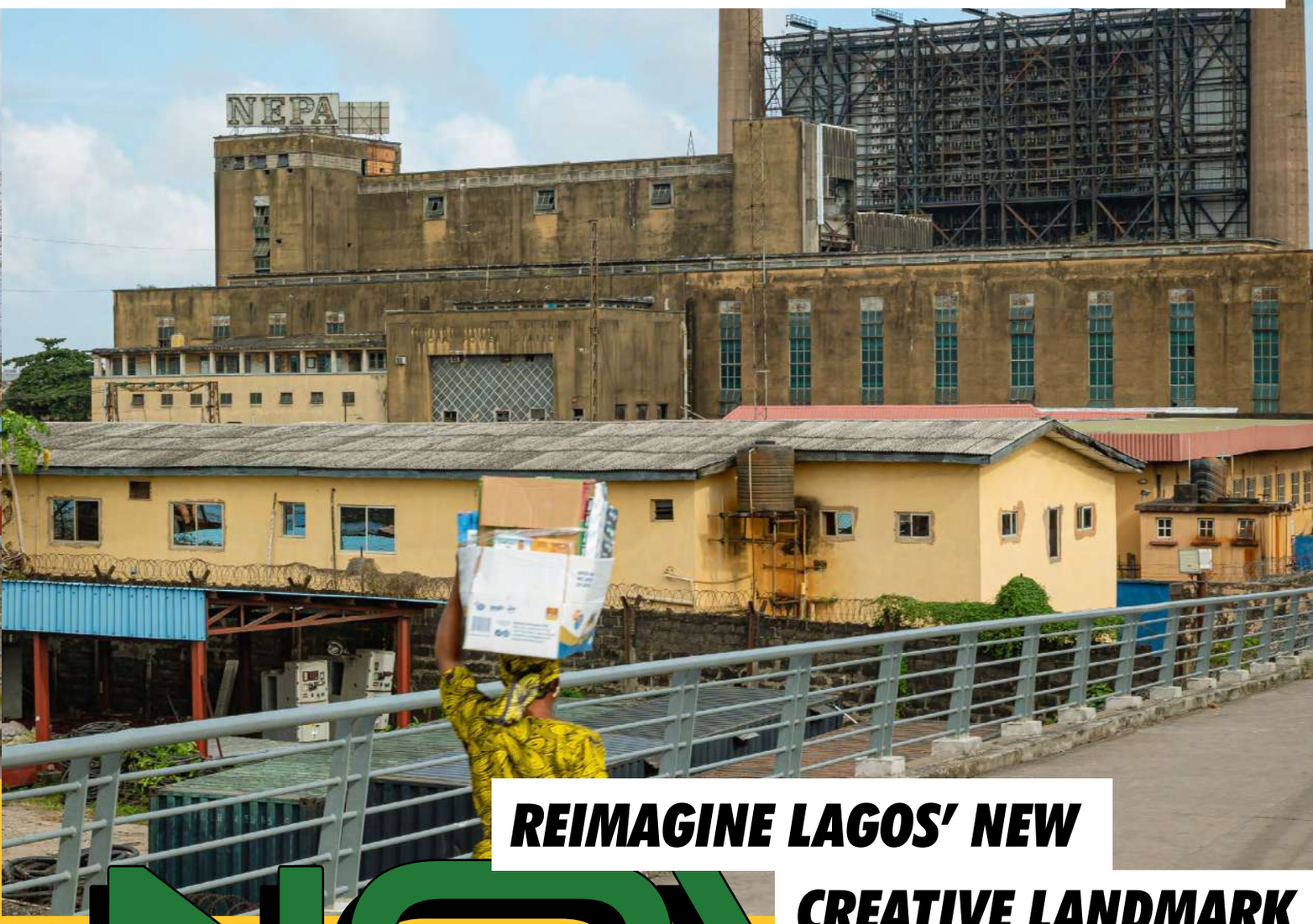
IJORA POWER STATION



REIMAGINE LAGOS' NEW CREATIVE LANDMARK

NOW

Calling all architects, urbanists, engineers, artists, makers and anyone with a passion for the future of our urban environments.

