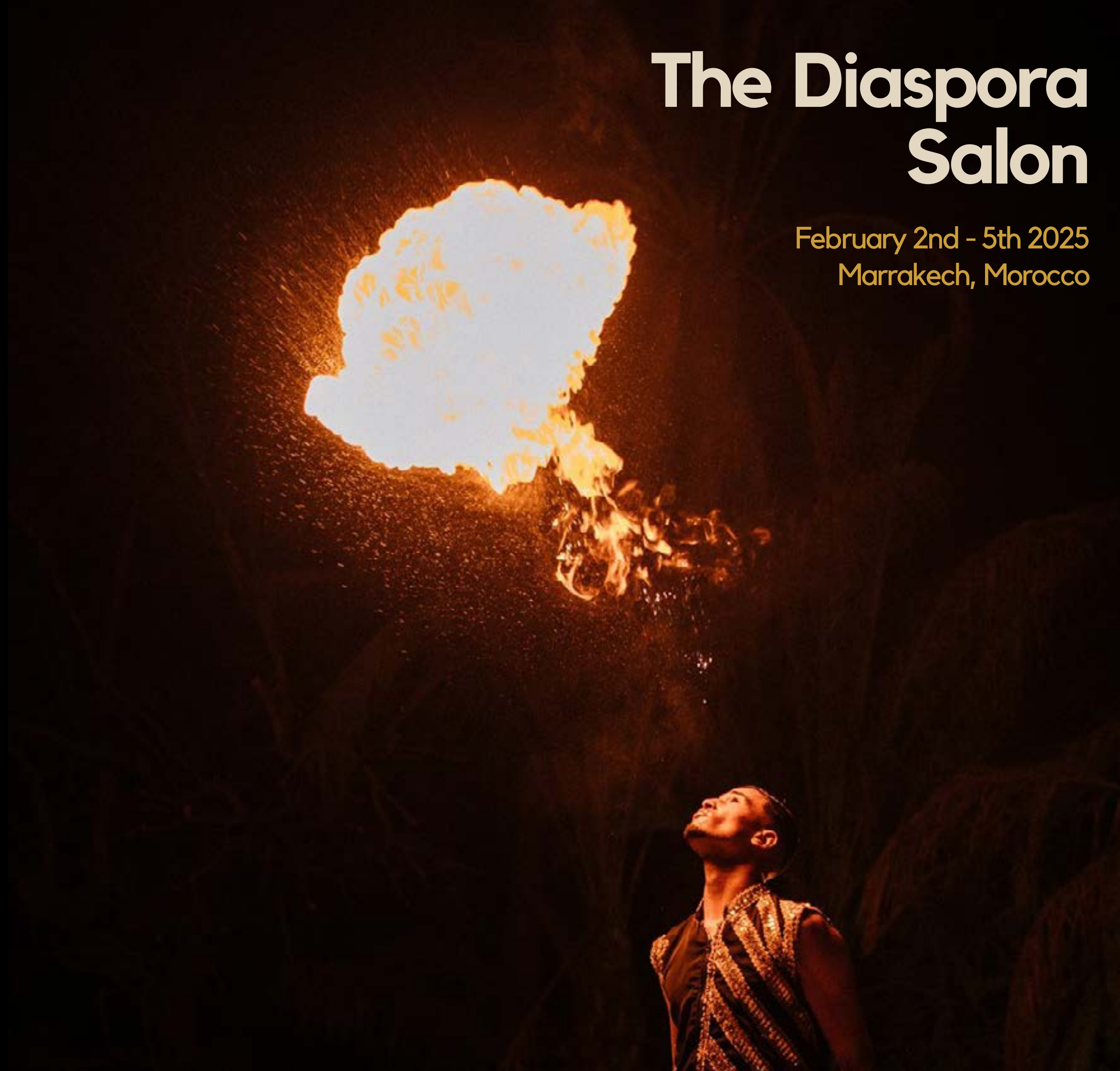


The Diaspora Salon

February 2nd - 5th 2025
Marrakech, Morocco



THE DIASPORA SALON

A yearly rendezvous celebrating the diverse cultural and entrepreneurial innovations by trailblazers of African ancestry.

