MFALMEBITS VOICES OF VALOR ISSUE 005

VOICES OF VALOR

CULTURE • HERITAGE • IDENTITY • INSTITUTIONS • AFRICA



THE HOUSE OF MUMBI

ANCESTRY, MEMORY, LINEAGE.

I AM BECAUSE WE ARE

BELONGING, UBUNTU, OUR STRENGTH.

THE DIGITAL STORYTELLER

ANCIENT WISDOM, NEW PLATFORMS, BIGGER REACH.

MADE IN AFRICA. WORN EVERYWHERE

AFRICAN CREATIVITY, GLOBAL STAGE, TONGORO & BEYOND.

BEYOND THE SINGLENESS

SELF-DEFINITION, HEALTHY LOVE, WHO WE CHOOSE TO BE.

Sankofa

OWN YOUR NARRATIVE

OUR PAST BUILT US.
OUR PRESENT EMPOWERS US.
OUR FUTURE IS OURS.

KNOW
RECLAIM
BUILD PASS
IT ON

WWW.MFALMEBITS AFRICA

CONTENTS

A MAP OF THIS ISSUE

SANKOFA — look back, remember, reclaim, build forward.

01 OPENING NOTE
SANKOFA
Editorial opening

02 FEATURE
THE HOUSE OF MUMBI
One_would_say by Wangui

03 SUB-FEATURE
I AM BECAUSE WE ARE
Kemuma's Haven

04 SUB-FEATURE
THE DIGITAL STORYTELLER
Verah Amito

05 SPECIAL FEATURE
MADE IN AFRICA, WORN EVERYWHERE
Tongoro Studios

06 SUB-FEATURE
BEYOND THE SINGLENESS
Morara Nyarangi

07 UNDER THE SCOPE
AFRICA NOW
Youth • Food • Health • Debt

08 SPECIAL FEATURE
TO THE AFRICAN WOMAN
Beauty • Power • Presence

FROM THE EDITORIAL DESK

WHY THIS ISSUE EXISTS
There are stories a people inherit.
There are stories a people are taught.
And then there are the stories a people decide to tell for themselves.

— MfalmeBits Editorial Team

Voices of Valor — Issue 005 was built somewhere between those three.

This issue is called Sankofa because remembering is not the same as living in the past. Sometimes you have to look back to understand what was interrupted, what was forgotten, what survived and what is still worth carrying forward.

So we went looking.
We found ourselves in **Mumbi**, in the stories carried through generations and the names that still connect people to where they come from.

We found ourselves in the simple truth that **I am because we are**, that identity does not exist in isolation, and belonging remains one of the things human beings continue to search for.

We looked at what happens when the old ways of telling stories meet the digital world. We looked at **Tongoro**, and at what becomes possible when African creativity is built on African soil and allowed to travel without leaving its identity behind.

We questioned the single stories that flatten African lives into something smaller than they are.

And then we looked around us.
At young people searching for work and direction.
At food systems that do not always return the value of what Africa produces.
At health systems carrying enormous pressure.
At the question of what Africa does with the capital, resources and opportunities available to it.
Because remembering means very little if it does not change what we build.

That is the conversation behind Issue 005.
Not nostalgia.
Not a performance of pride.
Memory as fuel.
Identity as responsibility.
Story as power.
And ownership as a decision.
This is Sankofa.
Look back. Remember. Reclaim.
Build forward.

