipped with its own generators, transportation centers, supermarkets, banks, health centers, police posts, public toilets, and fire station, as well as international telephone, telex, and postal services, Festac Village became a model township and master plan of globally connected national development, with major parallel avenues from 1 to 7 crosscut by “closes” labeled A, B, C, D. With over five thousand dwelling units consisting of two- and three-bedroom flats and duplexes, the village was planned for forty-five thousand visitors as well as cadres of Nigerian protocol officers. Transportation needs were served by professionally trained drivers of luxury Festac buses. If the National Theatre projected Black and African civilization throughout the world, Festac Village brought that world to Lagos, where a global Afro-modernity arose from the wellsprings of tradition.

Major Events

Like any major carnival or festival, Festac combined the formality of staged events and choregraphed performances with the more popular, improvised, and spontaneous festivities in Festac Village, on the streets, and in the nightclubs of Lagos, including Fela’s infamous “Shrine” (aka “Kalakuta Republic”) where he held an “anti-Festac.” Photographs by Marilyn Nance, who covered Festac as the North America Zone’s official photo-technician, portray the energy, excitement, and occasional exhaustion of a new Black generation on the move—sight-seeing, shopping in outdoor markets, enjoying Nigerian food, and partying into the night.[22] North American artists like Betye Saar and musicians like Jamaiel Shabaka would later acknowledge Festac’s lasting impact on their lives and work.[23] The official face of Festac, however, marked by opening libations, VIP receptions, and the diplomatic protocols of visiting ministers and heads of state, is seen clearly in three iconic events: the Colloquium, the Regatta, and the closing Grand Durbar held in Kaduna.

The Colloquium

Festac’s Colloquium on Black Civilization and Education was called “the heart of Festac” by the grand patron, Lieutenant General Olusegun Obasanjo, but it was more appropriately its head, an intellectual awakening designed to celebrate the Black world’s heritage, decolonize the Black scholar’s mind once and for all, and articulate Festac’s goals in a program for future action (the Lagos Programme). It featured opening addresses, public lectures, and the reports of five working groups representing thirty-five countries and international bodies such as the OAU, the United National Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and even the Holy See. Topics were organized around five conjunctive themes addressing Black civilization in relation to arts and pedagogy; African languages and literature; philosophy and religion; historical awareness and African systems of government; and science, technology, and mass media. The very organization of these themes manifests an implicit developmental pathway from art to science, and tradition to modernity.

The Festac Colloquium produced 269 papers by delegates from forty-one Black and African “nations” within a master narrative of Black civilization and collective self-determination.[24] In its triumphant march from traditional arts to modern science it reproduced the authority of

the Nigerian state, clothed in traditional custom and costume. This can be seen in the Colloquium's opening ceremonies, initiated by the grand patron himself, who poured a "traditional" libation of water and alcohol to honor unspecified gods and ancestors, as well as important guests including the Yoruba Oba (king) of Lagos, King Moshoeshoe of Lesotho, President Sir Jawara of The Gambia, and President Siaka Stevens of Sierra Leone. Young girls in traditional dress brought calabashes with kola nuts that were broken and distributed among the dignitaries. The grand patron thus established himself as the patron the Black and African world in what served as a distinctively African opening, uniting its members in a quasi-sacred body. The libation was followed by the Festac Anthem, sung by the Festac Choir, with the officials and delegates standing at attention:

> Let a new earth rise
> Let another world be born
> Let a bloody peace
> Be written in the sky.
> REFRAIN: Festac 77 is here.
> Let a second generation
> Full of courage issue forth
> Let a people of loving freedom
> Come to growth.
> REFRAIN: Festac 77 is here.
> Let a beauty full of healing
> And strength of final clenching
> Be the pulsing in our spirits
> And our blood.
> REFRAIN: Festac 77 is here.
> Let the martial songs be written
> Let the dirges disappear
> Let a race of men now rise
> And take control.
> REFRAIN: Festac 77 is here.[25]

The *Colloquium Proceedings* reveals a wide range of often-dissenting views regarding the definition of the Black world, appropriate educational strategies and developmental ideologies, and the politics of the OAU. One can almost feel Nigeria's head of state squirm in his seat as Wole Soyinka lambasted "the robots of leadership politics with their narrow schematism" during his public lecture on "The Scholar in African Society" and condemned those "stooges" in the International Secretariat responsible for rejecting a paper by the Brazilian artist and scholar Abdias do Nascimento because he challenged his country's myth of racial democracy.[26] But underlying and ordering the range of positions and manifesting the power of the Nigerian state—administered as it was by an international Colloquium Committee—were the categories that structured the discursive field itself. The Colloquium established an archive of knowledge, anticipated to fill six volumes, which would attest to the intellectual integrity and unity of Black civilization.[27] If the depth and span of this civilization achieved little consensus among participants, it was categorically imposed and ritually sanctified by the Nigerian state.[28]

The Regatta

Located in the historically elite area of the Queen's Drive foreshore in Ikoyi, Lagos, Festac's Regatta showcased the Nigerian nation-state in microcosm, commemorating the historic war-canoes and associated canoe-houses that developed along the coast and in the Niger Delta during the era of Atlantic slavery, followed by the 19th-century palm oil trade (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Festac Regatta.