Participants can enter as teams of 1-3 people

WHY NOW?!

What comes to mind when you hear "Lagos?" Do you think of its bustling markets or perhaps its iconic Afrobeats?

This year, the NowNow competition invites you to embark on a journey through the rich history of Nigeria's first major power station, the Ijora Power Plant. Commissioned by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on February 10, 1956, the oil-fired Ijora "B" Station once illuminated Lagos and its neighboring regions, extending its reach as far as the Ibadan power station.

Today, the Ijora Power Plant stands as a relic of its former glory, now serving as a simple repair workshop for transmission transformers.

However, we see beyond its present state—envisioning it as a beacon of Lagos's future, a pivotal opportunity to create a vibrant creative hub that fuels Africa's artistic and cultural revolution.

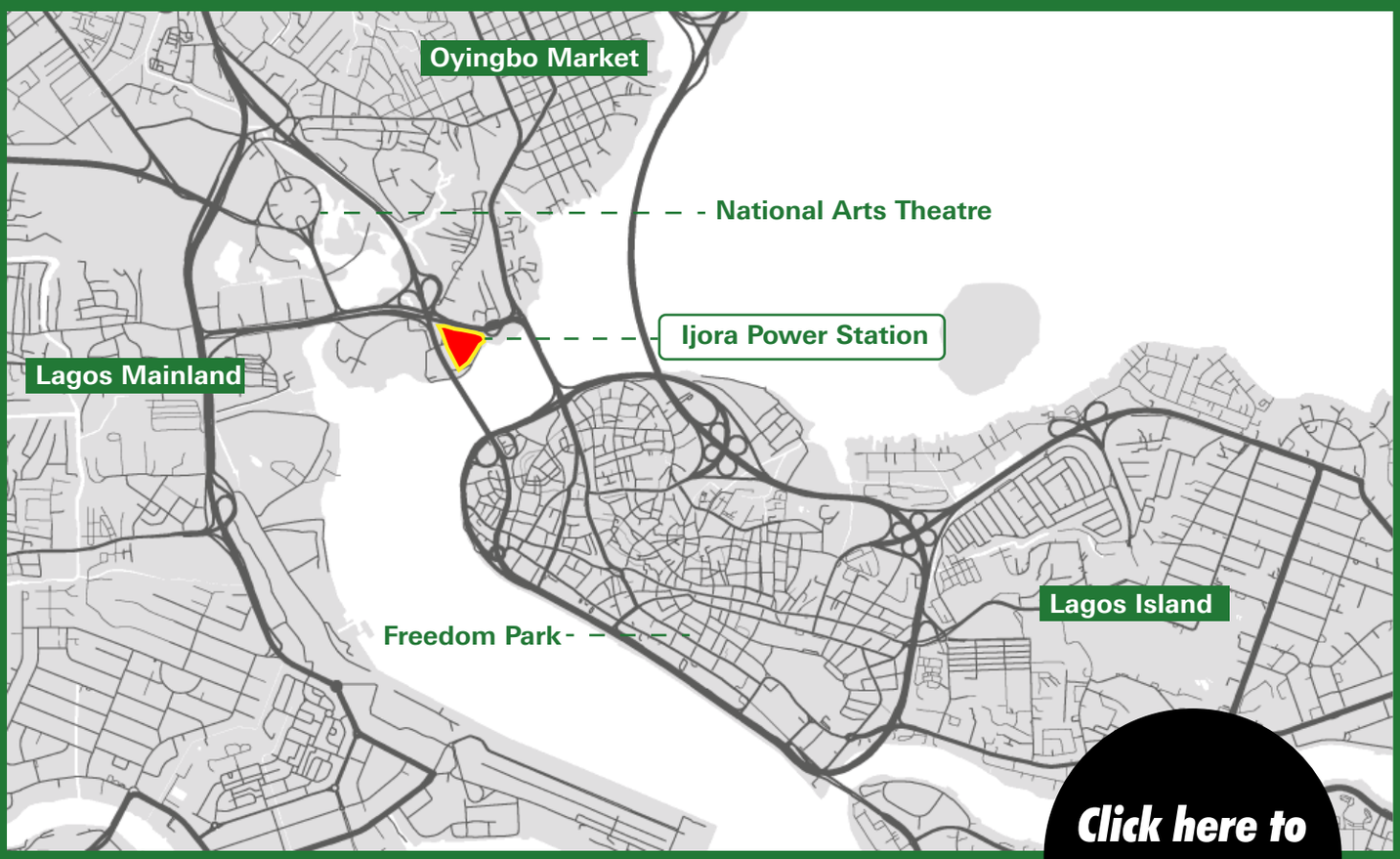
We invite participants to propose innovative ideas for the adaptive reuse of the Ijora Power Station Precinct and its main building. We welcome your visions and ideas to help shape the future of this iconic landmark.