VOICES OF VALOR

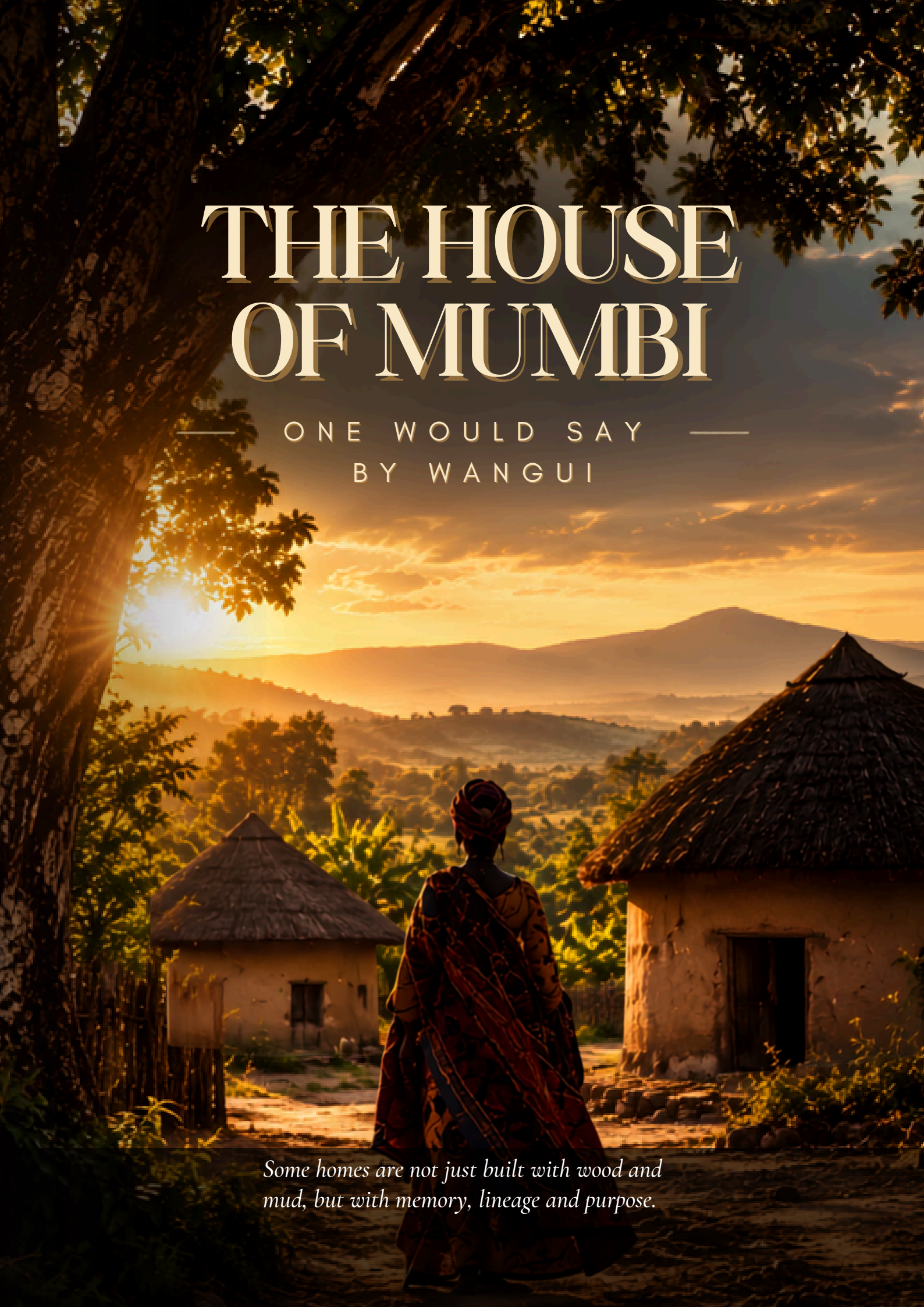
There comes a time when a people must stop looking for themselves in the eyes of the world.
Not because the world has suddenly learned to see them but because they have remembered that they were never lost.
Africa has carried memory through fire, through borders, through stolen names, through broken records and rewritten histories Yet somehow, beneath all that noise, something remained. **Us**.
The names. The stories. The songs. The hands that built. The minds that imagined.
The ancestors who lived, loved, fought, created and dreamed long before anybody arrived to tell us what Africa was supposed to be and perhaps that is the thing we need to remember most: **Our story did not begin with our interruption.**
Sankofa teaches us to reach backward not to live there, but to retrieve what is worth carrying forward.
So remember. **Jikumbushe**.
Remember the weight behind your name.
Remember that when you stand alone, you are never really standing alone.
There are thousands upon thousands who came before you, and thousands more walking beside you now. **Amka**.
Wake up to the inheritance. **Simama**.
Stand in it. Not with bitterness.
Not with an endless need to prove ourselves. Not with our eyes permanently fixed on everything that was taken.
We have spent enough time counting the wounds.There are fruits waiting to be tasted. There is knowledge waiting to be recovered. There are stories waiting to be told without asking permission.
There is a generation waiting to discover that being African is not a burden they were born to carry.

It is a lineage they were born into.
This is not an invitation to romanticise the past. It is a reminder that the past belongs in the conversation about the future.
Because liberation is not only breaking chains. Sometimes liberation is finally putting down the weight you were never meant to carry. Sometimes it is refusing the single story. Sometimes it is finding your people and realising:
I am because we are.

www.mfalmebits.africa

Sometimes it is taking an ancient fire and placing it somewhere new.
A classroom. A book. A screen. A conversation. A movement.
And sometimes liberation is as simple and as radical as saying: **I decide who I am.** That is where **Own Your Narrative** begins. Not with rebellion for rebellion's sake. With remembrance. With confidence. With the quiet understanding that you do not need permission to know yourself. So go back. **Rudi**. Retrieve what matters. Carry it forward. And then walk into the future like someone who finally remembers why they were built to survive.
Because this is not the end of our story.
It's about that time.
SANKOFA.
OWN YOUR NARRATIVE.




THE HOUSE OF MUMBI
ONE WOULD SAY
BY WANGUI
Some homes are not just built with wood and mud, but with memory, lineage and purpose.

The House of Mumbi

Mumbi and the Nine Daughters Who Became a People

There are stories we inherit so early that we stop asking where they came from. We learn the names, the people, and the places. We repeat them at family gatherings, in classrooms, and in conversations with our grandparents. Eventually, the story becomes so familiar that we forget it was once someone's explanation of the world.

Then there is **Mumbi**: a mother, a beginning, and a name at the centre of one of the best-known **Gikuyu origin traditions**. According to the tradition, she had nine daughters. Nine. Not sons who would carry the family name forward. Not nine warriors sent to conquer neighbouring lands. **Nine daughters.** And somehow, those daughters became much more than daughters. They became ancestry. They became clans. They became a way of remembering who belonged to whom. They became part of the story of a people. **Welcome to the House of Mumbi.**

In Gikuyu oral tradition, **Gikuyu and Mumbi** stand at the beginning of the people's origin story. One recorded version tells of Gikuyu being led to the slopes of Mount Kenya, where he encountered Mumbi beneath a fig tree. Together, they became the ancestral parents of the Gikuyu people. In one documented account, their daughters are remembered as **Wanjiru, Wambui, Wanjiku, Wacera, Wangari, Waithera, Wairimu, Nyambura, and Wangui.**

Here is where the story becomes interesting: these are not simply nine names on an old family tree. Tradition connects the daughters to the ancestral clans of the Gikuyu. The family expands: the daughters marry, their descendants multiply, and the household becomes a people. In one account, the clans are united under the name **Nyumba ya Mumbi,** meaning 'the House of Mumbi,' in honour of their mother. It is, frankly, a rather magnificent family legacy. Imagine your mother being so central to the story of where everyone came from that an entire people can be described as her house.

Nine daughters. Or ten? Ah, here is where history refuses to behave itself. If you have heard this story before, you may have heard someone say there were ten daughters, and they would not necessarily be wrong. The expression **kenda muiyuru,** often translated as 'the full nine,' is connected to a tradition in which the number nine could refer to ten clans. A historical account records nine clans as directly descended from the legendary daughters, while an additional clan was later associated with another origin tradition. The same source notes that informants could enumerate ten clans while referring to them collectively as the 'full nine.' Confused? Good. This is precisely why cultural stories deserve more than a neat little paragraph on a school website. Oral traditions are not Excel spreadsheets; they move. They are remembered differently by different people. Names change, and details acquire new meanings. One generation remembers one emphasis; another remembers another. The task is not always to force the story into one perfectly tidy version. Sometimes, the task is simply to listen to all the versions.