Source: Helinä Rautavaara (1977).

Employing the Nigerian navy and police to direct traffic, maintain security, and coordinate transportation of canoes and participants, the Festac task force for the event followed the fanfare and clockwork of a modern naval exercise. Seating arrangements in the Regatta Pavilion reflected state hierarchy, with the head of state and members of the Supreme Military Council taking their places on a central grandstand, flanked by the chief justice of the Federation, members of the Federal Executive Council, traditional rulers, leaders of public institutions and corporations, and finally "any others as directed."[29] Arriving in reverse order and at fifteen-minute intervals, beginning with lesser lights and ending with the inner circle, the audience was brought to order by the national anthem, which was followed by prayer, libation, and the official opening.

After a fanfare by the police band, the parade of boats was scheduled to begin rowing past the grandstand in strict alphabetical order, beginning with Bendel state, followed by canoe contingents from Cross River, Imo, Kwara, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, and Rivers states. Each state contingent was clearly marked by its own specific uniform, flag, and bunting, followed by a "command unit" of one war canoe, two ceremonial canoes, two race gigs, one ambulance boat, and one ordinance boat manned by members drawn from each of the participating

states. The sheer energy of the Regatta, according to one reporter, “turned the lulling lagoon into a tidal wave of canoes, cars and crowds,” with VIP stands spilling over with people.[30] Disrupting the alphabetical order of the boat parade, the Ogun state contingent quite literally jumped the gun in paddling past the grandstand, preempting Bendel state’s opening position in the lineup. Nonetheless, Bendel state followed with two contingents of Ijaw warriors and Itsekiri ceremonial boats, which together stole the show. With faces daubed in charcoal war paint originally designed to terrorize their enemies, the Ijaw team waged elaborate mock battles, invoking the precolonial intertribal wars with war songs, dances, and gunfire. Bendel was followed by Imo, Kwara, Lagos, Ondo, and Rivers states, each with its identifying themes, colors, rhythms, flags, and bunting. Imo featured Igbo masqueraders, Kwara brought calabash floats from its Pategi Regatta (founded in 1953), and Lagos displayed the Agemo masquerade, incorporating an Ijebu ritual of chieftaincy into its ceremonial canoe.

The Festac Regatta clearly invoked an era of coastal trade and canoe diplomacy that was directly associated with the Atlantic economy, although references to the trade in human cargo remained muted. If the Eyo masquerade on the Ondo canoe featured the wide-brimmed hats worn by 18th-century Brazilian slave traders, such references were virtually erased from Festac’s collective memory. Instead, a genealogy of colonial exhibitions and commemorations was listed in the official program and broadcast in running commentary during the event, including one regatta brought from Ijebu in 1896 to perform at the Olympic Games in Paris, another held in Lagos to mark the 1937 coronation of King George VI, and a regatta held in 1960 to celebrate the centenary of Lokoja, where the Royal Niger Company had established its inland headquarters. This is not to suggest that noncolonial regattas were completely ignored. But if the Festac Regatta was explicitly acknowledged as a composite of ritual practices and fishing festivals linked to local deities, kings, and chiefs, these were largely flattened into the imperial framework of pictures at an exhibition.

The Grand Durbar

Featured as “the greatest and biggest event to be staged by Nigeria,” the Grand Durbar was Festac’s grand finale, highlighting its regional, national, and international dimensions.[31] As a regional festival, it brought together emirs, chiefs, and district heads from Nigeria’s ten northern states under the traditional jurisdiction of the Sultan of Sokoto, still recognized as “Commander of the Faithful.”

Figure 4. Grand Durbar.

Source: Helinä Rautavaara (1977).

