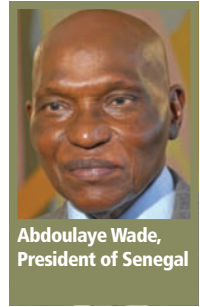


Culture Festival Lights Up the Senegalese Skies

The third edition of the Black World Festival celebrates Africa's renaissance as free, proud, creative, and optimistic.



Abdoulaye Wade,
President of Senegal

Dancers: Check. Musicians: Check. Artists: Check. There's a flurry of excitement in Senegal as the beautiful West African country prepares for the third edition of the World Festival of Black Arts and Cultures. Spanning three weeks from December 10 to 31, this unique festival, a celebration of African renaissance, is expected to draw crowds in the thousands—and the interest of the world.

After successfully hosting one of the most vibrant and exciting FIFA World Cups ever seen, Africa has proved it knows how to put on a show, and the 2010 World Festival of Black Arts and Cultures will be pivotal in conveying a vision of the continent as free, proud, creative, and optimistic.

Access will be free to encourage as many people as possible to participate, and there will be a huge emphasis on children's activities to engage the future generation.

"We wish to ensure that young Africans do not feel disorientated in the century in which they live," says Senegal's visionary president, Abdoulaye Wade. The former teacher is passionate about education as the key to development.

The festival will feature a number of the continent's leading music styles: the South African Chorus, Maghreb and Nile Valley Black music, Congolese rumba, Afro Beat, Mandingo music, Senegalese pop, Makossa, Cape Verdean music, and the Coupé Décalé from acts based in Africa, the U.S., and around the

"I believe culture to be an affirmation of life." President Abdoulaye Wade

world. There will be visual arts, general arts, cinema, literature, fashion, sports, and a host of other interesting events taking place in the streets, squares, museums, and hotels in Dakar.

"The African Union asked me to organize the festival, and we will do it in two parts: through a cultural component, which features the best singers and dancers in the world, and through an intellectual component," the President says proudly.

Senegal—known as the Land of the Teranga (hospitality)—will welcome Brazil as its guest of honor. The festival will emphasize

dialogue between peoples and cultures, giving all guests the opportunity to discover Brazil's rich African heritage.

It will also give people the chance to be dazzled by Senegal's beauty; the timeless atmosphere of Gorée Island; the former capital of Senegal, Saint-Louis; the luxurious delta of Casamance, which boasts the sumptuous Cap Skirring beaches; and of course, Dakar, at a time of year when the sun reigns supreme.

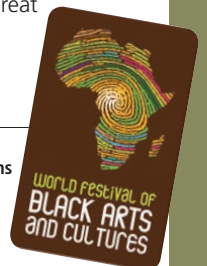
The festival will also explore serious themes. As the President explains: "There will be conferences introduced by leading experts, addressing: Permanent Resistance of Black Peoples; the Contribution of Black Peoples to Sciences and Technologies; African Diaspora; and Participation of Black Peoples in Wars that Made the Free World. There will also be discussions on Africa's place in current global affairs—Africa represents more than one billion people in 53 countries, yet its place in the IMF, World Bank, or WTO is almost non-existent—and the rediscovery of the ancient Black-African civilizations in the Nile region."

According to the general principles of the first festival, also hosted by Senegal in 1966 when Africa was barely moving out of colonization, the main aim was to allow as many artists of black origin to be known and appreciated in an atmosphere of "tolerance, mutual esteem, and intellectual fulfillment."

"This festival should not just be a stack of events. It must convey a message," President Wade concludes. "I put great importance on culture because I believe it to be an affirmation of life."



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