
San
and
Kofa

Restoring our
Queer and Tr

African

ans Heritage

Curatorial Note

As a queer Ghanaian, I grew up in a society that constantly told me my identity did not belong to my culture, that it was foreign, imported, and somehow un-African. Over time, I came to understand that this narrative is not only harmful but historically untrue.

Our stories have always existed. Our ancestors have always existed. Our resistance has always existed. What has been erased is not our existence, but the histories that affirm it.

This exhibition is my way of creating the space I once needed, a space to go back home to. It invites African and Afro-diasporic LGBTQIA+ people to reconnect with their heritage without shame, to see themselves reflected in history, and to remember that we come from a long lineage of resilience, creativity, spirituality, and love.

For many of us, home is more than a place. It is a memory, a longing, and a relationship shaped by migration, colonial violence, and silence. Through these archives, stories, and histories, I hope we can return to that home together, not as a place of pain, but as a source of grounding, belonging, and strength. This is an invitation to remember, reclaim, and affirm a simple truth: queerness has always been part of Africa's story.

San and Kofa

A display archival materials and present African queer and trans heritage across time and geography, while creating space for reflection and dialogue on what has been remembered, what has been forgotten, and what has been deliberately erased.

This space is for African and Afro-diasporic LGBTQIA+ people and their allies to reconnect, heal, feel grounded, and reclaim our histories as something alive and present, rather than distant or broken fragments of the past.

Crossdressing

This exhibited work challenges the idea that males presenting themselves as females is foreign to Ghanaian society by tracing its presence within cultural and social traditions. It draws on examples such as the Gallywood and Cancert Party shows, where men perform in women's clothing as part of a recognised and preserved cultural practice, suggesting a historical degree of acceptance. It also reflects on "Festive Transvestism" in Ghanaian universities, where male students temporarily engage in crossdressing during hall week celebrations, creating limited but meaningful spaces for gender expression. Together, these contexts reveal that crossdressing has existed within socially permitted frameworks, contrasting sharply with the stigma often seen today.


















UNIVERSITY HALL

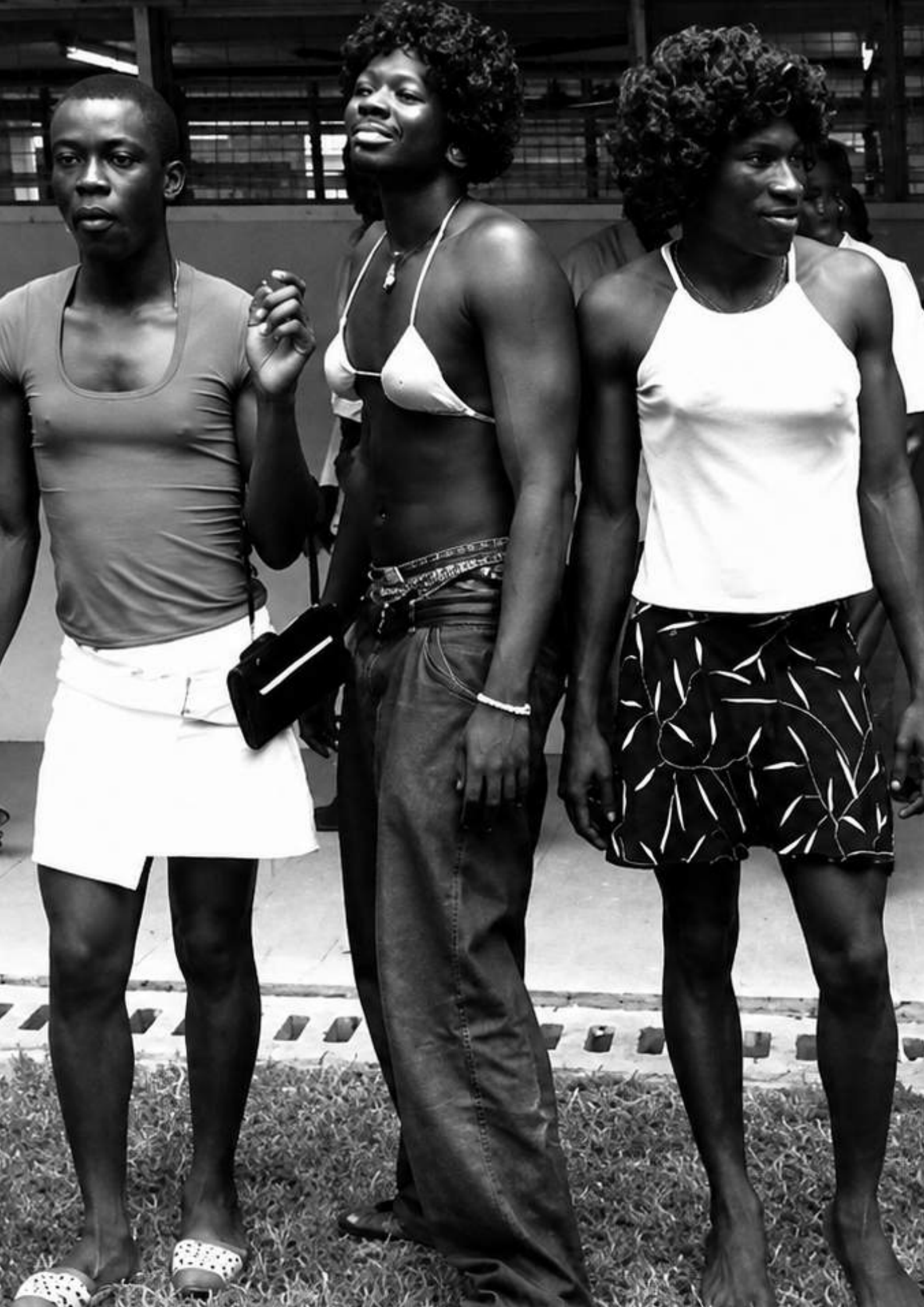




PLATE 2 The 1960s saw an explosion of female types. Pictured here in a pose reminiscent of Diana Ross and the Supremes is the Jaguar Jokers' cadre of female impersonators: *from left* to right, Kwaku Okyere, Kwao Mamful, Yaw Werenko, Emmanuel Christian Baidoo, Yaw Nyamekye Kwaasi Owusu. (Photo by courtesy 1983)







1960, Joseph Paul Walcott-Danquah

Widely known as Paul Danquah, a Ghanaian lawyer, actor, writer, and intellectual. Born in London to Ghanaian nationalist and statesman J. B. Danquah and Bertha May Walcott, Paul moved between Ghana, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Morocco throughout his life. He pursued a distinguished career in law and the arts, becoming one of the first sub-Saharan Africans to work at the World Bank while remaining deeply engaged in theatre, literature, and cultural life.