Before there were nine, there was Mumbi.



But why daughters?

This might be the most fascinating question of all. Origin stories tell us more than where people think they came from. They tell us what a society considered important enough to remember. In this tradition, the daughters occupy an extraordinary position. Their names become attached to ancestry and clan identity. Their descendants become part of the social structure of the community. The wider community can be remembered through Nyumba ya Mumbi. It is worth pausing here. Somewhere between "**Mumbi had nine daughters**" and "these daughters became ancestral figures," a family story becomes a social map. A daughter is no longer simply someone's child. She becomes a beginning for generations. Suddenly, a name is not merely a name. It is a thread.

There is something wonderfully ordinary about the names themselves: Wanjiku, Wambui, Wanjiru, and Wangui. These are names that still walk around Kenya today, names that answer to "Wanjiku!" in a crowded supermarket, and names that appear on office doors, school registers, university admission lists, and WhatsApp groups. They are names carried by women who may never have stopped to wonder whether, in an old origin tradition, women bearing these names were connected to the ancestral foundations of a people. That is one of the peculiar gifts of culture: the ancient does not always look ancient. Sometimes it is your grandmother. Sometimes it is the woman selling vegetables down the road. Sometimes it is the name your mother gave you because her mother gave it to her.

1

"Sometimes history survives by refusing to announce itself as history."

And then came the House

The phrase Nyumba ya Mumbi is perhaps the most beautiful part of the tradition: a house is more than its walls. It is memory. It is belonging. It is the people who know where you come from and the people who will ask where you've been. It is the place where names are given, stories are repeated, and children learn that they belong somewhere before they were old enough to understand what belonging meant. So perhaps the House of Mumbi was never merely about Mumbi. Perhaps it was about continuity: a way of saying: **These are our people. This is where we began. These are the names we remember. This is the house to which we belong.**

And the story is still moving

Centuries after these traditions were carried through oral storytelling, Mumbi and her daughters continue to appear in Kenyan literature. ***Ngugi wa Thiong'o's The Perfect Nine*** revisits the Gikuyu origin tradition through the daughters, expanding the old story into an epic about family, courage, choice, journey, and the formation of a people. Scholarship on the work specifically examines how Ngugi returns to the origin story and reimagines the daughters in the process. This means the story is doing what good stories have always done: it refuses to die.

It changes clothes. It moves from grandmother to storyteller, from storyteller to scholar, from scholar to novelist, from novel to reader, and now, perhaps, from reader to another generation.

The House Remains

We live in an age obsessed with beginnings: first posts, first jobs, first homes, first loves, first everything. But long before we began documenting our beginnings with photographs and Instagram captions, communities had their own ways of answering the oldest question: **Where did we come from?** For the Gikuyu, one enduring answer begins with Gikuyu and Mumbi and with nine daughters whose names became part of a people's memory. There may be variations in the telling. There may be disagreements in the details. There may even be a tenth daughter hiding inside the mathematics of the "full nine." But perhaps that is the nature of a living tradition. It does not sit still, waiting to be authenticated. It is carried. It is remembered. It is questioned. It is retold.

Somewhere beneath Mount Kenya, beneath the old fig trees, and beneath generations of names, there remains the image of a mother whose house became much larger than she could possibly have imagined. **Nyumba ya Mumbi. The House of Mumbi. A house built not from walls, but from daughters, descendants, and memory**.

THE VOICE BEHIND THE PIECE

ONE_WOULD_SAY BY WANGUI

Writer · Contributor

WHO SHE IS

I am fortunate to be amongst this culture. I love my name. It is a title. It is royalty. It carries meaning. It carries semblance.

WHAT DRIVES HER

I aim to write. Always. No matter where I've been, where I am, or where I land tomorrow, there is one thing that has always walked alongside me: words. Beautiful sentences. The need to put something into words, and perhaps leave a little of myself in them.

ON THIS ISSUE

THE HOUSE OF MUMBI

In "The House of Mumbi," One_would_say explores Gikuyu heritage, ancestry and the stories carried through generations bringing memory, identity and belonging into the present.

I AM BECAUSE WE ARE

www.mfalmebits.africa

Ubuntu is an African philosophy that reminds us that no one becomes who they are on their own. Imagine a world where success is never truly ours alone, where joy grows when it is shared, and where another person's struggle is not simply their burden but a concern we carry together. Rooted in a profound belief in our shared humanity, Ubuntu suggests that who we become is shaped by the people around us. Often associated with **Southern African communities**, it is more than an invitation to be kind. It is a call to recognise that our lives are deeply intertwined.

Ubuntu is not confined to books or philosophical discussions; its principles are woven into everyday African community life. They appear in a neighbour helping another family through a difficult season, a community gathering around a grieving household, or an elder sharing wisdom with a younger generation. These moments may seem ordinary, but together they express a powerful belief: we are responsible for one another. In many African communities, the idea of community extends beyond the individual household. Relatives, neighbours, and friends form a wider network of care and support. Your joy can become my joy; your pain can become a burden I help you carry; and your success does not have to diminish mine.

In many modern societies, we are encouraged to think of ourselves as individuals first: my goals, my success, my future, my life. Ubuntu gently challenges that way of thinking by asking us to remember the people who helped shape who we became. Who encouraged you when you wanted to give up? Who celebrated your achievements? Who gave you a place to belong? Behind almost every individual story is a constellation of people: parents, siblings, friends, and even strangers who offered kindness at exactly the right moment. Perhaps, then, becoming yourself was never entirely a solitary journey.

