

The Michigan Daily

African student groups celebrates the diaspora of African heritage

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Dom performs a poem at the Pan-African Pulp open mic at the UMMA Friday night. Buy this photo (<http://store.pub.umich.edu/michigan-daily-buy-this-photo/>)

Becca Mahon/Daily

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The University of Michigan Museum of Art celebrated Botswana-born artist Meleko Mokgosi's artistic renditions promoting Pan-Africanism, the international movement which seeks to unite groups of African heritage together on Friday night. The event featured spoken word recitations and open mic performances by the Detroit-based group Seraphine Collective and Detroit native artist Supercoolwicked.

The Undergraduate African Student Association collaborated with the African Graduate Student Association to organize the event. Chiamaka Ukachukwu, a second-year Ph.D. student in the Department of Pharmacology, is the president of the African Graduate Student Association. Ukachukwu said the celebration was timely with Black History Month starting on Saturday.

“Especially with Black History Month coming up and the state of current events, it's just nice to be reminded of our history and the kind of groundwork people have laid before us and just to celebrate that,” Ukachukwu said.

Mokgosi’s art exhibit featured a painted mural, a vinyl wall work, a text piece and reconstructions of a manifesto along with vintage posters exploring the theme of Pan-Africanism in each part.

Meleko Mokgosi visited the University in September to install his exhibition. He also met students from the African Student Association, Lisa Borgsdorf, manager of public programs at UMMA said.

“This event is really bringing undergraduate students, graduate students, members of the community and artists from Detroit all under one roof tonight,” Borgsdorf said.

Seraphine Collective, a Detroit-based support network of non-binary artists, women and DJs, performed at the event. Their music ranges from classic Afro house, Afrobeat and Gqom music to African pop and hip-hop.

Seraphine Collective’s DJ, Ozi Uduma, said the collective focuses on the importance of fostering community by attending various events.

“I think music is a way to teach about different cultures, about different people and not only to showcase the differences but the similarities in the ways in which we learn from each other and there is joy in using music and art as a caveat to create joyous spaces,” Udama said. “We’re honored to use this space to show people the importance of supporting art, artists, musicians and creators.”

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