Paul Danquah is also remembered as one of the earliest publicly documented gay Ghanaians. At a time when homosexuality was heavily criminalised and socially condemned across much of the world, he lived authentically and shared a lifelong partnership with Peter Pollock.


PLEASE, NOTE
TAKE CARE
9/21/76



Called to the



Reading Queer Life through Erasure in Nigerian Archives

My Son Saddens Me: Says Septuagenarian Father of Gay Pastor, 2008

Inside Nigeria's Gay Church: A PM News Undercover Report - 2008

OPC Goes After Homosexuals In Ibadan: 7 Arrested - 2002

Gay Movement: Taking The Wind Out Of Its Sail - 2006

Homosexuals In Church Is God's Design - Adeboye - 2003

Homosexual Church Shut: After PM News Report - 2008

Nigerian Gays Organise 1986

Prohibiting Gay Marriage - 2007

Checking The Excesses Of Clerics

Women and Lesbianism, 2010

PM NEWS

editorial

Prohibiting Gay Marriage

The issue of gay marriage has become so dominant globally in recent times that it has also assumed national discourse in our country

Because of the legalisation of gay relationship in some Western countries, gays in our country have started agitating for a right to be joined in holy wedlock.

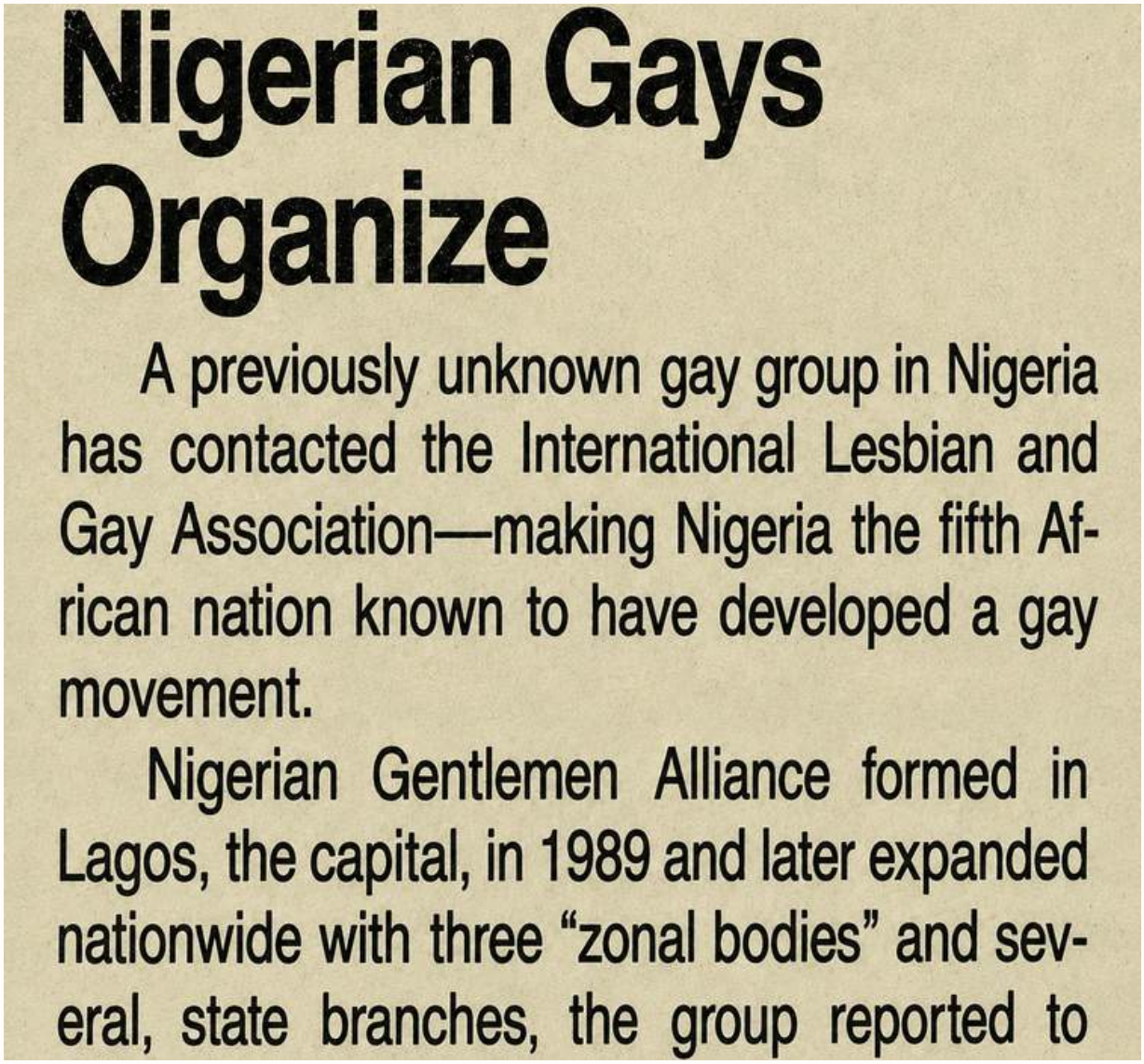
The bill further stipulates that no marriage license or certificate shall be issued to parties of same sex in the state while homosexuals caught engaged in relationship shall be liable to a term of 10 years imprisonment.

Marriage bans do not emerge in a vacuum. They emerge when lawmakers believe something is already happening, or might soon happen. The repeated use of the word "prohibit" suggests that conversations around same-sex relationships and marriage had become visible enough to provoke a response.

One sentence stands out: the article references agitation for the legalisation of same-sex marriage in Nigeria. That matters. It suggests that queer Nigerians were not only building communities and seeking recognition; some were beginning to make claims for rights.

Reading this article alongside earlier documents, a pattern starts to emerge. Organising becomes visibility. Visibility becomes public debate. Public debate becomes political intervention.

The archive records the growing visibility of people who had already been there.



Nigerian Gays Organize

A previously unknown gay group in Nigeria has contacted the International Lesbian and Gay Association—making Nigeria the fifth African nation known to have developed a gay movement.

Nigerian Gentlemen Alliance formed in Lagos, the capital, in 1989 and later expanded nationwide with three "zonal bodies" and several, state branches, the group reported to

This article may be the earliest anchor point in this archive. It reveals that an organised queer community already existed in Nigeria by at least 1989. The report references a nationwide structure with state and zonal branches and places Nigeria among the first African countries documented as having a gay movement.

