

# BABEL

A NEW LANGUAGE

October 27 - 31

## Lagos International Poetry Festival (Lipfest)



Since 2015 the Lagos International Poetry Festival has brought poets, writers, and artists from across the world to Lagos for a week of performances, workshops, and conversations, establishing itself as one of the continent's key cultural highlights.

Dreamed up over drinks and arguments on a forlorn park bench in the beauty and chaos of Lagos,

LIPFest was imagined as a vehicle for enabling poets existing on the fringes to create their own centers of gravity, with cultural force, vision, and daring. The festival is invested in sustaining an inclusive space for the unfettered expression of ideas and creative expression and attracts pioneering spirits and emerging voices, each defining new aesthetics and chronicling the beauty and terror of their times.

We have a keen desire to discover and develop new creative writing and performance talent, and this is manifested in the festival's series of workshops, masterclasses, and its newly established year-round schools programme.

Though tightly curated around yearly themes, LIPFest also presents opportunities to feature as a guest or curate an independent event.

We believe facilitating pan-diasporic connections between poets and writers from different universes of experience are important to deepening artistic consciousness. So we are enthusiastic about collaborations that expand space for the life of the mind and enrich practice.

## **Babel: A New Language**

This year we consider how the technology of language underscores our sense of identity and facilitates our understanding of the relational universe.

Entire generations of people across the world have had their contributions to scientific advancement and intellectual engagement precluded by the power dynamics that subordinates language for language, blurring encoded histories and bodies of knowledge in the process. We center the mother-tongue and the ongoing reclamation of default languages from the rubble of colonialism, interrogating the implication of a re-imagination of language in local education, and the possibilities presented for the liberation of stories and societies.

The 2022 edition of the festival draws an array of guest poets, writers, translators, and performers, as they translate their experiences by taking us beneath the skin of their tongues. Events will include special country performance showcases with offerings from Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, Nigeria, India, Germany, Spain, the US, Scotland, England, Belgium and France. Workshops and masterclasses will connect poets and writers at different stages of their careers for career shaping craft sessions, and the festival's keynote conversations and panels will unpack the theme.

As part of our international cultural exchange programme, we welcome the 2022 fellows of Moniack Mhor's (Scotland's national writing center) connect and collaborate international residency, who will be joining the rest of this year's festival guests for readings, performances and conversation. The festival's annual poetry slam also returns for its second season. One million naira up for the grabs!

For our eight edition we will be launching our annual print and digital journal – *Máṛòkò*.

Named after the thriving migrant community east of the Lagos Lagoon, who were violently evicted in the early 90s to make way for one of the most expensive real estate strips in the world, a garish urban sprawl built on the debris of over 300,000 scattered dreams, *Máṛòkò* draws its ethos from the unbowed spirits that relentlessly confront the reckless possibilities of Lagos.

It renders the rough-hewn beauties and joys that connect pan-African and pan-diasporic experiences, in poetry, prose and photography, tracing a contemporary canon across the contours of contemporary black urban life.



**Masterclass with Rudy Francisco  
(Thursday 27th October 11am – 1pm WAT)**

Join American spoken word poet and writer Rudy Francisco for an exclusive in-person spoken word masterclass. Multiple slam champion, Rudy Francisco is one of the most recognizable names in spoken word poetry. Rudy's impeccable gift for translating the unsaid into sound has been received on stages around the world. Suitable for writers and performers at every level of experience, this Masterclass will run the full gamut of what it takes to write original and honest poems that sing on stage.

**Venue: Goethe Institut, 7, Anifowoshe Street, Victoria Island**



**The Language of Healing: A Writing Workshop with Titilope Sonuga  
(Thursday 27th October 1:30pm – 3:30pm)**

Titilope Sonuga is an award-winning poet and performer whose work has graced stages and pages across the globe. She is the author of three collections of poetry, Down to Earth (2011), Abscess (2014), and This Is How We Disappear (2019) and has released two spoken word albums, Mother Tongue (2011) and Swim (2019). Titilope has written three plays and scripted advertising campaigns for global brands. She is the first poet to perform at a Nigerian presidential inauguration and is currently the Poet Laureate of the City of Edmonton.

**Venue: Goethe Institut, 7, Anifowoshe Street, Victoria Island**



**Poetry of Place: A Writing Workshop with Romeo Oriogun  
(Thursday 27th October 3pm – 5pm WAT)**

Romeo Oriogun is the author of Sacrament of Bodies, Nomad, and the forthcoming collection A Gathering of Bastards. Winner of the 2017 Brunel International African Poetry Prize, the Poetry Society of America's Alice Fay Di Castagnola Award, and The Chukwu Prize For Poetry. He has been longlisted for The NLNG Nigerian Prize for Literature, and was a finalist for the Lambda Award for Gay Poetry and The Future Awards African Prize for Literature.

**Venue : Online**



**Opening Cocktail and Performance  
(Thursday 27th October, 7pm – 8pm WAT)**

The festival opens with its first in-person event with an exhilarating evening of poetry, spoken word, and music, featuring Titilope Sonuga (Nigeria), Omar Bin Musa (Australia), Nadine Aisha Jassat (Scotland), Siphokazi Jonas (South Africa), and Nigerian singer Ric Hassani.

**Venue: Terra Kulture, Plot 1376 Tiamiyu Savage St, Victoria Island, Lagos.**



**Keynote Panel: Babel... A New Language  
(Thursday 27th October 8:20pm – 9:30pm WAT)**

Join Mukoma wa Ngugi, Sylvia Arthur, Kola Tubosun, Aja Monet, and Raymond Antrobus, as they consider how the technology of language underscores our sense of identity and facilitates our understanding of the relational universe. The festival's keynote panel will explore the power dynamics that subordinate language for language, the ongoing reclamation of default languages from the rubble of colonialism, the implication of re-imagining language in local education, and the possibilities it presents for the liberation of stories and societies.

