



**02 February 2017  
For Immediate Release**

**AFRICA'S FIRST MOBILE LITERARY FESTIVAL: 3<sup>rd</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> MARCH 2017**

Africa Writes is delighted to announce a partnership with Jalada Africa on the inaugural Jalada Mobile Literary & Arts Festival, travelling through 5 East African countries in 28 days.

A hybrid between a traditional place-based festival and a bus tour, the festival will cover 5 countries and 12 towns: Kenya (*Nairobi, Nakuru, Kisumu, Mombasa*), Uganda (*Kampala, Kabale*), DRC (*Goma*), Rwanda (*Kigali*) and Tanzania (*Mwanza, Arusha, Dar es Salaam, Zanzibar*).

The festival will celebrate diversity and create living connections between writers, artists, and diverse audiences in the big cities and small towns across East Africa.

Presented as a series of full-day events, the festival will feature an expanded retinue of panel discussions, literary readings and debates, spoken word and theatrical performances, creative writing and translations master classes, poetry workshops, exhibitions, art installations, and film screenings.

The festival will also incorporate new and imaginative ways of documenting literature and art using mobile-phone mini-documentaries.

The events will feature writers and artists drawn from the Collective, and tens of exciting authors, performers, and thinkers drawn from East Africa and beyond, as well as international voices. The mobile festival will travel over 4500 kms and engage directly with over 10,000 enthusiasts.

Jalada Africa was formed in 2013 by writers from Kenya, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Uganda and South Africa, and currently comprises of writers and artists, of African origin, from the continent and the diaspora. The Collective seeks to break boundaries by publishing works that stretch the reach of creative writing, expand the range of reading experiences, and diversify audiences for literature. Africa Writes is the Royal African Society's annual literature festival held each summer at the British Library. The partnership will result in the creation and publication of a poetry anthology featuring voices of refugees from Burundi, and a showcase of the Jalada festival to be presented at Africa Writes in London, 30<sup>th</sup> June – 2<sup>nd</sup> July.

Festival supporters include the Goethe-Institut Nairobi, the British Council and a host of cultural institutions across the region.

**\*ENDS\***

Website: [www.jalada.org/festival](http://www.jalada.org/festival)

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## **Notes for Editors**

**1. Jalada Africa** is a Pan-African collective formed in 2013 by writers from Kenya, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Uganda and South Africa, and currently comprises of writers and artists, of African origin, from the continent and the diaspora. Jalada began as informal gatherings to refine and enjoy each other's artistic productions, and grew into a pan-African interactive space where writers share their work, edit and critique each other, and provide guidance on ways of developing craft, while exchanging opportunities for personal and professional growth. The lack of reputable publishing spaces for young, talented African writers informed Jalada's transition to a digital publisher. [www.jalada.org/festival/schedule](http://www.jalada.org/festival/schedule)

**2. Africa Writes** is the Royal African Society's annual literature festival that takes place over an exciting summer weekend at the British Library in London. Every year we showcase established and emerging talent from the African continent and its diaspora in what is now the UK's biggest celebration of contemporary African writing taking place over an exciting summer weekend. The festival features book launches, readings, author appearances, panel discussions, writing masterclasses, youth and children's workshops, and other activities. The festival takes place Friday 30<sup>th</sup> June – Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2017. [africawrites.org](http://africawrites.org)

**3. The Royal African Society** is Britain's prime Africa organisation with more than a century of in-depth knowledge and experience of the continent and its peoples. We foster a better understanding of Africa in the UK and throughout the world, exploring the continent's history, politics, culture, problems and potential. We disseminate knowledge and insight to make a positive difference to Africa's development and celebrate the diversity and depth of African culture. [www.royalafricansociety.org](http://www.royalafricansociety.org)

## **4. Jalada Publications:**

### ***JA00: Sketch of a Bald Woman in the semi-nude and other stories***

The first anthology was eclectic and different from what was available in the reading market—tackling the often underexplored subject of mental health within the African context.