As a national event, it epitomized the grandeur of Nigeria's cultural heritage. But it was in its global dimensions that the durbar best captured the spirit of Festac, connecting the Black world to the world system by flying in dignitaries and heads of state as guests of the multi-million-naira Durbar Hotel built specifically for distinguished visitors, and by broadcasting the durbar by satellite to worldwide television audiences. At least temporarily, the durbar shifted the exemplary center of Festac's Black and African world from Lagos, Nigeria's sprawling yet congested city on the Atlantic coast, to the northern city of Kaduna, the administrative headquarters of the former Northern Region where spacious vistas and savanna winds offered temporary relief from the bustling south. In a concerted logistical initiative, the federal military government commandeered buses, trains, and Nigeria's national airline to transport many of the estimated two hundred thousand spectators from to Kaduna and back again.[32]

On February 8, 1977, in Kaduna's Murtala Muhammed Square, Lieutenant General Olusegun Obasanjo once again addressed the Black and African world. He spoke from a dais that included UN ambassador Andrew Young of the United States, Prime Minister Robert Llewellyn Bradshaw from Saint Kitts, and seven African heads of state, together with Kaduna's state governor and other top brass from the Supreme Military Council.[33] Praising the horsemanship, drumming, dancing, and acrobatics of the participating emirs and their colorful retinues, Obasanjo framed the durbar's broader significance as model of shared Black culture and community on which to build "a new independent collective future."[34] Bearing the national flag, Nigerian police mounted on horseback stood by as contingents from the northern states and their emirates marched past, each with its own banner and retinue of hunters, warriors, dancers, acrobats, and mounted guards. The Wasan Burtu dancers from Borno state, dressed in animal bird skins to lure game, were joined by the Shehu's standard

bearers, Kanuri “Kazagama” dispatch riders, and Waziri Dumas dancers. Tambari mounted musicians heralded the Emir of Kano, flanked by his Dogorai bodyguards and Yan Lafida cavalry riding horses protected by quilted armors. Camels from Katsina and Bori dancers from Zaria added local variation to Kaduna state. If subordinate leaders and district heads commingled in the festive confusion of music, dance, and dust, seniority was secured by the seats allocated to emirs and chiefs in the State Box, where the paramount traditional rulers from each state retired from the saddle and received the signature charge of the *jafi* salute.

Like any military march-past, inspection, or review, the Grand Durbar established hierarchical relations of seeing and being that privileged the viewers while also making them highly visible, in this case prefiguring future trajectories of political succession and alliance building that would shape the nation for decades to come. In international affairs, Andrew Young’s presence on the stage signaled a weakening of Nigeria’s relations with Britain—which had been strained over the British Museum’s refusal to return the original Benin ivory mask that served as Festac’s trademark—and a stronger alliance with the United States, since Young saw Nigeria as America’s strongest African ally in promoting business on the continent and fighting apartheid in South Africa. From more national and regional perspectives, spectators on the viewing platform included members of the younger and more educated northern military elite whose alliance with the old aristocratic order solidified northern control over the country and its petroleum resources. Seated next to Ambassador Young was Joseph Garba, Nigerian commissioner for external affairs, and Brigadier Sheu Yar’Adua, chief of staff, Supreme Headquarters; both had engineered the 1975 coup against General Yakubu Gowon to place Murtala Mohammed—“scion of the traditional establishment of Kano”—in power and represented the real military muscle of the Obasanjo regime.[35] Yar’Adua in fact belonged to the Fulani establishment in Katsina, in northern Kaduna state. Among other prominent northerners were Kaduna state governor, Group Captain Usman Jibrin, and the chief of army staff, General Theophilus Yakubu Danjumu, also rumored to be an architect of the previous coup. Also present was Muhammadu Buhari, who would soon become oil minister in the Second Republic (1979–1983) before bringing back the military in his 1983 New Year’s coup d’état (and returning as civilian president in 2015). At the time, however, with elections for the Second Republic in the planning stages, this consolidation of northern power—concentrated on the dais of the Grand Durbar’s State Box—provided a telling glimpse into Nigeria’s future.

Discussion of the Literature

Although the academic literature on Festac 77 per se is relatively limited, it falls within the intersection of three general research areas that together chart the historical trajectory in which it unfolds. The first, alluded to in the preceding paragraphs as the “genealogy of the genre,” refers to the robust studies of world’s fairs, universal expositions, and imperial exhibitions beginning with the London Crystal Palace Exhibition of 1851, which established the basic model for those that followed through the 1930s in Britain, France, and the United States. Whereas Jeffrey A. Auerbach’s *The Great Exhibition of 1851: A Nation on Display* provides a detailed breakdown of the planning, financing, and public participation in this monumental achievement as a singular case study, Paul Greenhalgh’s *Ephemeral Vistas: The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World’s Fairs, 1851–1939* shows how this inaugural showcasing of the wealth of nations was organized around Britain’s colonies,

dominions, and dependencies.[36] Two typically interwoven themes continue to characterize this literature, more as a dialectic than a debate. One emphasizes how political ideologies of empire and overrule were produced, consumed, and thereby legitimated.[37] The other emphasizes the spectacular dimensions of world's fairs and expositions in relation to the rise of capitalism and commodity culture, focusing on the fetishism of commodities in more phenomenological terms. Many of these studies draw upon Walter Benjamin's seminal essay "Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century," in which he links the logics of visual consumption in the Paris arcades to those of the world exhibitions, as "places of pilgrimage to the fetish Commodity."[38]

