

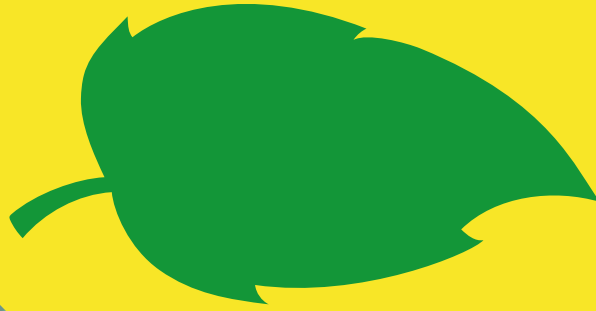


PRESENT

I-3 SEPT 2022
@WESTON LIBRARY,
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD
BROAD STREET, OXFORD, OXI 3BG

THURS: IOAM-4:30PM
FRI & SAT: IOAM-4:30PM

JAMES CURREY LITERARY FESTIVAL



2022

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

IN HONOUR OF THE GODFATHER OF AFRICAN LITERATURE, JAMES CURREY

 @JamesCurreyPrize

 @jamescurreyprize

 @CurreyFor

www.jamescurreysociety.co.uk

www.jamescurreylitfest.co.uk

info@jamescurreysociety.co.uk

NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR



*Welcome to the inaugural
James Currey Literary Festival!*

I thank Professor James Currey for his blessing. For trusting me with his name.

Founding the James Currey Society, and situating it in a city as expensive as Oxford is for a threefold reason. Firstly, to honour James Currey, the eminent African Studies publisher.

To develop African politics, studies, cultures and languages. And to create projects that will keep the legacy of James Currey alive.

In all the years to follow, under the auspices of the James Currey Society, we will honour culture and especially honour Mr. James Currey.

This festival honours the enormous but little-known contributions to the development of African literature made by James Currey, co-founder of the famous African Writers Series.

This first edition of the festival will bring together writers from across the African continent such as the Veteran Nigerian novelist, former politician, and former president of the Association of Nigerian Authors, Dr. Wale Okediran, who will talk about his new work. Other novelists such as Ikenna Okeh, Stephen Embleton, Ever Obi, and writers Kadija Sesay, Timi Ovuru, Okwiri Oduor, Suraj Yengde, Keith Richards, Shola Adenekan, Sonny Iroche, Lydia Idakula, Dianne Regisford, Uche Anyanwagu, Nky Iweka, Blessing Uzzi, Chioma Ude, and Ayodele Arigbabu will join in conversations cutting across a range of published works and topics.

In addition, the James Currey Lifetime Achievement Award in Literary Criticism will be awarded to Ikhide Ikheloa, who is well known for his daring reviews of creative works. Also featuring at the festival will be the announcement of the winner of the 2022 James Currey Prize for African Literature, which I established by at a dinner, organised by Juliet Mabey, publisher of OneWorld Publications.

The British Council is graciously supporting representation of selected authors from Africa at the Festival under their Culture Connects programme. I am delighted to say that Melody Sango, Programme Manager for Culture Connects in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) highlighted that our festival provides opportunities for creatives from both SSA and the UK to connect as professionals, to network, and explore opportunities for future collaboration – which is a key part of the work British Council is doing to support the growth of the creative sector.

Our guests include: His Royal Majesty, King Bubaraye Dakolo Agada IV, Ibenanaowei of Ekpetiama kingdom, Bloomsbury publisher, Alexandra Pringle, Britain's first 'black' female book publisher, Margaret Busby, along with Professor Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo, considered Mother of Modern Nigerian Literature, and eminent British publisher of African Studies, James Currey himself.

I am thankful to the beautiful minds, Farai Ncube and Matt Beavers of British Council. They didn't fail us at all.

Eternal gratitude to British Airways.

I thank everyone at Abibiman Publishing and the James Currey Society. And I thank all our volunteers!

Thank you, Sally Dunsmore of FT Oxford Literary Festival, Sir Tony Byrne, Stephen Embleton, Ifeanyi Mojekwu, Samson Onwe, Aboyeji Iyinoluwa, Professor Miles Larmer, Dr. Lucy Bayley and Alexandria Franklin of Bodleian Libraries, for all the support.

Enjoy your days in Oxford!