**Venue: Terra Kulture, Plot 1376 Tiamiyu Savage St, Victoria Island, Lagos.**



**Native Tongue: A Writing Workshop with Chekwube Danladi**  
(Friday 28th October 1:30pm – 3:30pm)

This workshop will encourage poets to include and celebrate local, colloquial, non-standard languages (i.e. pidgin, creole, and indigenous languages) in their poetry, as a subversive anti-colonial process as well as a lyrical tool. Chekwube Danladi is the author of *Semiotics* (Georgia, 2020), winner of the Cave Canem Poetry Prize. Her chapbook, *Take Me Back*, was included in the New Generation African Poets: Nne boxset. She is the 2022-25 Writer-in-Residence at Occidental College and lives in Los Angeles.

**Venue: Goethe Institut, 7, Anifowoshe Street, Victoria Island**



**Masterclass: Pushing Formal Boundaries in Poetry with Dami Ajayi**  
(Friday 28th October 11am – 1pm WAT)

Poetry yields itself to experimentation. Convention and boundaries could be stretched to the extremes of their tensile strength. This masterclass by Dami Ajayi, author of the critically-acclaimed poetry collections *Clinical Blues*, *A Woman's Body is a Country* and *Affection & Other Accidents*, is the facilitator. is to help you think about constraint and restraint in the craft of poetry. Diverse forms of poetry would be discussed as a refresher course, Open to poets in all stages of their careers.

**Venue: Goethe Institut, 7, Anifowoshe Street, Victoria Island**



**Lagos to London**  
(Friday 28th October 4pm – 5pm WAT)

Place and identity are intimately bound together. This is never more apparent than when they pull apart and press up against each other. In partnership with the Poetry Translation Center London, we open up a cultural conversation between poets in Nigeria and the UK, who share heritage, culture, and even languages. The session will feature readings and conversations that express multiple, sometimes contradictory, sometimes revealing perspectives on 'homecoming.'

**Venue: Online**



**A New Spelling of Our Names**  
(Friday 28th October 5pm – 6pm)

Four brilliant queer poets explore the power of poetry to deconstruct and reinvent the language of sexual and gender liberation from an African/diasporic perspective.

**Venue: Online**



**Africa Aloud: An Evening of Poetry and Spoken Word**  
(Friday 28th October 6pm – 7:30pm WAT)

Africa comes alive in beauty, language, and song, as an assembly of some the continent's finest performance poets take us through an evening of spectacular performances. Don't miss Africa Aloud with Nana Asaase (Ghana), Dike Chukwumerije (Nigeria), Mbali Malimela (South Africa), Renaud Dossavi (Togo), Jolyn Philips (South Africa), and Aremu Gemini (Nigeria).

**Venue: British Council, 20 Thompson Avenue, Ikoyi, Lagos**

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OCT**



**American Slang  
(Friday 28th October 8pm – 9pm WAT)**

We explore a range of American poetics with some of the best poets and spoken word artists in the world. Join Aja Monet, Rudy Francisco, Amy Shimson-shinto, and Joel Francois for a riveting evening of words and magic.

**Venue: British Council, 20 Thompson Avenue, Ikoyi, Lagos**

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OCT**



**Call and Response: In Conversation with Nature Feat – Su’eddie Agema,  
Umar Sidi and Samuel Osaze  
(Saturday 29th October 2:45pm – 3:45pm WAT)**

Umar Sidi’s lyrical second collection, *Like Butterflies Scattered About by Art Rascals* (Masobe, 2022), is steeped in Sufi traditions. He is joined by Su’eddie Agema (*Memory and the Call of Waters*), and Samuel Osaze (*The Strange Moon of Yenagoa*), both reading recent collections that lean into memory through the totems of rivers and land.

**Venue: Rovingheights Bookstore, Landmark Event Center, Lekki, Lagos**



**Geographies of Place and Feeling  
(Saturday 29th October 12:30pm – 1:30pm WAT)**

Join Mukoma wa Ngugi, Dami Ajayi, and Toni Kan as they read and discuss geographies of place and feeling from their extensive oeuvres and most recent collections. The session will be followed by book signings.

**Venue: Rovingheights Bookstore, Landmark Event Center, Lekki, Lagos**



**Language and Memory: with/Raymond Antrobus and Omar Bin Musa  
(Saturday 29th October 1:30pm – 2:30pm WAT)**

A Guardian Best Book of the Year Finalist for the T. S. Eliot Prize, Raymond Antrobus’ *All the Names Given* has been described as a direct, open, and formally sophisticated collection that moves deftly between tenderness and violence, hope and grief, praise and lament. He is joined by the enigmatic Omar Bin Musa who’s *Killernova* charts a journey with humor and vulnerability through the colonial history of South-East Asia. Raymond Antrobus and Omar Musa will read from their collections in conversation with Ghanaian writer and curator Elizabeth Johnson.

**Venue: Rovingheights Bookstore, Landmark Event Center, Lekki, Lagos**



**LIPFest 2022 Poetry Slam  
(Saturday 29th October 6pm - 7pm WAT)**

Wordsmiths from across the continent slug it out for N1million winner-takes-all at the second edition of the festival's annual poetry slam. This event includes an open mic, sip and paint, drinks, and street food in a carnival-like celebration of the power of words and storytelling.

**Venue: Terra Kulture, Plot 1376 Tiamiyu Savage St, Victoria Island, Lagos.**



**Homebound & Other Stories (Saturday 29th October 4pm - 5pm WAT)**

Travel across Mumbai and the Western Cape with two phenomenal storytellers, Puja Changoiwala and Jolyn Phillips. Changoiwala's book Homebound, holds us spellbound tracing the displacement that followed India's Covid-19 pandemic lockdown and a family's forced and sudden 900-km migration from Mumbai to Rajasthan. Phillips' startling debut collection of short stories, Tjieng Tjang Tjerries, center's on the oft-ignored lives of individuals, families, and communities on the margins of society, exploring how love and loss define our lives and the world we live in. This session is moderated by writer and novelist TJ Benson.