The second major line of research engages the politics of imperial ceremonies and protocols in the colonies, such as durbars, regattas, coronations, Empire Day ceremonies, and marches-past, as well as official arrival and departure ceremonies. These staged events featured dancing "natives" whose cultural performances became abstracted into "tradition" and incorporated into postcolonial festivals like Fesman and Festac—a trend found throughout the continent. A breakthrough article establishing this perspective is Terence Ranger's "Making Northern Rhodesia Imperial: Variations on a Royal Theme, 1924–1938," which explains how the "thin White line" of British overrule in the colony could not be sustained by force alone but *required* rituals of ceremonial interaction that converted "natives" into colonial subjects (and reproduced their status as such) under changing historical conditions.[39] This theme was expanded in another of his seminal essays on "The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa."[40] Helen Callaway's *Gender, Culture and Empire: European Women in Colonial Nigeria* builds on this insight by foregrounding the importance of gender in relation to racial difference across a broader range of staged and formalized interactions, a theme more extensively surveyed and eroticized in Ann McClintock's *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*.[41]

The transformation of colonial ceremonies into national festivals in postcolonial Africa forms the third body of research pertaining to Festac 77. Combining European and African traditions into hybrid productions, these festivals cover a broad range of performative genres including state ceremonial, independence jubilees, commemorative reenactments, cultural heritage days, durbars, national dance theatre troupes, and, more recently, music and film festivals.[42] As with studies of European world's fairs and expositions, what began with a scholarly focus on political authority and ideology has shifted more toward performance, contestation, and the negotiation of bodies personal and collective within the nation state. A correlative interpretive focus tracks the historical shift from state-funded festivals in the early years of independence through the seventies—representing the commanding heights of dirigiste development—to the rise of corporate funding and branding associated with structural adjustment and neoliberal reform. A paradigmatic study of the transformation itself is Jesse W. Shipley, *Trickster Theatre: The Poetics of Freedom in Urban Africa*, a historical ethnography of how the national theatre in Ghana became detached from the state and more market driven, abandoning failed modernist dreams for more fractured and reflexive forms of parody and critique.[43] Similar trajectories in dance, theatre, and music emphasizing the poetics and politics of performativity are rigorously explored in Hélène Neveu Kringelbach, *Dance Circles: Movement, Morality and Self-Fashioning in Urban Senegal*; Kelly M. Askew, *Performing the Nation: Swahili Music and Cultural Politics in Tananzia*; and Laura Edmonson, *Performance and Politics in Tanzania: The Nation on Stage*.[44]

Studies of African festivals emphasizing contests for power between the nation and its ethnic subgroups have been generated by a productive research group under the direction of Carola Lentz at Johannes Gutenburg University, Mainz. In special themed sections on jubilees and national days in Africa in *Nations and Nationalism* and *Anthropology Southern Africa*, Lentz, her students, and colleagues develop fine-grained analyses of the fault lines of African nation building as reflected, contested, and mediated by its festivals, including the counter-histories and counter-memories that they produce.[45] Innovative work in African art history also highlights relevant aesthetic trends, artistic philosophies, and ideological debates about modernity and cultural heritage that informed Festeac's national and international art exhibits. Peter Probst's *Osogbo and the Art of Heritage: Monuments, Deities, and Money* details the trenchant criticisms of the famous Osogbo School artists during Festac, when they were accused of ratifying European nostalgia for a "now-vanquished colonial past," and shows how Festac established conventions of Nigerian art still formative in 21st-century aesthetic practice. Chika Okeke Agulu's *Postcolonial Moderism: Art and Decolonization in Twentieth-Century Nigeria* provides valuable historical background to the artistic debates in Festac by charting the impact of the Zaria Art Society and its philosophy of "natural synthesis" on the varieties of Nigerian modernism from the late 1950s to the Biafran Civil War.[46]

