



Give buddy a new story

THE BRIEF

ONE BEAR. ONE STORY

www.yorubuddy.com

Where Nigeria meets Germany

A short History of the cultural and artistic connection between Germany and Nigeria

In the early 50s a free-spirited German writer and art critic by the name of **Ulli Beier** came to Nigeria with his wife **Suzanne Wenger** to take up a position in the University of Ibadan Extramural department. Beier, to those who knew him, was a man of the people, adventurous, curious and deeply committed to art, culture and creativity. Together with writers, artists, poets, playwrights and other creatives of the time, he began a club, called the **Mbari Club** in Ibadan that eventually became known as the **Mbari Mbayo** (a yoruba-nised version of the Igbo Mbari meaning Creation, and Mbayo we see it/we are happy). The founding members included **Wole Soyinka**, **Chinua Achebe (who named the club Mbari)** and **Duro Ladipo**. When he later settled in Osogbo, the club opened another branch there in the famous playwright Duro Ladipo's Fathers house.

Alongside the club, Beier and a fellow German Scholar **Janheinz Jahn**, co-founded the groundbreaking Pan-African literary arts journal **Black Orpheus**. Beier served as its primary founding editor, Wole Soyinka also joined as an editor in the early years, **Ezekiel (Es'kia) Mphahlele**, a South African writer, critic, and exile served as a key co-editor during the journal's foundational period at Mbari. **Professor Abiola Irele** the late Nigerian scholar and academic later took over editorial responsibilities. Co-founder **Janheinz Jahn**, co-edited early issues and was an important catalyst in Beier's initial move to Nigeria.

Other members of the editorial board, and contributors included **J.P. Clark (John Pepper Clark)** a Nigerian poet and playwright who later assumed leadership of the editorship, **Chinua Achebe**, **Christopher Okigbo**, **Theo Vincent**, **Femi Osofisan**, and various prominent cultural figures.

Included among those who founded and contributed to the magazine were **Aime Cesaire**, the poet, writer and politician from **Martinique** and **Leopold Sedar Senghor** the future President of Senegal who himself was an accomplished poet. Together Cesaire and Senghor had founded the important Negritude literary movement, which influenced much of Africa, especially French speaking countries. The magazine covers featured Visual Artists & Designers such as **Demas Nwoko**, Susanne Wenger and Georgina Beier among others.

In the Mbari Mbayo, Beier, Suzanne Wenger (who was divorced from Beier by this time) and his 2nd wife Georgina Beier held a series of art workshops. The art workshops were organised first in Ibadan in collaboration with **Julian Beinart** according to the principles of the New Bauhaus Chicago, then in Osogbo. In attendance were what we know today as the Osogbo artists: **Chief Jimoh Buraimoh, Chief Muraina Oyelami, Rufus Ogundele, Adebisi Fabunmi, Twins Seven Seven, Nike Okundaye and others**. The art workshops, Mbari Mbayo Clubs, Black Orpheus magazine, Duro Ladipo's plays and the ideas behind the Negritudes movement combined, can be likened to a Creative Hub that helped inspire the cultural and artistic revolution that we call the Osogbo movement. What was taught in these workshops, contributed in turning these artists, many of whom were untrained or self taught into the internationally recognised and collected visual artists of note whose influence continues to resonate today. Their unique visual language, use of materials, depictions of Yoruba mythology, rituals and stories keep appearing in Contemporary Nigerian art. What they created has set the standard for how modern Contemporary Nigerian art is expressed. Speak to any of the artists though, and they will tell you that the Beiers didn't actually 'teach' them anything. This seeming ambiguity can be solved by understanding the basic design principles of the Bauhaus on which the courses were based by Beinart. Whilst it's a supposition only, the description of the exercises that the Osgobo artists undertook during their workshops bears out this theory. Through the course the artists explored various materials and the idea of **PLAY** to enable them to access, rediscover and express their own individual creativity. According to Beier, to counterbalance the sterility that is the Bauhaus style, Yoruba mythology, folklore, forms, fashion, rituals, dance movements, carvings, masks and culture were combined to create a new visual language individualised through each artist's use of materials, personal preferences and artistic voice.