Onyeka Nwelue

Director, James Currey Literary Festival

THURSDAY, 1ST SEPTEMBER

TIME: 8AM–9AM

Unveiling of the James Currey bust. Donated by Onyeka Nwelue. Designed by Frank Anwuacha.
Venue: St Cross College - James Currey Collection Room

TIME: 10:30AM

Opening Remarks by Samson Onwe, President, James Currey Society
Special Book Presentation: Outside Weston Library by Onyeka Nwelue and Ikenna Okeh's *Deportee*.

TIME: 11–12PM

PANEL 1
The New African Writers Series and the Future of African Publishing

Moderator: Professor Miles Larmer
Panelists:
Professor Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo
Stephen Embleton
Kadija Sesay
Ikhide Ikheloa
Jaqueline Mitchell
James Currey
Dr. Pinkie Megkwe
Dr. Bronwen Everill

TIME: 12:15–1:15PM

PANEL 2
Are Writing Residencies, Book Fairs, Literary Conferences and Festivals important? How can they be funded?

Moderator: Debbie Edwards
Panelists:
Jahman Anikulapo
Lerato Mogoathe
Timi Ovuru
Sonny Iroche
Dianne Regisford
Keith Richards
Wale Okediran
Ifeoma Ifeanyi-Odinye
Onyeka Nwelue
Efe Azino-Paul

THURSDAY, 1ST SEPTEMBER

TIME: 1:15-2:15PM

FREE TIME

Book signings and exhibitions

TIME: 2:15-3:15PM

PANEL 3

What is the Future of Literary Prizes? Why Are They Important?

Moderator: Jahman Anikulapo

Panelists:

Niq Mhlongo

Sarah Ozo-Irabor

Ikhida Ikheloa

Masande Ntshanga

Charmaine Mujeri

Ever Obi

Ifeoma Ifeanyi Odinye

TIME: 3:30-4:30PM

PANEL 4

From Joseph Conrad to VS Naipaul: Are Africans Writing Travelogues? Are We Writing About Our History, Cuisines and Cultures?

Moderator: Collins Nweke

Panelists:

Suleiman Ahmed

Akin Alabi

Niq Mhlongo

Lerato Mogoatlhe

Chigozie Ahaiwe

Adaku Agwunobi

Ikenna Okeh

Ayodele Arigbabu

Nky Iweka

TIME: 6PM-

Venue: Heat African Restaurant

(189 Cowley Rd, Oxford OX4 1UT)

Evening of Tributes to Biyi Bandele.

Poetry. Music. Readings.

Tobi Abiodun. Tommy Wa. Efe Azino-Paul. Mr. Kaas.

(Register at director@jamescurreyprize.com)

An evening of tribute, poetry and music to the iconic writer and filmmaker who passed away on August 7th, in Lagos.

FRIDAY, 2ND SEPTEMBER

TIME: 10AM

Special Book Launch: *Madagali* by Dr. Wale Okediran and *Broken Bodies, Damaged Souls* by Professor Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo, *Some Angels Don't See God* by Ever Obi and *Onyeka Nwelue: A Troubled Life* by Mitterand Okorie

TIME: 11-12PM

PANEL 1

Are young people reading? Who is translating our books? What is the fate of Sci-fi in Africa?

Moderator: Lydia Idakula

Panelists:

Ayodele Arigbabu
Segun Egberongbe
Stephen Embleton
Masande Ntshanga
Leye Adenle
Jan Kotouč
Adaku Agwunobi
Timi Ovuru
Merline Ulysse

TIME: 12:15-1:15PM

PANEL 2

What Can Be Done to Develop the publishing infrastructure in Africa?

Moderator: Debbie Edwards

Panelists:

His Royal Majesty, King Bubaraye Dakolo Agada IV
Ever Obi
Uche Anyanwagu
Ben Touitou
Suraj Yengde
Jahman Anikulapo
Ahmed Suleiman

TIME: 1:15-2:15PM

FREE TIME

FRIDAY, 2ND SEPTEMBER

TIME: 2:15-3:15PM

PANEL 3

What Can We Do for James Currey?

Moderator: Ed Keazor

Panelists:

Jahman Anikulapo

Miles Larmer

Professor Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo

Sonny Iroche

Stephen Embleton

Samson Onwe

Nky Iweka

TIME: 3:30-4:30PM

PANEL 4

Who is Writing Fiction in Africa and Who is Publishing It?