Festac Studies

So what exactly is Festac 77 as an object of knowledge and a subject of research? How does one distinguish the "festival" itself from its many social, economic, political, and historical contexts or establish its singularity in the first place? These questions lie at the core of the scholarly literature on Festac itself and break to the fore in recent innovative approaches that trouble the very boundaries between intertextual media, primary and secondary sources, linear and non-linear narratives, and distinct festivals themselves. In what appears to be the only academic monograph on Festac 77, Andrew Apter's *The Pan-African Nation: Oil and the Spectacle of Culture in Nigeria*, the "story" of the festival is constructed less as a comprehensive narrative of exhibits and events and more as a window into the paradoxes of Nigeria's oil economy in which the spectacle of national growth and development occluded the underlying absence of a productive base. Subsequent experimental initiatives have gone further in reframing Festac's parameters. In "Panafest: A Festival Complex Revisited," Dominque Malaquais and Cédric Vincent argue that Festac's integrity cannot be meaningfully separated from three preceding festivals to which it was inextricably linked—not only Fesman and Panaf but also Zaire 74, which together form a "festival complex" they dub "Panafest." What they reveal are the "entangled" networks of inter-festival participation and planning that together constitute an "entity," which they dynamically map in their Panafest Archive (see "Primary Sources").[47] An even more radical approach to Festac is the iconoclastic *Festac '77: 2nd World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture*, edited by Ntone Edjabe and colleagues, which combines the iconic title and cover of Festac's popular souvenir publications with contemporaneous primary and secondary images, newspaper articles, interviews and documents, as well as new scholarly writing; the Chimurenga collective describes it as "decomposed, an-arranged and reproduced." Likened to the mix-tape that can be accessed on their website to complement the book, this collection captures the rich visual and textual polyvocalities of Festac on stage, behind the scenes, and in the public spheres of host and participating countries and communities in ways that recapitulate how Festac was experienced.[48] Frustrating for more conventional scholarship is this assemblage's lack of any

introductory material on the rationale (or anti-rationale) for spearheading this “an-arranged” format, its lack of full citation of document sources, and its sporadic pagination, notwithstanding that such incompleteness is partly a principled critical strategy.

In addition to Festac’s own official publications on Black and African culture, a growing number of memoir-essays and articles by Festac officials, participants, and visitors from Nigeria and abroad are shining new light on its contradictions, legacies, and global impact. Femi Osofisan, who (with Dapo Adelugba) co-selected and co-directed Nigeria’s dramatic productions in Festac and later served as director of CBAAC (Center for Black and African Arts and Civilization), portrays the tension between creative license and state intervention within the national theatre as the literal architecture of the nation both enabled and obstructed its celebration of culture. Wole Soyinka, who played a central role in brokering the truce between Nigeria and Senegal after Senghor’s professed boycott, locates Festac’s principal fault line within the Cold War, following its aftershocks throughout regional, religious, and even racial blocs. More recently, Denis Ekpo identifies the key contradiction within the cultural nationalism of Afro-modernity, an ideology promoted by Festac that preached economic development yet enabled dictators like Idi Amin and Mobutu Sese Seko to further consolidate ruthless regimes and kleptocracies.[49] This juxtaposition of ambitious promises and broken dreams characterizes the memoire essays that highlight the disjunct between the high expectations of cultural revival and its dwindling support in the years that followed.[50]

Festac’s dwindling legacies in Nigeria, however, may have had a greater impact on a global scale. In what is perhaps a significant contrast, the same genre of memoir-essays written by African American participants attests to transnational vectors of Black cultural nationalism and empowerment that rekindled the Black arts and Black Power movements. In addition to the testimonies of individual artists, writers, and musicians attesting to Festac’s lasting impact on their work, scholars like Romi Crawford emphasize the *generative* power of collective celebration in Lagos as an affective and consciousness-raising experience that resonated with art activists in Chicago.[51] This important perspective, combining the phenomenology of Festac with the transnational social and political networks that it activated and reactivated, represents a new and promising direction in reassessing its historical impact.

Primary Sources

One of the immediate outcomes following Festac was the establishment of the Center for Black and African Arts and Civilization (CBAAC)—initially housed in the National Theatre and subsequently moved to 36/38 Broad Street in Lagos—to serve as Festac’s official archive and repository of brochures, flyers, programs, architectural blueprints, photographs, and souvenirs and its museum of associated material artefacts. In addition to the extensive minutes of the National Planning Committee and the International Festival Committee meetings, CBAAC holds unedited audiotapes of the Festac Colloquium, including unpublished discussions and debates, as well as a broad range of films that include those covering the festival itself and older films of cultural festivals organized by Nigeria’s state councils for arts and culture and its overarching National Council for Arts and Culture. This collection illuminates how Festac’s national participants were recruited from competitive culture festivals organized by each of its states. Issues of preservation afflict the film archive, and some films and videos were shot in unusual formats (e.g., low-band) that require equipment not always available for their playback. A second valuable Nigerian archive is located in the Library

of the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (located at 13/15 Kofo Abayomi St., Eti-Osa, Lagos), which contains an extensive clip file of contemporaneous radio dispatches and newspaper articles on Festac from a variety of regional newspapers around the country.