Today, the German Consulate in Nigeria has revisited the story of the Beiers, Julian Beinart, Jan Janheinz and their role as catalysts in a movement that changed the visual arts landscape in Nigeria. With the **Yorubuddy Art Competition**, they hope to once more use the idea of PLAY combined with the visual language of Nigerian art to create a moment of synergy that will pay homage to the shared artistic history of Germany and Nigeria.

Yorubuddy is a combination of Yoruba and Buddy Bear or Buddy Bar - the German symbol of Berlin. Known throughout the world as a symbol for international understanding, tolerance, and peace, the United Buddy Bears International art exhibition began as a street art festival before travelling to 35 countries on all 5 continents with each bear being an artistic expression of the individual country and culture. More than 148 artists have been selected worldwide to date to design the Buddy Bears. The Bear, designed by sculptor **Roman Strobl**, is a 6ft 7in tall bear with its arms outstretched as if wanting an embrace. **Dotun Popoola** the renowned

Nigerian Sculptor will be the competition's Artist Mentor for the participants, and will hold a live pitch contest to review the best concepts and help to build the design capacity of the participants.

On November 3rd, 2026 at the Consulate building in Victoria Island, in Lagos Nigeria, the **Yorubuddy Art Exhibition** will be held with the ten final artistic representations of Yorubuddy arranged in a circle to represent The Art of Tolerance with its symbolism of love, peace, freedom and friendship, before a final winner is selected by an Eminent jury of curators, artists and collectors. The winning artist will receive a cash prize of N1.5million naira. Needless to say, the weight of artistic history between the two nations will be greatly enhanced by the competition.



Play, again. Today, the German Consulate General in Lagos revisits that story. With YoruBuddy, we want to bring back the idea of play and combine it with the visual language of Nigerian art, to create a new moment of exchange that honours the shared artistic history of Germany and Nigeria.

● THE YORUBUDDY JOURNEY

From open call to winner

01

Open call

Submit your original YoruBuddy concept.

1-25 OCTOBER 2026

02

Shortlist

Selected applications progress to the next stage.

03

Due diligence and finalist development

Finalists develop their concepts and engage with the Artist Mentor, while the YoruBuddy team conducts due diligence.

04

Live pitch

Finalists present their concepts, receive mentor feedback and answer questions from the public in an online session.

05

Final evaluation

The mentor and jury undertake the final assessment.

06

Winner

The winner is announced.

DECEMBER 2026

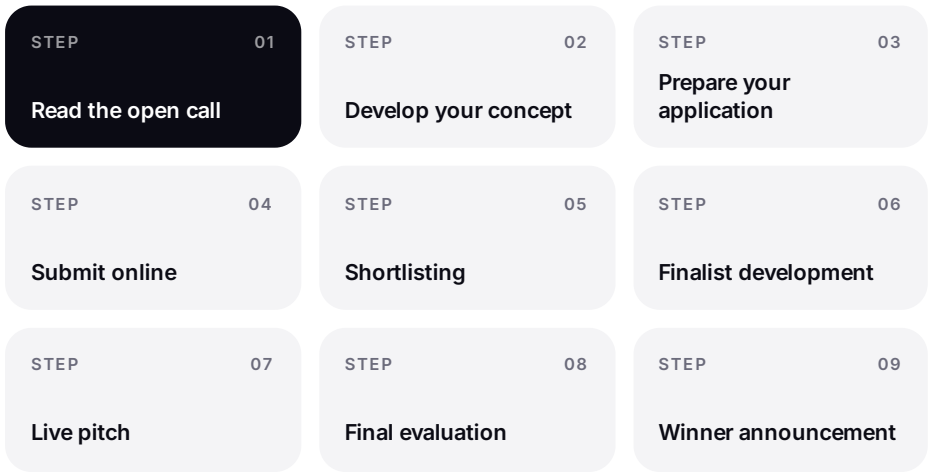


● HOW TO APPLY

Nine steps to your application

The YoruBuddy Art Competition invites artists to submit their creative interpretation of the YoruBuddy concept.

The competition progresses through an Open Call, Shortlisting, Finalist Development and Live Pitch. Follow the steps below to complete your application.



STEP

01



● READ THE OPEN CALL

Know the brief before you begin

Before beginning your application, read the competition brief carefully. Take time to understand:

-
- 01 The YoruBuddy concept and creative theme
 - 02 The artistic challenge
 - 03 Eligibility requirements
 - 04 Submission requirements
 - 05 Important dates
 - 06 Selection process
 - 07 Terms and conditions
-

Your submission should demonstrate your original creative interpretation of the YoruBuddy concept.