**Venue: Rovingheights Bookstore, Landmark Event Center, Lekki, Lagos**



**Babel: The Concert (Saturday 29th October 8:15pm - 10pm WAT)**

Wave making afrobeats sensation Fave is joined by a constellation of wordsmiths from across the world in the festival's big night of spoken word, poetry, and music. In the last eight years LIPFest has featured only the best on stage and this year is no exception. Featuring Fave (Nigeria), Titilope Sonuga (Nigeria), Rudy Fransisco (USA), Raymond Antrobus (UK/Jamaica), Aja Monet (USA), Omar Musa (Australia), Joel Francois (USA), Sboniso Dlamini (South Africa), Sunnah Khan (UK), Debris Stevenson (UK), Nana Asaase (Ghana), Nadine Aisha Jassat (Scotland), Dike Chukwumerije (Nigeria), and many more.

**Venue: Terra Kulture, Tiamiyu Savage St, Victoria Island, Lagos.**



**Church of Poetry – hosted by Henneh Kwaku Kyereh  
(Sunday 30th October 11am – 2pm WAT)**

Join a congregation of poets and enthusiasts for a soft morning of reflection and camaraderie. Bring a poem, bring a bottle, and read alongside Sunnah Khan, Toni Kan, Amy Shimson, Sboniso Dlamini, Henneh Kyereh Kwaku (Host), Dami Ajayi, Elizabeth Johnson, Efe Paul Azino, Obi Ifejika, Aja Monet, Mukoma Ngugi, and others.

**Venue: Freedom Park, Old Prison ground, Broad Street, Lagos Island**



**Film Screening: #WeAreDyingHere  
(Sunday 30th October 4pm – 5pm)**

#WeAreDyingHere chronicles the journey of three soldiers forced to survive in a war that they did not choose. As the war against women rages around them, they attempt to find solace to process their pain under the constant threat of their enemy lurking in the shadows. #WeAreDyingHere engages directly with the violent culture of harassment, abuse, rape, and femicide, it is a necessary pause, an exhale, and insight into the experience of living as a woman.

**Venue: British Council, 20 Thompson Avenue, Ikoyi, Lagos**



**Poetry After Dark: Festival Party Hosted by Debris Stevenson  
(Sunday 30th October 8pm WAT)**

Come rave with all your favourite poets at the festival's closing party hosted by Debris Stevenson. We party into the night silent disco style, stopping intermittently for raunchy metaphors sultry words. **Don't miss Poetry After Dark.**

**Venue: British Council, 20 Thompson Avenue, Ikoyi, Lagos**

# GUESTS



## AJA MONET

aja monet is a surrealist blues poet, storyteller, and organizer born and raised in Brooklyn, NY. She won the legendary Nuyorican Poets Cafe Grand Slam poetry award title in 2007 and aja monet follows in the long legacy and tradition of poets participating and assembling in social movements.

Her first full collection of poems is titled, *My Mother Was a Freedom Fighter* on Haymarket Books. Her poems explore gender, race, migration, and spirituality. In 2018, she was nominated for a NAACP Literary Award for Poetry and in 2019 was awarded the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Award for Poetry for her cultural organizing work in South Florida.

aja monet cofounded a political home for artists and organizers called, Smoke Signals Studio. She facilitates "Voices: Poetry for the People," a workshop and collective in collaboration with Community Justice Project and Dream Defenders. She is currently working on her next full collection of poems entitled, *Florida Water*. aja Monet also serves as the new Artistic Creative Director for V-Day, a global movement to end violence against all women and girls.



## AMARACHI ATTAMAH

Amarachi Attamah is a Graduate student in the Department of Museum Studies and Cultural Heritage Preservation at Syracuse University, New York State.

She is a Chant Performer, Poet, Broadcaster, and a Mother-Tongue Advocate. Her core interests are indigenous language sustainability, culture curation, intangible heritage preservation, community engagement and art therapy for mental well-being.

She has performed in Nigeria, Ghana, South Africa, the United Kingdom (where she recently completed a four-month performance fellowship with the British Royal National Theatre), and many performances USA, one of which is Gendering Africa Symposium, an annual Africa Women Conference at Columbia University. She was also selected as one of the participants for Performance Identities Across Cultures (PICS) 2022.



## AMY SHIMSHON SANTO

Dr. Amy Shimshon-Santo is a writer and educator who believes that creativity is a powerful tool for personal and social transformation. She is the author of *Catastrophic Molting* (Flowersong Press), *Even the Milky Way is Undocumented* (Unsolicited Press), and the chapbook *Endless Bowls of Sky* (Placeholder Press). She has been nominated for three Pushcart Prizes in poetry and creative nonfiction, a Rainbow Reads Award and Best of the Net in poetry, and national recognition on the honor roll of service learning. Her writing appears in *Prairie Schooner*, *ArtPlace America*, *Zócalo Public Square*, *Entropy*, *Tilt West*, *Boom CA*, *Yes Poetry*, *GeoHumanities*, *Education*, *Citizenship*, and *Social Justice*, *PUBLIC*, *UC Press*, *SUNY Press*, and more. She has edited two books amplifying community voices: *Et Al* (Illinois Open Publishing Network, 2022), and *Arts = Education* (UC Press, 2010). Her teaching career has spanned research universities, community centers, K-12 schools, arts organizations, and spaces of incarceration. Connect at [www.amyshimshon.com](http://www.amyshimshon.com)



# GUESTS



## AREMU GEMINI

Yusuf Alabi Balogun, going by the stage name 'Aremu Gemini' is an experimental performance poet, with a core focus in Yoruba arts and culture. Recipient of Horn of Afroclassical Merit Award for excellence in the propagation of arts and culture (2018), his art is guided by numerous drives, one of which is to sell out O<sup>2</sup> Arena, London for Yoruba oral arts.

Reckoned as a slam streak ranging from Askifa Inaugural Poetry Slam, First Runner Up for Grooming Talent Hunt 2020, Winner - Quramo Writing Prize 2.0, Former publicity officer for Poets in Nigeria, his craft have received successful acceptance and validation from media houses within Nigeria and outside the shore, including BBC Yoruba and The Folio Media (Nigerian exclusive affiliate to CNN). He has so many works to his credits, including a collaboration with South African artiste - Willemien Rust (Beginnes & Eindes) and Nigerian musical artiste, Temmie Ovwasa (Space Fuji).



