

Biographical Sketches

Keynote Speakers:

Keynote Speaker One: Tuesday, November 7th, 2017, 5-10pm; Location: Fundación Tres Culturas del Mediterráneo, Ballroom

Maureen Maisha Auma is an Educator, Gender Studies Scholar and Activist. She is Professor for Childhood and Difference (Diversity Studies) at the University for Applied Sciences, Magdeburg-Stendal, since April 2008. Currently (2014 – 2018) a Visiting Professor at the Centre for Transdisciplinary Gender Studies and the Institute of Education at Humboldt University Berlin. A member of the collective „Generation Adefra, Black Women in Germany“ since 1993. Research Focus: Diversity, Inequality and Plurality in Textbooks and didactical Materials in East and West Germany, Sexual Education as Empowerment for Black Communities and Communities of Color, Critical Whiteness, Intersectionality and Critical Race Theory. She is based in Berlin.

Keynote Speaker Two: Wednesday, November 8th, 2017, 6:15-8pm; Location: Teatro 31, Auditorio

Robert F. Reid-Pharr is Distinguished and Presidential Professor of English and American Studies at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. A specialist in African American culture and a prominent scholar in the field of race and sexuality studies, his major works include: Conjugal Union: The Body, the House, and the Black American, Oxford University Press, 1999; Black, Gay, Man: Essays, NYU Press, 2001; Once You Go Black: Choice, Desire, and the Black American Intellectual, NYU Press, 2007; and Archives of Flesh: African America, Spain, and Post-Humanist Critique, NYU Press, 2016.

Plenary:

“The Future of Black Studies,” Thursday, November 9th, 2017, 12:30-2pm; Location: Teatro 31, Auditorio

Nwando Achebe (Panelist), the Jack and Margaret Sweet Endowed Professor of History, is an award-winning historian at Michigan State University. She is founding editor-in-chief of the *Journal of West African History*. Achebe received her PhD from UCLA in 2000. In 1996 and 1998, she served as a Ford Foundation and Fulbright-Hays Scholar-in-Residence at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Her research interests involve the use of oral history in the study of women, gender, and sexuality in Nigeria. Her first book, *Farmers, Traders, Warriors, and Kings: Female Power and Authority in Northern Igboland, 1900-1960* was published in 2005 (Heinemann). Achebe’s second book, *The Female King of Colonial Nigeria: Ahebi Ugbabe* (Indiana University Press, 2011), winner of three book awards—Aidoo-Snyder, Barbara “Penny” Kanner, and Gita Chaudhuri book awards—is a full-length critical biography on the only *female* warrant chief and king in British Africa. Achebe has received prestigious grants from Rockefeller Foundation, Wenner-Gren, Woodrow Wilson, Fulbright-Hays, Ford Foundation, World Health Organization, and National Endowment for the Humanities.

Maboula Soumahoro (Panelist) is an Associate Professor at the Université de Tours François-Rabelais (France). She also teaches at the Paris Institute of Political Science. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Tours. Her research focuses on U.S., African American, and Africana studies. She has held teaching positions at Bennington College, Bard College (Bard Prison Initiative),

Barnard College and Columbia University. Based in France, Soumahoro is president of the Black History Month association. From 2013-2016, she served as an appointed member of the National Committee for the History and Memory of Slavery. In 2016-2017, she was Visiting Faculty at Bennington College and Columbia University-Barnard College.