The African concept that emphasizes the universal interconnectedness between people and can be translated as "I am because we are".

-Ubuntu



One of the most beautiful aspects of Ubuntu is its belief that community can become a source of strength. When one person struggles, others can step forward; when a family experiences loss, the community can gather around them. This does not mean that individuals surrender their independence. Rather, it recognises that independence and community do not have to be enemies. You can be your own person while still understanding that you did not build your life entirely by yourself. There is strength in knowing that you belong somewhere. But where is Ubuntu today? This is where the philosophy becomes especially relevant. We live in an incredibly connected world: we can speak to someone on another continent within seconds, watch someone's life through a screen, react to their photographs, and send messages without ever leaving our rooms. And yet, somehow, people can feel more alone than ever. We may have hundreds of followers but only one person we can genuinely call when life becomes difficult. We know what strangers had for breakfast, where they travelled, and what they bought, yet we may not know how the person sitting beside us is actually doing. Perhaps this is what Ubuntu has to teach the modern world: being surrounded by people is not the same as belonging. Ubuntu asks us to move beyond simply acknowledging that other people exist and toward recognising that their humanity is deeply connected to ours.



It would be easy to romanticise Ubuntu and imagine that every African community has always lived perfectly according to its principles. But that would not be true. African societies, like all societies, have experienced conflict, inequality, division, and injustice. Ubuntu is not a claim that people have always treated one another perfectly; it is an ideal reminder of how we ought to treat one another. Perhaps ideas matter precisely because we do not always live up to them. They give us something to return to. What if we practised Ubuntu in our everyday choices? Imagine checking on a friend instead of assuming they are fine, celebrating someone's achievement without turning it into a competition, or recognising that kindness does not have to be dramatic to matter. Ubuntu does not require grand gestures. Sometimes, it looks like simply saying, 'I see you. You matter. You do not have to carry this alone.' Perhaps the greatest lesson of Ubuntu is that humanity was never designed to be completely individual. We are shaped by the people who love us, challenge us, teach us, disappoint us, forgive us, and stand beside us. Our stories overlap, and our lives leave marks on one another. Whether we realise it or not, we are constantly becoming part of someone else's story, too. In a world that often tells us to stand out, get ahead, and look after ourselves first, Ubuntu offers a different invitation: look around, remember the people who helped you become who you are, and become the kind of person who helps someone else become who they are meant to be. Because perhaps we were never meant to walk through life saying, 'I am.' Perhaps the fuller sentence has always been, '**I am because we are**.'

UBUNTU

www.mfalmebits.africa

THE VOICE BEHIND THE PIECE

KEMUMA’S HAVEN

Writer · Contributor

WHO SHE IS

Kemuma's Haven is a young writer with a growing passion for storytelling, African culture, identity, and the little things that make us human. She enjoys putting thoughts and experiences into words in a way that feels honest, relatable, and meaningful. Her writing is often inspired by culture, connection, belonging, and the stories we carry with us.

WHAT DRIVES HER

I’m still discovering my voice as a writer, but I love writing about things that make people pause, feel, reflect, or see something from a different perspective. I’m especially drawn to stories that celebrate where we come from while making room for where we’re going. For me, writing is simply a way of turning thoughts, experiences, and ideas into something someone else can connect with.

ON THIS ISSUE

I AM BECAUSE WE ARE

In “I AM BECAUSE WE ARE,” Kemuma explores culture, connection and belonging, reflecting on the human need to know that we are not alone.





THE DIGITAL STORYTELLER:HOW AFRICAN ORAL TRADITIONS ARE RECLAIMING THE FUTURE

BY VERAH AMITO

An ancient proverb warns, 'When an old person dies, a library burns to the ground.' Today, through digital preservation, we ensure our libraries stand forever.

Long before print presses arrived or cloud servers began storing terabytes of data, Africa's original libraries walked on two feet. They spoke in rhythmic cadences, carried the scent of woodsmoke, and gathered entire villages around evening fires.

In traditional societies across the continent, the storyteller whether known as a griot, a village historian, or an elder was far more than an entertainer. They were the living custodians of memory, law, lineage, and communal wisdom.

When colonial systems enforced rigid literacy models, a quiet crisis of ownership took root. Mainstream history began asserting that unless a story was bound in leather and catalogued in a distant European archive, it lacked intellectual authority or historical weight. Our dynamic oral accounts were unfairly reduced to mere folklore or an exotic aesthetic trend.

Yet history has a poetic way of coming full circle.

Today, the evening fire has evolved into the glow of smartphones, podcast networks, and digital publishing platforms. Across the continent and its global diaspora, a vibrant generation of writers, podcasters, and sound archivists is stepping up to reclaim our narratives.

Rather than seeking validation from gatekeepers outside the continent, contemporary storytellers are creating their own platforms to document lived experiences with unvarnished dignity and context. This digital evolution is not a rejection of ancestral ways it is their direct continuation. Oral culture was always dynamic, participatory, and grounded in community engagement. Modern digital spaces function on this same structural frequency.

When a creator records a podcast on local history or publishes an essay on indigenous philosophy, the audience responds instantly. Listeners chime in with their own regional variations, fill in missing ancestral details, and participate in a collective restoration of truth.

Bridging Memory and Modernity

Preserving knowledge for the long term requires more than saving static text files. It requires capturing the warmth, tone, and soul of how information is passed down through generations.

Modern creators are achieving this by leaning into multilayered formats:

Preserving Linguistic Nuance: Audio archives retain the tonal variations, proverbs, and vocal subtleties of endangered Indigenous languages that plain text loses.

Centering Local Perspectives: Digital creators challenge long-standing assumptions by prioritizing firsthand accounts over external interpretations.

Building Intellectual Continuity: Decentralized digital archives ensure our collective memory remains resilient against physical destruction or geographical distance.