## DAMI AJAYI

Dami Ajayi is a Nigerian writer and psychiatrist. His first volume of poems, Clinical Blues (Write House, 2014), was a finalist of the ANA Poetry Prize. It was also longlisted for the Melita Hume Prize and the Wole Soyinka Prize for Literature. A Woman's Body is a Country (Ouida Books, 2017), his second volume, was selected by Quartz Africa in 2017 as one of the best books of the year, and it was a finalist of the Glenna Luschei Prize. Affection & Other Accidents is his most recent volume of poems.



## DEBRIS STEVENSON

A hybrid-playwright, dyslexic educator, Grime-poet, queer ex-Mormon and pro-raver. My work explores the intersectional, unexpected, and unjust whilst making the audience dance, question, and laugh.

Debris has worked in 30 countries, raised over £300,000 with her company The Mouthy Poets to develop young talent, designed foundation performance poetry modules at Nottingham University and had her debut poetry pamphlet, Pigeon Party, published by Flipped Eye.

Debris' debut show, Poet in da Corner, premiered at The Royal Court in 2018, receiving 4-5 stars and seeing Debris nominated for an Emerging Talent of The Year Award (Evening Standard Theatre Awards). Poet in da Corner toured the UK early 2020 alongside the release of the album (Accidental Records).

Debris is currently working on several TV shows in development, a play for Hightide Theatre and The Write to Rave, an immersive play exploring raving as radicalism. When Debris' not writing she can be found dancing for The Heatwave, Red Bull Music Academy and Sillis Movement.



# GUESTS



## DIKE CHUKWUMERIJE

Dike Chukwumerije is the 2011 Abuja Literary Society (ALS) Poetry Slam champion, the 2012 The African Poet (Nigeria) Grand Slam champion, and the 2013 Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA) winner of the prize for prose fiction. In 2013, he created the Night of the Spoken Word (NSW) platform to showcase emerging talent.

In 2016, building on NSW success, Dike launched Simply Poetry Ltd, a production company focused on staging poetry commercially. The company's first production premiered in October 2016, and went on to tour the country, staging over 20 times, in more than 9 cities. Dike is an accomplished public speaker and, in 2019, participated in the US International Visiting Leaders Program (IVLP) on Art for Social Change.



## ELIZABETH JOHNSON

Elizabeth Johnson is a writer and researcher. She has won the Random Story prize by Random Photo Journal and 3rd place in the Kofi Awoonor Literary Prize. Her play has also been selected and staged by Accra Theater Workshop. Her short stories, poetry and creative nonfiction have appeared in a few online and print publications. She works with The Writers Project of Ghana as a projects and media coordinator and manager of their annual literary festival, Pa Gya! A Literary Festival in Accra. She also works with The Library of Africa and the African Diaspora (LOATAD) and produced the maiden edition of their festival, Womanfest Ghana. She also works with Flash Fiction Ghana. Her full-time job is as a researcher & projects co-coordinator with Dr. Monk's Accra office



## HENNEH KWAJU KYEREH

Henneh Kyereh Kwaku is the author of *Revolution of the Scavengers*, selected by Kwame Dawes and Chris Abani for the APBF New Generation African Poets Chapbook Series. He's the founder & co-editor for @WildPine\_Poetry: an Instagram-based zine, the Contemporary Ghanaian Writers Series (CGWS), *Olongo Africa*, & the Rev/host of Church of Poetry on Twitter Spaces. His poems and hybrids have appeared/forthcoming in *Academy of American Poets*; *A-Poem-A-Day*, *World Literature Today*, *Poetry Society of America*, *Tupelo Quarterly*, *Lolwe*, *Agbowó*, *Tampered Press*, *Praxis Magazine*, *IceFloe Press*, *Random Photo Journal*, *Lunaris Review*, *CGWS*, *New South Journal*, *Samira Bawumia Literary Prize Winners Anthology*, *Resilience*, *Olongo Africa*, *Eremitic Poetry* & elsewhere. He's a 2022 WAW Resident at LOATAD. He is from Gonasua in the Bono Region of Ghana. Say hi to him on Twitter/IG: @kwaku\_kyereh.



# GUESTS



## JOEL FRANÇOIS

Joel Francois is a Haitian-born, Brooklyn-raised storyteller, who wishes to share his vista as a black writer and tell stories of love, family, and race through that lens. He believes that the artist is the architect of humanity and writes in search of God, love, and community. Joel's writing is an act of personal healing as his ultimate goal is to do good work with little harm. He is the 2015 Nuyorican Grand Slam Champion, the 2016 and 2017 Bowery Grand Slam Champion, was listed as one of New York City's top poets by Culture Trip, and earned a top 20 ranking in the 2016 Individual World Poetry Slam. Joel has dedicated the past three years to traveling the country and sharing his work.



## JOLYN PHILLIPS

Jolyn Phillips is an award-winning author. Her titles and awards are as follows:

- Tjieng Tjang Tjerries and other stories (Humanities and Social Sciences Award for Best Fiction, 2018)
- Radbraak (University of Johannesburg Debut prize, 2018)
- Bientang (Eugene Marais Prize, 2020)

Currently she is co-producers and founding member of Attakwa Production, a female-led Creative Arts production company.

Her performance profile include, poet, published author, composer, vocalist, stage performer and theatremaker.

She is currently a lecturer in the Department, Cultural Studies and Applied Linguistics where she teaches Afrikaans methodology for Afrikaans teachers



## KÓLA TÚBÒSÚN

Kòla Túbòsún is a Nigerian linguist, editor, travel writer, and scholar. His works have been published in African Writer, Aké Review, Brittle Paper, International Literary Quarterly, Jalada, Popula, Saraba Magazine, etc. In 2016, he became the first African to be given the Premio Ostana, a prize given for work in indigenous language advocacy. Tubosun is the brain behind YorubaName.com, a first crowdsourced multimedia dictionary of Yorùbá names. He has been translated to Italian and Korean, and currently works as a freelance lexicographer with Oxford University Press, UK. His collection of poetry Edwardsville by Heart was published in November 2016 by Wisdom's Bottom Press, UK.