The article quickly expands beyond Lagos, hints at networks, movement, communication, and relationships extending across cities. Queer organising appears here not as an isolated local phenomenon but as part of a broader social world connected across regions and even beyond Nigeria's borders.

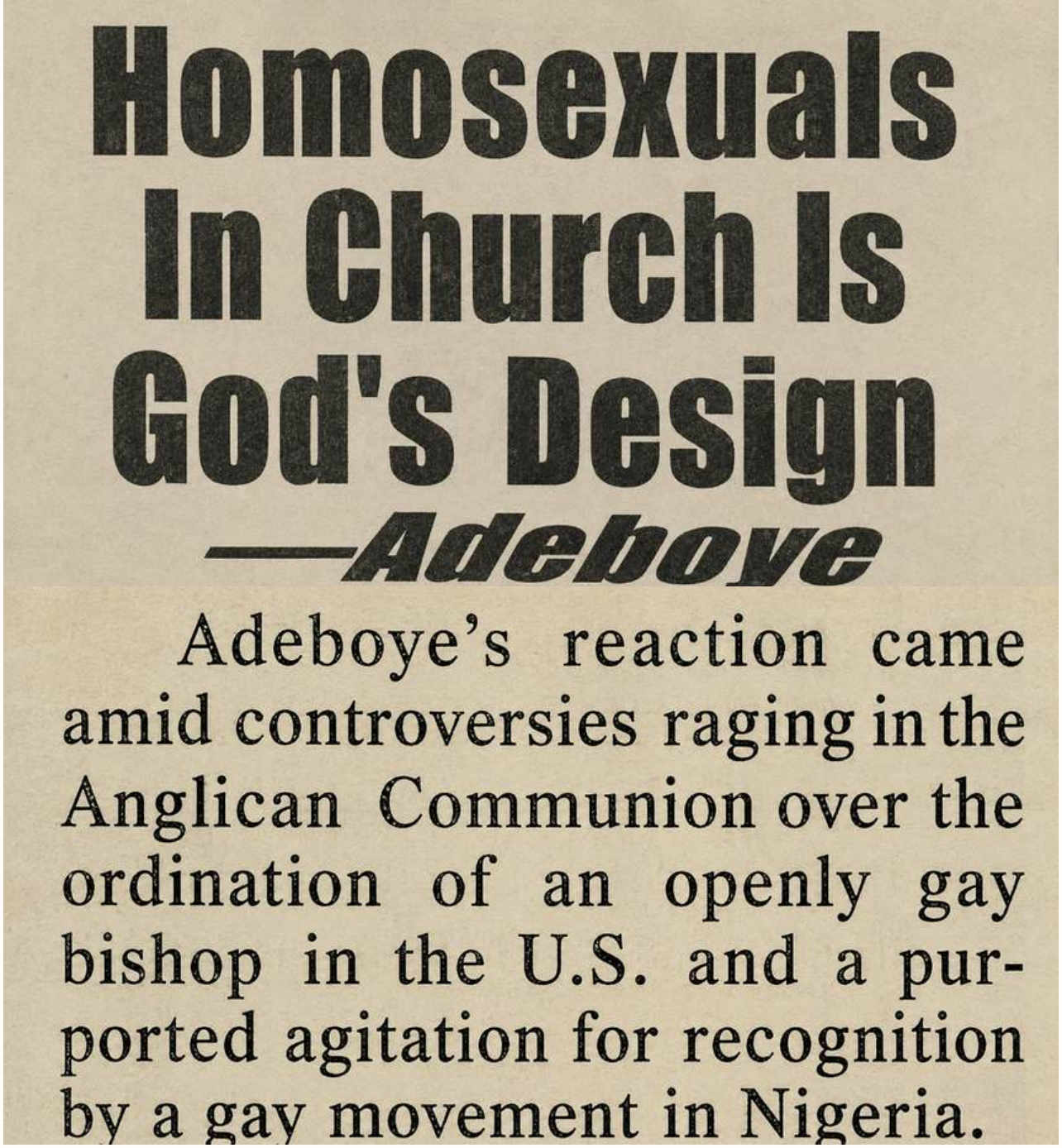
The questions linger. Who built these networks? How did they communicate? And what traces of their organising survive outside the newspaper record?

Men of the Oodua People's Congress (OPC) yesterday arrested seven persons in Ibadan, the Oyo state capital, including a famous chemist, Christopher Akor, who they described as homosexuals.

The alleged homosexuals gave their names as Bolaji Adebayo, Folorunso Olanrewaju, Azeez Adesina, Akeem-Oladejo, Biodun Kazeem and Christopher Akor. While Akor and Folorunso Olanrewaju were said to be ring-leaders and are resident in Ibadan with Bolaji Adebayo and Akeem Oladejo, the duo of Azeez Adesina (18) and Biodun Kareem (27) were resident in Lagos State, but used to visit Ibadan regularly to commit the despicable act.

This article enters the archive through violence. It documents the public arrest and exposure of seven men in Ibadan by members of the Oodua People's Congress (OPC). But beneath the language of accusation and moral panic, ***we are given names, ages, occupations, neighbourhoods, and routes between cities.***

One detail stands out: some of the men were described as residents of Lagos who regularly travelled to Ibadan. The article presents this movement as suspicious, but in reality, it suggests social networks, relationships, and forms of community extending beyond a single city.
The article also preserves an unexpected geography. Araromi, Oke-Padre, St. Mary's Catholic Church, an Agip filling station, Galaxy Television. Through an attempt at surveillance, the newspaper accidentally maps queer presence in urban Nigeria.
The archive survives because somebody was trying to expose it.



Homosexuals In Church Is God's Design —Adeboye

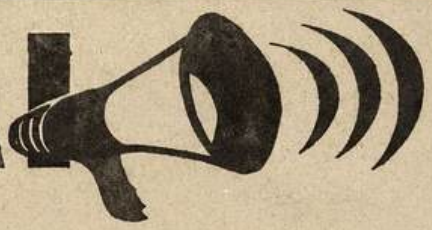
Adeboye's reaction came amid controversies raging in the Anglican Communion over the ordination of an openly gay bishop in the U.S. and a purported agitation for recognition by a gay movement in Nigeria.

For journalists to ask whether homosexuals belong in church, queer Christians must already have been present enough to make the question unavoidable. The article records Pastor Enoch Adeboye responding to what it describes as agitation by a gay movement seeking recognition.

That small reference matters. It connects this article to earlier evidence of organised queer communities and suggests that questions of visibility had already entered public religious life.

I keep returning to the context of the interview. Why was this question important enough to ask a prominent religious leader at an airport? What conversations were already taking place inside churches, universities, homes, and communities? Long before House of Rainbow became publicly visible, this article suggests that queer Nigerians were already negotiating faith, belonging, and recognition within religious spaces.

