

BALTIMORE SCHOOL
for the **ARTS**

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MEDIA CONTACT:
Stephanie Jayakanthan
The Baltimore School for the Arts
sjayakanthan@bsfa.org
443-642-5174 (o)
520-233-3947 (c)

The Baltimore School for the Arts Celebrates African Culture with Interdisciplinary Festival

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND, USA – The Baltimore School for the Arts (BSA) will present an interdisciplinary art festival, **Africa Now: Global Creativity in Perspective**, from March **20-25, 2017**. The festival draws from the school’s yearlong artistic and academic exploration into the arts and culture, sociological and political environment, and the important contributions of the world’s second-largest continent.

Highlights include:

On Monday afternoon, **March 20**, Nigerian artist **Laolu Senbanjo**, known for his **Yoruba-inspired drawings** on shoes, jackets, and even the **human body**, will lead a workshop on the Sacred Art of the Ori with BSA visual arts students. He’ll also give a performance at 4:30 pm as part of the Spring Gallery Opening. Senbanjo’s form of body-painting was made famous through its appearance in Beyonce’s *Lemonade* project; he interviews his subjects and then paints various attributes of the gods in Yoruba culture onto their bodies, based on those conversations.

On Tuesday afternoon, **March 21**, at 1 pm, BSA students will present on the **various academic topics** they have been exploring throughout the year, from disciplines ranging from chemistry to English to statistics. Tuesday evening, BSA music ensembles will present a **free recital** for the general public at 5 pm in the Schaefer Ballroom. The music selections will feature composers from the African diaspora, including **“Four Caprices”** by **Fred Onovwerosuoke**, **“The earth is tired”** by **Alberto Grau**, **“Three Nigerian Dances”** by **Samuel Ekpe Akpabot**, and **“This is Africa”** by **Shawn E. Okpebholo**.

On Wednesday morning, **March 22**, renowned curator **Diala Toure** and celebrated sculptor **Melvin Edwards** will speak to the students about the **portrayal of the African diaspora in art**. Former curator of collections at the James E. Lewis Museum of Art and current faculty member at the Johns Hopkins University, Toure is a curator, art historian, and an independent appraiser specializing in African art. In 1970, Edwards became the first African-American sculptor to have works presented in solo exhibition at the Whitney Museum. On Wednesday evening, the Senior Acting Ensemble and Stage Design and Production Students will present an **original performance piece**, ***The Marketplace of Ghana***, created by **Kwame Shaka Opare**. Inspired by Opare’s recent residency in Ghana West Africa, the performance includes music, movement, projected images, poetry, acting, and dance.

On Thursday morning, **March 23**, there will be a film screening for BSA students of ***Iron Ladies of Liberia***, a documentary that explores the achievements and struggles of Africa's first freely elected female head of state, **Ellen Johnson Sirleaf**, president of Liberia. At 5 pm, 16 students who recently traveled to Ghana will present an overview of their trip, complete with artwork, self-composed poetry, and a Q and A session.

On Friday morning, March 24, directors **Chelsea Odufu** and **Emann Odufu** will present their film ***Ori Inu: In Search of Self***, a coming of age story about a young immigrant woman who must choose between conforming her identity and spirituality to the cultural norms of America or revisiting her roots in the Afro-Brazilian religion called Candomble. The day **culminates with the festival's multidisciplinary performance** at 6 pm in the evening, featuring original works by French-Tunisian composer **Yacine Boulares** and Congolese choreographer **Zab Maboungou**, as well as a short film from **BSA's Ghana Voyage**.

On Saturday, **March 25**, from noon to 1:30 pm, BSA will host a **free children's festival** with storytelling and coloring workshops, as well as an African souvenir petting zoo. At 1:30 pm BSA high school and TWIGS students will perform an original work adapted from an African folk story. At 3 pm, there will be an additional presentation of Friday evening's feature performances.

For more information about guest artists or individual events, please email Stephanie Jayakanthan at sjayakanthan@bsfa.org.

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The Baltimore School for the Arts is a nationally recognized public arts high school that provides its students with intensive pre-professional training in the arts in conjunction with a rigorous academic curriculum. BSA graduates go on to the most selective arts and university programs nationwide and achieve prominence in theater, film, music, dance, and the visual arts. Additionally, the BSA's highly acclaimed TWIGS program offers free after-school arts instruction to 700 city elementary and middle school children from schools across Baltimore, as well as other outreach initiatives to thousands more. Founded in 1979, the school is an integral and vibrant part of Baltimore's educational and cultural communities.

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