# GUESTS



## LOVETH LIBERTY

Loveth Liberty is a multiple prize-winning performance poet and spoken word artiste whose work interrogates the Nigerian sociopolitical pulses, delicately explores womanhood and highlights the human experience.

With her artistry throbbing with social consciousness, the young Nigerian multiple Slam champion has performed at major literary and arts festivals across the country and has worked with notable national and global organisations like the BBC Media Action, European Union, Amnesty International and the United Nations Development Programme while graciously impacting the Nigerian literary ecosystem.

In her words: "I want to make art. Pour out myself generously and graciously so, so much that a lot of dreams, feeding off of mine, can bloom"



## MBALI MALIMELA

Mbali Malimela is a South African IsiZulu writer, performing poet and Storyteller. As a founder of a poetry brand called Bantu Origin, she has a strong passion for restoring the love and use of language through poetry. Mbali has been a part of numerous poetry platforms including the 22nd and 25th Poetry Africa Festival, 25th Time of The Writer Festival, Durban Playhouse Women In Arts Festival and the Artfluence Festival. She has had her writings published in the most loved journals including the Sol Plaatje European Union Anthology, 4th edition of Imbiza Journal & Fundza Literacy. Her visualized projects on her YouTube channel have been screened on few workshops and channels including The Durban Business Fair 2021 & 1KZN TV.



## NADINE AISHAT JASSAT

Nadine Aisha Jassat is the author of *Let Me Tell You This*, praised as 'beautifully written, immense and full of passion' by Nikita Gill and 'a joy both live and on the page' by Hollie McNish. Based in Scotland, she has been published widely; including in Picador's *It's Not About the Burqa* (shortlisted for the Foyles Non-Fiction Book of the Year) *404 Ink's Nasty Women* ('essential' - Margaret Atwood), and Bloodaxe's *Staying Human*. Nadine has performed internationally, including with Edinburgh International Book Festival's *Outriders Africa*, and has appeared across media, from BBC's *The Big Scottish Book Club* to South Africa's *Cape Talk Radio*. She has taught creative writing across the UK and internationally, with clients including BBC *Words First* and *The Arvon Foundation*. Her work has drawn significant acclaim: including winning a *Scottish Book Trust New Writers Award*, and being shortlisted for the *Edwin Morgan Poetry Award*. Nadine was included in Jackie Kay's *International Literature Showcase* selection, with Kay writing: 'Hers is a powerful, unforgettable new voice.'





## MUKOMA WA NGUGI

Mukoma Wa Ngugi is an Associate Professor of Literatures in English at Cornell University and the author of recently released *Unbury Our Dead with Song* (Cassava Republic Press, 2021), *The Rise of the African Novel: Politics of Language, Identity and Ownership* (UoM Press, 2018) *Black Star Nairobi* (Melville, 2013), *Nairobi Heat* (Penguin, SA 2009, Melville House Publishing, 2011), and two books of poetry, *Logotherapy* (U-Nebraska Press, 2018) and *Hurling Words at Consciousness* (AWP, 2006). *Mrs. Shaw* (Ohio University Press, 2015) was released in Eastern Africa as *We, the Scarred* by Paivapo Press in 2020). *Nairobi Heat* is under option by a major Hollywood studio.

He is the co-founder of the Mabati – Cornell Kiswahili Prize for African Writing. At Cornell, he along with Professors Carole Boyce Davies and Derrick Spears amongst others was at the forefront of changing the Department's name from Department of English to Literatures in English. In 2014, *New African Magazine* named him one of the 100 most Influential Africans.

The German translation of *Nairobi Heat* was named the 2014 Crime Book of the Season by *Buchkultur*. In 2009, he was shortlisted for the Caine Prize for African Writing and the Penguin Prize for African Writing for his novel manuscript, *The First and Second Books of Transition* in 2010.

In 2015 he was a juror for the Writivism Short Story Prize and the Neustadt International Prize for Literature. He co-edited with Prof. Laura Murphy, a Special Issue of *New Orleans Review* titled *The African Literary Hustle*. In 2016, he wrote an eight-part play radio play, *Drugs to Kill, Drug to Cure* for *Deutsche Welle* that was translated into Portuguese, Lingala, Kiswahili, Hausa and French.

A former co-editor of *Pambazuka News* and political columnist for the *BBC Focus on Africa Magazine*, his columns have appeared in the *Guardian*, *International Herald Tribune*, *Chimurenga*, *Los Angeles Times*, *South African Labour Bulletin*, and *Business Daily Africa*, and he has been a guest on *Democracy Now*, *Al Jazeera* and the *BBC World Service* amongst others.

His essays have been published in *World Literature Today*, *LA Review of Books*, *The World Today*, *The Black Commentator*, *Progressive Magazine* and *Radical History Review*. His short stories have been published in *Wasafiri*, *African Writing*, *Kenyon Review* and *St. Petersburg Review*, and his poems in the *New York Quarterly*, *Mythium*, *Brick Magazine*, *Kwani?* and *Tin House Magazine*.

Mukoma holds a PhD in English from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, an MA in Creative Writing from Boston University and a BA in English and Political Science from Albright College.

Mukoma Wa Ngugi was born in 1971 in Evanston, Illinois, and grew up in Kenya before returning to the United States for his undergraduate and graduate education. He is the son of world-renowned African writer Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o.



# GUESTS



## NANA ASAASE

Nana Asaase is an award-winning Ghanaian Poet, writer, Literary Coach, master of ceremonies, etc. His works are mostly rendered in both English and Twi (one of the dominant Ghanaian languages), employing other languages intermittently. He has performed for Presidents, diplomats, business executives, traditional rulers, and even the ordinary cab driver in Ghana. Though young, Nana's deep appreciation of 'Akan oratory' embodied in Poetry, and of Ghanaian folklore, has earned him a seat among the country's literary giants. He is a product of the University of Ghana, and a student of Prof Kofi Anyidoho, a Ghanaian/African literary giant. He has featured in both local and international media, including the BBC and CNN's "African Voices". He is the immediate past secretary of Ghana's National Folklore Board, and runs Asaase Inscriptions, a literary coaching agency. He is the Best Performance Poet 2020, in the maiden of the Entertainment Achievement awards, by Citi Tv.



