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Yinka Shonibare's G.A.S. Foundation Announces Ambitious 2025–26 Programme Exploring African and Afro-diasporic Art Archives

Symposium to be Held During Lagos Art Week, 4–5 November 2025

Guest Artists Space (G.A.S.) Foundation and Yinka Shonibare Foundation (Y.S.F.), both founded by British-Nigerian artist **Yinka Shonibare CBE RA**, are pleased to announce the 2025–26 edition of ***Re:assemblages***, a dynamic, **multi-year programme** designed to foster collaboration and experimentation across African art library collections. This ambitious initiative reimagines the stewardship and activation of African and Afro-diasporic art archives, and will result in a rich constellation of **international convenings, symposia, micro-publications**, and a **research intensive**.

Re:assemblages was developed in response to the Picton Archive, housed at the G.A.S. Foundation in Lagos. The archive contains a significant portion of the personal library of **Emeritus Professor of African Art John Picton and Sue Picton,** spanning African and international art, history, archaeology, architecture, and anthropology. It offers a vital entry point for rethinking African modernisms, contemporary art, and postcolonial knowledge production within the shifting geopolitical and intellectual currents of the 20th century.

The *Re:assemblages* programme will further expand enquiry by exploring alternative knowledge systems, archival futures, and the evolving landscape of art libraries and publishing in Africa. It will forge vital connections between artists, publishers, and research institutions, whilst addressing enduring challenges surrounding visibility, access, and the colonial legacy embedded in archival practice.

Central to this edition of *Re:assemblages* is a **two-day symposium**, taking place in Lagos, Nigeria, on **4–5 November 2025** during **Lagos Art Week**. Hosted by G.A.S. and Y.S.F., the symposium will bring together archivists, artists, curators, and cultural practitioners for a series of conversations, panels, and site-specific interventions.

The symposium will focus on four central themes:

- **Ecotones** will explore spaces where different ways of living, knowing, and relating to nature and culture come together and influence each other.
- **The Short Century** invites a reappraisal of the role of African liberation and independence movements in shaping transnational art and publishing between 1945 and 1994.
- **Annotations** will use experimental literary strategies to explore alternative ways of reading history.
- **The Living Archive** emphasises embodied, artist-led archival methods that prioritise community, memory, and ongoing transformation.

The symposium will also serve as the inaugural public gathering of the **African Arts Libraries Lab (AAL Lab)**, a new network convened by G.A.S. and Y.S.F. that unites a dynamic group of African arts libraries and publishers across cities including Lagos, Dakar, Marrakesh, Cairo, Nairobi, Cape Town, and Limbe.

The programme is curated by **Naima Hassan**, with contributions from **Maryam Kazeem**, **Ann Marie Peña**, and **Jonn Gale**, and funding from the **Terra Foundation of American Art**. The programme advisory committee

comprises **Dr. Beatrix Gassman de Sousa**, **Natasha Ginwala**, **Dr. Rangoato Hlasane**, **Serubiri Moses**, and **Dr. Oluwatoyin Zainab Sogbesan**.

Programme Highlights

Re:assemblages Symposia: A two-day event taking place in Lagos, Nigeria on 4–5 November 2025, bringing together archivists, researchers, writers, and cultural practitioners to explore 20th and 21st century African and Afro-diasporic art archives through panels, conversations, and site-responsive interventions, followed by a second symposium in autumn 2026 that will workshop a toolkit of adaptive archival practices shaped by the programme's outcomes.

African Arts Libraries Lab (AAL Lab): A network of African arts libraries and publishers across cities such as Lagos, Dakar, Nairobi, Cairo, and Cape Town, focused on collaborative research, capacity-building, and pioneering preservation models. Through the **Affiliates Network**, the Lab extends to arts libraries, publishers, and research institutions worldwide that hold significant African and Afro-diasporic collections.

AAL Lab Convenings: A series of public events hosted by AAL Lab members across multiple locations to share research, foster dialogue, and amplify African archival voices. Each convening will culminate in a micro-publication that documents its outcomes, advancing new approaches to archival storytelling and knowledge sharing. The convenings will also contribute to the *Archive Futures Repository*, a living digital resource offering tools that support evolving models of archival stewardship and activation.

The Short Century Intensive: A research fellowship hosting five fellows exploring overlooked narratives and transnational archival traces of African liberation and independence movements from the period 1945–1994.

ENDS

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Further Background Information: guestartistspace.com | yinkashonibarefoundation.com

Full *Re:assemblages* 2025–26 programme concept note:
https://www.yinkashonibarefoundation.com/Portals/0/Reassemblages%202025-26%20Programme%20Concept%20.pdf

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NOTES TO EDITORS

About Y.S.F. and G.A.S.

Yinka Shonibare Foundation (UK) and Guest Artists Space Foundation (Nigeria) were established in 2019 by the eminent British-Nigerian artist Yinka Shonibare CBE RA.

Yinka Shonibare Foundation (Y.S.F.) is a UK-registered charity (charity no. 1183321) that fundraises, develops international partnerships and programmes, and offers strategic support and oversight to Guest Artists Space Foundation.

