

FOR RELEASE ON WEDNESDAY 13 MARCH 2019

“Man Booker shortlisted novelist Chigozie Obioma headlines Africa Writes, the UK’s biggest African literature festival”

Africa Writes, the UK’s largest celebration of contemporary African and diaspora writing brought to you the Royal African Society, returns for an exciting summer weekend from **Friday 5th to Sunday 7th July 2019** at The British Library.

The festival’s headline author will be Man Booker shortlisted novelist **Chigozie Obioma**, who will discuss his writing, Igbo mythology, fatherhood, masculinity and stories of the everyday, closing the 3-day event on Sunday, 7th July.

Obioma will read from his debut novel, *The Fishermen*, winner of the inaugural FT/Oppenheimer Award for Fiction, the NAACP Image Awards for Debut Literary Work, and the Art Seidenbaum Award for First Fiction (Los Angeles Times Book Prizes); and finalist for the Man Booker Prize 2015. He will also discuss his new novel *An Orchestra of Minorities* (Little, Brown, 2019). Set between Nigeria and Cyprus, the novel is ‘a heart-wrenching epic about the tension between destiny and determination’. The event will also include an evocative staged reading of *The Fishermen*, adapted by Gbolahan Obisesan.

Previous headline authors at Africa Writes have been Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Ngugi wa Thiong’o with son Mukoma wa Ngugi, Wole Soyinka, Ama Ata Aidoo, Ben Okri, Nawal El Saadawi and Alain Mabanckou.

Africa Writes 2019 will host two other headline events on the Friday and Saturday evenings. On Friday 5th July, the festival will open with ***Our Bodies Speak Poetry***, an evening of intergenerational poetry and storytelling exploring the body as a site of power, possibilities and resistance.

On Saturday 6th July, the festival will launch the anticipated new anthology ***New Daughters of Africa*** in partnership with the Royal Society of Literature, featuring editor Margaret Busby and a panel of contributors including Bernardine Evaristo, Nadifa Mohamed, Ayòbámi Adébáyò and Namwali Serpell.

Twenty-five years after the landmark *Daughters of Africa* anthology, this new companion volume brings together the work of over 200 writers from across the globe – Antigua to Zimbabwe, Angola to the USA – to celebrate a unifying heritage, illustrate an uplifting sense of sisterhood and showcase the remarkable range of creativity from the African diaspora. The anthology speaks to the strong links that endure from generation to generation as well as the common obstacles that women writers of colour continue to face as they negotiate issues of race, gender and class.

For the first time, Africa Writes will take place in **Bristol** from Saturday **29th June to Thursday 4th July**. The programme will include a full day of activities on the Saturday, followed by a series of evening events across the city.

In London, the festival’s rich and vibrant daytime programme will once again include book launches, panel discussions, performances, masterclasses, family workshops and international book fair. The *Africa Writes: Young Voices* programme will continue to engage school children across the city.

Tickets are now available to book at www.bl.uk/events/africa-writes-2019 and the full festival line-up will be announced in May.

AFRICA WRITES | Brought to you by the Royal African Society | 2019 FRIDAY 5th - SUNDAY 7th JULY 2019
THE BRITISH LIBRARY, 96 EUSTON ROAD, NW1 2DB

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For further information, please contact: **Marcelle Akita**, ras_communciations@soas.ac.uk

For Images, Logos & Artist Bios, [Download the Press Pack](#) on Dropbox

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Listing Information

FESTIVAL (Adults and family)

Africa Writes 2019

Friday 5 July 19:00 - Sunday 7 July 19:00

The British Library, 96 Euston Road, London NW1 2DB www.bl.uk

Nearest tube: King's Cross

Ticketed headline events & day passes £8 - £20

Festival website: africawrites.org

Ticket booking link: <https://www.bl.uk/events/africa-writes-2019>

Confirmed line-up so far: Chigozie Obioma, Bernardine Evaristo, Nadifa Mohamed, Ayòbámi Adébáyò, Namwali Serpell, and Margaret Busby.

Notes to Editors:

- 1. Africa Writes** festival is a leading festival of contemporary literature from Africa and the diaspora brought to you by The Royal African Society. Launched in 2012, each edition showcases the best new writing from the African continent and its diaspora in what is now the UK's biggest celebration of contemporary African writing. www.africawrites.org
- 2. The Royal African Society** is a membership organisation that provides opportunities for people to connect, celebrate and engage critically with a wide range of topics and ideas about Africa today. Through our events, publications and digital channels we facilitate mutual understanding between the UK and Africa across academia, business, politics, culture and education. We amplify African voices and interests, reaching a network of more than one million people globally. www.royalafricansociety.org.uk
- 3. The British Library** is the national library of the United Kingdom and one of the world's greatest research libraries. It provides world class information services to the academic, business, research and scientific communities and offers unparalleled access to the world's largest and most comprehensive research collection. www.bl.uk
- 4. Africa Writes 2019** is organised in partnership with the British Library, with support from Arts Council England, the British Council and Miles Morland Foundation. **Africa Writes Bristol** is supported by Arts Council England, the Bristol Cultural Development Partnership, University of Bristol and University of Exeter.