Michael A. Gomez (Chair) is currently Silver Professor of History and Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at New York University, having served as the founding director of the Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora (ASWAD) from its inception in 2000 to 2007, and is currently series editor of the *Cambridge Studies on the African Diaspora*, Cambridge University Press. He has chaired the History departments at both NYU and Spelman College, and also served as President of UNESCO's International Scientific Committee for the Slave Route Project from 2009 to 2011. His first book, *Pragmatism in the Age of Jihad: The Precolonial State of Bundu* (Cambridge University Press, 1992), examines a Muslim polity in what is now eastern Senegal. The next publication, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (University of North Carolina Press, 1998), is concerned with questions of culture and race. *Reversing Sail: A History of the African Diaspora* (Cambridge University Press, 2005) is more fully involved with the idea of an African diaspora, as is *Diasporic Africa: A Reader* (New York University Press, 2006), an edited volume. *Black Crescent: African Muslims in the Americas* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), examines how African Muslims negotiated their bondage and freedom throughout the Americas, allowing for significant integration of Islamic Africa. Gomez's new book, *African Dominion: A New History of Empire in Early and Medieval West Africa* (Princeton University Press, 2018), is a comprehensive study of polity and religion during the region's iconic collective moment. Invested in an Arabic manuscript project disrupted by war (in Mali), arguably one of the most important endeavors of its kind in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, Gomez remains supportive of the struggles of people of African descent worldwide.

Speaking Volumes Black British Writers:

Thursday, November 9th, 2017, 6-8pm; Location: Teatro 31, Auditorio

Sharmilla Beezmohun has worked in publishing since 1994. She co-founded Speaking Volumes Live Literature Productions in 2010 with Sarah Sanders. Previous work includes eleven years as Deputy Editor of *Wasafiri*, the Magazine of International Contemporary Writing, plus stints at Virago and Heinemann's African and Caribbean Writers Series among others. In 2010 her first novel, *Echoes of a Green Land*, was published in translation in Spain as *Ecos de la tierra verde*. She edited *Continental Shifts, Shifts in Perception: Black Cultures and Identities in Europe* (2016) and, with Sarah White and Roxy Harris, co-edited *A Meeting of the Continents: The International Book Fair of Black Radical and Third World Books* (2005). Her work has been published in various journals and translated into Finnish. Sharmilla is a Trustee of Carcanet Publishers, *Modern Poetry in Translation* magazine and the George Padmore Institute as well as being on the international organising committee of AfroEuropes, a cross-continent academic and cultural network.

Yvette Edwards is a British author of Montserratian origin. Her debut, *A Cupboard Full of Coats*, was published in the UK, USA and Greece and nominated for awards including the Man Booker Prize, Commonwealth Writers' Prize and IMPAC Dublin Literary Award. Its themes centre around the psychological impact on the interior worlds of children who witness domestic violence. Her second novel, *The Mother*, was published in 2016 in the UK and USA. Narrated by the mother of a 16 year-old who has been stabbed and killed, it is an emotive exploration of grief and the root causes of teenage violence. She currently mentors for the Escalator scheme run by Writers' Centre Norwich and a judge for the Jhalak Prize for writers of colour.

www.yvetteedwards.co.uk/

Colin Grant is a historian, author and BBC producer. His books include *Negro with a Hat*, a biography of Marcus Garvey; *I and I The Natural Mystics Marley, Tosh and Wailer*; and his latest, *A Smell of Burning: the Story of Epilepsy*. Grant's memoir of growing up in a Caribbean family in 1970s suburbia, *Bageye at the Wheel*, was shortlisted for the PEN/Ackerley Prize. He has written numerous BBC radio documentaries including *A Fountain of Tears*, focusing on the last days of Federico Garcia Lorca. He is a regular contributor to the *Guardian* and *Granta Magazine* and is a tutor of Creative Writing at Arvon and City University.
www.colingrant.info/

Peter Kalu is the son of Nigerian and Danish migrants and grew up in Manchester. He began writing at Moss Side Write, a local black writing group, and has written eight books to date, two radio plays broadcast on the BBC and several works for theatre. His series of young adult novels highlight the experience of young Black Britons: *The Silent Striker* (now being filmed), *Being Me* and *Zombie XI* (all Hope Road Publishing). His most recent crime novel is *Little Jack Horner* (Suitcase Books). Over 30,000 people have borrowed his books from UK libraries and he was Winner of a 2003 BBC Dangerous Comedy Award. He works occasionally as a French and Spanish translator and is a PhD student in Creative Writing at Lancaster University.
www.peterkalu.com/