Moderator: Lydia Idakula

Panelists:

Professor Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo

Ever Obi

Ikenna Okeh

Timi Ovuru

Nneoma Otuegbe

Niq Mhlongo

TIME: 5PM-7PM

**The James Currey Lecture by Ikhide Ikheloa
(Pa Ikhide) & Film Screening.**

**Venue: Oxford Martin School, 34 Broad St,
Oxford OX1 3BD**

SATURDAY, 3RD SEPTEMBER

TIME: IOAM

Special Book Launch: *The James Currey Anthology*, edited by Stephen Embleton.

TIME: II–I2PM

PANEL 1

Reading and Writing for Children

Moderator: Dr. Shola Adenekan

Panelists:

Professor Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo

Ikenna Okeh

Stephen Embleton

Wale Okediran

Teri Sillo

Uchehara Winifred Chinyere

TIME: I2:IOPM

**James Currey Prize for African Literature
Special Reading**

Moderator: Teri Sillo

Readings from shortlisted authors from their works.

TIME: I:I5-2:I5PM

FREE TIME

SATURDAY, 3RD SEPTEMBER

TIME: 2:15-3:15PM

PANEL 2

Daughters of Africa: Who is Publishing African Voices? And What Are Africans Writing?

Moderator: Emma Shercliff

Panelists:

Dr. Margaret Busby

Alexandra Pringle

Okwiri Oduor

Professor Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo

Lizzy Attree

Dr. Pinkie Megkwe

TIME: 3:30-4:30PM

PANEL 3

Book to Film: The emergence of book to film. Taking books to the screen and why it is important. Who is funding it?

Moderator: Ed Keazor

Panelists:

Chioma Ude

Peace Anyiam-Osigwe

Chigozie Ahaiwe

Stephen Embleton

Jan Kotouč

Ben Touitou

Dorothee Wenner

Chris Ihidero

Blessing Uzzi

TIME: 7PM

**The James Currey
Birthday Dinner and
Prize Ceremony**
(Strictly on invitation)

GUESTS & PARTICIPANTS



Timi-Nipre Vivian Ovuru is a young writer, actor, freelance / features writing journalist, poet, Convener – Humansof Bayelsa and Rap, Poetry and Palmwine and also the founder of Mangroove House Publishers / Mangroove House Literary Society, from Bayelsa State in the Niger-delta region of Nigeria.



Ever Obi is a fiction writer based in Lagos. His debut, the acclaimed mystical novel *Men Don't Die* was published in 2019, exploring themes of death and spiritualism, and has been discussed on several forums, including the Oxford Literary Festival.



Ed Emeka Keazor is a historian, lawyer, author and documentary filmmaker. His books include *'120 Great Nigerians You Never Knew'* and *'The Nigerian History Photo-book'*. His film *'Onunaekwuluora'*, on archaeologist Professor Thurstan Shaw, documents Shaw's uncovering of Igbo-Ukwu artworks that proved the Igbo people had created complex works of art 1000 years ago. In 2014, he received an award for his work on African history from The African Society of Cambridge University.



Akachi Ezeigbo – essayist, literary theorist, novelist, playwright, poet, short story writer and children's author – is a Professor of English who taught for three decades at the University of Lagos before moving eastwards to teach at Federal University Ndufu-Alike, Ikwo, in Ebonyi State.



Niq Mhlongo is an author and travel journalist from Soweto who earned a BA in African Literature and Political Studies from Wits University in 1997. *Dog Eat Dog* (2004), *After Tears* (2007), *Way Back Home* (2013), and *Paradise in Gaza* (2020) are his four novels. He has also written two collections of short stories, *Affluenza* (2016) and *Soweto, Under the Apricot Tree* (2018). He edited the critically acclaimed essay collection *Black Tax, Burden or Ubuntu* in 2019. In 2006, his book *Dog Eat Dog* won the MAR DER LETRAS INTENEZIONALE Literary Award in Spain.

GUESTS & PARTICIPANTS



Alexandra Pringle: For 20 years, Alexandra served as Bloomsbury Publishing's Editor-in-Chief. Currently, she is the Executive Publisher. She is a Trustee of Giffords Circus, a Patron of Index on Censorship, and an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. She has received honorary Doctor of Letters degrees from Warwick University and Anglia Ruskin University.



James Currey: The "Godfather of African Literature" is James Currey, co-founder of James Currey Publishers (est. 1984). Many academic books, journals, fiction, and nonfiction books about Africa have been produced by his publishing business, notably during a time when it was thought to be unprofitable to publish books about Africa. In collaboration with Chinua Achebe, he and Heinemann Publishers created the renowned African Writers Series (AWS), which has served as an inspiration to countless African(ist)s all over the world.



