

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY ACCRA HOLDS ARTS, CULTURE, & IDEAS SYMPOSIUM WEEKEND.

Over 30 acclaimed African Writers from to headline one-of-a-kind literary and October bookfest weekend in Accra.

Accra, Ghana— All roads lead to Accra in October. The eleventh edition NYU Accra's signature public program 'Labone Dialogues' will kick off with VIPs and special guests gracing the purple carpet before a three-day extravaganza of books and authors from **Oct 19-23, 2023**.

Book lovers will be treated to readings panels featuring poets, novelists, and nonfiction writers committed to reclaiming the African narrative in the world of literature. They will be headlined by giants of African literature from Wole Soyinka, Aminatta Forna, Jennifer Makumbi and Chris Abani to newer voices sparking change like Remy Ngamije, Femi Kayode and Fui-Can Tamakloe. Ghana's Second Lady, Mrs. Samira Bawumia will be an honored guest.

The weekend will take place one week after the Writers Project of Ghana's Pa-Gya Literary festival and capping a week of celebrations of books and the power to change the continent through reading. It will be the eleventh edition of the Labone Dialogue speaker series and the first one spanning three days and over 30 authors.

In early 2020, the '**Labone Dialogues by NYU Accra**' was conceived and it is curated by Prof. **Chiké Frankie Edozien**, the Global Site Director for the New York University campus in Labone. Since then, iconic artists like the late great **Ama Ata Aidoo**, the novelist, **Ayesha Haruna Attah**, the musician **Wanlov The Kubolor**, the playwright **Latif Abubakar**, have all graced the NYU Accra stage. The first event was a tribute to the late great pioneering musician, **Kofi Ghanaba**. Since that first event, heavy hitters and multiple award winners in the African literary scene have flocked to NYU Accra for a chance to connect with Ghanaian audiences including Ethiopia's **Maaza Mengiste**, Nigeria's **Abubakar Adam Ibrahim**, South Africa's **Zukiswa Wanner**, and **Leye Adenle**.

"We are excited to welcome such heavy hitters to Accra. From Nobel winners, Pulitzer winners, and multiple award nominees, this weekend will be an African book lovers dream," Edozien said.

"I arrived in Ghana from New York and recognized that we had a unique opportunity as a global university to share our knowledge and have incredible classes and conversations for our neighbors and hosts, rather than keep them within our halls of academia," Edozien said. The scope of the presenters includes participants of all corners of the continent and the diaspora.

Edozien emphasized that NYU is a private university that has always been in the public service and that all programming is free to attend. NYU is partnering with several Accra based organizations to bring this to pass including Writers Project Ghana and SocialiteAF. The program will be held at the NYU Accra Gardens, No. 7 fourth Norla Street, Labone, Accra at with doors opening 9 a.m. and lasting till sundown. Anyone can RSVP at nyuaccra@nyu.edu The events are livestreamed on the Facebook LIVE and YouTube. @NYUAccra. More information can be found here: <https://bit.ly/labonedialogues>

New York University is a private university in the public service. NYU Accra was established in 2004 and is one of 14 Global Academic Centers for Study-Away. Here we provide a pathway for our students in New York to come and study and work in fulfillment of requirements for our degree programs. '**Labone Dialogues by NYU Accra**' is a public/community event.

Partners: Socialite AF Ltd, Ankaa Tropical Oranges

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SPEAKER BIOS TO DATE

THE LEGEND



Nobel laureate **Wole Soyinka** is a Nigerian playwright, poet, and political activist. Born in 1934, he has held university professorships in various countries including Ile-Ife, Lagos and Ibadan in Nigeria, Johannesburg in South Africa, and Cambridge in England, Harvard, Emory, Loyola, and Yale in the United States. He has worked on various performance stages in Africa and the rest of the world. His works encompass drama, poetry, novels, music, film, and memoirs; he is considered among contemporary Africa's greatest writers as well as a global artist and scholar. He is currently Professor of Theater at NYUAD

THE KEYNOTE SPEAKERS.



The keynote speaker, Nigerian author **Chris Abani** is the recipient of the PEN USA Freedom-to-Write Award, the Prince Claus Award, a Lannan Literary Fellowship, a California Book Award, a Hurston/Wright Legacy Award, a PEN Beyond the Margins Award, the PEN Hemingway Book Prize and a Guggenheim Award. His fiction includes *The Secret History of Las Vegas* (Penguin 2014), *Song For Night* *(*Akashic*, 2007), *The Virgin of Flames* (Penguin, 2007), *Becoming Abigail* (Akashic, 2006), *GraceLand* (FSG, 2004), and *Masters of the Board* (Delta, 1985). His work has been translated into French, Italian, Spanish, German, Swedish, Romanian, Hebrew, Macedonian, Ukrainian, Portuguese, Dutch, Bosnian and Serbian.



