

Participants Biographies

Ayobami Adebayo (Nigeria)

Ayòbámi Adébéyò has written for Wasafiri, Elle, the BBC, LitHub and The Guardian (UK) amongst others. She has received fellowships and residencies from Ledig House, Sinthian Cultural Centre, Hedgebrook, Ox-bow School of Arts, and Ebedi Hills. She holds BA and MA degrees in Literature in English from Obafemi Awolowo University, Ife. She is the author of ***Stay With Me***, which was shortlisted for the Kwani Manuscript Project as a work in progress in 2013. After it was published in 2017, it was shortlisted for the Baileys Prize for Women's Fiction and the 9mobile Prize for Literature. It has also been longlisted for the International Dylan Thomas Prize and the Wellcome Book Prize.

Stay With Me was named a Notable Book of the Year by The New York Times and a Best Book of the Year by The Guardian, The Economist, The Wall Street Journal and many other publications. Ayòbámi was born in Lagos, Nigeria.

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Kafula Mwila (Zambia)

Born on Zambia, Kafula Mwila is a self-motivated, energetic, enthusiast who pursues the arts with much passion. Her personal beliefs and experiences form the basis of her writing. Through her writing, she reveals issues that human kind faces every day and her themes show how central the power of creation to human kind.

Whether it is fiction or non-fiction, her writing is powerful enough to captivate and influence her audiences on ideas that she carefully elaborates with a rare and unique narrative skill. Her audiences attest to her strong use of visible descriptive and emotive diction in her work that makes her writing such thrilling non-stop reads.

Kafula's writing career which commenced in 2009 includes two novels, a collection of short stories, a collection of poems and a motivational book which talks about one's spiritual journey toward a success.

Through her dynamism, she has also worked with local and international writing platforms, having published in the Femrite Uganda Anthology of African Women Writers in 2012, Caine Prize Anthology for African Writers in 2016, Writivism Anthology in 2017 and with the Department of Literature at Makerere University where she was one of the contributing writers in an anthology to commemorate the 55th anniversary of the Department in 2017.

Through her blogs, 'Toward a Zambian Genre', one can follow her discussions on the development of the creative writing industry in Zambia. She is also a contributing writer to the Urban Xpress Magazine.

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Lesego Rampolokeng (South Africa)

Lesego Rampolokeng is a poet and performance maestro, and the author of 12 books. He has collaborated with visual artists, playwrights, film-makers, theatre and opera producers, poets and musicians. His no-holds-barred style, radical political-aesthetic perspective and instantly recognisable voice have brought him a unique place in South African literature.

Since his debut *Horns for Hondo* (1990), he has released several pioneering collections of poetry including

Talking Rain (1993), *The Bavino Sermons* (1999), *The Second Chapter* (2003/5), and *Head on Fire* (2012). His most recent collection, *A Half Century Thing* (2015) won the National Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences Award 2017 for “Best Fiction: Single Authored Volume.”

He is the author of three novels, the most recent of which, *Bird-Monk Seding* (2017), presents a stark picture of life in a rural township two decades into South Africa’s democracy and reinvokes the visions of pantheon of jazz innovators and radical writers. Rampolokeng has also written two plays and has written screenplays and released several audio recordings.

His documentary film *Word Down the Line* debuted in 2014.

He is currently completing a major study of the life and work of black consciousness poet and activist Mafika Pascal Gwala.