Through these efforts, an African reader in Nairobi, Lagos, London, or Salvador can access the same heritage, ensuring that our cultural roots adapt seamlessly to an interconnected world.

Legacy Beyond the Present

As artificial intelligence and rapid digitization reshape global media, Africa's greatest currency remains its authentic identity and resilience. Technology provides the distribution channels, but our history provides the substance.

Digital spaces have become our modern knowledge archive a bridge where ancient wisdom and futuristic innovation meet.

Five, ten, or fifty years from now, when future generations seek to understand how African identity navigated the digital revolution, the record will not be found exclusively in distant, foreign libraries. It will live in the digital footprints we construct today the voices we amplify, the memories we preserve, and the stories we refuse to let slip into silence.

"Until the lion learns to write, every story will glorify the hunter." Today, the quill and the microphone are in our hands.

"When the future looks back at the digital age, will they read our story as it was written for us, or as we chose to tell it?"

"We are not simply adopting modern technology; we are infusing technology with our ancestral rhythm."

THE VOICE BEHIND THE PIECE

VERAH AMITO

DIGITAL WRITER · SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER

WHO SHE IS

I am a digital writer and sign language interpreter dedicated to bridging communication gaps and weaving compelling digital stories. Blending my passion for accessible communication with creative storytelling, I explore the intersections of language, culture, and digital expression.

WHAT DRIVES HER

I'm passionate about building inclusive spaces where every voice and story can be heard and understood. Beyond writing, I champion sign language accessibility and explore new ways to connect people through storytelling.

ON THIS ISSUE

THE DIGITAL STORYTELLER:

HOW AFRICAN ORAL TRADITIONS ARE RECLAIMING THE FUTURE

Verah explores how digital spaces can carry African oral traditions forward, connecting culture, storytelling and new forms of expression.

VOICES OF VALOR

CULTURE • LITERACY • INSTITUTIONS • AFRICA



THE CONFIDENCE ISSUE.

AFRICAN IDEAS.
REAL PEOPLE
GLOBAL IMPACT.

CULTURAL CURRENCY

MORE THAN
FASHION
IT'S ECONOMY.

AFRICAN INNOVATORS

CREATIVITY
THAT BUILDS
REAL CHANGE.

MADE IN AFRICA, WORN *Everywhere.*

Celebrating African craft, culture and vision made in Dakar, worn across the world.

Tongoro THE VISION

DAKAR TO THE WORLD

A closer look at Tongoro, African craftsmanship and the vision turning Dakar into a doorway to the world.

SPECIAL FEATURE

THE PEOPLE,
THE PROCESS,
THE IMPACT.

MFALMEBITS VOICES OF VALOR ISSUE 005



Tongoro



MADE IN AFRICA, WORN EVERYWHERE

Celebrating African craft, culture and vision made in Dakar, worn across the world.



SPECIAL FEATURE

A closer look at Tongoro, African craftsmanship and the vision turning Dakar into a doorway to the world.

CULTURE · CRAFT
VISION · LEGACY







MADE IN AFRICA WORN EVERYWHERE

Somewhere between Dakar and the rest of the world, a different kind of African story is being stitched together.

There is a moment in every great African story when you have to decide what the story is really about. Is it about being seen? Is it about being accepted? Is it about finally getting invited into rooms that were never built with you in mind? Or is it about building something so distinctly your own that the room eventually has no choice but to make space? Tongoro chose the last one.

Tongoro is designed and produced in Dakar. Its materials are sourced on the African continent, and its production involves local tailors. From the beginning, Diouf's ambition was bigger than clothing. She wanted to contribute to an Africa-based manufacturing ecosystem and create economic and social opportunities for artisans in West Africa. That distinction matters because Africa has spent centuries being taught the economics of departure. The raw material leaves, the finished product returns, and the value moves elsewhere.
Sometimes, even our own cultural creations have to pass through someone else's hands before the world considers them valuable.

In 2016, **Sarah Diouf** launched Tongoro in Dakar, Senegal. Not as an attempt to imitate Paris, not as an attempt to make African fashion look African enough for an international audience.
She built a brand around something much simpler and much more radical:
Make it here.

Tongoro asks a different question:
What if the value stays? What if the fabric is sourced here? What if the hands making the garment are here? What if the knowledge belongs here? What if the business grows here?
What if the story travels without the people who created it having to leave?
That is where Tongoro becomes bigger than fashion.
The clothes are beautiful, yes.
But beauty is only the doorway.

Behind it is a proposition about what an African creative economy could look like when Africans are not merely supplying inspiration, labour or raw materials but building the brands, systems and institutions that capture the value.
And then something beautiful happened.
The world came looking.
Beyoncé wore Tongoro.
Alicia Keys wore Tongoro.
Naomi Campbell wore Tongoro.
Iman wore Tongoro.
Burna Boy wore Tongoro.

The list grew. The photographs travelled. The clothes appeared in music, on stages, and across some of the world's most visible fashion spaces. Beyoncé's early appearances in Tongoro helped bring the brand to an enormous global audience, while the label continued producing from Dakar.
But here is the part we refuse to get this backwards:
Beyoncé did not make Tongoro African.
Tongoro was African before the spotlight arrived.

The spotlight simply became another road through which the story travelled.
That matters because African success is too often narrated from the moment somebody outside Africa notices it.
As if the applause is the achievement.
As if the validation is the destination.
As if the story begins when somebody famous finally says:
Look at them.
No.

THE NEW LANGUAGE *of Fashion*

Look at them before they were looking.
Look at the studio.
Look at the tailors.
Look at Dakar.
Look at the hands.
Look at the years.
Look at the decision to build.
That is where the story lives.

Sarah Diouf once described her relationship with Tongoro in terms that reveal just how far beyond clothing this journey has become. A tailor who had been with the brand from its beginning eventually told her that he had been able to buy a house in his village for his mother.
She cried.
Not because a celebrity had worn Tongoro.
Because someone working within the ecosystem had changed his family's life.
There it is.
That is Made in Africa.