Our co-keynote possibility is the incredible **Aminatta Forna**. She was born in Scotland, raised in Sierra Leone and Great Britain, and spent periods of her childhood in Iran, Thailand and Zambia. She is the award-winning author of the novels *Happiness*, *The Hired Man*, *The Memory of Love* and *Ancestor Stones*, and a memoir *The Devil that Danced on the Water*, and the forthcoming essay collection, *The Window Seat: Notes from a Life in Motion*. Aminatta's books have been translated into twenty-two languages. Her essays have appeared in *Freeman's*, *Granta*, *The Guardian*, *LitHub*, *The Nation*, *The New York Review of Books*, *The Observer* and *Vogue*. Aminatta is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and a member of the Folio Academy. She has acted as judge for the Samuel Johnson Prize, the Bailey Prize for Women's Fiction, the Sunday Times EFG Short Story Award, the Caine Prize, and the International Man Booker Prize. In 2003 Aminatta established the Rogbonko Project to build a school in a village in Sierra Leone. The charity has also run a number of projects in the spheres of adult education, sanitation, and maternal health. Aminatta is the recipient of a Windham Campbell Award from Yale University, has won the Commonwealth Writers' Prize Best Book Award 2011, a Hurston Wright Legacy Award the Liberaturpreis in Germany, and the Aidoo-Snyder Book Prize. She has been a finalist for the Neustadt Prize for Literature, the Orange Prize for Fiction, the IMPAC Award and the Warwick Prize. Aminatta Forna was made OBE in the Queen's New Year's Honours 2017. She is Director of the Lannan Center for Poetics and Social Practice at Georgetown University and Professor of Creative Writing at Bath Spa University.



Jennifer Makumbi a Ugandan fiction writer. Her first novel, [Kintu](#), won the [Kwani? Manuscript Project in 2013](#). Her second book is a collection of short stories, [Manchester Happened](#) for the UK/Commonwealth publication and [Let's Tell This Story Properly](#) (for US/Canada publication) came out in Spring 2019. It was shortlisted for The Big Book prize: Harper's Bazaar. Her third book, [The First Woman](#) for UK/Commonwealth and [A Girl is a Body of Water](#) for USA/Canada publication came out in Autumn 2020. Jennifer is a recipient of the Windham-Campbell Literature Prize 2018. She won the Global Commonwealth Short story prize 2014 for her short story, [Let's Tell This](#)

[Story Properly](#). She is a Cheuse International Writing Fellow (2019) and KNAW-NAIS residency (2021). She has a PhD from Lancaster University and has been (senior) lecturer at several universities in Britain.

THE DELEGATES



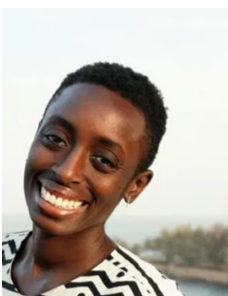
Leye Adenle is a London-based Nigerian author and the winner of the first ever Prix Marianne for his debut novel *Easy Motion Tourist* (2016) in 2016. The second novel in the Amaka series, *When Trouble Sleeps* was published in 2018 and [shortlisted for the 2019 CrimeFest edunnit award](#). He has written several short stories under his own name, and over a hundred satirical pieces under various pseudonyms. His latest novel is, *The Beautiful Side of the Moon*.



Sulaiman Addonia is an Eritrean-Ethiopian-British novelist. His first novel, *The Consequences of Love*, shortlisted for the Commonwealth Writers' Prize, was translated into more than 20 languages. *Silence is My Mother Tongue*, his second novel, has been longlisted for the 2019 Orwell Prize for Political Fiction. He currently lives in Brussels where he has launched a creative writing academy for refugees and asylum seekers, the Asmara-Addis Literary Festival (In Exile).



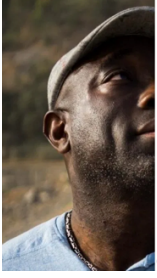
Dami Ajayi fuses being a writer into his busy schedule as a psychiatrist. Known as Jolly Papa (JP for short) by his friends—a sobriquet he took from a popular highlife song by Rex Lawson—the poet cum doctor cum music critic makes seamless transitions between these orbits around which his life rotates.