(Above) - The bustling markets along Broad Street of Lagos Island.

(Below) - An image taken during the opening of Ijora Power Station 101 years ago.

Image of interior of Ijora Power Station, 2024, Olájídé Ayẹni, Team NowNow

CONTEMPORARY LAGOS CULTURE



Click here to visit the site

Lagos, often perceived as a "no man's land," is better likened to a vibrant mosaic, intricately pieced together by the diverse histories and peoples that call it home. Hosting over 250 ethnic groups, Lagos transcends the concept of a melting pot, functioning instead as a dynamic furnace of cultures that continually forges new blends.

The Ijora Power Station, located in the heart of Lagos Mainland, stands as a testament to the city's rich history. Situated in the Ebute Metta Ward, meaning "The Three Harbours" in Yoruba, it nods to the historical port points at Iddo, Otto, and Oyingbo—an area that has long been a cultural crossroads where old and new Lagos intersect.

Just 2 kilometers away, the National Arts Theatre in Iganmu symbolizes Nigeria's artistic identity. This iconic structure has hosted countless performances, exhibitions, and cultural festivals, celebrating the nation's rich artistic history. Meanwhile, Yaba's vibrant streets showcase the city's youthful energy, with incubators and tech hubs, art galleries, concept stores, and design-focused retail spaces.

Oyingbo Market, deeply rooted in the historical growth of Lagos' Awori people, serves as a microcosm of the city's diversity. The saying "Oja Oyingbo ko mo p'enikan o wa," meaning "Oyingbo market does not recognize the absence of anyone," reflects its inclusive nature, where traders from all ethnic backgrounds converge to sell everything from traditional crafts to modern electronics.

Barely 3 kilometers from the Ijora site, Freedom Park on Broad Street—once a colonial prison, now a cultural center—hosts music concerts, art exhibitions, and literary events, symbolizing the city's transformation and resilience. Although farther away, the New Afrika Shrine in Ikeja is another cultural pilgrimage site, honoring Afrobeat pioneer Fela Kuti and drawing fans from around the world.

Designers should consider Lagos' culture as it has been shaped by its people, places, and history, curating their work to reflect the diverse influences represented at the Ijora Power Station.

ADAPTIVE RE IMAGINATION

At the intersection of extreme resource scarcity and an urgent environmental crisis, the need for innovation, resilience, and sustainability has never been more critical. Lagos finds itself at this pivotal juncture, where the city has the opportunity to demonstrate to the world how development can occur with a more holistic and nuanced understanding of sustainability than what was previously held during the Industrial Revolution in the West and Southeast Asia. Today, proposals can leverage ultramodern technology, advanced information systems, and a rich cultural heritage to carve out innovative solutions for reimagining remnant post-industrial sites.

In the context of the Ijora Power Station, an approach that begins with a deep understanding of the current urban and architectural systems supporting its existing uses—juxtaposed with global best practices in architecture and technology—could lead to reimagining new futures that respect and reclaim local cultural perspectives. This effort should aim not only at the physical transformation of space but also at the democratization of art and culture in Lagos, challenging the perception of art as elitist.