Margaret Busby: Born in Ghana, Margaret attended London University after receiving her education in the UK. When she co-founded Allison & Busby in the late 1960s, she became Britain's youngest and first Black woman publisher. She has written drama for BBC radio and the stage in addition to being a writer, editor, broadcaster, and literary critic. She has adapted and dramatized works by Wole Soyinka, Sam Selvon, Timothy Mo, Walter Mosley, Jean Rhys, and Henry Louis Gates for radio. She has served on the boards of a number of organizations, including the Royal Literary Fund, Wasafiri magazine, Tomorrow's Warriors, and the Africa Centre in London. Among the prominent authors she has interviewed are Toni Morrison and NguGĩ wa Thiong'o.



Ikhide Ikheloa who describes himself as Father, Fighter, Lover, Troublemaker, is a literary critic and writer. He's a tireless crusader for the digitalization of literature and has been profoundly involved in the modern literary tradition and writing. He refuses to write a book because he stubbornly insists that the book is dying a long slow death.



Efe Paul Azino, a Nigerian poet, writer, and performer who was born in Lagos, is recognized as "one of Nigeria's outstanding performance poets." In the Nigerian spoken word performance scene, he has also been credited with "playing a vital role in lifting the words from the page and giving them life." He is the creator and director of the yearly Lagos Book and Art Festival as well as the director of poetry at the Lagos International Poetry Festival.

GUESTS & PARTICIPANTS



Miles Larmer: At the University of Oxford, Professor Miles Larmer teaches African history as an associate professor. His research largely examines Zambia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the middle to late twentieth century in central and southern Africa. He has written about labor unions, opposition parties, contested nationalism, and the Cold War's impact on Africa.



Stephen Embleton: Born in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa and now a resident in Oxford, United Kingdom. He is the 2022 James Currey Fellow at the African Studies Centre, Oxford University. His background is Graphic Design, Art Direction in Advertising, and Film/Video production and directing. He is a charter member of the African Speculative Fiction Society.



Ikenna Okeh: Born in 1989, Ikenna Okeh writes narrative poetry, and prose fiction centred around African characters. His latest novel, *Deportee*, is published in the UK by Abibiman Publishing. All of his works are to be found in the library of the Nordic Africa Institute, Sweden.



Dr. Kadija George is a fellow at IES (London) in participation, engagement and participation. Her research project encompasses "Investigate the potential of a public collective interview method using Black British magazine publishers in the '90's". She published *Sable Litmag* for 15 years from 2001. She has (co) edited several anthologies of writing in all genres for writers of African and Asian descent. She is the co-founder of Mboka Festival of Arts, Culture and Sport in The Gambia; the founder of AfriPoeTree, an SIV for African poets and PanAfricanism. (<https://:AfriPoeTree.org>). In 2019 she received a Kluge fellowship at the Library of Congress in Washington DC 2019 for her graduate research on Black British publishing and PanAfricanism which will be published by Africa World Press. In 2020 and 2021 she received an honorary doctorate from Goldsmiths College, an Honorary Fellowship from the Royal Society of Literature and an MBE for services to literature.



Okwiri Oduor: Kenyan author Okwiri Oduor was awarded the 2014 Caine Prize. In April 2014, she was named to the Hay Festival's Africa39 list of 39 Sub-Saharan African authors under the age of 40 who have the potential and talent to define trends in African literature. Her story "Rag Doll" was later published in the anthology *Africa39: New Writing from Africa South of the Sahara*, edited by Ellah Allfrey.

GUESTS & PARTICIPANTS



Jahman Anikulapo has been a practicing artist since 1980 and has worked as a journalist covering the arts and culture since 1984. He focuses primarily on writing about the performing arts, visual arts, literature, film, and cultural affairs for a number of national and international publications. Jahman is also an advocate for the arts and culture, using initiatives, conferences, exhibitions, and seminars to influence national and international legislation.



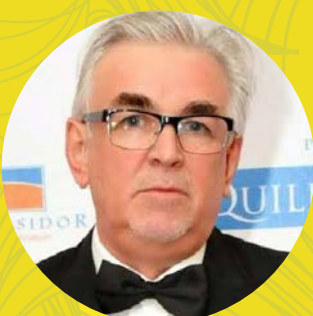
Suraj Yengde: At the Harvard Kennedy School, Suraj Yengde is the first post-doctoral fellow for the Shorenstein Center. He is an associate editor of *Caste: A Global Journal of Social Exclusion* and has worked with prestigious international institutions in Geneva, London, and New York. His articles have appeared in a number of prestigious journals and publications, including *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, *Social Transformations*, *Economic and Political Weekly*, *Globe Post*, *Mail and Guardian*, *India Today*, *the Indian Express*, *Hindustan Times*, and *Economic and Political Weekly*.