Ayesha Harruna Attah is a Ghanaian writer living in Senegal. She was educated at Mount Holyoke College, Columbia University, and New York University. She is the author of the Commonwealth Writers Prize-nominated *Harmattan Rain*, *Saturdays Shadows*, and *The Hundred Wells of Salaga*, currently translated into four languages. *The Deep Blue Between*, her first book for teen readers and *Zainab Takes New York*.



Nana Ekua Brew-Hammond is the author of the children's picture book *BLUE: A History of the Color as Deep as the Sea and as Wide as the Sky*, and the young adult novel *Ponder Necklace*, which *Publishers Weekly* called “a winning debut.” Her writing has also appeared in *Now2*, *African Writing*, *Los Angeles Review of Books*, and *Sunday Salon*. She is the editor of the *Relations Anthology* (2023)



Growing up in Lagos, Nigeria **Chiké Frankie Edozien** learned to read from the newspapers before even attending school. He is the author of the groundbreaking memoir *Lives of Great Men: Living & Loving As An African Gay Man* which won the [Lambda Literary award 2018](#) for biography/memoir. His *Shea Prince* was a Gerald Kraak Finalist and part of its *As You Like It* anthology which [also garnered a 'Lammy' in 2019](#). His *Last night in Asaba* along with other incredible stories from around Africa have been anthologized in *The Heart of The Matter*. He also contributed the short story *Krife* to the Relations anthology (2023). Edozien lives in Ghana where he is the director of New York University, Accra.



Rémy Ngamije is a Rwandan-born Namibian story writer, essayist, columnist, poet, photographer, and the author of *The Eternal Audience Of One*. He also writes for [brainwavez.org](#), a writing collective based in South Africa. He is the editor-in-chief of Namibia's first literary magazine: Doek! And he is a Caine prize nominee!



The American poet, **Gregory Pardlo** is a graduate of Rutgers University-Camden. As an undergraduate, he managed the small jazz club his grandfather owned in nearby Pennsauken, NJ. He received an MFA from NYU as a New York Times Fellow in Poetry and an MFA in nonfiction from Columbia University as a Teaching Fellow. Pardlo is the author of *Digest*, winner of the 2015 Pulitzer Prize for Poetry, *Totem*, winner of the 2007 American Poetry Review / Honickman Prize, and translator from the Danish of Niels Lyngso's, *Pencil of Rays* and *Spiked Mace*. He is Poetry Editor of *Virginia Quarterly Review* and Co-Director of the Institute for the Study of Global Racial Justice at Rutgers University-Camden. His most recent book is *Air Traffic*, a memoir in essays published by Knopf in 2018. He is on the NYUAD faculty.



Kalaf Epalanga is a writer and musician born in Benguela, Angola and based in Berlin. He has published in Angola and Portugal two collections of literary chronicles *Estórias de Amor para Meninos de Cor* (engl.: *Lovestories for Kids of Colour*, 2011) and *O Angolano que Comprou Lisboa (Por Metade do Preço)* (engl.: *The Angolan who Bought Lisbon (at Half the Price)*, 2014). *Também os Brancos Sabem* (engl.: *The Whites Also Can Dance*, Editorial Caminho, 2017) published in Angola, Portugal and Brasil, is his first novel and was critically acclaimed in the Portuguese-speaking world. In 2023, it was published in America as *Whites Can Dance Too*.



Nozizwe Cynthia Jele is a South African novelist. Her debut novel, *Happiness is a Four-Letter Word* (Kwela Books, 2010), has won numerous awards including the Best First Book category (Africa region) in the Commonwealth Writers' Prize 2011 and 2011 M-Net Literary Award in the Film category. The book was adapted into film and released at the box office countrywide in February 2016. *The Ones with Purpose* is Nozizwe's second novel. It was shortlisted for the [Sunday Times Barry Ronge Fiction Prize](#) 2019 and University of Johannesburg for South African Writing in English 2019.



Ondjaki has published four novels, three collections of short stories, two collections of poetry and three children’s books. His literary debut came in 2002 with the novella *O Assobiador* (The Whistler), which was followed up with the childhood memoir *Bom dia Camaradas* (Good Morning, Comrades) in 2003. Since then he has also published *Transparent City* (2012), *Uma Escuridão Bonita* (2013), *Sombos Azuis Pelas Esquinas* (2014), *Há Gente em Casa* (2018). Ondjaki has been awarded a number of important prizes, among them the prestigious Jabuti Prize. His novel *Transparent City* was awarded the Saramago Prize 2013, Prix Transfuge 2015 and Prix Littérature Monde 2016. His books have been translated to French, Spanish, Italian, German, English, Chinese and Swedish.