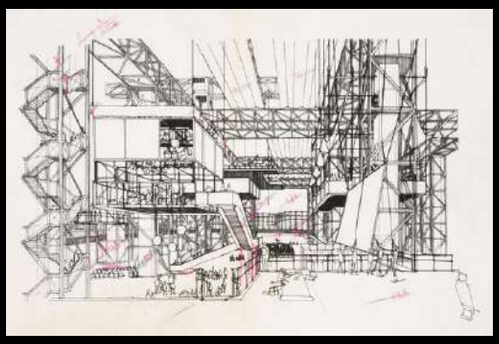
Currently, art spaces in Lagos are concentrated mainly on the affluent Victoria Island, perpetuating the notion that art is costly to create and accessible only to a select few. This perception is reinforced by the difficulty many face in screening films or organizing art events off the island, particularly in less privileged areas like Ajegunle.

However, the adaptive reuse of the Ijora Power Station could serve as a beacon for a more inclusive approach to art and public space, avoiding an elitist reproduction of art and instead fostering a sense of community and shared cultural expression.
An adaptive reimagination of the Ijora Power Station seeks to advance 'best practices' in adaptive reuse, as seen in projects like Battersea Power Station, Tate Modern, and Seaholm Power Plant. Although postcolonial examples are few, Freedom Park is a notable case. Once a prison, it has been transformed into a vibrant cultural space, demonstrating a sustainable reuse of colonial relics while creating a public space accessible to all. This transformation offers a model for how the Ijora Power Station could also catalyze cultural democratization in the city of Lagos.

(Below 1)
The developer of the Battersea Power Station project, in London, United Kingdom was faced with crumbling walls and a missing roof when it took on the project

(Below 2)
An internal sketch by British Architect Cedric Price's Fun Palace - The Fun Palace was an innovative and visionary project proposed in the 1960s it highlighted modular design, movable structures, and open-plan spaces intended to foster creativity and community engagement, in a previously industrial building

(Below 3)
An image of the dilapidated inside of the Ijora Power Station, made up of a large internal space now marked by signs of neglect and decay characterized by rusted equipment, crumbling infrastructure, and an overall sense of abandonment.