Dr Pinkie Mekgwe is the Senior Regional Advisor for Africa and West Asia at the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA). Before joining International IDEA in 2018, Mekgwe was Executive Director for Internationalisation at the University of Johannesburg. She also previously served as Deputy Director for International Education and Partnerships at the University of Botswana, and as Programme leads for Education at TrustAfrica, as well as Programme Officer for Research, Gender and the Humanities for the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA). She remains a passionate supporter of the creative arts in Africa.



Derek Bassey is a self-teaching 21-year-old artist. Born and raised in Nigeria, but currently residing in Canada, his growth has been shaped by diverse experiences. Armed with nothing but pure intent and a willingness to explore, Derek started painting after he graduated high school in 2016. While getting his Bachelor of Business Administration at the Canadian Mennonite University, his body of work continuously explores subject matters like identity, death, legacy, and love. He draws inspiration for his art from a litany of sources. Visions in his consciousness, lyrics from his favourite music, and scenes from his favorite pictures.



Keith Richards OBE is currently the Managing Director of Promasidor Nigeria Ltd a food and beverages company based in Lagos. His career has spanned over thirty years of involvement in developing markets, especially Africa. Prior to his current position he has most recently been Managing Director of Guinness Nigeria Plc in Lagos and of International Equitable Association, in Aba, Abia State.

GUESTS & PARTICIPANTS



Shola Adenekan is the publisher of *The New Black Magazine* (www.thenewblackmagazine.com). Currently, he is associate professor of African literature at Ghent University, Belgium. Previously, he was assistant professor of literary and cultural analysis at the University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands. He has worked as a postdoctoral researcher at University of Bremen (Germany), University of Bayreuth (Germany) and the University of Leeds (United Kingdom). He is also the author of *African Literature in the Digital Age* (Boydell & Brewer, 2021), and co-editor of the Special Issue 'Digital Africas' (Postcolonial Text, 2020). His research interests include digital culture, digital humanities, African literature and culture, and Africana studies. He is currently the recipient and principal investigator for the ERC Starting Grant, Yoruba Print Culture (2021–26) (project number 949557).



Sonny Iroche is a Lagos and Abuja based seasoned Financial and Infrastructure Consultant. He consults for the public and private sectors in Nigeria, South Africa, and a number of sub-Saharan African countries. He is a Senior Academic Visitor at the African Studies Centre, University of Oxford.



Lydia Idakula Sobogun is a trained lawyer, arts enthusiast, and a TV/Film & Stage Producer. She's the Founder of Gbagyichild Entertainment, home to the TARUWA brand, which comprises the monthly open mic performance evening, a yearly magazine, an annual performing arts festival and an online platform.



Teri Sillo was born to Nigerian parents in Sheffield, England, studied Law at the University of Liverpool and was called to the Bar of England and Wales by the Honourable Society of Gray's Inn, London as a barrister. Subsequently, she moved to New York, USA where she worked at Citi Private Bank. She returned to the UK in 2011 ever since which she has worked as a Business Analyst in the banking industry. In 2021 she will be taking time off employment in order to focus full time on her novels and artwork, an effort facilitated by her company, Boldly Artistic Ltd, which was registered on Companies House UK on 31 December 2018. She enjoys writing, reading and travelling and has lived in Nigeria and the United States.



Uche Anyanwagu is a Nigerian-trained Medical Doctor and Clinical Epidemiologist. In addition to his clinical and academic works, Uche is a creative writer, social critic, and a poet. He has contributed poems in some anthologies globally. He has published four books.

GUESTS & PARTICIPANTS



Nky Iweka is a British Nigerian trying to introduce Nigerian cuisine to the International world. She is the owner of Tupelo and Green based in the United Kingdom. A Computer Scientist by training, she worked as a management consultant (PwC Consulting) for many years before quitting to enter into the world of Food.



