



Friday 13 August 2021

Images available here:

<https://bit.ly/3IY4Xer>

Today, Hartwig Fisher, Director of the British Museum welcomed the Governor of Lagos State, His Excellency Babajide Sanwo-Olu, and an accompanying delegation to the Museum to discuss the ongoing development of the John Randle Centre for Yoruba History and Culture, in Lagos, Nigeria.

The John Randle Centre (www.johnrandlecentre.org), scheduled to open in spring 2022, will be a landmark new building in the heart of Lagos Island forming an impressive centrepiece in the cultural quarter. The Centre, with its state-of-the-art exhibition galleries, will celebrate Yoruba art, music and culture as well as providing an extensive leisure space with swimming pools, an amphitheatre and restaurants.

The Governor was accompanied on his visit by Uzamat Akinbile-Yusuf, the Honourable Commissioner for Tourism, Arts and Culture, Polly Alakija, artist and educator, who was recently appointed as a Trustee of the John Randle Centre; and Seun Oduwole, the John Randle Centre Project Lead.

During discussions between His Excellency Babajide Sanwo-Olu and Hartwig Fischer, the Director reaffirmed the British Museum's support for the John Randle Centre. The visit also offered the Governor's party an opportunity to view the Africa Galleries and to discuss the displays and interpretation with British Museum curators from the department of Africa, Oceania and the Americas.

Hartwig Fischer, Director of the British Museum said:

I am hugely passionate about the British Museum's many projects with partners in Nigeria. They say much about our approach as a Museum, how we 'live' and embody the principles of respectful collaboration.

Three years ago, I had the pleasure of visiting Lagos where I met some of the colleagues involved in making the John Randle Centre a reality. Today, I was delighted to reciprocate by welcoming Governor Sanwo-Olu and the Commissioner for Tourism, Arts and Culture to the British Museum and to be able to pledge our continued support for their inspiring museum project.

In addition to this first visit of the British Museum Director to Lagos in 2018, the meeting today builds upon other activities supporting the development of new museum projects in West Africa. In 2019 the Museum organised two conferences, one in London and one in Ghana, where partners from Lagos had the opportunity to present and discuss plans for the John Randle Centre with a diverse range of colleagues from across the cultural sector. In support of the Lagos initiative the British Museum will lend iconic objects to the John Randle Centre for Yoruba Culture and History on a long-term basis and continues to advocate for positive and reciprocal UK-Nigerian relations.

His Excellency Mr. Babajide Sanwo-Olu, Governor of Lagos State said:

I am delighted by the keen interest and enthusiasm the British Museum is showing in the John Randle Centre, a project that is for us, in Lagos, a strong demonstration of our commitment to the promotion of arts and culture. The Yoruba people place a great premium on their rich artistic and cultural history and legacy and welcome every collaboration that can help amplify and propagate this, by introducing it to new audiences around the world.

The John Randle Centre is the first of many initiatives aimed at showcasing and preserving the bountiful cultural heritage of the Yoruba people, regenerating the public spaces of the city of Lagos, Nigeria, and catalysing the emergence of a vibrant cultural centre in the very heart of Lagos. We thank the British Museum for their unwavering support and we are excited about this burgeoning partnership; just as we look forward to an artistic collaboration that promises to entrench Lagos as the cultural capital of sub-Saharan Africa.

The John Randle Centre for Yoruba History and Culture

The John Randle Centre for Yoruba History and Culture is an ambitious initiative set in the heart of Lagos Island, close to the National Museum. Funded by the Lagos State Government, the Centre is due to open in 2022

The British Museum has championed its development from the outset and supports the project to link the research and display interests of the Centre by exploring various aspects of shared heritage and history.

The Centre will highlight current research in Nigeria with a focus on the works of named Yoruba sculptors, many of whom are celebrated in major museum collections throughout the world. These Yoruba artists will be 'relaunched' through this opening display at the John Randle Centre to reconnect a generation of young people in Nigeria to this heritage. The Centre, with its multisensory approach and contemporary outlook, will offer a fresh approach to exploring Yoruba identity and history.

Notes to editors

The British Museum is collaborating on and supporting a number of important projects led by institutions and colleagues in Africa focused on creating new museums and displays for both local and international audiences. In Nigeria, the John Randle Centre for Yoruba History and Culture is nearing completion. This new heritage centre in Lagos will explore Yoruba history as well as contemporary culture in the region. It will feature a selection of outstanding objects from Nigeria, including those which the British Museum will lend to the new Centre on a long-term basis.

Further information

Contact the British Museum Press Office
Images available here: <https://bit.ly/3IY4Xer>
communications@britishmuseum.org

Contact the Lagos State Commissioner for Information and Strategy:
gomotoso@lagosstate.gov.ng