



THE UNIVERSITY
OF THE
WEST INDIES



The PJ Patterson Institute for
Africa-Caribbean Advocacy

KGOTLA!

An African Art and Artefacts Exhibition and Panel Discussion

UWI Main Library, Mona | September 16 – October 21, 2026

PRESS RELEASE

Reconnecting with African Material Cultures Through a Reparative Lens

Kingston, Jamaica — September 2026 — The University of the West Indies (UWI), Mona invites the public to experience *Kgotla: An African Art and Artefacts Exhibition and Panel Discussion*, an exhibition that explores African artistic traditions, material cultures, and the enduring connections between Africa and the Caribbean.

The exhibition will be held at the **UWI Main Library, Mona, from September 16 to October 21, 2026**. The opening ceremony will be held at the Multifunctional Room at UWI Main Library and will be held **September 16 at 5 p.m.**

Kgotla, a Setswana term from Botswana meaning a traditional forum for communal gathering, dialogue, and deliberation, reflects the central vision of the exhibition: to create a space for collective conversation and reflection. The exhibition seeks to move beyond the passive viewing of African objects and instead encourage meaningful engagement with the histories, cultural knowledge, and artistic practices embodied within them.

The exhibition statement positions *Kgotla* as an act of decolonial practice, seeking to build “bridges of belonging” between African descendants in the Caribbean and the African continent. It challenges inherited Eurocentric frameworks that have historically shaped how art is valued, classified, and displayed, while inviting audiences to reconsider African art and artefacts on their own intellectual, aesthetic, spiritual, and cultural terms.

At the heart of the exhibition is a reparative focus: an effort to address the historical alienation of African descendants from the continent of Africa as a consequence of slavery, colonialism, and the disruption of cultural connections. Through the presentation of African material cultures, *Kgotla* creates an opportunity to recover knowledge, strengthen cultural relationships, and deepen understandings of Africa’s contributions to global artistic and intellectual traditions.

The exhibition features two significant collections that demonstrate different approaches to the preservation and stewardship of African art and artefacts. The **Makonde Collection**, held by the African Caribbean Institute of Jamaica (ACIJ), represents a historic cultural exchange between Tanzania and Jamaica following the visit of a Makonde delegation to the Institute of Jamaica in 1974. The collection

showcases the skill and artistic traditions of Makonde woodcarvers, whose works were created from ebony, one of Tanzania's most durable hardwoods.

The **Dunn Collection**, a private collection assembled by Dr. Leith Dunn and Professor Hopeton Dunn, presents works gathered through their engagement with diverse African cultures, particularly during their years living in Botswana and travelling throughout the region. Together, these collections demonstrate the many ways African art and material culture are preserved—through cultural institutions, personal stewardship, scholarship, and lived experience.

Kgotla is therefore both an exhibition and a gathering: a space to encounter African artistic traditions, question colonial systems of value, and reflect on the continuing relationship between Africa and the Caribbean. By bringing these collections into dialogue, the exhibition encourages audiences to see African art not as distant historical objects, but as living expressions of creativity, knowledge, identity, and connection.

Exhibition Details

Title: *Kgotla: An African Art and Artefacts Exhibition and Panel Discussion*

Venue: UWI Main Library, Mona

Dates: September 16 – October 21, 2026

Opening Event: September 16 **Time:** 5 p.m.