We unite dynamic individuals from across disciplines to explore the rich cultural ties that connect us and the vibrant differences that make each community unique.
The birth of an international movement reshaping the global narrative.

**An event by us, about us,
and for everyone.**

Our sponsors have the unique opportunity to join this transformative community.

Become part of a community transcending borders by connecting generations of creatives, entrepreneurs, and thought leaders. Together, we cultivate an enduring legacy, celebrating a wealth of culture and innovation, thus honoring our collective origins.

**You are invited to be a patron
of a cultural movement.**


HOST JNANE TAMSNA



Programming will take place across iconic Marrakech locations, from a modern theater to a private building embodying traditional architecture. Key events will be hosted at Jnane Tamsna, known for decades for its events featuring Nobel, Booker, and Pulitzer Prize-winning authors.

Owned by Meryanne Loum-Martin, Morocco's first Black female hotelier and an award-winning Parisian lawyer, the farm-to-table boutique hotel hosts extraordinary events, moveable feasts unfolding across countless beautiful spaces dotted around the ten acre property. Born in Ivory Coast with Senegalese and Caribbean roots, Meryanne has lived and worked across Black cultures, weaving her rich heritage into the essence of Jnane Tamsna. Together with her team she holds space for meaningful conversations, celebrating the beautiful complexity of the Black Diaspora experience.



A photograph of a tropical garden scene. In the foreground, there are several palm trees with long, feathery fronds. The background features a series of orange-colored arches that create a sense of depth. The lighting is warm, suggesting a sunny day. The overall composition is framed by a dark, curved border.

"The world is like a
masquerade dancing.
If you want to see
it well, you do not
stand in one place."

Chinua Achebe

SALON

Overview

A Platform for Visionaries

The annual gathering of a dynamic collective that flourishes year-long. Beyond the main events, this vibrant network connects a global community, manifesting opportunities for long-term connections and collaborations. Through a series of more intimate events and an interactive directory, the Salon holds space for shared inspiration, learning and growth.



Global Exchange

A key initiative of the Diaspora Salon is the creation of a comprehensive community directory that will serve as a valuable resource for all members. This directory will provide a platform for connecting individuals across industries, sharing expertise, and facilitating collaborations.

It will be a living network that highlights member achievements, fosters business opportunities, and encourages the exchange of ideas, ultimately strengthening the bonds within this global collective and enhancing the impact of the Diaspora Salon throughout the year.

Across Generations

We proudly sponsor a diverse group of young talents, offering them the opportunity to attend and immerse themselves in a culturally rich environment.

These young voices play a pivotal role in shaping the narrative of The Diaspora Salon and expanding its global impact. "The Next Generation" is an ongoing conversation, nurtured and supported by generous individuals, ensuring that their influence continues to grow.

Three Pillars

Three core threads permeate the schedule. They evolve and deepen over time, through annual conferences and series of smaller events hosted throughout the year in various member cities.

These pillars ensure continuous engagement, fresh insights, and sustained dialogue within our network.

Everywhere & Anywhere

Centering voices in fields where underrepresentation and erasure has persisted.

We champion the brilliance of those who excel against all odds. Through discussions on literature, music, environment and entrepreneurship, we examine how these expressions honor heritage while challenging existing narratives, offering bold perspectives on the diaspora's identity.

The Power of Positivity

Transforming experiences of adversity and triumph into work that embodies beauty, resilience, and creativity.

This pillar invites us to see experiences differently. We celebrate our rich tapestry of cultures, basking in endless possibility, engaging in intergenerational conversations, and reclaiming our narrative. We aim to open doors, find the right tone, and honor the diverse heritage that enriches us all. This exploration celebrates our community's enduring spirit, redefining its place in the world and leaving a lasting impact on the cultural landscape.



Black Entrepreneurship

Harnessing the transformative power of the Diaspora's entrepreneurial spirit.

We explore economic resilience, cultural pride, and identity across continents. We highlight stories demonstrating how challenges become opportunities, building bridges between cultures and creating sustainable growth. Through innovation, entrepreneurs reshape industries and define success on their terms. Their ventures generate wealth while preserving traditions, honoring heritage, and strengthening community bonds. At the Diaspora Salon we will spotlight entrepreneurs who craft a legacy of impact, enriching global markets and fostering a future where culture and success thrive together through products and perspectives crafted in Africa.