Not a label printed beneath a logo.
Not a marketing angle.
Not a pity purchase.
Not a discount for being African.
A livelihood.
A skill.
A business.
A family.
A future.
A house built for someone's mother.
And suddenly the conversation changes.

www.tongoro.com



We are no longer asking whether African fashion can compete with the world.
We are asking why the world ever assumed it couldn't.
Sarah has spoken openly about the poor reputation that African products have historically carried in global markets and about her desire to demonstrate that African craftsmanship can stand alongside the craftsmanship associated with established European fashion houses. Her vision is not simply to sell more clothes; it is to shift perception and make 'Made in Africa' a mark of value.

That is narrative work.
And narrative work is never small, because before people change how they buy, they have to change what they believe.
Before they invest, they have to believe something is valuable.
Before they imitate, they have to believe something is worth copying.

In 2026, as Tongoro reaches its tenth anniversary, Diouf is looking beyond the first decade. She has spoken about wanting the brand to become bigger than herself, expanding its reach while helping build an industry rooted in culture, sustainability and the ability to compete globally. She has described herself not simply as a designer but as someone thinking in terms of systems—production, capacity, human resources, training and scale.
That is the evolution we are interested in.
Because eventually, every serious African creative project has to confront the same question:
What happens after the applause?

What happens when the celebrity photograph disappears?
What happens when the article is no longer trending?
What happens when the founder is tired?
What happens when demand becomes bigger than the workshop?
What happens when the world wants what you built?
Do you have the systems to give it to them without losing the soul that made them want it in the first place?

Those are not fashion questions.
Those are institutional questions.
And perhaps that is why Tongoro belongs in Voices of Valor.
Because this issue is not simply about remembering who we were.
It is about remembering who we are capable of becoming.
Tongoro takes cultural memory and turns it into contemporary form.
It takes African craftsmanship and places it inside a modern global business.
It takes a Dakar atelier and connects it to customers across continents.
It takes something that could have been dismissed as local and refuses to let "local" mean "less than."
That is a form of liberation too.
Not the dramatic kind.
No chains breaking.
No gates crashing down.
Just a woman in Dakar deciding that the standards would not have to be imported for the work to be excellent.

Tongoro has spent a decade making an argument without needing to shout it:

Africa can make beautiful things.

Africa can make sophisticated things.

Africa can make profitable things.

Africa can make globally desirable things.

And Africa can make them here.

And then doing the WORK. Again.And again.And again.
There is something deeply African about that.
We have always known how to make things with our hands.
We have always known how to turn cloth into meaning.
We have always known that a pattern can carry memory.
That colour can carry IDENTITY. That an object can tell a STORY. The challenge was never whether we had the CREATIVITY. The challenge was whether we could build the structures around that creativity so that the value did not disappear before it reached the people who created it.
Tongoro is one answer to that question. Not the final answer. Not the only answer but a living one.
And perhaps the most beautiful part is that Sarah does not seem interested in stopping at fashion.
In her tenth year, she has spoken about wanting to build an industry based on culture one that is sustainable and capable of competing globally. She has even embraced the description of herself as a "**cultural industrialist**."
Now that is a title worth sitting with.
Because maybe that is where the next chapter of African creativity lives not simply in artists not simply in designers not simply in people making beautiful things but in builders.
People who take culture seriously enough to turn it into infrastructure, People who understand that a dress can become a business.
A business can become employment.
Employment can become dignity.
Dignity can become confidence.
Confidence can become ownership.
And ownership can become freedom.
This is why the phrase Made in Africa deserves to be said differently.
Not carefully.
Not apologetically.
Not as though we are asking the world to be kind to us.
Say it with your chest.
Made in Africa.
The hands are here.
The imagination is here.
The knowledge is here.
The beauty is here.
The future is here.
And if the world wants to wear it?
Let them come looking.

BEYOND THE SINGLENESS

By Morara Nyarangi

In 2026, perhaps being African is no longer a question that can be answered by a map. Perhaps it is a story. And the most important question is: WHO GETS TO TELL IT?

-Morara Nyarangi



photograph sourced from motivation.africa

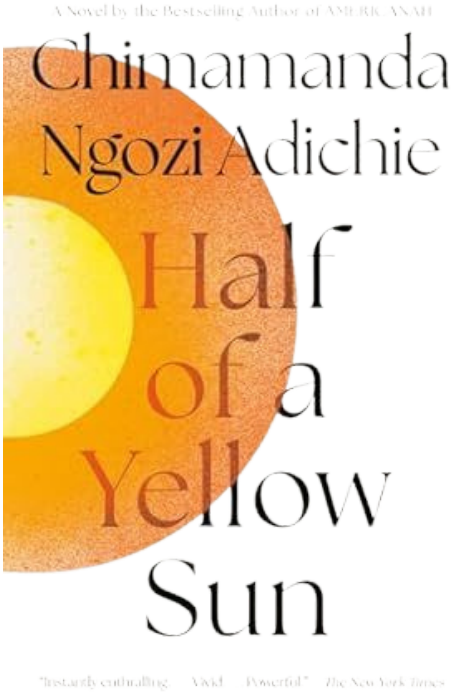
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AFRICAN TODAY?

Maybe the question is not **where we come from**, but who gets to tell the story of where we come from.

Someone asks, "Where are you from?" It sounds simple. You give them a country, perhaps a city or a community. And yet, somehow, the answer never feels complete.
Because **what exactly does it mean to be African?**
Is it the passport in your bag? The name your parents gave you? The language your grandmother speaks? The meal that tastes better at home? The music that makes the entire room move?
Or is it something deeper? Something you carry even when you leave, something that follows you into classrooms, airports, boardrooms, foreign countries, and digital spaces?"

