

30 South African authors to take part in inaugural iLembe Book Festival

South African authors – including Angela Makholwa, Joanne Joseph and Nathi Olifant – will be taking part in the inaugural iLembe Book Festival, which takes place in KwaZulu-Natal in February 2024 under the theme 'Our Time, Our Stories, Our Voices'.



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This literary event takes place at the Luthuli Museum in Groutville, KwaDukuza, part of the iLembe District Municipality, from 1-3 February 2024.

The festival will bring together a cross-section of more than 30 South African authors in 15 sessions and includes a poetry slam and a full children's programme. The main book festival on Saturday, 3 February, has a content-rich programme that is packed with insightful conversations and talks, lively debates and one-on-one author sessions.

The lineup includes discussions on the art of mining the past for hidden treasures for writing inspiration, how would-be authors can get their books published, the rise of local book adaptations to television and film, popularity of crime fiction, how to pen a memoir and Ubuciko Nokulondolozwa Kolimi (Art is the Preservation of Language). There will be one-on-one sessions with KwaZulu-Natal authors Nelly Page, Nathi Olifant and Thenjiwe Msane.

Angela Makholwa burst onto the literary scene in 2007 to both public and critical acclaim with her debut thriller *Red Ink*, one of the first crime fictions by a Black author in South Africa. The book – which is set in Johannesburg – has been adapted into a screenplay and will be streaming on Showmax from February this year.

This was followed by *The 30th Candle* which has also been adapted into a Netflix screenplay. Makholwa's latest book, *The Reed Dance Stalker*, is a sequel to *Red Ink* and was published in October last year. Her other novels include *Blessed Girl* which was shortlisted for the UK's Comedy Women in Print Prize. The book was also shortlisted for the National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences' Literary Awards.

Joanne Joseph is a broadcaster and media personality who has written a number of books including *Drug Muled: Sixteen Years in a Thai Prison* and *Children of the Sugarcane*, a novel set against the backdrop of 19th century India and the British-owned sugarcane plantations of Natal.

Durban-based Nathi Olifant is a former crime and political journalist who worked for various newspapers including *The Sunday Times*, Independent Media and *The Witness*. He has 17 years of journalism experience. His debut novel *Blood, Blades and Bullets – Anatomy of a Glebelands Hitman* won the 2021 The Book Behind Awards for Best English Novel: Male. *The Fugitives – Glebelands Hitmen* is his second novel. The final book in the trilogy, *Assassins Endgame*, will be released this year.

The iLembe Book Festival is a collective effort by local authors including Commonwealth Writers' Prize winner Nozizwe Cynthia Jele, the acclaimed Hlomu series author and journalist Dudu Busani-Dube, and Scarred writer Ayanda Xaba, who are all part of this year's organising committee.

The iLembe Book Festival will incorporate the following:

- Creative Writing Workshops taking place on 2 February, aimed at upskilling local aspiring authors.
- Visits to local primary and secondary schools to drop-off books and encourage young people to read and write. These will take place on 1 February.
- Main book festival taking place on 3 February.
- Book sales: The festival will offer a platform to independent local booksellers to sell books at the event at discounted prices. In addition, the festival will have a special book stall for local self-published authors to allow them space to showcase their writing.
- Food, arts and craft vendors will be available on site on 3 February.

The iLembe Book Festival is made possible through the funding from the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture (DSAC), Presidential Employment Stimulus Programme (PESP) and National Arts Council (NAC) and the partnership with the Luthuli Museum.

For more, go to www.ilembebookfestival.co.za

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