Confirmed Speakers

We are thrilled to share our inaugural edition's trailblazing roster of confirmed speakers. For more details on the full lineup and program for the annual conference, please get in touch.

Taiye Selasi

Taiye Selasi is an author and photographer. She holds a BA in American Studies from Yale and an MPhil in International Relations from Oxford. In 2005, she published the seminal essay "Bye-Bye, Babar (Or: What is an Afropolitan?)," sparking a movement among transnational Africans. In 2013 Selasi's debut novel, the New York Times bestseller "Ghana Must Go", was selected as one of the 10 Best Books of 2013 by The Wall Street Journal and The Economist.

Tyehimba Jess

Poet Tyehimba Jess earned his BA from the University of Chicago and his MFA from New York University. He is the author of Leadbelly (2005) and Olio (2016), winner of the Pulitzer Prize. His honors include a Pulitzer Prize, a Whiting Writers' Award, a Chicago Sun-Times Poetry Award, and a Gwendolyn Brooks Open Mic Poetry Award. A former artist-in-residence with Cave Canem.

Enuma Okoro

Enuma Okoro is a Nigerian-American author, writer, lecturer, curator, and arts and culture critic. She is a weekly columnist for the Financial Times weekend newspaper. Her column, "The Art of Life," reflects her broader research and writing interests: how the intersection of art, philosophy, spirituality, ecology and culture can speak to the human condition and interrogate how we live with ourselves and one another, and how we relate to the more-than-human.

Rokhaya Diallo

Rokhaya Diallo is a French journalist, writer, and award-winning filmmaker widely recognized for her work which dismantles the barricades of racism and sexism through the promotion of equality and pluralism. A contributing writer to the Washington Post and The Guardian, she is also a researcher for the Gender+Justice Initiative in Georgetown University, Washington D.C. In France, she is a commentator for leading radio RTL and for leading news channels.

Marcus Gibbs

Marcus is a Chartered Alternative Investment Analyst and a seasoned leader in the London hedge fund industry. He has driven operational excellence at firms such as SS&C Globeop, Bank of America Merrill Lynch, and Lighthouse Partners LLP.

Marcus is also the Founder & Managing Director of PointGuard Investments, focusing on residential and commercial property conversions in London. With over 15 years of experience in property investment and management, he and his team provide asset management services for Caribbean expats while successfully managing his own growing portfolio in London

Claude Grunitzky

CEO and Managing Partner of the Equity Alliance, a fund dedicated to providing capital to emerging, underrepresented venture capitalists and early stage founders who are women or people of color. Founder of two media companies focused on Black culture, TRACE (funded by Goldman Sachs and successfully sold to European investors) and TRUE Africa (funded by Google), Claude is a Visiting Social Innovator at the Harvard Kennedy School's Social Innovation and Change Initiative.

Dr Fredara Mareva Hadley, Ph.D

Dr. Fredara Mareva Hadley, Ph.D. is an ethnomusicology professor in the Music History Department at The Juilliard School . Her work has been featured in the press including The New York Times, The Washington Post, and Billboard Magazine, and in academic publications such as American Music. Her commentary is included in documentaries including the recently premiered PBS docuseries, Gospel, Little Richard: I am Everything, and the Emmy-award-winning docuseries The 1619 Project.

Dr Christy Pichichero, Ph.D

Dr. Christy Pichichero, Ph.D is an Associate Professor of History and French at George Mason University. She earned her A.B. in Comparative Literature at Princeton University, her B.M. in Applied Music (Voice - Opera) from the Eastman School of Music, and her Ph.D. in French Studies from Stanford University. She is the Director of Faculty Diversity in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, the Past President of the Western Society for French History, and a thought leader in Critical Race Theory, anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion. Dr Christy Pichichero, Ph.D Dr Carolyn Finney, PhD is a storyteller, author and a cultural geographer.

Dr Carolyn Finney, Ph.D

Dr Carolyn Finney, PhD is a storyteller, author and a cultural geographer who is deeply interested in issues related to identity, difference, creativity, and resilience. Her research has focused on African Americans and environmental issues in the U.S. Her book "Black Faces, White Spaces" reimagines the relationship of African Americans to the Great Outdoors.