Selected Festac primary source documents can be found scattered throughout various collections of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture (in New York City), the UNESCO archives in Paris, the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library, and the Howard University Archives, but none appear to contain files or collections dedicated to Festac itself. The online Panafest Archive more recently developed under the direction of Dominique Malaquais and Cédric Vincent, however, brings together a wealth of primary sources on Festac 77, together with the three proceeding festivals (Zaire 74, Panaf 69, and Fesman 66) that together form a festival complex. Using innovative digital and conceptual architecture to capture the linkages and networks throughout the festival complex, the archive's images, documents, recorded interviews, and films are organized around (a) the four festivals, (b) their political contexts, (c) the wealth of artistic productions, (d) urbanism and festival architecture, and (e) Afro-descendent dynamics. The Panafest Archive doubles as a repository of sources, including extensive video interviews with former participants, and as a multimediated form of digital history in its own right, providing new interpretive perspectives from its nonlinear design. The physical Panafest archive is housed in the Musée Quai Branly in Paris, under 35AP1-143.

Another helpful online resource is Abdul Alkalimat's digital archive of Festac materials, inspired by his own participation as a US delegate to the Festac Colloquium. His selective primary sources are organized into (a) festival documents and books; (b) Festival News (the official Festac newsletter); (c) photo documentation; (d) video documentation; (e) the US Colloquium Panel (with audio); (f) selected papers presented; (g) newspapers, magazines, and scholarly articles; and (h) Festac's legacy.

Links to Digital Materials

Archives

Festac Archive of Abdul Alkalimat *<http://alkalimat.org/festac/>*.

Panafest Archive *<http://webdocs-sciences-sociales.science/panafest/>*.

Video/Film

"Festac 77: Lagos Festival *<http://www.unesco.org/archives/multimedia/document-29>*."

Festac Opening Ceremony *<https://reuters.screenocean.com/record/1055719>*.

Festac Regatta *<https://reuters.screenocean.com/record/238104>*.

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Further Reading

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Notes

1. Ntone Edjabe, Graeme Arendse, Ziphozenkosi Dayile, Duduetsang Lamola, Stacy Hardy, Bongani Kona, Ben Verghese, Moses März, Akin Adesokan, Mamadou Diallo, Dominique Malaquais, Terry Ayugi, Andrea Meeson, and Eva Munyiri, eds., *Festac ’77: Decomposed, An-Arranged and Reproduced by Chimurenga* (London: Chimurenga and Afterall Books, 2019).

2. For a historical ethnography of Festac 77 see Andrew Apter, *The Pan-African Nation: Oil and the Spectacle of Culture in Nigeria* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

3. For an excellent collection of essays on the Dakar festival see David Murphy, ed., *The First World Festival of Negro Arts, Dakar 1966: Contexts and Legacies* (Liverpool, UK: Liverpool University Press, 2016). See also Tobias Wofford, “Exhibiting a Global Blackness: The First World Festival of Negro Arts,” in *New World Coming: The Sixties and the Shaping of Global Consciousness*, ed. Karen Dubinsky, Sean Mills, Scott Rutherford, Susan Lord, and Catherine Krull (Toronto, ON: Between the Lines, 2009), 179–186.

4. See David Murphy’s panoramic introductory chapter, “The Performance of Pan-Africanism: Staging the African Renaissance at the First World Festival of Negro Arts,” in *The First World Festival of Negro Arts, Dakar 1966: Contexts and Legacies*, ed. David Murphy (Liverpool, UK: Liverpool University Press, 2016), 1–42. For discussions of Aimé Cesaire’s play, *The Tragedy of King Christophe*, performed at Fesman, see Christina S. McMahon, “Theater and the Politics of Display: *The Tragedy of King Christophe* at Senegal’s First World Festival of Negro Arts,” in *Modernization as Spectacle in Africa*, ed. Peter J. Bloom, Stephan F. Miescher, and Takyiwaa Manuh (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2014), 287–306; and Brian Quinn, “Staging Culture: Senghor, Malraux and the Theatre Programme at the First World Festival of Negro Arts,” in *The First World Festival of Negro Arts, Dakar 1966: Contexts and Legacies*, ed. David Murphy (Liverpool, UK: Liverpool University Press, 2016), 83–96. For Fesman’s commitment to Senghor’s philosophy of Négritude, see Onuora Nzekwu, “Nigeria, Negritude and the World Festival of Negro Arts,” *Nigeria Magazine* 89 (1966): 80–94. For a more general study of the aesthetic politics of Fesman, see Lauren Taylor, “The Art of Diplomacy in Dakar: The International Politics of Display at the 1966 *Premier Festival des Arts Nègres*” (PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2019).