Peace Anyiam-Osigwe is a Nigerian filmmaker and entertainment executive who has been called “the queen of Nollywood films”. She is the founder of globally acclaimed film ceremony, Africa Movie Academy Awards. She pioneered the screening of Nollywood films at international film festivals



Ayodele Arigbabu is one of the founding fathers of the current wave of African SFF, the person who pulled together the Lagos 2060 collective and published the resulting anthology. Ayodele is now as much a professional futurist as he is a working architect, publisher, illustrator, and author.



Collins Nweke: Born on 14 July 1965, Collins Nweke is a Belgian politician of Nigerian origin. A 2014 candidate Member European Parliament, Collins is a current third term Councillor for Social Affairs at Ostend City Council. Since 2006 his portfolio has included the Local Economy, Social Policy, Equality & Diversity Affairs and International Development. Collins features regularly on TV Continental Lagos as Global Affairs Analyst, on Channels TV as Foreign Policy Commentator and on TRT World Istanbul as African Affairs Analyst. He joined the Opinion Makers team of The Brussels Times in 2021 where he contributes opinion pieces on Social Policy and International Development. He writes on Diaspora, Africa’s place in the New World Order and interculturalism.



Jan Kotouč is a Czech author of space operas, military SF and alternative history. His first novel was published in 2009 and since then he has written a number of novels in Czech. *Frontiers of the Imperium* is the first book in his latest series, the *Central Imperium*. He is one of the handful Czech writers who has found success on the English-speaking market. Apart from writing, he teaches at a university and is a popular speaker at a number of conventions.

GUESTS & PARTICIPANTS



Onyeka Nwelue was born in 1988 in Nigeria and left for India, when he was 18. He's author of 20 books, including the phenomenal award-winning *The Strangers of Braamfontein*. He is an Academic Visitor at the African Studies Centre, University of Oxford, where he is the founder of the James Currey Society. He's the Dean, School of Cinematography at Queensland University in Haiti. He lives between Oxford and Johannesburg.



Masande Ntshanga is the author of the novels, *The Reactive* (2014) and *Triangulum* (2019), as well as the chapbook, *Native Life in the Third Millennium* (2020), an experimental collection of poetry and prose. He is the winner of the inaugural PEN International New Voices Award in 2013 and a Betty Trask Award in 2018. He was born in East London, South Africa, and graduated from the University of Cape Town, where he completed his Masters in Creative Writing under the Mellon Mays Foundation. He has received a Fulbright Award, a Civitella Ranieri Fellowship, and a Bundanon Trust Award. His work has appeared in *chimurenga*, *The LA Review of Books Quarterly Journal*, *MIT Technology Review* and *n+1*.



Leye Adenle, winner of the first ever Prix Marianne in 2016, is a Nigerian writer living and working in London as an agile coach - sort of a trainer of computer geeks. His short story, *The Assassination*, in the anthology, *Sunshine Noir*, was a finalist for the 2017 CWA short story dagger award.



Emma Shercliff has over 20 years of experience in the publishing industry. She has worked for publishing houses in Paris, Melbourne, Abuja and London, and for the British Council in Nigeria and Iran. Emma was formerly Managing Director of Macmillan English Campus, and Head of Export Sales at Hodder Education. She was Sales & Rights Director of Cassava Republic Press UK, an award-winning independent African publishing company, until 2019. She was Publishing Director for Ankara Press, an African romance imprint launched in 2014, and conceived and coordinated the acclaimed *Valentine's Day Anthology* (2015), which featured contributions in multiple languages from authors and translators across Africa.



Nneoma Otuegbé was born in Owerri Nigeria in 1987. She is a Visiting Lecturer and Doctoral researcher in English literature at the University of Wolverhampton. Her writing which cuts across genres have appeared in various literary magazines. Her fiction was longlisted for the 2022 commonwealth short story prize.

GUESTS & PARTICIPANTS



Debbie Edwards is a highly motivated and respected creative professional philanthropist. Debbie has been at the centre of creative literature for 30 years. As a published author and poet, she has supported and championed the talent of creatives from Nigeria and across the globe. As an experienced talent manager and Founder/CEO of DETM, Debbie counts Onyeka Nwelue as one of her star clients and currently serves as COO of Abibiman Publishing House.



Lizzy Attree is a Director on the board of Short Story Day Africa and is the co-founder of the Mabati-Cornell Kiswahili Prize for African Literature. She teaches World Literature at Richmond, the American International University in London. She is also a trustee of Wasafiri magazine.