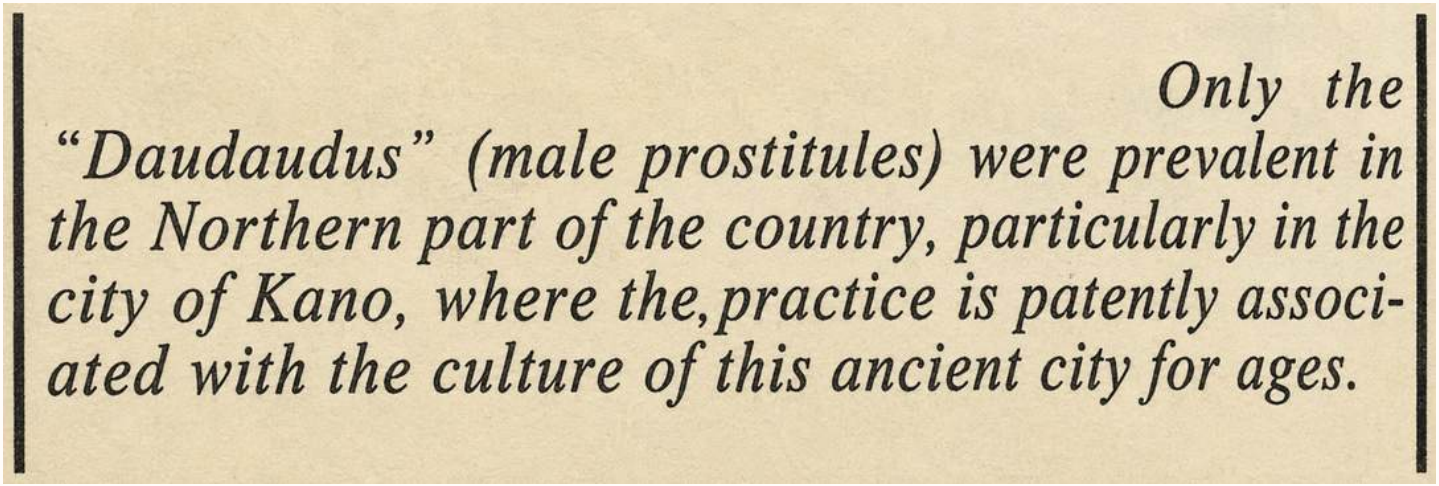
EDITORIAL

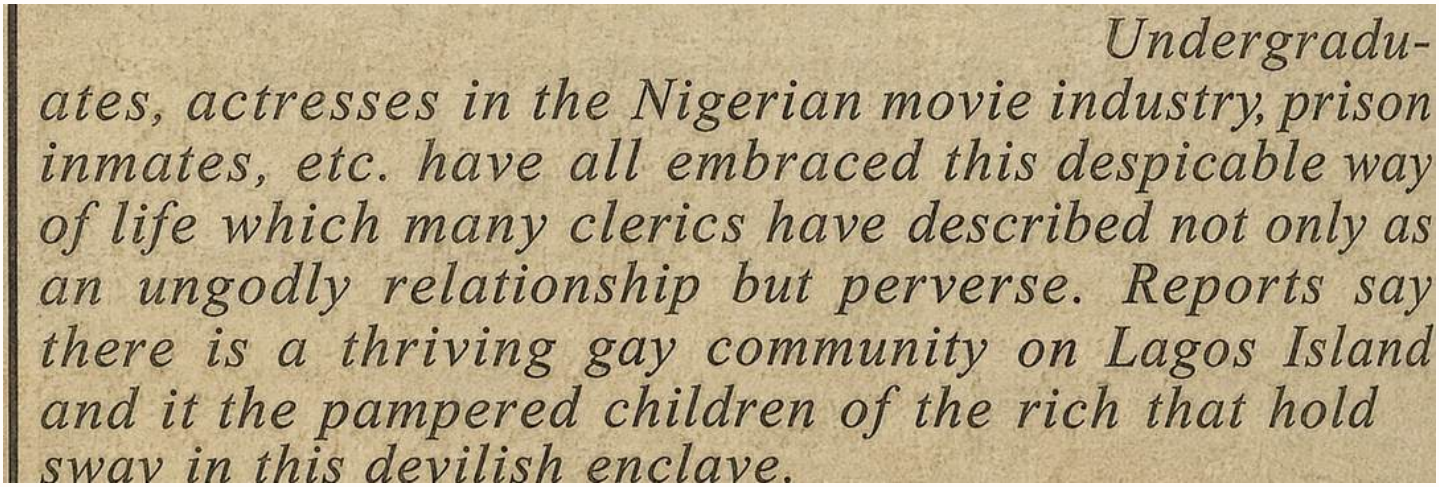


Gay Movement:

Taking The Wind Out Of Its Sail

Perhaps, the federal government was compelled to wage war against this social problem after a group that calls itself Association of Gays in Nigeria openly held its annual general meeting at the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, recently.


Only the "Daudaudus" (male prostitules) were prevalent in the Northern part of the country, particularly in the city of Kano, where the practice is patently associated with the culture of this ancient city for ages.


Undergraduates, actresses in the Nigerian movie industry, prison inmates, etc. have all embraced this despicable way of life which many clerics have described not only as an ungodly relationship but perverse. Reports say there is a thriving gay community on Lagos Island and it the pampered children of the rich that hold sway in this devilish enclave.

For a movement to be "losing momentum," it must first have had it. The article treats the existence of a Nigerian gay movement as a fact. The debate is not whether it exists, but whether it is succeeding.

What makes this article particularly rich is how many different communities appear within it. References emerge to Yan Daudu communities in northern Nigeria, queer life in universities, the Nigerian film industry, prisons, and a reportedly thriving gay scene on Lagos Island. These mentions are brief and sometimes hostile. But they reveal an archive of presence stretching across regions and social worlds in a period of intense moral panic.