Irenosen Okojie is a writer and arts project manager. Her debut novel, *Butterfly Fish*, won a Betty Trask Award. Her work has been featured in *The Observer*, *The Guardian* and *The Huffington Post* amongst other publications, as well as on the BBC. Her short stories have been published internationally. She was presented at the London Short Story Festival by Ben Okri as a dynamic writing talent to watch and was featured in the *Evening Standard Magazine* as one of London's exciting new authors. Her short story collection *Speak Gigantular* published by Jacaranda Books has been longlisted for the Jhalak Prize.
www.jacarandabooksartmusic.co.uk/writer/irenos-en-okojie-2/

Jacob Ross is a poet, playwright, journalist, short story writer and novelist. He edited *Artrage*, Britain's leading intercultural arts magazine and now is Associate Editor for Fiction (Peepal Tree Press). He has published the short story collections *Song for Simone* and *A Way to Catch the Dust*; co-edited anthologies including *Voice, Memory, Ashes* and *Ridin' n Rising*; co-authored *Behind the Masquerade: The Story of Notting Hill Carnival*; and edited *Closure: Contemporary Black British short stories*. Ross's novel, *Pynter Bender*, was shortlisted for the Commonwealth Writer's Regional Prize, The Society of Authors Best First Novel and *Caribbean Review of Books* Book of the Year. His current novel, *The Bone Readers*, was published in 2016. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature.
www.peepalpress.com/authors/jacob-ross

Leone Ross writes magic realism, horror fiction, erotica and psychological drama. She has published two critically praised novels, *All The Blood Is Red* (ARP/Actes Sud) and *Orange Laughter* (Anchor/Farrar Straus & Giroux/Picador), which was shortlisted for the UK Orange Prize. Ross's short fiction has been shortlisted for the V S Pritchett Prize and Salt Publishing's Scott Prize. She has judged the Manchester Fiction Prize and the Wimbledon Bookfest Short Story Competition. She is a Senior Lecturer in Creative Writing at Roehampton University, and a Senior Fellow of the UK Higher Education Academy.
Leone Ross's short story collection, *Come Let Us Sing Anyway*, will be published in June 2017 by Peepal Tree Press. She lives in London and is working on a third novel.
www.leoneross.com

Sarah Sanders has worked in literature for over twenty years and has held positions at London Arts, several independent publishers as well as the BBC. She became a freelance literature tour manager in 2001 and managed international live events in the USA and across the UK, working with some of the best-known writers in the world. As part of a long association with Arts Council England, Sarah introduced the first grants fund for Live Literature, working with festivals, producers and venues, enabling spoken word artists to develop their practice. She has curated and programmed events with international writers and translators at festivals in the UK and abroad, working with organisations including PEN International, English PEN, ICORN and the British Council. She is a co-founder of Speaking Volumes Live Literature Productions, which recently produced the UK celebration of the centenary of the birth of Gwendolyn Brooks with a line-up of twenty writers.

Elisa Joy White (Chair) is an Associate Professor of African American and African Studies at University of California at Davis. She holds a PhD in African Diaspora Studies from the University of California at Berkeley, where she also received an MA in African American Studies. She completed an MA in Media Studies at the New School University and a BA in Theatre from Spelman College. Her interdisciplinary research interests and publications address Black European Studies, lesser-examined African Diaspora sites, the social and cultural dimensions of globalization, human rights and new media studies. Reflecting a scholarly commitment to diverse African diaspora communities, her publications include the book, *Modernity, Freedom and the African Diaspora: Dublin, New Orleans, Paris* (Indiana University Press), and two new chapters in the second edition of *They Followed the Trade Winds: African Americans in Hawai'i* (University of Hawai'i Press). She is co-editor of the forthcoming volume, *Relating Worlds of Racism: Dehumanisation, Belonging, and the Normativity of European Whiteness* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2018). Her current book project considers deportations, detention, and borders in relation to African Diaspora communities in Europe. The ninth biennial conference will complete her two-year term (2016-2018) as Vice President of the Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora (ASWAD).