## OBII IFEJIKI

Obii Ifejika's storytelling exists in poetry, performance, design, photography and film. She has been awarded a Canne Young Lion Award for her work in Design, won the first National Poetry Slam and has performed widely across Nigeria as well as Germany. Her poems have been featured in campaigns and projects for United Nations, Heritage Bank, The McArthur Foundation and Creative Africa, respectively.

She is a part of the poetry theatre production, Finding Home. Swallow, her one-woman show where she played 8 characters, was commissioned by British Council and performed at the Lagos Theatre Festival. Her poetry films integrate her aesthetic of naturalism and minimalism. Connect at [obii.xyz](http://obii.xyz)



## OMAR BIN MUSA

Omar Musa is a Bornean-Australian rapper, poet, author and visual artist from Queanbeyan, Australia. He has released four poetry books (including Killernova), four hip-hop records (including Since Ali Died), and received a standing ovation at TEDx Sydney at the Sydney Opera House. He was named one of the Sydney Morning Herald's Young Novelists of the Year in 2015. His one-man play, "Since Ali Died", won Best Cabaret Show at the Sydney Theatre Awards in 2018. He has had several solo exhibitions of his woodcut prints. He has performed at venues such as the Brixton Academy in London and the Brooklyn Academy of Music.



# GUESTS



## NANA ASAASE

Nana Asaase is an award-winning Ghanaian Poet, writer, Literary Coach, master of ceremonies, etc. His works are mostly rendered in both English and Twi (one of the dominant Ghanaian languages), employing other languages intermittently. He has performed for Presidents, diplomats, business executives, traditional rulers, and even the ordinary cab driver in Ghana. Though young, Nana's deep appreciation of 'Akan oratory' embodied in Poetry, and of Ghanaian folklore, has earned him a seat among the country's literary giants. He is a product of the University of Ghana, and a student of Prof Kofi Anyidoho, a Ghanaian/African literary giant. He has featured in both local and international media, including the BBC and CNN's "African Voices". He is the immediate past secretary of Ghana's National Folklore Board, and runs Asaase Inscriptions, a literary coaching agency. He is the Best Performance Poet 2020, in the maiden of the Entertainment Achievement awards, by Citi Tv.



## OBII IFEJIKI

Obii Ifejika's storytelling exists in poetry, performance, design, photography and film. She has been awarded a Canne Young Lion Award for her work in Design, won the first National Poetry Slam and has performed widely across Nigeria as well as Germany. Her poems have been featured in campaigns and projects for United Nations, Heritage Bank, The McArthur Foundation and Creative Africa, respectively.

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# GUESTS



## PUJA CHANGOIWALA

Puja Changoiwala is an award-winning journalist and author of three books – Homebound, Gangster on the Run and The Front Page Murders. As a journalist, she writes about the intersections of gender, crime, social justice, human rights and technology in India. Her work has been featured across the likes of BBC, CNN, The Hindu, The Guardian, National Geographic, Al Jazeera, Foreign Policy, among other publications across the world. Previously a senior correspondent with Hindustan Times, Puja is a recipient of the International Centre for Journalists' Covid-19 Reporting Award, the Laadli Media Award for Gender Sensitivity, Red Ink Award for Excellence in Indian Journalism, Iceland Writers Retreat Alumni Award, among other acclaims. She lives in Mumbai.



## RAYMOND ANTROBUS

Raymond Antrobus was born in London, Hackney to an English mother and Jamaican father. He is the author of To Sweeten Bitter, The Perseverance, All The Names Given and the children's book Can Bears Ski? In 2019 he became the first ever poet to be awarded the Rathbone Folio Prize for best work of literature in any genre. Other accolades include the Ted Hughes award, PBS Winter Choice, A SundayTimes Young Writer of the year award and The Guardian Poetry Book Of The Year 2018, as well as being shortlisted for the Griffin Prize and Forward Prize. In 2018 he was awarded The Geoffrey Dearmer Prize, (Judged by Ocean Vuong), for his poem Sound Machine. His poem Jamaican British was added to the GCSE syllabus in 2019. All The Names Given was shortlisted for the Costa Poetry Award, and the T.S Eliot Prize



## RENAUD DOSSAVI

Ayi Renaud Dossavi is a Togolese writer, business journalist and blogger. Author of poetry, short stories and essays, his poems' collection "Chants de Sable" granted him the "France Togo" literary prize in 2018 (and later the "Komlan Messan Nubukpo" Literary Prize in 2021), year in which he also obtains the first prize in the writing competition "Africa of my dreams" of the African Development Bank (AfDB).

Ayi has been officially distinguished in his country, being elevated in 2020 to the rank of "Officier de l'Ordre du Mérite national" ( Officer of the National Order of Merit). He's currently secretary-general of the PEN-Togo Writers' association, togolese branch of PEN-International, where he promotes writing and freedom of speech, especially among the younger generation.



# GUESTS



## ROMEO ORIOGUN

Romeo Oriogun is the author of *Sacrament of Bodies*, *Nomad*, and the forthcoming collection *A Gathering of Bastards*. Winner of the 2017 Brunel International African Poetry Prize, the Poetry Society of America's Alice Fay Di Castagnola Award, and The Chukwu Prize For Poetry. He has been longlisted for The NLNG Nigerian Prize for Literature, and was a finalist for the Lambda Award for Gay Poetry and The Future Awards African Prize for Literature. He has also received fellowships and support from Ebedi International Writers Residency, Harvard University, Hutchins Center for African and African American Research, Pen International, Pen America, Freedom House, Oregon Institute for Creative Research, and the IIE- Artist Protection Fund. An alumnus of the Iowa Writers' Workshop where he won The John Logan Prize for Poetry, he currently lives in Ames where he is a Postdoctoral Research Associate at Iowa State University.



## RUDY FRANCISCO

Rudy Francisco is one of the most recognizable names in Spoken Word Poetry. He was born, raised and still resides in San Diego, California. At the age of 21, Rudy completed his B.A in Psychology and decided to continue his education by pursuing a M.A in Organizational Studies. As an artist, Rudy Francisco is an amalgamation of social critique, introspection, honesty and humor. He uses personal narratives to discuss the politics of race, class, gender and religion while simultaneously pinpointing and reinforcing the interconnected nature of human existence.