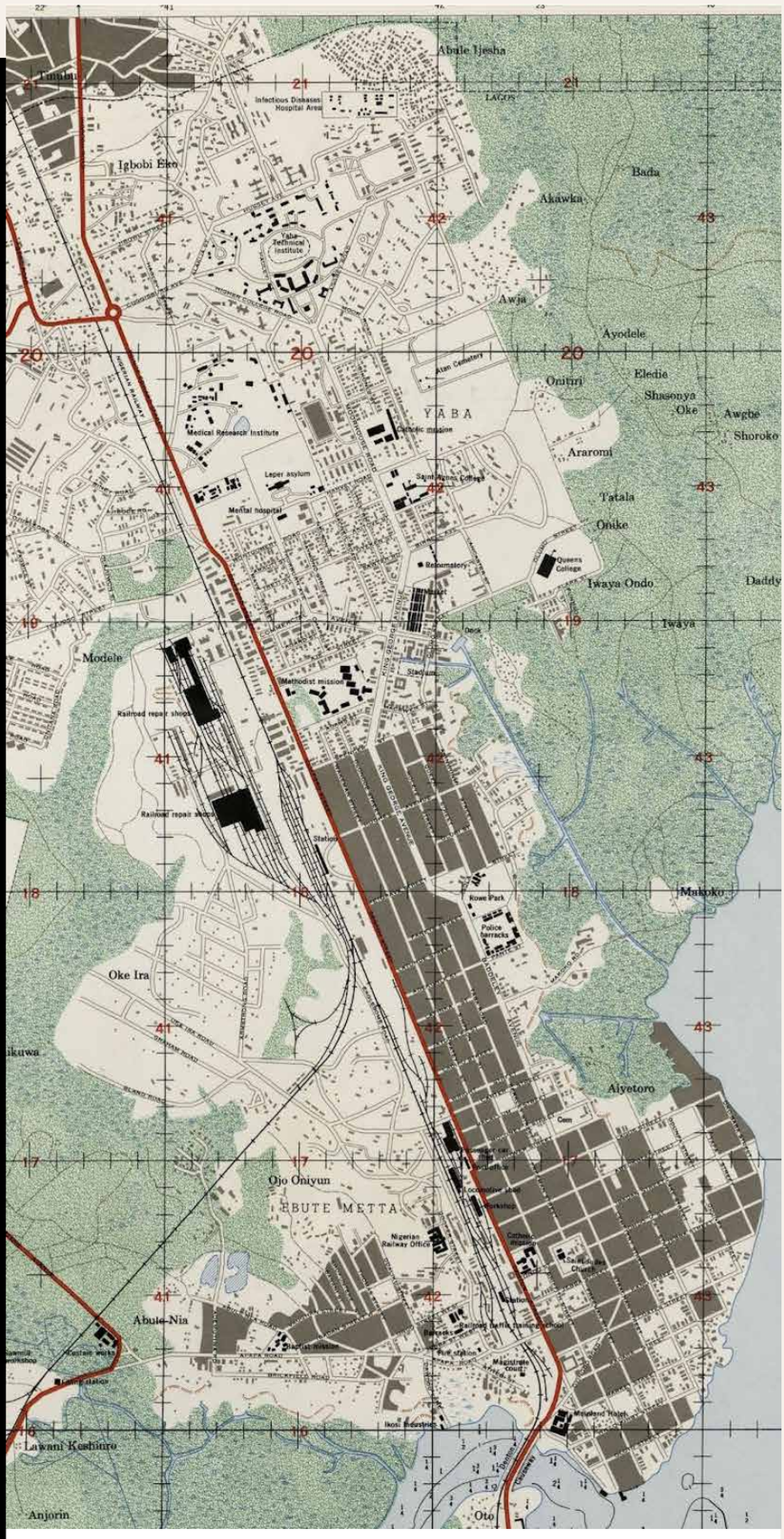


(1)

(2)

(3)

AFRICAN URBANITY OF THE FUTURE



(Above)
Detail of Map of Lagos, Nigeria, drawn by the American Army Corps in 1962.
The position of Ijora Power Station can be seen alongside Denton Causeway (today the site of Lagos' Eko Bridge) towards the bottom of the map.

The final consideration for this competition requires one to look into the city's future from the perspectives of its urbanites. How, then, might one see through the eyes of others and into the future nonetheless? **The Lagos State Development Plan 2052** might help one with that. In this document, which comprises over 400 development initiatives and aspirations of the city, there are many cultural visions and goals from which one can construct a comprehensive spatial programme. For example, the Focus Area 6 of the plan under Arts and Entertainment (including Nollywood) clearly states:

'Become Africa's leading international media city for audiovisual and interactive media, producing films that generate global-standard box office business. '

So, taking an architectural view, it could be envisioned as a design that brings together cutting-edge filmmaking studios, centres for interactive and audiovisual media, and cultural venues honouring Nollywood and other African entertainment, all working together to create an ecosystem that can support box office business on par with the best in the world. In this effort, it is quintessential that we identify the key stakeholders involved across the entire cultural production value chain, ensuring that everyone's expertise and perspective are valued.

Image of roof space of Ijora Power Station, 2024, Olájídé Ayeni, Team NowNow

CHALLENGE

BRIEF

Reimagine the Ijora Power Station as a new creative landmark.

Lagos's rich cultural diversity is evident in its demographics, architecture, cuisine, markets, arts, and culture. **Using these influences as a starting point - propose a reimagined Ijora Power Station in the heart of Lagos that invites, hosts and thrives as a new creative hub** for one of Africa's most renowned creative capitals, Lagos.

One's proposal should note that the informal sector is vital due to Lagos' limited formal infrastructure, and its recognition in design is crucial. Reflect on the colonial legacy of the Ijora Power Station and propose ways to transcend stereotypes of African identity. Proposals should be practical yet bold, envisioning development rooted in Lagos's cultural heritage.