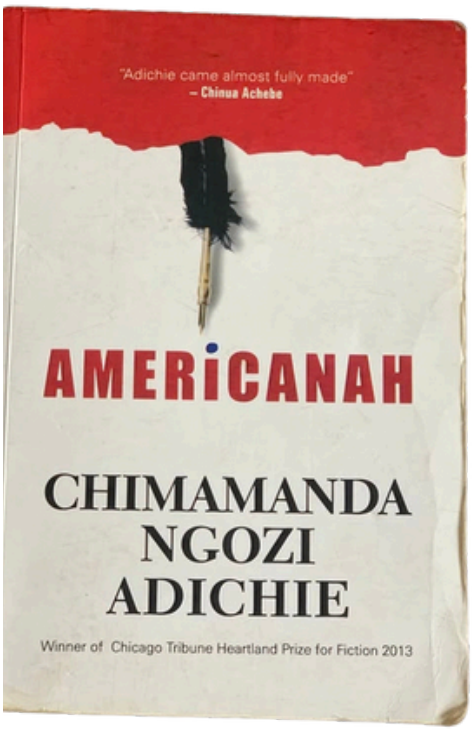
The Stories We Inherit
Long before many of us learned to define Africa for ourselves, Africa had already been defined for us, sometimes through films, news headlines, or the curious questions of people who have never been here.
Africa can easily be reduced to familiar images of poverty, wildlife, hunger, and corruption. None of these realities should be denied. But what happens when a fragment becomes the whole? When one photograph becomes the entire album? This is where **Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's idea of the single story becomes powerful.**

In her TED TALK 2009, Chimamanda's explains how hearing only one story about a person, country or people can create an incomplete understanding of them.



HALF OF A YELLOW SUN BOOK

These stories may not necessarily be false, but the danger lies in allowing one narrative to become the only narrative.
What does it mean to be African in 2026?
Beyond the Single Story
Maybe the biggest act of rebellion against a single story is simply to tell a different one.
It is rather amusing how strongly people feel the need to perform "**Africanness**." It is as if being African comes with a checklist of things to do: *speak the language, know all the traditions, wear traditional clothes, eat the food, know the dances, and never question the elders.*
Identity has never been so simple.



In 2026, an African could wear traditional clothing one day and jeans and sneakers the next. They might use English in class, speak Sheng with friends, and struggle with the language their grandparents speak fluently. They might listen to Afrobeats, learn a foreign language, and use technology their ancestors could never have imagined.

Is that less African, or is it simply what a living African identity looks like?

Culture was never meant to be preserved in a museum. It evolves as people evolve, and Africa evolves because Africans themselves evolve. Each generation inherits traditions, values, and histories. But inheritance raises an important question: should we preserve these traditions, examine them, reshape them, or sometimes let them go?

To be African today means respecting the past without being trapped by it, while welcoming the future without feeling ashamed of one's origins. This tension is present in the work of Nigerian writer *Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie*. In ***Half of a Yellow Sun***, she examines the Nigerian-Biafran War through stories shaped by ethnicity, class, colonialism, loyalty, and love.

In ***Americanah***, migration becomes for Ifemelu a way of looking at race, belonging and identity in both Nigeria and the United States.
Sometimes leaving home can change the way we see it
Her work also brings up another important question, namely, who is entitled to tell African stories? African women have for a long time been portrayed in stories as mothers, wives, daughters or as victims, without always being given the opportunity to tell those stories themselves. Adichie puts the experiences and voices of African women at the heart of global discussions.
So my most honest answer to the question to "What does it mean to be African?" is that It depends.
Her work also raises an important question: who is entitled to tell African stories? African women have long been portrayed as mothers, wives, daughters, or victims, without always being given the opportunity to tell their own stories. Adichie places the experiences and voices of African women at the heart of global discussions.

So, my most honest answer to the question, 'What does it mean to be African?' is: it depends.
It depends on the inheritance we received, the things we rejected, the changes we made, where we come from, and where we are going. **In 2026, being African means staying grounded while continuing to evolve; preserving while questioning; remembering while reinventing.**

We do not have to choose between being African and being modern. We can be both. Perhaps the true act of rebellion against the single story is not to create one exact definition of Africa, but to make room for its many stories.

Give them the country, but remember that the country is only the beginning. You are not a flag, a stereotype, a headline, or a single story. You are a collection of stories: some inherited, some forgotten, and some still being written.

Perhaps being African today is not about proving that you belong to one definition of Africa. Perhaps it is about having the freedom to help define what Africa becomes next. Africa does not need one story. It never did. It needs millions. Perhaps the next one is yours.



CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE

THE VOICE BEHIND THE PIECE

MORARA NYARANGI

Writer · Contributor

WHO SHE IS

I’m just someone who enjoys creating, learning, and being inspired by the world around me. I like things that feel real, fun, and a little different, and I’m always open to discovering where my creativity takes me.

WHAT DRIVES THEM

Creating, learning, and staying open to wherever creativity leads.

ON THIS ISSUE

BEYOND THE SINGLENESS

In “BEYOND THE SINGLENESS,” Morara explores identity, narrative and the danger of reducing African lives and experiences to a single story.

UNDER THE SCOPE

YOUTH & WORK

THE JOBS WE HAVEN'T BUILT YET

Africa has the world's youngest population, but its greatest challenge is turning this demographic reality into productive opportunity. Too many young people enter adulthood without access to decent work, relevant skills, or pathways into industries capable of absorbing their talent. The answer cannot be employment alone. Africa needs economies that create value here through manufacturing, technology, agriculture, creative industries, infrastructure, and modern services, while connecting education and skills to real-world demand. The question is no longer whether Africa has the people. It is whether we are building enough systems for them to build with.



FOOD & AGRICULTURE

THE FOOD WE GROW, BUT DON'T ALWAYS CONTROL

Africa grows food, yet food insecurity remains a defining challenge. In 2025, around 309 million people across the continent experienced hunger. The answer goes beyond producing more it means strengthening storage, irrigation, processing and regional markets so African agriculture creates more value for the people who grow the food.