Rudy Francisco seeks to create work that promotes healthy dialogue, discourse and social change. Furthermore, Rudy has made conscious efforts to cultivate young poets and expose the youth to the genre of Spoken Word Poetry via coaching, workshops and performances at preparatory schools and community centers. Rudy has also received admiration from institutions of higher education. He has conducted guest lectures and performances at countless colleges and universities across the nation.

Rudy Francisco has shared stages with prominent artists such as Gladys Knight, Jordin Sparks, Musiq Soul Child, and Jill Scott. He is also the co-host of the largest poetry venue in San Diego, competes in domestic and international poetry slam competitions and had the honor of being nominated for an NAACP Image Award. Ultimately, Rudy's goal is to continue to assist others in harnessing their creativity while cultivating his own. Rudy Francisco is the 2009 National Underground Poetry Slam Champion, 2010 Individual World Poetry Slam Champion and appeared on TV One's "Verses and Flow"



# GUESTS



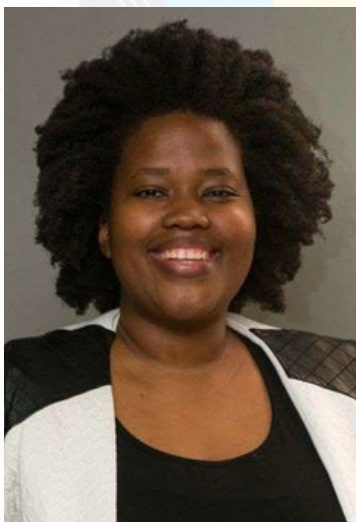
## SU'UR SU'EDDIE VERSHIMA AGEMA

S. Su'eddie Vershima Agema is a multiple-award-winning writer, cultural activist, editor, publisher, and development consultant. He was listed among Nigerian Writers Award's 100 Most Influential Nigerian Writers Under 40 (2017 & 2018) and EGC's Top 50 Contemporary Poets Who Rocked Nigeria (2012-2017). He was previously the Black History Month Project Curator and founding President of African Writers [Society] at the University of Sussex. His poetry collections include *Memory and the Call of Waters* (Shortlist, The Nigeria Prize for Literature 2022) and *Home Equals Holes: Tale of an Exile* (Winner, Association of Nigerian Authors Prize for Poetry 2014; Nominee, Soyinka Prize for African Literature 2018). Su'eddie also has award credits for his prose and children's fiction. He is a Chevening alum of the University of Sussex; an alum of Benue State University, Makurdi; a 2022 David C. Pollock scholar of the Families in Global Transition; and convener, Benue Book and Arts Festival.



## SBONISO AFRICA DLAMINI

Africa Dlamini is a Spoken Word/Slam poet, and author, from Howick, South Africa. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Sociology and Education & Development, and a Post Graduate certificate in Education from University of KwaZulu Natal. Inspired primarily by his father's storytelling, Africa's writings are a reflection of personal struggles, frustrations and discontents, and the confusions associated with the path of growth, and ultimately finding a way to make amends (with self and those around). His exploration of the nature of man, of history, of the ever looming social ills is evident in the social commentary prevalent in his writings. Africa has published poetry chapbook titled *Shedding*, and currently working on his memoir, *A Boychild's Cradle*. He has shared his work on prominent platforms around South Africa such as 19th and 25th Poetry Africa Festival, Current State of Poetry's One on One National slam, Poet in A suit, ARTfluence festival, and Tree of Poetry's Music and Poetry shows.



## SIPHOKAZI JONAS

Siphokazi Jonas is an award-winning poet, playwright, performer, and producer based in Cape Town, South Africa. She holds an MA in English Literature as well as an undergraduate degree in Drama and English. As writer and performer, she has produced numerous poetry and theatre shows. Her most recent stage production *#WeAreDyingHere* was performed at Artscape Theatre, Joburg Theatre, and the HerStory International Film Festival to positive reception. The production was adapted into an award-winning short film, which has screened at numerous international film festivals. Jonas has been a featured act at poetry sessions and festivals around the country and at the Lviv International Book Forum in Ukraine, and the Global Meeting on Law and Society in Lisbon, Portugal. She was selected as the inaugural Featured Poet at the Poetry Africa Festival in 2021.



# GUESTS



## PUJA CHANGOIWALA

Sunnah Khan is a multi-talented Scottish Pakistani poet, creative facilitator and filmmaker living in London. Her debut pamphlet *I Don't Know How to Forgive You When You Make No Apology For This Haunting* was published by Roughtrade Books in 2020. Most recently she won a commission to reimagine Scottish myth and was awarded funding by Women of the World Festival to develop and run six weeks of workshops with young survivors & clinical psychologists. She is also part of the poetry collective *4 BROWN GIRLS WHO WRITE*. The collective came together in 2017 and were published by Femzine (2018) and Roughtrade Books (2020). As well as taking a 5 star sell out show to the Edinburgh Fringe (2019), they have performed at the Tate, British Library, London Literary Festival (2021), were commissioned to create work for Quentin Blake's Exhibition at The Foundling Museum (2021), have performed at numerous festivals including Byline and Prima Donna, and were featured in British Vogue last year. Sunnah has worked across the BBC and Channel 4 in production and development, from *Dispatches Born Homeless*, BBC Two's *Generation Gifted* to developing shows for Netflix and Vice Studios, and most recently working on a national suicide prevention campaign for a charity.



## RAYMOND ANTROBUS

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# GUESTS



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## TITILOPE SONUGA

Titilope Sonuga is an award winning poet and performer whose work has graced stages and pages across the globe. She is the author of three collections of poetry, *Down to Earth* (2011), *Abscess* (2014), and *This Is How We Disappear* (2019) and has released two spoken word albums, *Mother Tongue* (2011) and *Swim* (2019). Titilope has written three plays, *The Six*; an intergenerational exploration of womanhood, *Naked*; a one-woman play and *Ada The Country*, a musical. She has scripted advertising campaigns for global brands and was an actor on the hit television series *Gidi Up*, which aired across Africa. She is the first poet to perform at a Nigerian presidential inauguration and is currently the Poet Laureate of the City of Edmonton.