(Above)
Image of interior of Ijora Power Station, 2024, Ọlájídé Ayẹni, Team NowNow

(Below and Right) Drone Footage of Ijora Power Station, Dutum.

(Bottom Right) Stamp of Eko Bridge and Ijora Power Station.
1984

SITE

BRIEF

The Ijora Power Station, commissioned in 1923, was the primary electricity source for Lagos and its environs during the colonial period. The site covers 82,749.98 m^2 with a 1.2 km perimeter and includes various land uses, with a focus on the **(1)** original Ijora B power plant. The map highlights the boundary around the dilapidated spaces owned by: **(2)** transformer / switching yard **(3)** NEMSA Chemical and Engineering Laboratory, Senior Staff Association of Electricity and Allied Companies Recreation Club, **(4)** informal housing along the lagoon, **(5)** general commercial activity, **(6)** Heyden Oil Tank Farm with a dedicated jetty, and an open unused space.

The site is accessible via two main roads: Oba Fatai Araromire Street (off Ijora Causeway) and Heyden Oil Main Gate (off Iddo Road), and several fishing boat jetties along the lagoon. Due to limited vehicular access and traffic congestion on Ijora Causeway, integrating design proposals with the city's waterway mobility plan is crucial. **The Ijora power station, situated at the crossroads of Lagos mainland and island, is a key location for cultural convergence. Designers should consider its internal function and its visibility to the millions of commuters on the nearby Eko Bridge.**

(Left) Image of interior of Ijora Power Station, 2024, Ọlájídé Ayẹni, Team NowNow
(Right) View over Eko Bridge from Lagos Mainland, 1983.

BRIEF

THINKERS

Nollywood Film Village:
A dedicated hub for Nigeria's film industry, offering advanced facilities for production, training, and screenings to foster local talent and cultural expression.

Lagos Development Plan 2052:
The Lagos Development Plan 2052 aims to transform Lagos into a smart, sustainable, and globally competitive megacity. It focuses on enhancing infrastructure, transportation, housing, healthcare, education, and economic development, with an emphasis on the creative industries to drive arts, culture, and entertainment.

Waterfront View:
Utilizing scenic waterfront areas to create public spaces, recreational facilities, and cultural landmarks, thereby enhancing the urban experience.

First, Second, and Third Bridges to Nigeria Mainland:
These key bridges connect Lagos Island to the mainland, facilitating trade, movement, and urban integration. The Eko Bridge (1975) alleviated traffic congestion, the Carter Bridge (1901, rebuilt in the 1970s) is one of the oldest, and the Third Mainland Bridge (1990) is the longest, significantly improving commutes and economic activities.

Nigeria National Theater of 1977:
Located in Iganmu, Lagos, this iconic cultural landmark was built for FESTAC '77 to celebrate African heritage. Opened in 1977, the theater features a 5,000-seat main hall and hosts cultural events and performances, remaining a symbol of Nigeria's rich cultural legacy.

POINTERS

- Use and Accessibility -

Prioritize accessibility for all abilities with ramps, elevators, and clear wayfinding.
Ensure large portions of the site are publicly accessible with hours from Monday to Saturday, 07:00 - 20:00.

- Proposed Programs -

Include a mix of functions such as theatres, cinemas, radio stations, recording studios, film and fashion shows, studios, ateliers, and classrooms.
Distinguish between primary uses (e.g., theatres, cinemas) and secondary uses (e.g., studios, ateliers)

- Size & Cost -

Take note of site boundaries: Highway (Eko Bridge to Carter Bridge), Seashore (Adjira River to Lagos Harbour), and Neighbourhood (Ijora Badia, Lagos Terminus).
Propose bold, innovative designs without being limited by traditional cost constraints, aiming for a transformative impact

- Stakeholders to Consider -

Proposals are encouraged to engage varied stakeholders including the private sector (Nollywood, musicians, fashion industry), Ministry of Culture and Tourism, architects, and designers.
Consider the local government and neighbouring communities (Ijora Badia, Lagos Island vs Mainland).