HRM, King Bubaraye Dakolo is an environmental and human rights activist of repute. He was an intellectual partner of the Ijaw struggle for resource control in the late 1990s and founder of the Nun River Keepers Organisation, a community-based organisation whose objective is to protect one of the most historically significant rivers in the world – the Nun River and its environment. His book, *The Riddle of the Oil Thief*, discusses grand oil theft in the Niger Delta and its effects on the region.



Dr. Ifeoma Ezinne Odinye is a poet and novelist. She is a Senior lecturer in the department of English Language and Literature, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria. She teaches prose fiction and poetry (Creative Writing). She has published some literary works: *Pain in the Neck* (Novel, 2018), *At Sunset* (Poetry, 2018), *African-China* (Novel, 2019) and other published fictional works in anthologies. Some of her articles on African literary studies are also published in reputable academic journals online. She has some unpublished creative works.



Hon. Merline Handfield-Ulysse is the brain behind Zawadi concierge Services, Zawadi Creations, and Collections. She is also the founder of the International Leadership Empowerment Movement Ltd (ILEM), an entity that provides leadership training, coaching, mentoring, and conferences for corporate entities locally and internationally. Also, Merline is the founder and managing director of YELAH a youth-centered organisation that teaches trains, and motivates youths, mentors fathers, assisting individuals in developing their talents and becoming more innovative. Merline is a two-time award-winning author, award-winning youth talents development of 2016, and recipient women development award of 2019. Merline is a certified international speaker, trainer, mentor, and coach with the John Maxwell Team, a certified CBT practitioner, and mental health facilitator for the UK's OCD, BDD, and hoarding most importantly she has a fantastic network of young innovators that she works with as part of a youth leadership program, that she has created a few years back.

GUESTS & PARTICIPANTS



Tee Mac Iseli: Popular flutist and composer, Tee Mac Omatshola Iseli, has been in the music industry since the 1970s with his debut and sophomore albums making it to the billboard top 10. As the renowned Welsh-Nigerian vocalist Shirley Bassey's musical conductor and arranger, he also worked in Hollywood, Los Angeles, as a composer for Cidi Croft Enterprise and later for Universal Films. He was chosen chairman of FAMECorp in 2011, which was founded to construct movie theaters and performance halls around Nigeria and is owned by famous Nigerian musicians and Nollywood celebrities.



Tobi Abiodun is a spoken word poet born and raised in Benin City. His poetry cuts across the personal, social and political. Tobi is a multiple slam champion with titles in major Nigerian cities including the inaugural Lagos International Poetry Festival Slam in 2021. His poems have appeared on Nantygreens, Odour of Death Anthology, Memento: An Anthology of Contemporary Poets, Feral, BBC Radio London, Nymphs and Thugs, Komorebi Mag, Malimbe and are forthcoming elsewhere. He has produced works for Oando Plc, Hewlett-packard (HP), Guinness Plc etc. Tobi is the face behind the viral Heritage Bank Pidgin Spoken Word Poetry advert.



Chidozie Christian Ahaiwe is an award-winning Nigerian-British producer. Chidozie began his career in film working for Vertigo Films before moving to NBC Universal and Sony Pictures Television. While working for Vertigo Films Chidozie he was involved in the release of BAFTA nominated films *Monsters* and Nicolas Winding Refn's *Bronson* starring Tom Hardy. Chidozie's debut documentary film *Endsars: Lekki Massacre*, was Rome International Movie Awards Winner and Cannes World Film Festival - Semi-Finalist - Best Documentary Feature. Chidozie has gone on to produce and direct the anticipated documentary *Hushpuppi: The Gucci Billionaire Master*, which is soon to be released on a major global streaming platform.



Segun Anofi Egberongbe is a freelance writer, model, actor and CEO of Leather N Soul Fashion brand. He is a graduate of University of Lagos Nigeria. He has a B.Sc. degree in Political science. His passion lies in standing out in whatever career path I choose. The strive for excellence is his core value, which has aided his growth.



Uchehara Chinyere Winifred is a Catholic nun of the Daughters of Divine Love Congregation. Her research interest is in exploring and upholding the aesthetics of African Literature. For the past ten years, she has worked as a vice principal of academics and a Literature teacher in secondary schools. Currently, she represents her congregation as a pastoral worker at St. Mary's Catholic Church Brierley Hill, Birmingham.