### ***JA01: Sext Me Stories and Poems***

The second anthology was a ground-breaker and an attempt at fictionalizing sexual experiences in ways that were rare, in ways that our readers and critics thought broke the implied modesty of our fictional boundaries. The anthology was a central subject of discussion during the 2015 Africa Writes Festival in London, in which Jalada gave a presentation and participated in the panel discussions.

### ***JA02: Afrofuture(s)***

At the beginning of 2015, Jalada published *Afrofuture(s)* – an anthology that sought to capture multiple and alternative ways of imagining futures – as Africans. The prelude to the anthology featured work by visual artist *Wangechi Mutu* with an accompanying text by *Binyavanga Wainaina*. The anthology garnered wide readership and received critical acclaim with two stories: “*eNGAGEMENT*” by Richard Oduor Oduku and “*A Brief History of Nonduality Studies*” by Sofia Samatar, long listed for the prestigious 2015 British Science Fiction Association (BSFA) Awards.



### **JA03: *My Maths Teacher Hates Me and Other Stories***

In June 2015, Jalada produced a mini-anthology in collaboration with Writivism, a project by CACE – a non-governmental organization in Uganda. The anthology featured flash fiction from exciting young writers from a mentorship program carried out in four African cities.

### **JA04: *The Language Issue***

In September 2015, Jalada published *The Language Issue*, which celebrates language through fiction, poetry, spoken word, visual art and essays, in 23 African languages as well as English and French. It features both new and established writers. It has been called the most ambitious and robust anthology on African languages on the continent to date, published in an innovative digital format. It has been hailed as a game changer by writer *Tsitsi Jaji*, who is a Professor of English at Duke University, and lauded by writer and Professor of English at Cornell University *Mukoma Wa Ngugi* as a landmark publication, ensuring that “Jalada will be as important for this generation of writers as *Transition* was for the Makerere generation”. The Language Issue featured both new and established artists, including Edwige Dro, Richard Ali Mutu, Ndinda Kioko, Phoebe Boswell, Maneo Mohale, and Efemia Chela.

### ***Jalada 05/Transition 123 Fear Issue (Forthcoming, June 2017 – launch at Africa Writes)***

The publication will focus on **Fear** as weaponised terror, to the fear of the Other, the fear of love, the fear of death, the fear of failure, of success, of spiders, crowds, heights, closed spaces etc., fear is such a primal and inescapable part of living. Our phobias, the things that make us human or, indeed, inhuman, are as diverse and as peculiar as the varied lives that we lead. Our fears, and the dance between fear and fearlessness, shape how we live, how we interact, and how we conceptualize ourselves and others. The conversations of our day on immigration, race and integration, and terrorism, among others, point to the timelessness of the basic question of how fear influences human beings and our struggle to live together in the world. [hutchinscenter.fas.harvard.edu/transition](http://hutchinscenter.fas.harvard.edu/transition)

### ***The Translation Issue 01 (March 2016)***

This issue is a statement to the effect that African languages can inspire global conversations, and can find their place in dialogue among themselves and exist with equal power alongside Asian and European ones. The inaugural Translation Issue, published to popular and critical acclaim, featured a new short story by the revered Kenyan scholar, **Ngugi wa Thiong’o**. The short story was originally written in Kikuyu as *Ituĩka Rĩa Mũrũngarũ: Kana Kĩrĩa Gĩtũmaga Andũ Mathĩ Marũngĩ*, and translated into English, as ‘The Upright Revolution: Or Why Humans Walk Upright’ by the author himself. It was published in 33 languages, making it **the single most translated short story in the history of African writing**.

The story had since been translated into 55 languages, 40 of which are African languages. It is a vast body of collaborative work by professional and amateur translators plus language enthusiasts from 14 African countries. The story is available at [www.jalada.org](http://www.jalada.org). The publication has been featured in major newspapers and literary forums around the world such as *The Guardian* (UK), the *Times Literary Supplement*, *PEN International* (UK), *Books Live* (South Africa), *This is Africa* (London, Cape Town), *Writivism* (Uganda), and *Kannadaprabha Daily* (India) among others.