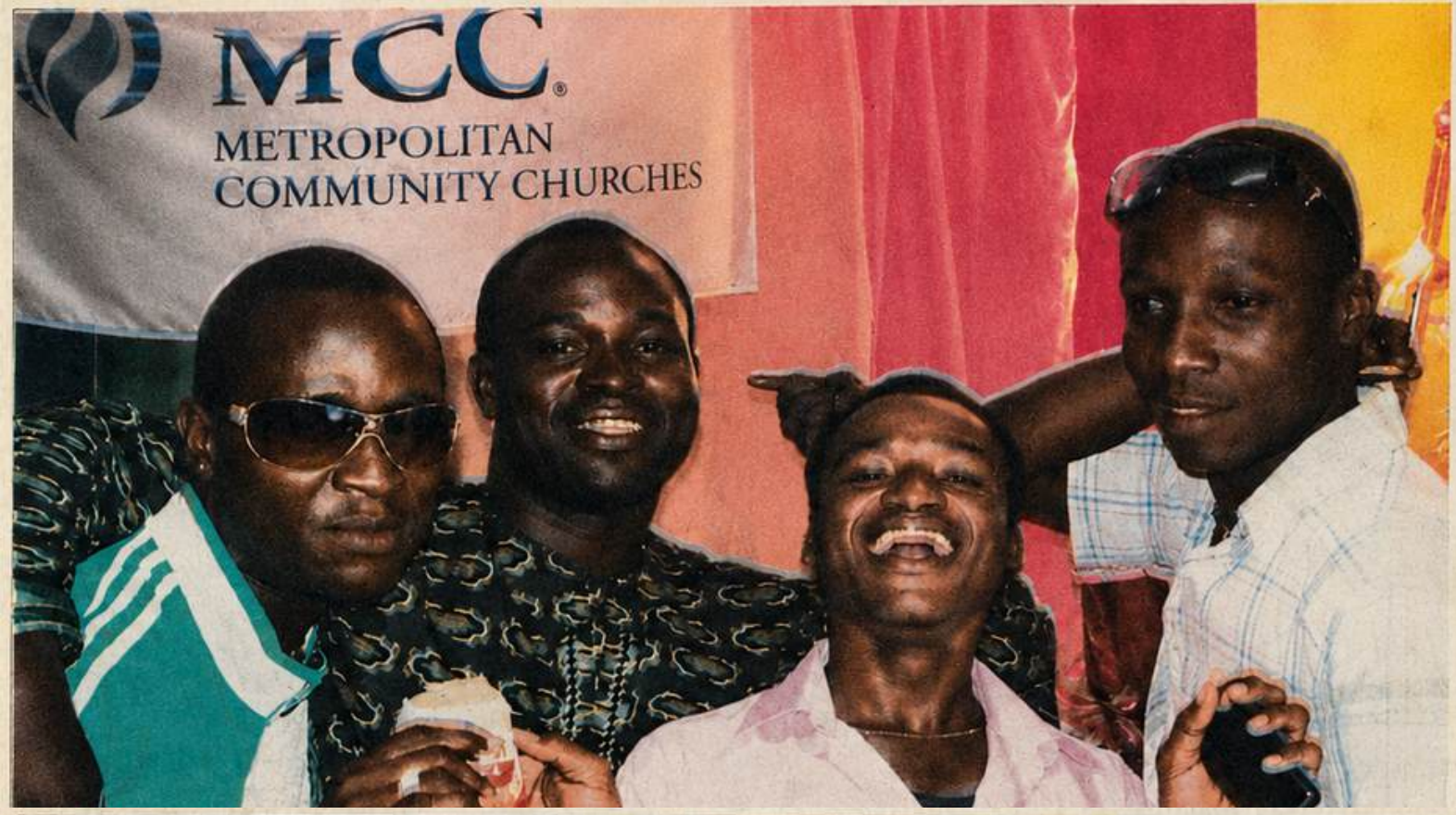
Rowland Jide Macaulay, a 42-year old self-professed 'reverend' and UK-trained lawyer, presides over the ministry, attended mainly by top fashion designers, models, celebrities, activists, among others.

The City Mall edifice on 11 May looked like a rendezvous for gays with several homosexuals and lesbians freely and openly holding hands and kissing in public. Please turn to page 9 for a detailed account of *P.M.News* findings on the gay church.