Ovetta Sampson

Named one of the Top 15 People in Enterprise Artificial Intelligence by Business Insider in 2023, Ovetta Sampson is a tech industry leader who has worked with multiple technologies to help solve some of the biggest problems facing multiple industries. Leading engineers, designers and researchers, at top companies such as Microsoft, IDEO and Capital One, Ovetta has been designing and developing machine learning, artificial intelligence and enterprise software solutions for more than a decade. She is currently the Director of UX, Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence at Google.





ABOUT US

The Team

Meryanne Loum -Martin
Founder & Artistic Director



Meryanne is a Senegalese, West Indian and French cultural entrepreneur. From an award-winning Parisian lawyer, she evolved into a self-taught interior designer and pioneer of boutique hospitality in Marrakech.

Her contributions have garnered global acclaim, earning her coverage in publications such as the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Architectural Digest, Forbes, Essence, Black Enterprise, Shoppe Black, Ebony, Vogue, Travel and Leisure, The Miami Herald and Conde Nast Traveler. A bestselling author published by Rizzoli New York, Meryanne is a passionate public speaker and advocate for cultural heritage.

She hosts literary retreats and workshops that showcase the creative brilliance of the African diaspora in literature, cinema, and entrepreneurship. Beyond her hospitality ventures, Meryanne is the mastermind behind development projects including a cutting-edge ecolodge and a visionary cultural campus designed in collaboration with renowned architects.

She serves as ambassador to the Berlin-based Leading Cultural Destinations of the World and of the IBU movement. She served on the board of the Marrakech Biennale, advancing Marrakech as a global cultural hub. Through her hotel, Jnane Tamsna, Meryanne supports initiatives of the Global Diversity Foundation, which supports emerging changemakers.

Let's celebrate together, in the motherland, the many expressions of one sole creativity: Black Culture. »

Meryanne Loum-Martin

The Diaspora Salon team reflects the very essence of our mission. Composed of accomplished global citizens, our members embody the diversity and richness of the Black diaspora. Our team represents cross cultural collaboration, citizens of France, America and Great Britain, whose roots trace back to Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, Haiti, and Guadeloupe amongst many others. This multicultural foundation ensures that a wide range of voices and narratives shape the Salon's vision and programming.

Veronika Chatelain
Creative Director



Veronika Châtelain is a grant maker and a cultural preservationist working with artists, storytellers and creatives who challenge the false and dangerous narratives about communities in the Global South. She led Open Society Foundations Global Initiative for the Restitution of African Cultural Heritage.

Renua Itsueli
Strategic Development



Renua Itsueli is a Nigerian Architect based in the London after over a decade driving projects in the United States and the Middle East. As strategic development coordinator she will lead fundraising initiatives for The Diaspora Salon. Renua will also develop our network of partners, with a specific focus on West Africa.

Keyza Nubret
Head of PR
Curator (Caribbean)



Keyza Nubret is the founder of K'S COM, a 360-degree communication agency recognized for its expertise in public relations, entrepreneurship, art, culture, and sports. Her primary goal is to build bridges in a constantly evolving world. She wields major influence within the Afro-Caribbean community and the African diaspora through her work with overseas associations, the French National Assembly, and diaspora elected officials.

Jasmine Pierce
Head of Communications



Jasmine L. Pierce is the founder of JLP Consulting and formerly a Vice President at Becca, a creative communications agency in New York and Los Angeles. She joins The Diaspora Salon as our head of communications, where she will leverage her expertise in media relations, events and partnerships to ensure a smooth launch process.

Michelle Adjoo Saahene
Community Engagement



Michelle Adjoo Saahene is an activist, speaker, and retreat host dedicated to advancing racial and social justice. As the Program Director at Evolve Media, a women-led digital buying company, she connects creators with mission-driven campaigns, amplifying voices for meaningful change.

Thaïs Sala
Senior Curator



Thaïs Sala is a musician and cultural curator. She is part of the founding collective of Harvest Festival, a platform celebrating the produce of urban and rural communities in the region, from local ancestral products to art, music and food. She runs Jnane Tamsna's Creatives-in-Residence program, providing artists with opportunities to delve deeper into their craft whilst immersing themselves in Marrakech's vibrant cultural community.



Contact us

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