Guest Artists Space (G.A.S.) Foundation is a Nigeria-based non-profit that delivers residencies and public programmes across two sites: one in the heart of Lagos, and another on a rural working farm in Ijebu, Ogun State.

Advisory Committee

Dr. Bea Gassmann de Sousa is a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow at the UCL School of European Languages, Society and Culture in London. She is a collaborative advisor for Tate Modern's forthcoming exhibition Nigerian Modernism in October 2025, and the academic editor/ advisor for a digital East African art history platform. Her specialist focus is on the importance of continental African archives and scholarship contributions to global modernity. She is an active member of the Black Europe research group at SELCS and a founder-member of the Multiple Artistic Mobilities scholarly network of Germanophone and continental African universities (2020 -).

Natasha Ginwala is a curator, researcher, and writer. She is co-curator of Sharjah Biennial 16 (2023–25) and Artistic Director of Colomboscope, Sri Lanka. Former roles include Associate Curator at Large at Gropius Bau, Berlin, and Artistic Director of the 13th Gwangju Biennale. Her curatorial practice spans major international platforms including documenta 14, Berlin Biennale, and Venice Biennale.

Dr. Rangoato Hlasane is an artist and researcher whose work intersects cultural practice and socio-spatial justice. He is co-founder of Keleketla! Library in Johannesburg and has presented work at documenta fifteen, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, and the Berlin Biennale. He holds a PhD in African Literature and currently serves as Assistant Professor at the Academy of Media Arts, Cologne.

Dr. Oluwatoyin Zainab Sogbesan is an architect, cultural historian, and heritage specialist. She is the founder of Àsà Heritage Africa Foundation and has served as a curator, consultant, and lecturer across Nigeria, the US, and Europe. Her work focuses on heritage preservation, inclusive interpretation of culture, and intangible heritage in African contexts. She holds a PhD from City University London and numerous international fellowships.

Serubiri Moses is a Ugandan curator, editor, and writer based in New York. His work explores African art theory and exhibition histories, with a focus on collective teaching and listening as epistemic practice. He teaches part-time at Hunter College (CUNY) and is visiting faculty at Bard College's Centre for Curatorial Studies. He has held academic positions at institutions including NYU, the New Centre for Research and Practice, and Dark Study, and has lectured internationally. His curatorial projects include exhibitions at MoMA PS1 (2021), the Hessel Museum (2019), and KW Institute, Berlin (2018). A former research fellow at the University of Bayreuth, he holds an MA from Bard College and is an alumnus of the Àsìkò International Art Programme. He is a contributing editor at *e-flux journal* and his forthcoming book, *Judith Namala: A Novella*, will be published by CARA.

Planning Committee

Moni Aisida is the Executive Director of G.A.S. Foundation. With a background in fintech, health, and the arts, including roles at SMO Contemporary, Art X Lagos, and Affinity Gallery, she is known for advancing emerging art practices and institutions.

Jonn Gale is a London-based ethnobotanist whose interdisciplinary practice explores ecotonal lines—zones of transition between divergent forms of knowledge. She is undertaking a practice-led, AHRC/CHASE-funded PhD at Birkbeck, University of London, and the Linnean Society, investigating the contributions of Black naturalists to 18th- and 19th-century natural knowledge.

Naima Hassan is the Curator of Re:assemblages and Associate Curator and Archivist, G.A.S. Library and Picton Archive. Through Re:assemblages, she leads the development of a transnational platform that brings together artists, scholars, communities, and institutions to critically engage with African art archives and library collections. She co-curated Annotations, the programme's first chapter, with Maryam Kazeem.

Belinda Holden leads on programme, partnerships, fundraising, and governance for both Y.S.F. and G.A.S. In 2020, she launched Guest Projects Digital and, in 2022, helped establish the G.A.S. residency programme in Lagos alongside Yinka Shonibare CBE RA.

Magda Kaggwa is the Communications and Projects Manager at Y.S.F., having joined the organisation in 2021. With a background in cultural production, programme delivery, communications, and stakeholder engagement within the arts and culture sector, she has successfully led the production of ambitious artistic programmes, commissions, exhibitions, and public events.

Maryam Kazeem is a writer and founder of iranti press, a Lagos-based publishing project that convenes FESTAC 2077: A Speculative Writing Exercise. She holds an MFA in Creative Writing from CalArts, where she also taught Black cultural and performance studies as a Teaching Fellow. She co-curated Annotations with Naima Hassan.

Ann Marie Peña is a curator, cultural producer, and policy advisor focused on social justice and community-engaged artistic practices. She is Chair of the Curatorial Programme and a founding trustee of Y.S.F., as well as Curator of Special Projects (at large) for the National Gallery of Canada. She is currently pursuing a doctorate on community-engaged collection care at Tate.

Siti Osman oversees philanthropy and fundraising at Y.S.F. and G.A.S. She has held senior roles at major UK arts institutions including Tate, Southbank Centre, the Royal College of Music, and the National Gallery.

About the Terra Foundation

Founded in 1978, the **Terra Foundation for American Art** supports organisations and individuals locally and globally. With offices in Chicago and Paris, it advances intercultural dialogue and transformative practices that expand narratives of American art through its grants, collection, and initiatives.

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