



A PLATFORM FOR INTERNATIONAL
CULTURAL EXCHANGE

Press release II.

CULTURE BEYOND BORDERS

Rooted, Yet Not Restricted

WSICE @ 92:

The Wole Soyinka International Cultural Exchange Returns for Its 17th Edition
Lagos and London to Host a Global Conversation on Culture, Memory, Identity and
Humanity

Some anniversaries celebrate age.

Others celebrate endurance.

And then there are those rare moments when society pauses not merely to honour a
birthday, but to acknowledge the continuing relevance of an idea.

In July 2026, as Nobel Laureate Professor Wole Soyinka marks his 92nd year on earth,
the Wole Soyinka International Cultural Exchange (WSICE) returns for its 17th edition
under a theme whose urgency grows more evident with every passing day:

CULTURE BEYOND BORDERS

Rooted, Yet Not Restricted

The programme will unfold across Lagos and London, bringing together scholars,
artists, cultural practitioners, students, policymakers, diaspora communities and global
citizens in what has become one of Africa's most enduring annual conversations on
culture, creativity, memory and the future.

Yet this year's theme is more than a slogan. It is a question. A challenge.

Perhaps even a warning.

For we live in an age when technology travels faster than wisdom.

When information crosses oceans in seconds while understanding often remains
stranded at the border.

When human beings are more connected than at any time in history, yet loneliness,
division, suspicion and cultural amnesia continue to expand.

The world has become increasingly global.

But has it become more humane?



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That question sits quietly beneath the theme of WSICE 2026. For centuries, culture has been humanity's most sophisticated passport. Long before modern visas, treaties and airports, music travelled. Stories travelled. Ideas travelled. Languages travelled.

Spiritual traditions travelled. Memory travelled.

And through them, civilisations encountered one another, challenged one another, enriched one another and, occasionally, transformed one another.

Culture has always crossed borders.

The question is whether it survives the journey.

Today, migration reshapes nations. Artificial intelligence reshapes communication. Digital platforms reshape identity. Young people increasingly inherit multiple homes, multiple loyalties and multiple narratives. The child born in London may dream in Lagos. The student raised in Lagos may imagine tomorrow in Toronto. The artist in Nairobi may find an audience in New York . The entrepreneur in Accra may build community in Berlin.

Humanity itself is becoming more mobile than ever before.

Yet beneath that movement remains an eternal responsibility: To remember who we are. For roots are not prisons. They are foundations. And culture is not a museum artifact preserved beneath glass. It is a living inheritance.

It breathes. It adapts. It travels. It evolves.

But it must never disappear.

This is the conversation WSICE 2026 invites the world to join.

Over seventeen remarkable years, the Wole Soyinka International Cultural Exchange has grown from a commemorative initiative into a global cultural movement dedicated to nurturing critical thought, creative imagination, cultural literacy, youth empowerment and international dialogue.

Inspired by the life and work of Professor Wole Soyinka, the programme continues to champion the values that have defined his intellectual journey: freedom of thought, moral courage, cultural consciousness, social justice and the enduring responsibility of the artist to society.

This year's activities will feature:

- International Cultural Roundtables
- Youth Leadership and Identity Workshops
- Theatre and Dramatic Presentations
- Literary Conversations
- Spoken Word Performances



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- Music and Cultural Showcases
- Diaspora Heritage Dialogues
- Academic Exchanges
- Visual Arts Exhibitions
- Creative Industry Engagements

A major component of the London programme, hosted in collaboration with The Africa Centre and a network of educational and community partners, will place young people at the centre of the conversation.

Because every civilisation eventually confronts the same question:

What shall we leave behind for those who inherit tomorrow?

WSICE believes the answer cannot be infrastructure alone. Nor technology alone. Nor economics alone. It must also include memory. Values. Identity. Culture. For without memory, progress loses direction. And without culture, development risks becoming merely efficient displacement.

As the world gathers once again around the enduring legacy of Africa's first Nobel Laureate in Literature, WSICE 2026 offers more than celebration. It offers reflection. It offers dialogue. It offers encounter. And perhaps, in a century increasingly defined by walls, divisions and competing certainties, it offers something even more valuable: A reminder that culture remains one of humanity's last great meeting places.

Not because it erases differences.

But because it teaches us how to live with difference. Across oceans. Across languages. Across generations. Across histories. Across borders.

And so, as Professor Wole Soyinka turns ninety-two, the conversation continues. Not merely about Africa. Not merely about literature. Not merely about heritage.

But about humanity itself.

PROGRAMME DATES

Lagos, Nigeria

13–14 July 2026

London, United Kingdom

17–18 July 2026

ABOUT WSICE



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The Wole Soyinka International Cultural Exchange (WSICE) is an international cultural initiative established to promote dialogue, creativity, education, cultural literacy and youth engagement while celebrating the intellectual and humanistic ideals embodied by Nobel Laureate Professor Wole Soyinka.

For seventeen years, WSICE has served as a bridge between generations, disciplines, nations and cultures, using the arts and humanities as instruments of understanding, transformation and global citizenship.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES

WSICE Secretariat

Theme:

CULTURE BEYOND BORDERS

Sub-theme:

ROOTED, YET NOT RESTRICTED

“For what is culture if not memory travelling through time in search of another generation willing to remember?”

#WSICE2026

#WS92

#CultureBeyondBorders

#RootedYetNotRestricted

#WoleSoyinka92



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