OlongoAfrica’s Black Orpheus Fellows Selected

Kọ́lá Túbọ̀sún
February 25, 2025



We were thrilled by the response to our *Black Orpheus Fellowship* announcement late last year.

We got **59 applications**, all of them fascinating and some quite ambitious. It took a while to read and assess all of them, but thanks to our five judges (editors, curators, academics) who read through the entries, rated them, and selected the top applications, we have a final list.

Last year, in collaboration with Archivi.ng, we selected Shalom Kasim for a six-month fellowship, which is currently in progress. He will now be joined by the fellows selected below.

Our aggregation of selection by our five judges produced **25 unique applications** out of the 59.

Of these 25, we narrowed the search further to the top nine.

The top four will get 2m naira each to pursue their projects.

The bottom five will get a one-time 500,000 naira support each for their projects.

Projects that were not selected for individual funding will also have access to all the *Black Orpheus* materials, as necessary, and OlongoAfrica will pay to publish any original work from them throughout the year.

And now, here are the top ten selections, in selection order.

1. ***Yadichinma Ukoha-Kalu*** with a visual arts project to reinterpret the *Black Orpheus* covers in linocuts and in her own unique style, following Susanne Wenger and Georgina Beier.
2. ***Tinashe Mushakavanhu*** who will be using the metadata of the *Black Orpheus* archives, and modern algorithms to research interrogate literary history.
3. ***Sarah Laniyan***'s interest is in the female contributions to *Black Orpheus* and her research will produce writings that explore this subject in deep detail
4. ***Ebunoluwa Adepoju***, seeks an interrogation of Colette Omogbai's work, and aims to produce a series of visual artworks using poststructuralism and "material-body ontologies."
    - ***IfeOluwa Nihinlola***'s project continues an ongoing project in art history, fieldwork, and archival study as related to the understanding of the artists published in *Black Orpheus.*
    - ***Kosoluchi Agboanike*** would like to investigate Mbari both from an Igbo art standpoint and the Clubs that Beier, Ṣóyínká and Achebe instituted in Ìbàdàn and Osogbo, interrogating the place of space in art, from ancient times to the present.
    - ***Damilola Faith Ayeni*** would be producing a 3000-word article addressing questions on racial diversity and the place of Apartheid and other upheavals in the *Black Orpheus* production.
    - ***Ifesinachi Nwadike*** is interested in write-ups that use water as a metaphor to understand the literary discourse and challenges of the Black Orpheus writings.
    - ***Denja Abdullahi*** will be studying the archive of the *Black Orpheus journal* so as to write about the growth of African literature, and comparing the politics and realities from then till today.

The Black Orpheus Fellows will work with a team of *OlongoAfrica* editors and consultants. **Mọlará Wood,** acclaimed writer and editor, will support the work as our year-long Editor-in-Chief on the project, helping to guide scholars in their research directions. Fellows will also have access to individual support and the *OlongoAfrica* website, to write about the progress of their work.

Thank you to every applicant who sent us their ideas.

Thanks also to our funding partner *Open Society Foundation*, our fiscal agent *Participatory Politics Foundation*, and *The Brick House Cooperative*, our mothership.