GUESTS & PARTICIPANTS



Suleiman Ahmed is a software engineer, writer, and social commentator. As a software engineer, Suleiman has developed a range of software products for the UK NHS, and justice departments in the UK, USA, New Zealand, Canada, and Australia. He's also developed software in areas such as Cybersecurity, Digital ID, and the Internet of Things. As a writer, Suleiman regularly writes on contemporary issues, many of which are published on his Facebook Page, and by both UK and Nigerian newspapers. He is also the author of the socio-political novel, *Trouble in Valhalla*. Suleiman attended Coventry University, where he graduated with a BSc with Honours, First Class in Network and Mobile Computing. He currently lives in Lincolnshire, UK.



Uzoma Blessing Chibuiké "Blessing Uzzi" is a Film Producer and Director. She studied international relations at Eastern Mediterranean University North Cyprus where she graduated with a first-class. After school, she moved back to Nigeria to pursue her career in film making. She has directed and produced two short films and in recent time a feature film. She produced a short film "9:07", a story about the last six hours of an Author's life. Also, she directed a feature film "No Man's Land", a story about forced evictions and demolition of slum houses.



Wale Okediran: A medical doctor, former ANA President and award winning, prolific author whose book is on the reading lists of several African countries, Dr. Wale Okediran is the Secretary General, PAWA (Pan African Writers Association), the continent's apex writers' guild. Also the founder of Ebedi Writers Residency, Oyo State, Okediran was a former member of the Federal House of Representatives in Nigeria. Dr. Okediran has published till date, fourteen novels, many of which are on the reading lists of a number of Nigerian universities. His highly acclaimed novel, *Tenants of the House*, which is a fictional account of his years in the House of Representatives was the 2011 Co-Winner of the Wole Soyinka Prize for African Literature.



Sarah Ozo-Irabor is a literary practitioner experienced in spearheading numerous projects centring the engagement with, and promotion of, African literature. She has been instrumental in opening up transnational conversations on works by writers of African descent, not least through founding *Books & Rhymes*, a literary podcast that reimagines the transformative power of books and the way music and literature dialogue with each other. She is also the founder of *Lit Avengers*, an intertextual monthly literary salon. In 2020, she was named *Brittle Paper's* Social Media Influencer of the Year for her use of social media as a way of redefining literature. She is the Director of the AKO Caine Prize for African Writing.



Dr Adaku Agwunobi is a British-Nigerian singer, songwriter, author, researcher and entrepreneur. At 26, Dr Adaku became the first Black PhD holder in Loughborough University's London campus, her PhD was entitled "*Entrepreneurial Health and Wellbeing in the Digital Economy: An Intersectional Critical Realist Investigation*". She is best known for her debut single *Jisike* and poetry book *Yours Sincerely*.

GUESTS & PARTICIPANTS



Benjamin Abba Nnayelugo popularly known as **Ben Lugo Touitou** is a Nollywood actor famously known for Lagos Cougars . Ben Lugo started his career as a model before he ventured into the movie industry. He came to limelight for his role in the movie “*Lagos Cougars*”.



Chioma Ude is a Nigerian entertainment executive. In 2010, she founded Africa International Film Festival (AFRIFF) a film festival held annually in Nigeria. Ude founded AFRIFF in 2010, as a platform to train individuals in the film industry and then develop and monetize content for the public.



Dorothee Wenner is a German film curator and journalist. She has served as curator at the Berlin International Film Festival since 1990. She is also a founding jury member of the Africa Movie Academy Awards.



Chris Ihidero is a Nigerian filmmaker. He is the head writer/story editor on MNet’s TV drama Hush. He has worked as a theatre artist, broadcaster, newspaper columnist, magazine editor and university lecturer. In September 2014, he launched PinPoint Media a 360 media and production company. PinPoint Media is a mother company to Lagos Film Academy(LFA), ScreenKraft and TNS. In December 2014, he launched True Nollywood Stories (TNS), as a platform for news, views, reviews, opinion and general information around Nigeria’s film industry. Ihidero has also been involved in training Nigerians in storytelling skills. The trainings such as Story Story and TV Writing masterclass.



Dr Bronwen Everill is the 1973 College Lecturer in History at Gonville & Caius College and Director of the Centre of African Studies at the University of Cambridge. She is the author of *Abolition and Empire in Sierra Leone and Liberia* and is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society.

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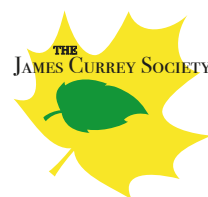
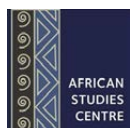
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