Dilman Dila is a writer, filmmaker, all round storyteller, and author of a critically acclaimed collection of short stories, *A Killing in the Sun*. He has been shortlisted for the Commonwealth Short Story Prize (2013) and for the Nommo Awards for Best Novella (2017), and long listed for the BBC International Radio Playwriting Competition (2014.)



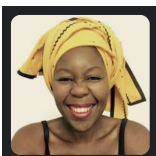
In 2020, **Zukiswa Wanner**, a writer who claims the whole continent as her home became the first African woman to be awarded the Goethe Medal. Wanner has written four novels: *The Madams* (2006), *Behind Every Successful Man* (2008), *Men of The South* (2010), and *London, Cape Town, Joburg* (2014) and has three children’s books: *Jama Loves Bananas* (2011), *Refilwe* (2014) and *A True Book: Africa* (2019). Wanner examined the relationships between domestic workers and domestic employers in the satirical nonfiction *Maid in SA: 30 Ways To Leave Your Madam* and published a literary travel memoir *Hardly Working* (2018). She co-edited the African-Asian anthology *Behind The Shadows: Contemporary Stories from Africa and Asia* (2012) with Rohini Chowdhury, and the African Young Adult anthology *Waterbirds On The Lake Shore* (2019) published in English, French, and Kiswahili.



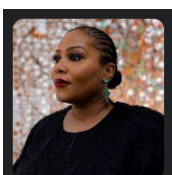
A trained clinical psychologist, **Femi Kayode** is the author of *Lightseekers*. Kayode was raised in Lagos but now lives in Windhoek, Namibia with his wife and children. His debut novel won the Little, Brown/UEA Crime Fiction Award. His latest novel is the just released *Gaslight*.



Nana Darkoa Sekyiamah writes across genres including creative nonfiction, short stories and essays. She is the author of the ‘Sex Lives of African Women.’ Nana is the co-founder of *Adventures from the Bedrooms of African Women*, an award-winning website, podcast and festival that publishes and creates content that tell stories of African women’s experiences around sex, sexualities and pleasure. She lives in Ghana.



Sisonke Msimang is a writer and curator based in Perth, Western Australia, whose focus is on race, gender, and politics. Msimang is at work on a new novel about the relationship between South Africa and Zimbabwe, and the meaning of freedom for those who are forced to live in African diaspora communities. She is known for her memoir ‘Always Another Country: A Memoir of Exile and Home’ (2017) and ‘The Resurrection of Winnie Mandela’ (2018), a biography of anti-apartheid activist Winnie Madikizela-Mandela



Wana Udobang, also known as Wana Wana, is a Nigerian writer, poet, journalist, filmmaker, and television personality. Her work has appeared on the [BBC](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Huffington Post](#), [BellaNaija](#), and [The](#)

Guardian, She has been described as "one of the biggest champions of our new spoken word renaissance is taking a leap into the void



Martin Egblewogbe was born in Ghana and he enjoys writing short stories and poetry in his spare time and has contributed to several anthologies. He is a co-founder of Writers Project. Ghana and also currently hosts the radio show “Writers Project” on CitiFM in Accra, Ghana. Martin’s collection of short stories was published in 2012 as “Mr Happy and the Hammer of God and Other Stories. His second collection of short stories, 'The Waiting' was released in 2020.



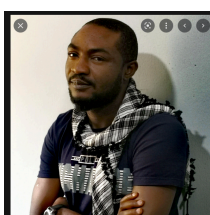
Nairobi, Kenya based **James Murua** is a blogger, journalist, and podcaster who has written for a variety of media outlets in a career spanning print, web, and TV. His online space www.jamesmurua.com, which focuses on literary news and reviews was created in 2013 and is the number one blog on African literature today. This blog was nominated for “Best Creative Writing Blog” for the 2018 Bloggers Association of Kenya Awards. He was also announced as Best Writer “Theatre, Art and Culture” at Kenya’s Sanaa Theatre Awards and listed as one of the top men in digital in Kenya in 2018. James Murua has conducted workshops on blogging and social media in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and Malawi and has been a media consultant for the Goethe Institut, Nairobi.



