

Call for Submissions: A Black Orpheus Companion

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February 5, 2026



In 2025, **OlongoAfrica** embarked on a historic journey to recover, digitize, and restore the complete run of *Black Orpheus* (1957-1993). For the first time in decades, the journal that defined African modernism—publishing the early works of Leon Damas, Wole Soyinka, Ama Ata Aidoo, Christopher Okigbo, J.P. Clark, Chinua Achebe and many others —was made freely available to the world. *See more here.*

The digitization was just the first step.

We are thrilled to announce our next ambitious project: **A Companion Book on the Legacy of Black Orpheus**, scheduled for publication in 2026/2027.

This volume will serve as both a collector's item and a critical companion to the archive. It will feature selected essays from our initial exploration, process notes on the digitization journey, photographs, and other rich metadata visualizations.

We are now opening a call for NEW contributions to complete this collection.

What We Are Looking For

We invite writers, scholars, archivists, and cultural critics to submit essays, creative nonfiction, or hybrid pieces that engage with *Black Orpheus* and the broader theme of archival preservation in Africa.

We are looking for work that is rigorously researched but accessible to a general audience.

Potential Themes:

- Essays profiling the contributors to *Black Orpheus*, especially the lesser-known ones.
- Explorations of the design, cover art (Susanne Wenger, Demas Nwoko), and the visual identity of the Mbari Club era, and contiguous subjects like textile art and the Osogbo school.
- Re-examining the debates on language and literature that played out on the journal's pages.
- Fresh perspectives on the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF) funding and its impact on the editorial direction.
- *Black Orpheus* and the Black diaspora writing (Brazil, Caribbean, USA).
- Archive as Resistance: Personal or critical reflections on the act of digital preservation. What does it mean to own our history in the digital age?
- Literary city, Ibadan (or Lagos) and other African cities in the *Black Orpheus* story.
- Co-founders and fellow travellers: Janheinz Jahn, Abiola Irele, JP Clark, and relevant perspectives on the work of panelists, editors, and committee members of the *Black Orpheus*.

(For more inspiration, please review the original Fellowship Research Areas.

Call for Visual Archives



Do you possess rare photographs, letters, ticket stubs from the Mbari Club, or original art related to the *Black Orpheus* era (1957-1993)?

- We are accepting submissions of **high-resolution images** of historical materials.
- We are also interested in **contemporary photography** or art that responds to the themes of the journal.

(Note: Contributors of visual materials will be compensated at standard rates negotiated based on the usage.)

Submission Guidelines

- **Word Count:** 1,500 – 3,000 words.
- **Format:** Word Document (.doc/.docx).
- **Language:** English (though we welcome pieces that engage with indigenous languages).
- **Bio:** Please include a brief bio, 100 words max.

A Note on Style

While we welcome scholarly rigor, this is a book for a general, literary audience. We are looking for **narrative storytelling** and **cultural criticism**, not academic papers.

- Please avoid heavy academic jargon.

- Please minimize footnotes (where necessary, use endnotes).

Timeline

- **Submission Deadline:** May 30, 2026

Honorarium

Payment: Selected contributors will receive **\$150 USD** upon publication via PayPal or Bank Transfer.

Copy: Contributors will receive a complimentary print copy of the book.

How to Submit

Please send your completed drafts or detailed pitches to **submissions@olongoafrica.com** with the subject line: **“Submission: Black Orpheus Book - [Genre] - [Your Name]”**.

- (e.g., *SUBMISSION: Black Orpheus Book - Essay - Adunni*)

Terms of Publication

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