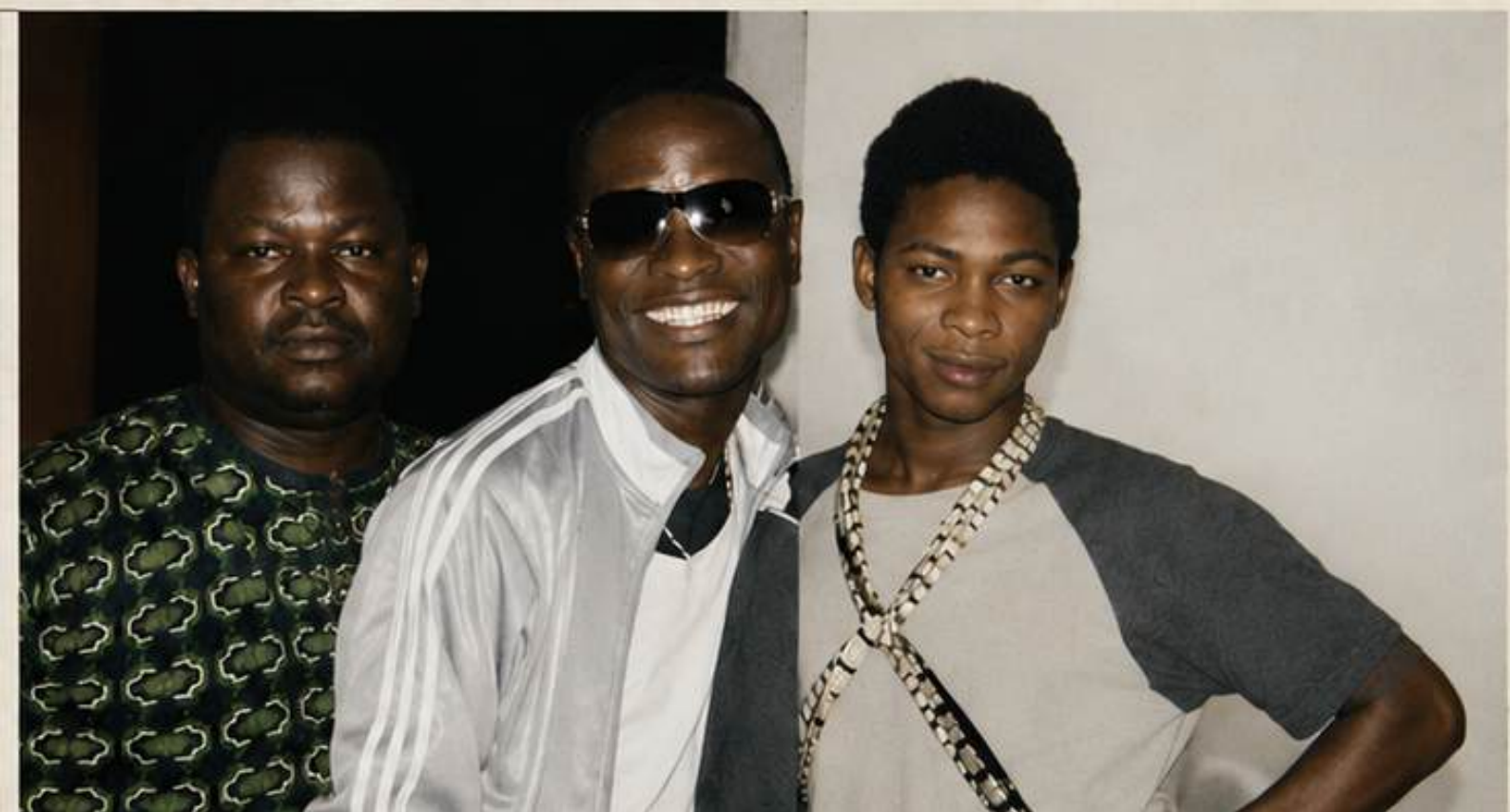
...THE PRAISE NIGHT

Recently, the church held a praise night at the United Bible University, Ojodu Lagos, to mark its second anniversary, amidst heavy security. Despite the fact that most attendees were known church members, they were still thoroughly searched before being allowed entry into the venue.

Specifically, the church refused entry to Nigerian journalists who came to cover the event except one from the BBC and the press crew the church invited from the UK.


MCC
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COMMUNITY CHURCHES







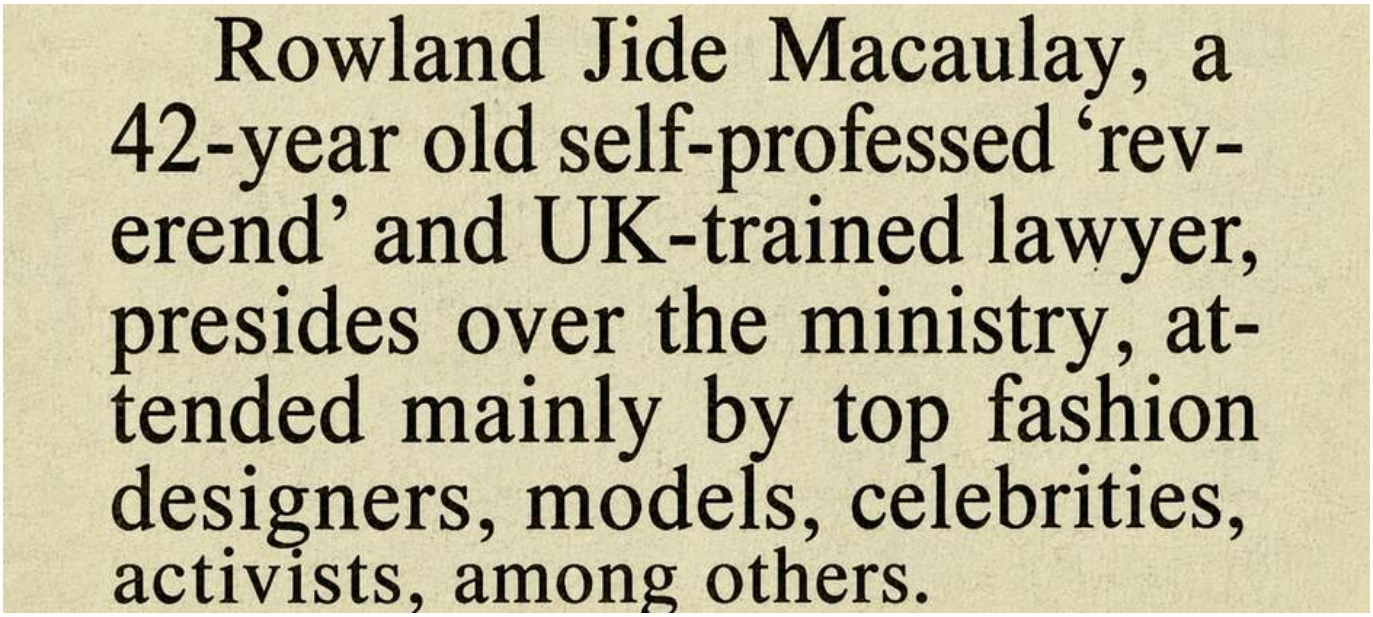
The headline immediately takes us into the existence of something remarkable: **a church led by a pastor openly affirming gay men and lesbians**. By now, the organised queer movement that first appeared in the archive in 1992 has become something much larger than a network, an institution. House of Rainbow, reportedly founded around 2006 during an intense period of backlash against queer visibility, **had a fixed address, regular worship, leadership, and community life**. The article unintentionally preserves a detailed geography of queer Lagos: **Block 145, Jakande Estate in Oke Afa, Isolo; City Mall Studios in Onikan after Rev. Jide Macaulay's interview on Moments with Mo; and United Bible University, where he trained**. What was intended as an exposé instead becomes **one of the richest records of queer institution-building in Nigeria**.

Also, during singing sessions, the church's choir changes lyrics of popular Christian songs to suit their doctrine.

For instance, a song: "God will give Christians everything in double folds" is changed by the gay church to: "God will give us (gay) partners in double folds."

For the two-year old gay ministry, Macaulay has a special mission: to draw about 14 million gay people, which he claims, exist in the country to the fold.