## TJ BENSON

TJ Benson is a Nigerian writer and visual artist whose work explores the body in the context of memory, African Spirituality, migration, utopia and the unconscious self. His work has been exhibited and published in several journals like Harvard's *Transition Magazine*, *Iskanchi*, *Jalada*, *SSDA Migrations*, *Catapult*, *Bakwa Magazine* and shortlisted for awards. His *Saraba Manuscript Prize* shortlisted Africanfuturist collection of short stories '*We Won't Fade into Darkness*' was published by *Parresia* in 2018.

His debut novel '*The Madhouse*' was published in 2021 by Masobe Books and Penguin Random House SA and his second novel '*People Live Here*' was published in June 2022. He is a beneficiary of the 2020 Caine Prize Editorial Workshop mentorship program and his short story '*Please, Please*' appears in the recent AKO Caine Prize anthology '*A Mind to Silence and other Short Stories*' published by Cassava books in 2022. He has facilitated writing workshops, more recently teaching a class on magical realism and surrealism within the context of African literature for *Lolwe Magazine* and an Inkubator workshop for Short Story Day Africa. He has attended residencies in Ebedi Nigeria, Moniak Mhor Scotland, Art Omi New York and is a University of Iowa International Writing Program Fellow. He currently lives in an apartment full of plants and is in the danger of becoming a cat person.



# GUESTS



## TOBY ABIODUN

Tobi Abiodun is a writer and poet born and raised in Benin City. A multiple poetry slam champion holding titles across major cities in Nigeria, including the inaugural Lipfest Poetry Slam. Tobi's writhing cuts across the personal, social and political.



## TONI KAN

Toni Kan is the award winning author of over 20 books of poetry, fiction and biographies. His books include the critically acclaimed works of fiction and poetry; *The Carnivorous City*, *Nights of the Creaking Bed* and *When a Dream Lingers Too Long*. He is co-founder of [sabinews.com](http://sabinews.com) (the first Nigerian news website to be acquired by an investor); [thisislagos.ng](http://thisislagos.ng), the go-to website for all things Lagos and the literary magazine, [thelagosreview.ng](http://thelagosreview.ng). Toni Kan, a fellow of the Heinrich Boll writing fellowship (Germany); Civitella Ranieri Writing Fellowship (Italy) and Yaddo Writing Fellowship (USA) has just published a new collection of poems, *Songs for Bar Beach (A Memorial in Verse)* and is at work on a novel, *Time Never Passes*.



## 78TH PSALMIST

David Osaodion Odiase, also known as "The 78th psalmist" is a storyteller and history enthusiast who tells conscious African stories through poetry, performance art, film, docu-poetry, and experimental art forms, with the intent of promoting historical and cultural literacy. His poetry films and docu-poetry have made official selection at international film festivals such as One Earth awards in India, Festival del Cinema di Cefalù, Italy, Panama series festival and most recently Silicon Valley African Film festival in San Jose California. He has been a top ten entrant of the Nigerian students' poetry prize in 2016, recipient of the Ekonke African Storytellers prize in 2020, a contributor to the West-Africa to west Oakland poetry exchange in 2021, 1st runner up GoNigeria Poetry Challenge in 2022 and amongst others, emerged Winner of the Lacasera National Poetry slam competition – Spoken Wars, 2022.



# GUESTS



## UMAR SIDI ABUBAKAR

Umar Abubakar Sidi is a helicopter pilot with the Nigerian Navy. He attended College of Education Staff Primary School, Sokoto, the prestigious Nigerian Military School, Zaria and the Nigerian Defence Academy, Kaduna. His literary touchstones include Umberto Eco, Orphan Pamuk, Adonis, Italo Calvino and Jorge Luis Borges. Sidi is the author of the poetry collection *The Poet of Dust*. (KonyaShamsRumi, 2019), and *Like Butterflies Scattered About by Art Rascals* (Masobe, 2022). Sidi's work is majorly premised on the exploration of the body, soul and spirit from Sufi and Surrealist perspectives. His works have appeared in *Brittle Paper*, *Transition Magazine*, *Jalada*, *Saraba Magazine* and elsewhere.

## TEAM

### EFE PAUL AZINO

Creative Director, LIPFest

Widely regarded as one of Nigeria's leading performance poets, Efe has been a headline performer at many of the nation's premier performance poetry venues. He is the director of the Lagos International Poetry Festival (LIPFest), director of poetry at the annual Lagos Book and Art Festival, and coordinator of spoken word poetry at the Open Door Series' International Cultural Exchange and the Lagos Black Heritage Festival. Efe Paul is the producer of Nigeria's first spoken word poetry theatre production, *Finding Home*, and has performed at Johannesburg Arts Alive Festival, Ake Book and Arts Festival, Lagos Book and Arts Festival, Lights Camera Africa Film Festival, and British Council Lagos Theatre Festival amongst others. He is an Osiwa Poetry Residency Fellow. For *Broken Men Who Cross Often*, published by Farafina Books, is his first collection.





## OBII IFEJIKA

Media/Comms., LIPFest

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## BANKE THOMPSON

Project Manager, LIPFest

Banke Thompson is a highly qualified, professional and dedicated project manager who with experience over the years, has managed all aspects of event planning, coordination and project delivery. Developing strong cross-functional relationships with clients and stakeholders, she has continued to deliver detailed project timelines, lead and communicate across customer teams and partners.

A lover of arts and poetry, Banke has ensured outstanding results and premium customer service along with her team at Creative Africa, an art and culture consultancy firm with focus on cultural production and advocacy.



## LAKE ADEDAMOLA

Admin Lead, LIPFest

Lake Adedamola is a graduate of the Obafemi Awolowo University, O. A. U. Ile-Ife; a poet, and editor with Nantygreens; He also works with Brittle Paper; and is an alumnus of I.S. Jones's Singing Bullet Poetry Workshop. He has since 2018 served in various capacities on the LIPFest team, currently the Admin Lead. He is also a "need-greater."