Image of lady walking along Eko Bridge infront of Ijora Power Station, 2024, Ọlájídé Ayẹni, Team NowNow

SUBMISSION?

Participants are asked to produce 2 x A2 portrait panels. The first panel should be a drawing of their Reimagination of the Ijora Power Station. The second should show the design of any building, object,artwork or space that is integral to their overall vision for Ijora Power Station.

PANEL A

Develop a vision for the future of the Ijora Power Station as a new creative hub for the City of Lagos saved as an A2 PDF portrait.

IPS35

594mm

PANEL B

Develop a vision for the future of the Ijora Power Station as a new creative hub for the City of Lagos saved as an A2 PDF portrait.

IPS35

420mm

300 WORD DESCRIPTION

Describe your proposal with a Project title and 300 words description, in Arial 10 font saved as an A4 PDF.

SUBMISSION CRITERIA

- Two A2 portraits in 1 PDF file format.
- One A4 portrait description of project.
- File sizes below 10MB
- File names (A2): Team number_panels (e.g. IPS35_panels)
- File names (A4): Team number_text (e.g. IPS35_text)

PRIZES

R **20 000** 1st

R **10 000** 2nd

R **5 000** 3rd

		x7 Golden Mentions		

WORD FROM OUR SPONSOR

In many African cities, the need for artistic spaces that foster critical discourse is urgent, especially in the face of increasingly restrictive political climates. Non-commercial art spaces offering such platforms are diminishing due to a lack of public funding and the pressures of capitalist urban development. Art venues are being replaced by commercial investments, creating art-free residential areas in countries like Ghana, Nigeria, and Ethiopia. And, unlike temporary and project-related funding, sustainable structural support is scarce. The Art/Space Negotiations project addresses these challenges by collaborating with local experts to ensure art, culture, and freedom of expression remain integral to Africa's urban development. As part of this effort, the Goethe-Institut, through the Art/Space Negotiations project, partners with the Now Now architecture design competition to *reimagine the abandoned Ijora power station as a new art hub bridging historical and contemporary discourse.* This collaboration will serve as a first step of a negotiation process.

GOETHE INSTITUT

SUPPORTING PARTNERS

THE SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS · SAIA

LAGOS URBAN DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

THE NIGERIAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

YOUNG — URBANISTS

ARCTIC INFRASTRUCTURE

HOW SUMBISSIONS ARE EVALUATED

The success of competition entries will be evaluated based on their clarity and interpretation of the brief. Entries should be visually expressive, with few clear, concise drawings and supporting visual evidence. Participants should follow the format presented in the Submission Layout. In terms of visualizing one's ideas, sketches, renders, digital drawings, paintings, photoshop, and any other artistic mediums are welcome. The judges will assess the entries based on their ability to meet the brief's requirements.

Sun, Oct 01, 2024	—	Early registration opens
Sat, Nov 30, 2024	—	Normal registration
Fri, Jan 31, 2025	—	Late Registration
Fri, Feb 28, 2025	—	Registration and Submission deadline
Mon, Mar 31, 2025	—	Winners announcement

Image of interior of Ijora Power Station, 2024, Olajide Ayeni, Team NowNow

T'S & C'S

1. The competition is accessible to any individual, whether you are a student, architect, designer, urbanist, engineer, artist, maker, activist, or anyone intrigued by the realms of design and architecture. Participants must be a minimum of 18 years old.

2. Entrants have the option to participate in the competition either individually or as part of a team. Teams are allowed to consist of individuals from diverse nationalities and age groups, but all team members must be at least 18 years old.

3. Entrants are obligated to adhere to deadlines, procedures, fees, and submission requirements before the competition deadline.The NowNow Competition assumes no responsibility, under any circumstances, for any technical difficulties or web malfunctions.