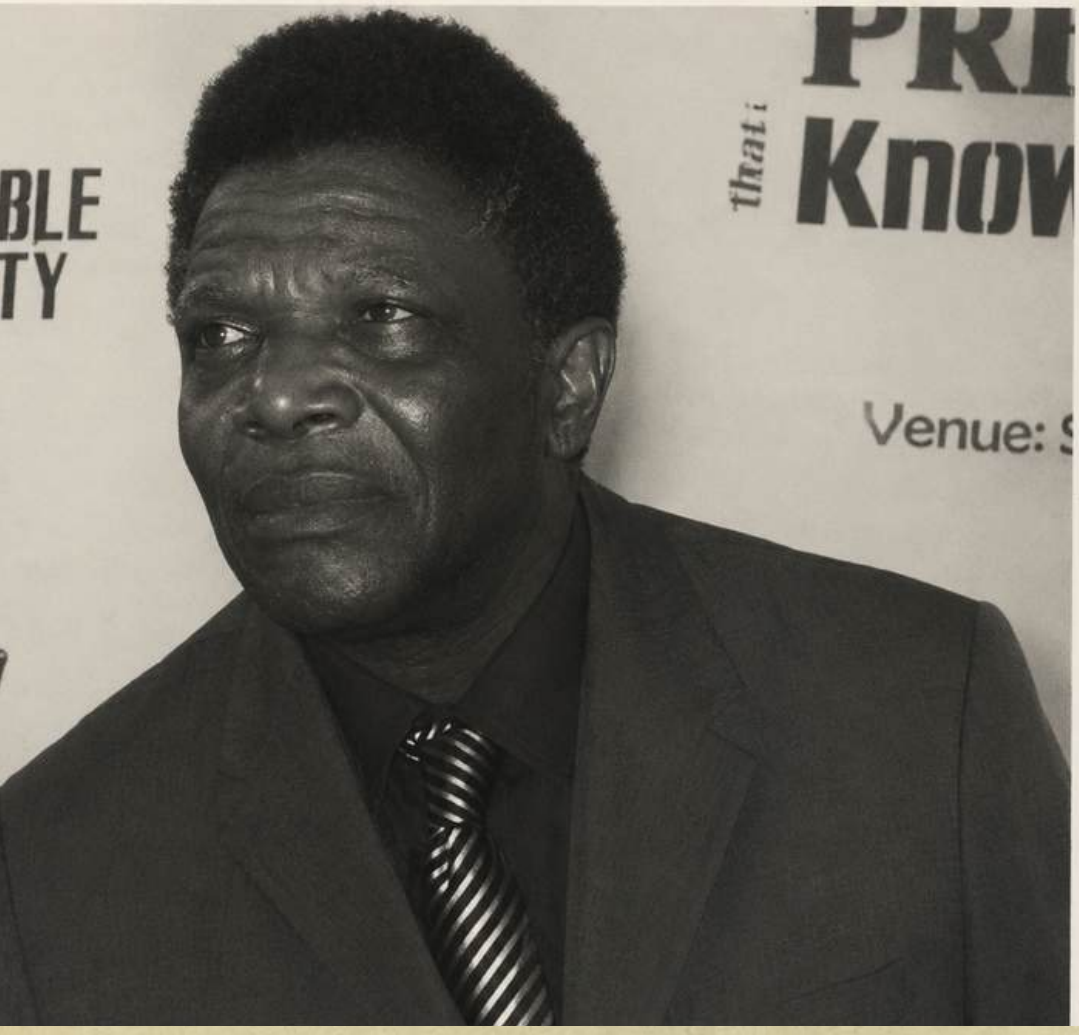
The gay ministry also plans to further promote the movement, with its plan to sponsor five interested people to study Theology, in line with the gay doctrine.



The opening paragraphs celebrate what the newspaper presents as the successful closure of House of Rainbow, **as though exposing one building could erase an entire community**. The article accidentally tells **a story about** the church itself, its **worship**, its **songs**, its **members**, and even its **ambitions to train future clergy**. Rather than documenting an ending, the article records what seems to be a moment of adaptation. House of Rainbow did not disappear; it relocated, evolved, and continues today as an organisation creating safer spaces for LGBTQ+ people of colour in the UK. Reading this now, the "closure" feels less like a victory over queer existence than evidence of its resilience. **Institutions built around community rarely disappear as easily as headlines suggest**.



This editorial places Rev. Jide Macaulay alongside pastors accused of fraud, sexual abuse, and other serious crimes, not because of evidence of wrongdoing, but because of who his congregation welcomed. It is **one of the clearest examples in this archive of how newspapers participated in producing moral panic rather than simply reporting it**. Instead of investigating House of Rainbow, the article attempts to define where it belongs within Nigeria's moral imagination. But it also reveals something important: **by 2008, queer religious organising had become visible enough to demand editorial responses, public condemnation, and calls for collective action**. The article tells us less about the House of Rainbow than about the machinery of stigma that surrounded queer visibility in this period.



I did not know his church was for gay people; but I know he was gay. I mean, being a gay doesn't mean that he should pastor a church of homosexuals. Recause I'm a father to Rowland; I counselled and prayed for him, and I tell him to make his church a church of all people;

This article shifts the archive from public institutions into the private space of family. ***Professor Augustus Macaulay admits that he knew his son was gay long before the newspaper investigation, complicating the common assumption that queer people were always immediately rejected by their families***. What emerges instead is a far more complicated ***relationship***, one ***shaped by disagreement, ongoing conversation, invitations, disappointment, and care***. The article also quietly confirms that House of Rainbow was established enough to celebrate anniversaries, rent spaces, and host public events. For me, this is one of the most human documents in the collection. It reminds us that queer history is not only about movements and organisations, but also about ***families trying, struggling, and negotiating what love looks like under immense social pressure***.

Women's Grooming

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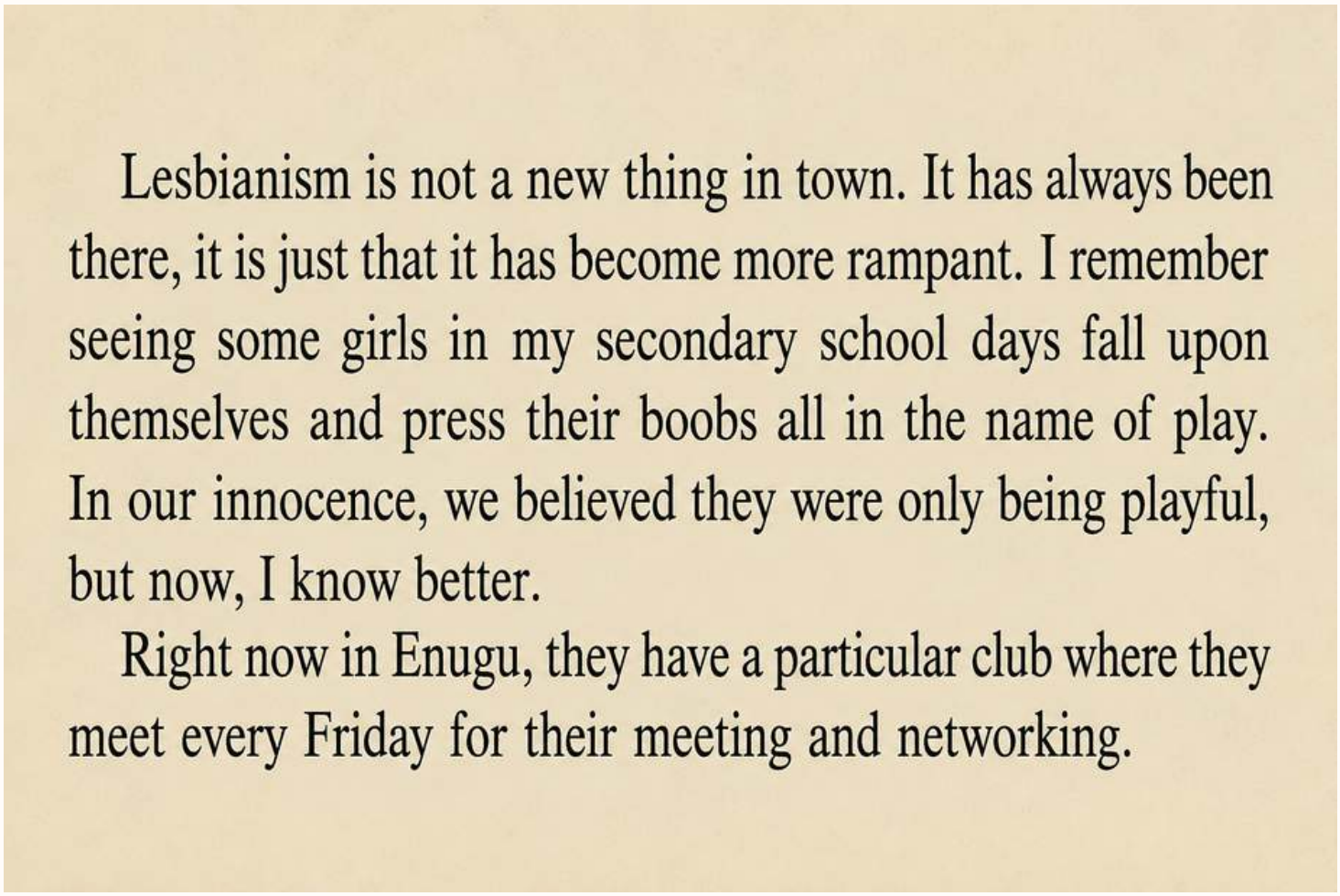
With AMARA