HEALTH & SOVEREIGNTY

HEALTH SHOULD NOT BE A LUXURY

Health system is more than hospitals and medicine; it determines whether a family can survive illness without losing everything else. Around 385 million people in Africa are pushed into or deeper into poverty each year because of out-of-pocket health spending, according to the WHO African Region. At the same time, governments face financial pressure, rising debt burdens and declining external assistance. Building stronger systems therefore means more than increasing access to treatment. It means investing in primary care, health workers, domestic financing, medicines, manufacturing and infrastructure so that African countries can protect health without making households carry the cost alone.

MFALMEBITS
THREADS OF AFRICA

Info sourced from WHO

TO THE WOMAN WHO CARRIES SO MUCH

The cover of Issue 005 of Mfalmebits' eMagazine, Voices of Valor, is inspired by Sankofa, the Akan principle of looking to the past to guide the future. Its message, "Own Your Narrative," encourages us to reclaim African stories, wisdom, and identity, then carry them forward through new platforms and greater reach.

You were never meant to spend your whole life proving that you deserve to take up space. You have carried families, built homes, crossed borders, created businesses, raised children, held communities together, and still found a way to smile when nobody asked what it cost you. So, before anyone tells you who you should become, remember this: you already arrived with a history.

Your beauty is not a negotiation. It does not become more valuable because somebody else approves of it, photographs it, marries it, desires it, or puts a price on it. Your skin, your hair, your curves, your scars, your softness, and your presence are not things to apologise for or endlessly correct. Beauty was never supposed to be a punishment. You are allowed to enjoy being beautiful.

And do not mistake softness for weakness. There is power in the woman who knows when to speak, when to build, when to walk away, when to love, when to rest, and when to stand her ground. There is power in your intellect, in your hands, in your voice, in the way you raise another generation, in the businesses you build, the knowledge you preserve, the rooms you enter, and the rooms you create for those coming behind you. Your power runs deeper than what the world can photograph.

So, stand differently. Not because you have something to prove, but because you have something to remember. You are not here merely to survive every expectation placed upon you. You are here to live, create, lead, love, become, and leave something behind. Africa does not need you smaller. It needs you fully alive. And whatever the world has taught you to forget about yourself, go back for it. Take it with you. Then walk forward.

MFALMEBITS
THREADS OF AFRICA

Heiskimani -Founder
www.mfalmebits.africa

VOICES OF VALOR

ISSUE 005 / SANKOFA

MASTHEAD

THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE ISSUE

VOICES OF VALOR
A MfalmeBits editorial publication.

PUBLISHED BY MFALMEBITS
African-centered digital hub promoting cultural literacy and institutional growth.

FOUNDER & EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
ELIJAH KIMANI
Founder & CEO, MfalmeBits

MFALMEBITS EDITORIAL TEAM

CREATIVE DIRECTION & DESIGN
PUFFECT PIXELS

African stories.
Real people.
Lasting impact.

CONTRIBUTORS

ONE_WOULD_SAY BY WANGUI
The House of Mumbi

KEMUMA'S HAVEN
I Am Because We Are

VERAH AMITO
The Digital Storyteller

MORARA NYARANGI
Beyond the Singleness

SPECIAL FEATURE

TONGORO STUDIOS
Made in Africa. Worn Everywhere
Editorial feature by MfalmeBits.

PUBLICATION NOTE

Voices of Valor exists to make room for African voices to speak with their own names, from their own experiences, on their own terms.

This issue is part of MfalmeBits' ongoing work in cultural literacy, African storytelling and the preservation and evolution of African knowledge.

© 2026 MfalmeBits. All rights reserved.

Individual contributors retain copyright of their respective works and are credited accordingly. Reproduction, redistriubution, adaptation or commercial use of this publication or its contents without permission is prohibited.

SANKOFA
OWN YOUR NARRATIVE

MFALMEBITS.AFRICA

2026

ISSUE 005
SANKOFA



REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE.

THEN MOVE LIKE IT.

You have read the stories.
You have met the voices.
You have looked backward, forward,
and somewhere in between.

But Sankofa was never about staying behind.
It was about remembering enough to know
what belongs to you.

The names.
The beauty.
The knowledge.
The courage.
The unfinished work.

Africa has never been empty of greatness.
We have simply inherited a world that too often
taught us to look everywhere else before
looking
within.

So take what this issue gave you.
Take the memory.
Take the pride.
Take the questions.
Take the fire.

And carry it forward.

Your story is not finished
Your identity is not a burden.
Your heritage is not a museum piece.

OWN IT.

OWN YOUR NARRATIVE.

Stay free. Stay liberated . Stay African.

— MFALMEBITS EDITORIAL TEAM

MFALMEBITS
Preserving African Knowledge & Culture
www.mfalmebits.africa
© 2026 MfalmeBits. All rights reserved.

VOICES OF VALOR

ISSUE 005
MFALMEBITS
EDITORIAL TEAM

SANKOFA

OWN YOUR NARRATIVE.

005

LOOK BACK. REMEMBER. RECLAIM. BUILD FORWARD.

SANKOFA IS NOT A RETURN TO THE PAST.
IT IS THE COURAGE TO CARRY WHAT MATTERS
INTO THE FUTURE.

MFALMEBITS.AFRICA

OWN YOUR NARRATIVE

VOICES OF VALOR • ISSUE 005





VOICES OF VALOR

Liberation

Sankofa

Own your narrative

Issue 005

MFALMEBITS

Preserving African Knowledge & Culture

www.mfalmebits.africa

© 2026 MfalmeBits. All rights reserved.

SEPT 30TH 2026

ISSUE 005

VOICES OF VALOR

OWN YOUR NARRATIVE



SANKOFA

"SE WO WERE FI NA WOSANKOFA A YENKYI."