



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: 20 September 2017

“The UK’s biggest African literature and book festival comes to Bristol”

Africa Writes, the UK’s biggest annual African literature and book festival brought to you by the Royal African Society, comes to Bristol for the first time, from Friday 6th October to Saturday 7th October 2017, presenting a vibrant programme of events at The Cube Cinema and Hamilton House. Curated with Bristol-based partners, this literary weekend brings together writers from Nigeria, Cote D’Ivoire, Somalia, Uganda, Ghana and across the diaspora for workshops, film screenings, panel discussions, performances and book launches. For African literature enthusiasts and newcomers alike, the festival presents an engaging programme looking at literary activism, adaptation, the cities we live in, forbidden love, hidden histories, and more.

The festival headliner will be **Chinelo Okparanta** - a writer born in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, and now living in the USA. She will speak about her powerful novel *Under the Udala Trees* (2015) - a story inspired by Nigeria’s folktales and set in the midst of the Biafran War that uses the lifetime of one woman to explore love and truth of personal relationships, in the context of conflict and division.

Chinelo Okparanta says: *“I’m excited to be a part of this very important literary conversation. With Africa in the house, Bristol will surely never be so hip, literature never as sexy”*.

Engaging the community across all ages, the festival presents a series of exciting events in partnership with Somali diaspora arts organisation **Numbi Arts**, including a collaboration with Paper Nations to run zine-making workshops in Bristol schools, a creative writing workshop and the festival closing party on Saturday 7th October hosted by celebrated poet **Elmi Ali**, with Bristol community radio station **Ujima** and featuring DJs and spoken word performances. **Kinsi Abdulleh**, director of Numbi Arts, says *“We are bringing our Numbifest Cross-currents series to Africa Writes Bristol to explore cities and what they mean to us. There is a huge amount of creative activity going on in the Bristol Somali community and we are excited to engage with and showcase this.”*

Jowhor Ile will launch his debut novel *And After Many Days*, winner of the 2016 Etisalat Prize for Literature. As part of Spike Island’s Novel Writers programme, Jowhor Ile will present his book in conversation with Ivorian writer and literary activist **Edwige Dro**.

Exploring the relationship between literature and film, **Africa Writes Bristol** launches on Friday 6th October with an evening of screenings and discussion at **The Cube Cinema**, in partnership with Bristol-based film festival **Afrika Eye**, including Biyi Bandele’s film *The Half of a Yellow Sun*, and a panel discussion looking at the intersection of film and literature about and in Africa.

The **University of Bristol** in partnership with Kampala-based **Centre for African Cultural Excellence (CACE)** will run a workshop on Literary Activism and Arts Management for young Bristol-based creatives, and host a panel discussion about a new generation of literary entrepreneurs based on the African continent, featuring **Edwidge Dro** (Abidjan Lit, based in Cote D’Ivoire), **Louise Umutoni** (Huza



Press, based in Rwanda) and speakers from **Writivism** festival in Uganda. Both sessions draw directly from a **collaborative research project** on literary activism and Africa involving CACE, the University of Bristol and the University of Exeter.

Children 8-12 years old are invited to attend a creative writing and storytelling workshop with Ghanaian British filmmaker and writer **Yaba Badoe**, who will read from her new book of interwoven tales, *The Secret of the Purple Lake*.

Africa Writes 2017 Pop-Up: Bristol is brought to you by the Royal African Society in partnership with Numbi Arts, The University of Bristol's Centre for Black Humanities, Afrika Eye, Ujima Radio, Spike Island, Centre of African Cultural Excellence, Coexist at Hamilton House, The Cube Cinema, Book Kernel and Paper Nations, and is supported by Arts Council England and Sigrid Rausing Trust.

Festival programme: bit.ly/AW2017Bristol

#AfricaWrites17

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For further information or to arrange interviews with guest writers and contributors, please contact: Caitlin Pearson ras_events@soas.ac.uk.

Notes to Editors:

1. **Africa Writes** is the annual literature and book festival brought to you by the Royal African Society. Launched in 2012, every year Africa Writes showcases established and emerging talent from the African continent and its diaspora in what is now the UK's biggest celebration of contemporary African writing. www.africawrites.org. Follow us on Twitter [@AfricaWritesUK](https://twitter.com/AfricaWritesUK) and [Facebook](#)
2. Now more than 100 years old, **The Royal African Society (RAS)** is an inclusive pan-African membership charity based in the UK that aims to facilitate equitable relations between the UK and Africa in the fields of academia, business, politics and policy, arts and education. Through our events, publications and digital channels we share insight and instigate debate, reaching a network of more than one million people globally. www.royalafricansociety.org.uk
3. **Numbi Arts** is a cross-arts organisation that is about nurturing local and global conversations, collaboratively creating platforms to celebrate diverse voices, producing workshops, events, the SCARF literary arts magazine and Numbispace - an on-going research project investigating contemporary arts practice from pre-civil war Somalia to the present day diaspora. Numbi.org
4. **The University of Bristol's Centre for Black Humanities** was founded in 2017 and is based in the Faculty of Arts. Its goal is to create an interdisciplinary space for the discussion of black thought and the critical study of race, migration, diaspora, transnationalism and globalisation. The Centre aims to consider the varied and contested meanings of 'Black' in historical and contemporary contexts alongside the omission of non-white voices in (local) history and university curricula
5. **Hamilton House** in Stokescroft, Bristol is powered by Coexist as a space in which we collectively live, work, play and innovate to create a better world for each other, our community and the environment.
6. **The Cube** is a Microplex Cinema, Arts venue, adult creche and progressive social wellbeing enterprise in Central Bristol. The aim of the organisation is to reinvent the notion of the Cinema as a shared social space for the people within the local community and provide a greater choice of programs for the people of Bristol.
7. Associate Producer of the festival is Bristol-based **Kate Wallis**. Kate is Lecturer in Global Literatures in the English Department at the University of Exeter and was Producer of the Africa Writes festival in London in 2015.