Women And Lesbianism

Back to my story, this lady, who is a dedicated church worker, called me for this filthy talk right from her room in camp, where they went for a Christian gathering. According to her, she is presently in a relationship with two sisters who are now enemies because of her.

We keep hearing of our actresses who are into this shameful act. Recently, we heard of a female senator who bought a Range Rover SUV for a lesbian partner who is an actress. Just last week, my friend told me a story about two women in VGC, who moved out of their homes, left their children and moved into a new house as man and wife. What is this world turning into?


Lesbianism is not a new thing in town. It has always been there, it is just that it has become more rampant. I remember seeing some girls in my secondary school days fall upon themselves and press their boobs all in the name of play. In our innocence, we believed they were only being playful, but now, I know better.

Right now in Enugu, they have a particular club where they meet every Friday for their meeting and networking.

One of the striking things about this article is how widely **it imagines lesbian life already existed in Nigeria**. **Churches**, **film industries**, **elite neighbourhoods**, **secondary schools**, **beauty salons**, **friendships**, and even **a club in Enugu** all **become sites where lesbian relationships are said to exist**. While the article is clearly written as a warning, it unintentionally preserves traces of worlds that are rarely documented elsewhere. Paragraph 16 is particularly revealing: **"Lesbianism is not a new thing, it's always been here."** That single sentence undermines one of the most persistent myths about queer life in Africa: that it is recent or imported. Even **while condemning lesbianism, the writer acknowledges its long-standing presence**. Read archivally, this article becomes evidence of continuity.

Researchers Note

Archives are often imagined as places where history is carefully preserved. But for many queer communities, history survives differently.
Much of what we know about queer life in Africa does not come from records created by queer people themselves. Instead, it survives in newspaper reports, police stories, religious debates, editorials, and moments of public controversy. These documents were rarely written to preserve queer history. Many were produced to condemn, expose, or erase it.

This exhibition asks a different question: What happens if we read these archives against the grain?

Rather than reading these articles only for what they intended to say, I read them for what they accidentally preserved: names, places, organisations, friendships, churches, movements, journeys, ambitions, and communities. Taken together, these fragments reveal something larger than any single article ever intended. They show that queer Nigerians were organising, building institutions, forming networks, negotiating faith, demanding recognition, and imagining futures long before many public narratives suggest.

This exhibition is an invitation to read those traces differently.

Boyega Taiwo Adediran

Remembering Forward

Segment one

These five images belong to our first issue, the one concerned with freedom. The looks here are open and unhurried. The body is its own reason. We wanted something that could sit inside an African queer archive and say, quietly: we were here, and we were well. Not in spite of who we are, but because of it. It specifically looks at the body as human canvas.











Remembering Forward

Segment two

Moving into the second issue, the work began to ask different questions. What do we inherit? What do we choose to carry forward, and what do we lay down? The styling in these images reaches toward something ancestral, not as costume but as conversation. Queerness is not placed elsewhere here. It is at home in the textures and the gaze and the way two people share space with each other and with the camera.











Remembering Forward

Segment three

The final look hardens. There is more interiority here, more boldness. If the earlier images celebrate and assert, these ones disrupt. They sit with the troubling question: what does it feel like to be stuck in the duality of the modern African where you live alongside pop culture and new ideas of being vs heritage and lineage of traditions, ideas and norms? We did not arrive at an answer. We stayed in the question long enough to photograph it.







Remembering Forward

collaborative work by Echoes of Uhuru

These photographs began as an act of noticing. Noticing what the body carries when it is at ease. Noticing what tradition looks like when it is held gently. Noticing what it means to be Black, queer, and fully present in spaces that have always quietly made room for us, even when those spaces had no name.

Created through Echoes of Uhuru and our flagship publication, Intetho Magazine, these images form part of an ongoing visual archive of African queer life. They explore queer heritage as a process of remembering and restoration, drawing attention to histories and ways of being whose traces were fragmented through colonialism, missionary intervention, apartheid, and later nationalist projects. The photographs invite us to consider heritage as something living; carried in bodies, relationships, memory, and everyday acts of presence.

The exhibition brings together images from two issues of Echoes of Uhuru. The first reflects on freedom as something quietly inhabited through the body, intimacy, and ease. The second turns to the African Renaissance as an unfolding conversation, where culture moves with us across generations and queerness finds expression within that movement. The people portrayed here are collaborators, artists, and queer people participating in the making of their own archive. Their presence before or resident photographer, Yeukai Runyowa's lens is grounded in trust, care, and shared authorship.

Presented here, it offers a space to reflect on the many ways queer lives in Southern Africa have always contributed to the continent's cultural imagination. These images linger with questions of ancestry, belonging, identity, and possibility, allowing tenderness and complexity to exist together within the same frame.

Credits/Ukubonga

Creative Platform: Echoes of Uhuru
Muse & Model: Nqobani Mathew Dabengwa
Muse & Model Zukhanye Stassia Nyeka
Photography: Yeukai Runyowa
Creative Direction: Kubechosi Mazizi

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