

SEAT 1A  
**CULTURE LIST**  
 Books, blogs,  
 film, art & music

# A Female Perspective

Wings presents a woman-led listing for you in this issue's roundup of the most exciting cultural events happening at Arik destinations... featuring art, literature and curation by or about women

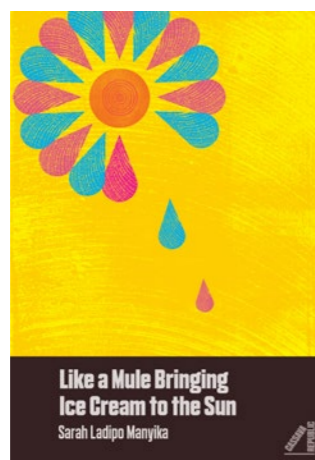
WORDS NANA OCRAN



*Literary Journey*  
 Cassava Republic's  
 Bibi Bakare-Yusuf  
 and Emma Shercliff  
 are opening a new  
 London office.

**CASSAVA COMES TO LONDON**

The Abuja-founded Cassava Republic Press is very much a literary game-changer, what with its development of genre fiction, its coup of snagging the rights to the Carlos Moore-penned biography – Fela: This Bitch Of A Life – a few years back, and its more current Ankara Press imprint for romance fiction. Now, Cassava has jumped continents and landed in London, where co-founders Bibi Bakare-Yusuf and Emma Shercliff have leveraged their combined knowledge in British publishing and other business sectors, as well as their broad networks within the UK, to set up a South London office. They will, in fact, be keeping the Abuja head office (Shercliff is based there with Bakare travelling between the two places), although there is additional reasoning for the location split, says Shercliff: “From a logistics point of view, it’s an unfortunate reality that it’s easier and cheaper to distribute



into other African countries from London than from Nigeria.” Still, the added location means that media goodwill for a “fresh air” publisher that “knows how to give a good party” has meant that the literary community has laid out a pretty large welcome mat for the company. Advice and suggestions for how to navigate the exceptionally competitive

**“Certain areas of publishing are still male-dominated but perceptions are changing, one successful woman at a time”** Emma Shercliff

British book trade have been offered, which is crucial, as this is a sector where over 5,000 books are produced every month, with readers’ time and attention being well prized. A wide stable of authors (and topics) come under Cassava’s umbrella, although the female authorship is high, especially via Ankara Press. “At present, all eight of our romance titles are written by women, but we’re really keen to challenge the romance publishing stereotypes,” says Shercliff. “In our last submissions call-out, we stated that we were actively seeking more manuscripts from men, as well as stories which involved same-sex relationships. We have received some submissions from men – I think about a dozen in total – but nothing that we felt

really had the ‘wow’ factor, but we’ll keep looking...” With more female literary roles, and not just as authors, being established in African publishing, Shercliff also tells us that: “While senior management at major educational publishing companies remains male-dominated to a large degree, we now have new companies such as Parrésia and Kachifo which are either owned by women or have employed women in very senior positions. Certain areas of the publishing business, such as sales, for example, are still male-dominated because of an assumption that the role can only be fulfilled by a man – but those perceptions are slowly changing, one successful woman at a time.” [cassavarepublic.biz](http://cassavarepublic.biz)



*Above, right: Supporting Star*  
 Hansi Momodu-Gordon of the Future Assembly art initiative.

*Solo Show*  
 Logo Oluwamuyiwa Adeyemi, Monochrome Lagos series, 2013 – ongoing (c).

**Books**

**LIKE A MULE BRINGING ICE CREAM TO THE SUN**

The new, second fiction novel by Sarah Ladipo Manyika is focused on the life and adventures of the quirky and sassy San-Francisco-based ex-doctor, Morayo Da Silva. An absorbing read, due to the candour and humour contained within the character, the rippling themes of longing,

ageing and sensuality are dealt with beautifully in this memorable story.

Like A Mule Bringing Ice Cream To The Sun is published by Cassava Republic Press.

