Library Of Africa and
The African Diaspora

Litar

Exhibition 14/11/2026 – 30/01/2027

litafrika – Literatures of a Continent: Curatorial Statement

African literature is not an archive of artefacts; it is a living, creative ecosystem. The exhibition "Literatures of a Continent" is the culminating evolution of the litafrika trilogy, a collaborative initiative originally exhibited in Zurich, Switzerland, from 2022 to 2024 by the Litar Foundation and Museum Strauhof together with African partners. This trilogy systematically explored transcontinental literary exchange, the continent's poetry, its contemporary fiction and arts, and the vibrant literary metropolises of Abidjan and Accra. Now physically grounded at LOATAD in Accra, Ghana, "Literatures of a Continent" extends this dialogue to the African continent and audiences. It traces the trajectory of the African word from foundational historical debates directly into the heart of contemporary urban life, serving as a celebration of the continent's literary and linguistic diversity.

At the centre of this showcase, poetry from across the continent acts as a primary language of critique and transformation. Whether through the written words of foundational figures such as Ama Ata Aidoo, Francis Bebey, Birago Diop, Assia Djebar, Taban lo Liyong, Niyi Osundare, and Noémia de Sousa or the visceral energy of spoken-word performances and poetic interventions by Elikplim Akorli, Poetra Asantewa, Jhonel, Lydol, and Elisângela Rita, visitors are invited into a dynamic, generational, and multilingual dialogue across the language regions of Africa.

From dismantling the colonial gaze and honouring the spiritual and ecological roots of the land, to confronting the harsh political realities and displacements of the post-colonial state, the friction among these diverse voices builds directly toward the fierce poetic mandate of Ghanaian author Ama Ata Aidoo (1942-2023). In "Speaking of Hurricanes", Aidoo warns against the hidden, internal tempests of post-colonial history, lamenting the political violence "whose shrieking winds are / not heard around the world / and / the havoc they wreak / cannot even be discussed." To write is to shatter this silence. It is an absolute declaration: the act of creation is the ultimate form of resistance.

This drive to create manifests in the unyielding agency of and diversity of African authors. In an open archive, oral histories, rare editions from the LOATAD collection and archival materials from the Al Imfeld collection based at Litar Foundation, Switzerland, give insights into the legacies of storytellers and writers whose influence extended far beyond their continent. Texts on textiles across a vast linguistic spectrum assert the continent's linguistic richness. By highlighting contemporary novelists across the regions, including Kobby Ben Ben, Tanella Boni, Yara Monteiro, Fiston Mwanza Mujila, and Ondjaki, and Pan-African institutions such as LOATAD and Abidjan's 1949books, the exhibition bridges the gap between literary heritage and the voices shaping African literatures today.

Curators:
Sylvia Arthur and Seth Avusuglo (LOATAD)
Christa Baumberger and Nicole Schmid (Litar)

Curatorial Assistance, Scenography, and Installation:
FCA Ghana

Litar Foundation | Litafrika:
Litar is a place for literature and its mediation based in Zurich, Switzerland. Galerie Litar hosts regular exhibitions, events and workshops on literary topics: www.litar.ch/en
The starting point of the "litafrika" programme was the acquisition of the Swiss journalist and theologian Al Imfeld's (1935-2017) collection of articles, based at Litar Foundation.

Funding Partners:
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