Nii Ayikwei Parkes is a writer, editor, and publisher, who has won acclaim as a children's author, poet, broadcaster, and novelist. He is the author of the poetry chapbooks: eyes of a boy, lips of a man (1999), his début; M is for Madrigal (2004), a selection of seven jazz poems; and Ballast (2009), an imagination of the slave trade by balloon. His novel, Tail of the Blue Bird (2009), was lauded internationally, becoming a bestseller in Germany and notably winning France's two major prizes for translated fiction – Prix Baudelaire and Prix Laure Bataillon – in 2014. He is also the author of two books for children – The Parade and Tales from Africa – under the name K.P. Kojo. His latest novel is Azúcar.



Socrates Mbamalu is a freelance writer and journalist whose work has been published by Al Jazeera, VICE, Foreign Policy and others. He is a graduate student of war and society at Chapman University in California. His interests spill across literature, conflict, geopolitics and social philosophy.



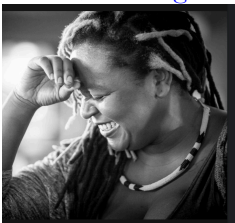
Abubakar Adam Ibrahim is a Nigerian creative writer and journalist. His debut short-story collection The Whispering Trees was longlisted for the inaugural Etisalat Prize for Literature in 2014, with the title story shortlisted for the Caine Prize for African Writing. Ibrahim has won the BBC African Performance Prize and the ANA Plateau/Amatu Braide Prize for Prose and in 2014, he was selected for the Africa39 list of writers aged under 40 with potential and talent to define future trends in African literature. His first novel, Season of Crimson Blossoms, won the Nigerian Prize for Literature, Africa’s largest literary prize in 2016. His latest book is When We were Fireflies.



Su'eddie Vershima Agema is a poet, Strategic Leader and Team Builder, Development Worker, Editor, Researcher, Cultural Enthusiast and Creative Writer. He is the convener of the Benue Book and Arts Festival, a national literary project in Nigeria earned an MA in International Education and Development as a Chevening Scholar from the University of Sussex.



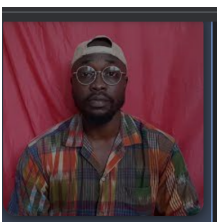
Tendai Huchu's is a Zimbabwean author whose first novel, *The Hairdresser of Harare*, was released in 2010 to critical acclaim, and has been translated into German, French, Italian and Spanish. He is also the author of the 2014 novel and [The Maestro, The Magistrate & The Mathematician](#). He was also shortlisted for the Caine Prize in 2014 and now lives in Scotland.



Mohale Mashigo, is a South African singer-songwriter, novelist, and former radio presenter. Her debut novel *The Yearning* (Pan Macmillan, 2016) won the 2017 University of Johannesburg Prize for South African Debut Writing and was longlisted for the International Dublin Literary Award 2018. Other books include *Intruders*, a collection of speculative short stories, and *Beyond the River*, a novelisation of the film by the same name. She is one of the writers for *Kwezi*, a comic book series set in contemporary urban South Africa.



Antony 'Fui' Can-Tamakloe has been writing stories for a little over fifteen years, and prefers to write from the perspective of the everyday Ghanaian. Occasionally, he writes these stories in Ghanaian pidgin. In 2017, he self-published *Made in Ghana: A Collection of Short Stories* with co-author Rodney Assan. His aim is to write stories that impact Ghanaian culture and society by creating awareness on things that need to be changed.



Sarpong Osei Asamoah is a Ghanaian Postcolonial Pundit. His work has appeared and is forthcoming in *The Hellebore Press*, *Icefloe Press*, *Write Ghana*, *Gumbo Press*, *Lunaris Review*, *Writers Space Africa*, and elsewhere. He is a founding member of the Contemporary Ghanaian Writers Series.



Kinna Likimani is the Founder and Executive Director of AfterSchool Ghana, an NGO that works to improve the educational and social well-being of rural and urban disadvantaged children. She has degrees from Smith College and Columbia University. She blogs under the moniker Kinna Reads. She is a feminist and a social activist and lives in Accra.



Nicole Amarteifio is an acclaimed TV / film producer cited in The Financial Times 2015 "Top 25 Africans to Watch" list, after a successful launch of the hit web series, *An African City* (2014). Amarteifio is currently pursuing TV and film projects full time, after a successful career in international development. She is most known for her time as the first ever social media strategist for the Africa.