**Art**

**OUT OF AFRICA**

“There is a distinct need to ensure that artists are supported in spite of linguistic boundaries

that so often divide Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone countries.” So says Hansi Momodu-Gordon, of Future Assembly, a new African artists’ development initiative that is co-curated by herself and creative partner Orla Houston-Jibo. Designed to provide African and African diasporic artists a space to test ideas, learn new skills and interact through exhibiting their work, this



visionary project is a blessing for those at critical points of their career. Conceived in 2015, Future Assembly launched in the fourth month of this year with its first solo session – It’s Also A Solo Journey by Lagos-based photographer Logo Oluwuyiwa – whose work was exhibited in London’s News Of The World gallery (Deptford). The UK and Nigeria connection makes good sense, as Momodu-Gordon spent a year working at the Centre For Contemporary Art in Lagos (CCA, Lagos) before spending three years at Tate Modern London, working across exhibitions, commissions and research. Growing partnerships for Future Assembly – which will be hosted as an annual programme – already include the African Artists’ Foundation (Lagos), University Of The Arts, London, The Arts Council, England and Autograph ABP (Association Of Black Photographers).

**Exhibition**

**BEARING FRUIT**

Artist Zina Saro-Wiwa founded the Boys’ Quarters art gallery in Port Harcourt, Niger Delta in 2014 and has been showcasing her own and other artists’ work within the gallery, as well as around the globe. From July, one of her latest Boys’ Quarters Project Space exhibitions takes over the Tiwani Contemporary gallery in London. The Pineapple >



*I'm With the Band*  
Filmmaker Remi Vaughan-Richards' documentary journeys behind the scenes with the band Faaji Agba (© Henry Adebajo).



*Fly On The Wall*  
Remi Vaughan-Richards and (left), the band, backstage in Brooklyn in 2011 (© Henry Adebajo).



Show will unpick, display and highlight the semiotics of the spiky fruit in a showcase that sees Saro-Wiwa curating and contributing her own work along with artists from Port Harcourt, Lagos and the US.  
tiwani.co.uk

**Film**

**BEATS, RHYMES AND MUSICAL LIFE**

Not quite a rockumentary – as Juju, Highlife and Afrobeat are the pioneering sounds that emanate from the award-winning Faaji Agba heritage music doc – this new project has filmmaker Remi Vaughan-Richards as the auteur behind it. Granted, she partnered up with Kunle Tejuoso, music producer and owner of the Jazzhole

**LEADING WOMEN ONLINE...**

**THE STORYTELLER**

Yagezie Emezi is a Nigerian-born storyteller and YouTube vlogger whose name is doing the online rounds as someone to check out and tune into. Her topics? Anything from moving to Lagos, to body politics and Q&A sessions with family members. However, also under her belt is her work as a multi-disciplinary artist and photographer with her eye mainly trained on documentary, fashion and travel around the African continent.  
yagazieemezi.com

**THE QUEEN OF DIGITAL ART**

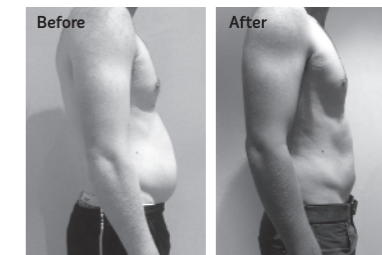
Jepchumba, a 'digital African', is the brains behind the African Digital Art online network, which has now reached its eight-year mark. Her series of podcasted interviews and programmes highlight artists and arts collectives from around the continent. Stop by the site for a modest library of conversations with groundbreaking and disruptive performers and artists, including South African Lebogang Rasethaba, who discusses his discovery of storytelling through film via his projects and studies in China, Tegan Bristow, curator of the Post African Futures exhibition and avant-garde artistic duo Thenjiwe Niki Nkosi and Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum.  
africandigitalart.com

record and book store in Lagos, but Vaughan-Richards was the sole female director, camerawoman and sound engineer on the six-years-in-the-making film, and as such was made an 'honorary member' of the 11-strong band. With the musician's ages ranging from late 50s to mid 80s, the musical history contained and displayed in this fly-on-the-wall feature has strands of Fela Kuti, Cuban and Yoruba maestros running right through it. Having kicked off with screenings at last year's Lights, Camera, Africa festival and this year's iREP Documentary Film Festive – both in Lagos – Vaughan-Richards is looking towards Europe and the US for future screenings. For now, you can whet your appetite with some of the film's archive clips via YouTube. ➤

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