5. The African American contingent that participated in Fesman was infiltrated by the CIA via the American Society of African Culture (AMSC), which served as a CIA “soft power” front. For evidence that the chartered flight for the US contingent was financed by the CIA, see Dominique Malaquais and Cédric Vincent, “PANAFEST: A Festival Complex Revisited,” in *The First World Festival of Negro Arts, Dakar 1966: Contexts and Legacies*, ed. David Murphy (Liverpool, UK: Liverpool University Press, 2016), 197–198.

6. James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: Why Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998).

7. Léopold Sédar Senghor, *Liberté 3: Négritude et civilisation de l’universel* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1971).

8. For a historicized theorization of the nation form, see Etienne Balibar, “The Nation Form: History and Ideology,” in *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, ed. Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein (New York: Verso, 1991), 86–106.

9. Dana S. Hale, *Races on Display: French Representations of Colonized Peoples, 1886–1940* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2008). See also Lauren Cross, Lauren Seitz, and Shannon Walter, “The First of Its Kind: A Cultural History of the Village Nègre,” *Digital Literature Review* 3 (2016): 21–31.

10. Christopher L. Miller, “Hallucinations of France and Africa in the Colonial Exhibition of 1931 and Ousmane Socé’s ‘Mirages de Paris,’” *Paragraph* 18, no. 1 (1995): 39–63.

11. Lauren Janes, *Colonial Food in Interwar Paris: The Taste of Empire* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), 127–159.

12. Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas: The* Expositions Universelles*, Great Exhibitions and World’s Fairs, 1851–1939* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1988). Surrealist poet and Africanist ethnographer Michel Leiris also highlighted the ways Africa was “produced” by the European imagination. See Michel Leiris, *l’Afrique fantôme* (Paris: Gallimard, 1999) and also his 1930 article “l’Oeil de l’ethnographe,” reprinted in Michel Leiris, *Zébrage* (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), 26–34.

13. Recollected in Wole Soyinka, “The Scholar in African Society,” in *Colloquium Proceedings of the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture*, vol. 1, ed. A. U. Iwara and Englebert Mveng (Lagos, Nigeria: Federal Military Government of Nigeria, 1977), 52–53.

14. Souleymane Bachir Diagne, *African Art as Philosophy: Senghor, Bergson and the Idea of Negritude*, trans. Chike Jeffers (London: Seagull Books, 2011).

15. Sam Anderson, “‘Negritude Is Dead’: Performing the African Revolution at the First Pan-African Cultural Festival (Algiers, 1969),” in *The First World Festival of Negro Arts, Dakar 1966: Contexts and Legacies*, ed. David Murphy (Liverpool, UK: Liverpool University Press, 2016), 133–150; and Andrew Apter, “Beyond Negritude: Black Cultural Citizenship and the Arab Question in FESTAC 77,” in *The First World Festival of Negro Arts, Dakar 1966: Contexts and Legacies*, ed. David Murphy (Liverpool, UK: Liverpool University Press, 2016), 151–165.

16. For a discussion of these two “waves” of socialism in Africa see Andrew Apter, “Socialism, African,” in *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, vol. 7, 2nd ed., ed. William A. Darity Jr. (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2008), 638–642.

17. Samir Meghelli, “From Harlem to Algiers: Transnational Solidarity between the African-American Freedom Movement and Algeria, 1962–1978,” in *Black Routes to Islam*, ed. Manning Marable and Hishaam D. Aidi (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 99–119. See also Kathleen N. Cleaver, “Back to Africa: The Evolution of the International Section of the Black Panther Party, 1969–1972,” in *The Black Panther Party (Reconsidered)*, ed. Charles E. Jones (Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 2009), 211–254.

18. For eyewitness accounts of these heated debates see Nathan Hare, “Algiers 1969: A Report on the Pan-African Cultural Festival,” *Black Scholar* 1, no. 1 (1960): 2–10; and George W. Shepherd, “Reflections on the Pan-African Culture Conference in Algiers,” *Africa Today* 16, no. 4 (1969): 1–3.