4. All relevant information can be downloaded from the NowNow Competition's website. Any and all additional competition related materials / documentation shall be sent to the entrant within 2-3 working days of their successful registration to the competition. To access and utilize this additional content, entrants must settle the registration fee, granting them a unique identification code. The registration fee, established according to the competition schedule, stays the same regardless of the team size.

5. Paying a single fee provides the participant or team with a personal identification code associated with the submission of one project. To obtain extra submission codes and, consequently, submit additional projects, additional fees must be paid.

6. Accepted payment methods include: Paystack, PayPal & bank transfer.

7. Prizes are determined without consideration for the team's size. The NowNow Competition covers all commissions imposed by its bank for prize payments. However, any commissions charged by the winner's bank or currency exchange fees are the sole responsibility of the winner. Prizes will be granted following the verification of the winners' identity and upon their signing of a self-declaration confirming full acceptance of all the Terms and Conditions of the competition.

8. The jury consists of independent and impartial experts. The jury's decision is solely based on the evaluation criteria of the competition and it is to be not subject to challenge under any circumstances. Participants agree not to dispute the decision or the jury's evaluation. If any member or members of the jury withdraw, the NowNow Competition will replace them with new members who are equivalently qualified and impartial.

9. The NowNow Competition bears no responsibility for any potential shortcomings in project execution. It is essential to note that the jury's evaluation and the awarding of a prize should not be construed as an assessment of the project's adequacy or technical feasibility in any way.

10. The NowNow Competition is not obligated to provide participants with explanations regarding the competition decisions or results.

11. Participants are prohibited from publishing their submitted materials before the official announcement of the winners.

12. Under no circumstances are participants allowed to make inquiries to the jury about the competition.

13. Any team or individual found to be in violation of the Terms and Conditions during or after a competition may have their rewards, publications, or any other outcomes of the competition revoked at any time.

14. The prizes are disbursed through bank transfer or PayPal. To receive the prize, whether as an individual or a legal entity, the winner must complete a declaration acknowledging receipt of the prize. Consequently, it is not feasible to request an invoice.

15. The submission of projects and/or winning the competition does not establish any form of professional commitment or relationship between the participants and the NowNow Competition.

16. The NowNow Competition reserves the right to alter the competition's dates, the composition of the jury, or the methods for project submission. Any changes will be communicated through the NowNow Competition's media channels at least 48 hours before the submission deadline via email.

17. In any case, these Terms and Conditions do not constitute an offer to the public.
18. Upon registering on the NowNow Competition's website, participants declare their full and unconditional acceptance of all the Terms and Conditions of the competitions without any exceptions.

19. The NowNow Competition reserves the right to modify the Terms and Conditions and any other rules without prior notification. Additionally, the Terms and Conditions and any other rules may be waived by special rules specific to individual competitions.

20. The NowNow competition operates in English by default. Any translation may be requested upon special request

Ineligibility Rules

1. Any blatant infringement of the NowNow competitions Terms and Conditions.

2. Submitting material, content or information relevant to the competition through a method different from the one specified in the submission requirements.

3. Submitting material after the submission deadline has passed.

4. Naming a file in a manner that deviates from the specifications outlined in the submission requirements.

5. Submitting panels that include any reference to the identity of entrants (e.g., name, office, university).

6. Submitting layouts that include text not written in English.

7. Submitting any material that does not align with the competition principles or is deemed incomplete.

8. Submitting a project that significantly deviates from the overarching goals, brief or purposes of the competition.

9. Entrants having a familial connection within the second degree or a direct professional relationship with any of the jury members at the time of the competition and/or within the two preceding years.

10. Submitting a project that is neither new nor original, and not the result of the intellectual effort of the entrants, meaning it does not belong to them.

11. The NowNow Competition evaluates projects solely based on technical and objective criteria. Projects not meeting the specified requirements or falling under the outlined cases are automatically rejected. Disqualified projects won't be considered or evaluated by the jury, and entrants or teams won't receive any refund.

12. By agreeing to the Terms and Conditions, entrants explicitly confirm that they do not meet any of the stated eligibility criteria

NOW NOW