OPEN CALL PERIOD

1 October – 25 October 2026

Applications must be submitted within the published application period.

STEP

02



● DEVELOP YOUR CONCEPT

Find the story behind your bear

Before completing the application form, develop your idea for YoruBuddy. Think about:

- ? What does YoruBuddy mean to you?
- ? What story do you want your work to tell?
- ? What inspires your interpretation?
- ? What artistic style or technique will you use?
- ? What makes your interpretation distinctive?
- ? How does your concept connect with Yoruba or African creativity, culture or contemporary expression?

Your application should communicate not only what you want to create, but also the idea and story behind it.

STEP

03



● PREPARE YOUR APPLICATION

Have everything ready first

Have all the information and materials required by the online application form ready before you begin.

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Prepare your:

Full name

Email address

Telephone number

Location

Artist profile or biography

Relevant social media or portfolio links, where requested

CREATIVE INFORMATION

Prepare:

Title of your concept

Concept description

Artist statement

Explanation of your inspiration

Description of your creative process

Any supporting artwork or images requested by the application

Your written responses should be clear, concise and authentic to your artistic practice.

STEP

04



● SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION ONLINE

Check, then click submit

Complete the YoruBuddy application form through the official website. Before clicking Submit, check that:

- ☐ All required fields have been completed
- ☐ Your contact information is correct
- ☐ Your concept description is complete and not more than 2,000 words
- ☐ Your artwork and images have been uploaded correctly
- ☐ Your supporting information is accurate
- ☐ You have read and accepted the relevant terms and conditions
- ☐ Your 3-minute pitch is well recorded



Keep your confirmation. Once you submit your application, retain your confirmation or any reference number provided.

STEP

05

● SHORTLISTING

After the open call closes

Eligible submissions will be reviewed and a group of finalists will be selected. Shortlisting is the next stage after the Open Call. Selected applicants will be contacted using the information supplied in their application.



IMPORTANT

Make sure the email address and telephone number in your application are active and regularly monitored.

STEP

06

● FINALIST DEVELOPMENT

Strengthen your idea

If you are selected as a finalist, you will progress to the next stage of the YoruBuddy journey. At this stage, finalists may have the opportunity to further develop their concepts and engage with the competition's Artist Mentor.

The objective is to help finalists strengthen their ideas, explore their creative processes and prepare to present their concepts. It also gives the YoruBuddy team the opportunity to do their due diligence on the participants.

STEP

07



● LIVE PITCH · STAGE 04

Tell the story of your concept

Each finalist will pitch their concept to the Artist Mentor. The live pitch gives each finalist the opportunity to:

- 01 Present their YoruBuddy concept
- 02 Explain the inspiration behind their work
- 03 Discuss their creative process
- 04 Receive feedback from the Artist Mentor
- 05 Answer questions from the public
- 06 Engage with the audience during an online session

The live pitch is an important opportunity for finalists to communicate the story, thinking and creative vision behind their YoruBuddy concept.

LIVE PITCH DATE

To be announced

Further details regarding the online session will be communicated to finalists.

STEP

08

● FINAL EVALUATION

The mentor and jury decide

Following the finalist process and live pitch, the submissions will proceed through the final evaluation process in accordance with the competition rules.

The competition's mentor and jury will form part of the evaluation process. The final outcome will be announced according to the published competition schedule.

STEP

09

● WINNER ANNOUNCEMENT

One bear. One story.

WINNER ANNOUNCED

December 2026



The winning concept will form part of the next stage of the YoruBuddy creative journey, subject to the competition's terms and conditions.

● APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Before you submit

Before submitting your application, make sure you have:

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- ☐ Read the YoruBuddy competition brief
 - ☐ Confirmed your eligibility
 - ☐ Developed your YoruBuddy concept
 - ☐ Prepared your concept description
 - ☐ Recorded your pitch
 - ☐ Prepared your artist statement or biography
 - ☐ Prepared the required artwork or supporting images
 - ☐ Completed all mandatory application fields
 - ☐ Checked your contact information
 - ☐ Read the Terms & Conditions
 - ☐ Read the Privacy Policy
 - ☐ Reviewed your application
 - ☒ **Submitted before 25 October 2026**
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