19. These papers are housed in the Centre for Black and African Arts and Culture (CBAAC) in Lagos.

20. Duro Oni, “FESTAC ’77 and the Nigerian National Theatre Legacy,” in *Striking Expressions: Theatre and Culture in National Development*, ed. Duro Oni (Maiduguri, Nigeria: Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists, 2017), 69–84.

21. Paul Rabinow, *French Modern: Norms and Forms of the Social Environment* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989), 4–5.

22. Fanny Robles and Marilyn Nance, "Marilyn Nance: Remembering FESTAC," *Nka: Journal of Contemporary African Art* 42–43 (November 2018): 164–168. See also Suzanne Enzerink, "Global Black Culture: Celebrating Americanness at Festac 77," *Black Perspectives, the Blog of the African American Intellectual Society*, January 13, 2017.

23. Camille Mary Weiner, *Betye Saar: FESTAC 77* (Culver City, CA: Roberts Projects, 2018).

24. A. U. Iwara and Englebert Mveng, *Colloquium Proceedings of the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture*, vol. 1 (Lagos, Nigeria: Federal Military Government of Nigeria, 1977).

25. Akin Euba, "Text Setting in African Composition," *Research in African Literatures* 33, no. 2 (2001): 126. As he points out, Euba composed the music for the anthem's text, which was adapted from African American poet Margaret Walker's "For My People."

26. Soyinka, "The Scholar in African Society," 45.

27. All of the papers were eventually published in a ten-volume collection: Joseph Ohiomogben Okpaku, Alfred Esimatemi Opubor, and Benjamin Olatunji Oloruntimehin, eds., *The Arts and Civilization of Black and African Peoples* (Lagos, Nigeria: Center for Black and African Arts and Civilization, 1986), organized into ten themes: Black civilization and the arts, philosophy, literature, African languages, historical awareness, pedagogy, religion, science and technology, African government, and mass media.

28. For an illuminating account of how dissenting voices were sanitized in the General Report of the Colloquium, see Moyibi Amoda, *Festac Colloquium and Black World Development* (Lagos, Nigeria: Nigerian Magazine Special Publications, 1978).

29. "Seating Programme for Traditional Regatta," Major General I. B. M. Haruna, Federal Commissioner for Information and Chairman, National Participation Committee for FESTAC, to His Excellency, Head of Federal Military Government, Lt-Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo, January 19, 1977, NPS Regatta file, CBAAC, Lagos, 40–41.

30. Precious Benson, "FESTAC Viewing," *The Punch* (Ikeja), January 31, 1977.

31. "FESTAC's Triumphant End," *West Africa* 3110, February 14, 1977, 311.

32. Estimates varied from one hundred thousand to two hundred thousand in the Nigerian press, while the *New York Times* offered the more conservative figure of forty thousand. See John Darnton, "Young Attends a Vast Pageant in Nigeria," *New York Times*, February 9, 1977, 13.

33. The African leaders were Presidents Ahmadu Ahidjo of Cameroon, Aghostinho Neto of Angola, Mouktar Ould Daddah of Mauritania, Seyni Koutche of Niger, Mobutu Sese Seko of (then) Zaire, Gnassingbé Eyadema of Togo, and Sangoule Lamizana of (then) Upper Volta.

34. "Durbar Recaptures Our Identity," *Nigerian Chronicle* (Calabar), February 10, 1977, 15.

35. Richard A. Joseph, *Democracy and Prebendal Politics in Nigeria: The Rise and Fall of the Second Republic* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 130.

36. Jeffrey A. Auerbach, *The Great Exhibition of 1851: A Nation on Display* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999); and Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas*.

37. See Zeynup Çelik, *Displaying the Orient: Architecture of Islam at Nineteenth-Century World's Fairs* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992); Robert W. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876–1916* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984); Hale, *Races on Display*; Patricia Morton, *Architecture and Representation at the 1931 Colonial Exposition, Paris* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000); Pascale Blanchard and Sandrine Lemaire, *Culture colonial: La France conquise par son empire, 1871–1931* (Paris: Éditions Autrement, 2003); and Sylvanie Leprun, *Le théâtre des colonies: Scénographie, acteurs, et discours de l'imaginaire dans les expositions, 1855–1937* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1986).

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39. Terence O. Ranger, “Making Northern Rhodesia Imperial: Variations on a Royal Theme, 1924–1938,” *African Affairs* 79, no. 316 (1980): 349–373. Further variations on this theme that identify the conversion of these colonial ceremonies into icons of postcolonial tradition include Ralph Austen, “Tradition, Invention, and History: The Case of the Ngondo (Cameroon),” *Cahiers d’Études Africaines* 126, no. 32-2 (1992): 285–309.

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