

Lagos International Poetry Festival Opens Applications for Inaugural Craft and Development Lab

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Free four-month program for poets and writers from Nigeria, Africa, and the diaspora launches with faculty including Nick Makoha, Titilope Sonuga, and Romeo Oriogun

The Lagos International Poetry Festival (LIPFest) has opened applications for the first cohort of the LIPFest Craft and Development Lab, a new four-month program focused on craft, mentorship, and professional development for poets, spoken word artists, and writers from Nigeria, across Africa, and the diaspora.

The Lab will select ten participants through an open call process. The program is free to apply to and free to participate in. Applications close Friday, 3 July 2026.

Designed for early- to mid-career writers with active projects in development, including manuscripts, spoken word albums, poetry films, and stage works, the Lab brings together facilitated workshops, one-on-one mentorship, peer critique, and career development support within a sustained virtual learning environment.

Participants will receive access to a faculty of established writers and practitioners, portfolio development opportunities, and showcase platforms connected to LIPFest and partner festivals across the region.

“One of the clearest things we have seen at the Lagos International Poetry Festival is the enormous pool of talented poets producing urgent, inventive, and formally ambitious work,” said Efe Paul-

Azino, Director of the Lagos International Poetry Festival. "Our obsession has been with presenting that work on stage, and with helping build the conditions that allow it to deepen, evolve, and endure. The LIPFest Craft and Development Lab, growing out of our annual workshop series, is the product of this."

Cohort 1 will be facilitated by three internationally recognised poets, including Romeo Oriogun, winner of the NLNG Literature Prize, National Book Award finalist, and Professor of Creative Writing at Florida Atlantic University; Titilope Sonuga, beloved Nigerian-Canadian poet, spoken word artist, and former Poet Laureate of Edmonton; Nick Makoha, award winning Ugandan poet, author of Kingdom of Gravity and The New Carthaginians, and founder of the Obsidian Foundation.

The program is supported by Africa No Filter, the pan-African narrative change organisation working to expand and shift representations of Africa and Africans in global media and culture.

Participants will receive Showcase opportunities at LIPFest and partner festivals and be eligible for portfolio development grants to support a manuscript, spoken word recording, poetry film, or stage production currently in development.

Applications are now open at lagospoetryfestival.com/lab.

Applicants must be comfortable working and receiving feedback in English. All sessions will be delivered virtually.

Notes to Editors

About the LIPFest Craft and Development Lab

The LIPFest Craft and Development Lab is a four-month virtual program of craft and professional development for ten early- to mid-career poets, spoken word artists, and writers from Nigeria, Africa, and the diaspora. The Lab combines workshops, mentorship, peer critique, and career development support, culminating in a public showcase at the Lagos International Poetry Festival. Participants also gain access to portfolio development grants and regional showcase opportunities.

The program is free to apply to and free to participate in.

For more information: lagospoetryfestival.com/lab

About the Lagos International Poetry Festival

Founded in 2015, the Lagos International Poetry Festival (LIPFest) is one of Africa's leading platforms for poetry, spoken word, and literary culture. Held annually in Lagos, the festival convenes poets, writers, artists, musicians, thinkers, and audiences from across Africa and the global Black diaspora for performances, workshops, conversations, screenings, and public programming.

lagospoetryfestival.com

Instagram/X: @lagospoetryfest

Contact: info@lagospoetryfestival.com

About Africa No Filter

Africa No Filter is a donor collaborative that supports storytellers and narrative change initiatives working to challenge stereotypical and reductive narratives about Africa and Africans. The organisation funds and collaborates with creatives, journalists, researchers, and cultural producers across the continent and diaspora africanofilter.org

