

Hay
Festival
Global



Report
2024





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Introduction

Hay Festival Global and Book Bunk have celebrated the 2024 NBO Litfest, taking place 27–30 June 2024 in Nairobi, Kenya. Created by Book Bunk in 2021, NBO Litfest is a burgeoning biennial event on the international stage. Over one weekend in Nairobi's Kaloleni Library, Eastlands Library and McMillan Memorial Library, this year's event will bring over 60 local and international writers together with readers for an ambitious programme of over 32 conversations and performances.

Launched at Hay Festival Hay-on-Wye 2024, the NBO Litfest programme features masterclasses, a children's festival, conversations, film screenings and performances taking place across three iconic public libraries in Nairobi.

Through its partnership with Hay Festival Global, NBO Litfest seeks to increase its international presence, expand its audience reach and take place annually.

The upcoming Nairobi event also marks a return to the city for Hay Festival Global, following six years of the Storymoja Hay Festival, which ran 2008-2013.

"As an international charity, we reach millions of people every year through our one-of-a-kind Festivals, Forums, programmes, and digital platforms. We are delighted to partner Book Bunk as co-hosts of this year's NBO Litfest, continuing our South-to-South series in new and engaging ways for audiences in Nairobi."

Julie Finch, CEO
Hay Festival Foundation Ltd

"Together with our Book Bunk colleagues we are celebrating the best of local and global literature at NBO Litfest 2024, inviting artists, writers and thinkers to share their stories and explore new perspectives and solutions to our shared problems. By forging new connections between our teams in Mexico, Peru and Colombia in this exciting new chapter in Kenya, we deepen our South-to-South project further."

Cristina Fuentes La Roche
Hay Festival Global International Director

"Book Bunk's origin story began with a literature festival - so this is a great full circle moment for us. NBO Litfest celebrates the role libraries play as inclusive spaces where we can convene to discuss and attempt to solve some of our world's most pressing problems. So we're elated to expand the scope of our festival through this partnership and we welcome you all to come experience our world."

Wanjiru Koinange
Co-founder of Book Bunk



The programme in detail

Across 32 events, the programme launched a dynamic platform that unites writers, artists, and thinkers from the region and beyond with the community, amplifying voices, inspiring creativity, and igniting discussions that challenge conventions and inspire change.

Masterclasses

The festival begins on Friday 28 June with a day of masterclasses featuring writers, journalists and public speakers at the height of their craft, including **Bernardine Evaristo**, **Shafinaaz Hassim**, **Mercy Juma**, **Beverly Ochieng** and **June Gachui**. Events for children and young people include an *African Story Box Time* with **Orpah Agunda**; director **Tevin Kimathi** and kid actor **Kael Wafubwa** show their new film, *Stero*; live and interactive readings with **Taiye Selasi**, **Amani Muthoni** and **Sihle-isipho Nontshokweni**; story writing masterclass with **Sihle-isipho Nontshokweni**; plus live music.

The biggest questions

Some of the world's biggest questions are tackled in panels including author **Amitav Ghosh** and activist **Elizabeth Wathuti** on the climate crisis; Brazilian writer **Djamila Ribeiro** on feminist fury; award-winning journalist **Jon Lee Anderson** explores the perils of speaking out; and technology rights defender **Alex Gakuru** joins artists working in the digital realm **Chidi Nwaubani** and **Naddya Adhiambo Oluoch-Olunya** for a discussion on AI.

Questions around identity come to the fore as writers **Aminatta Forna OBE**, **Taiye Selasi** and **Ndinda Kioko** talk to **Mercy Juma** about the African in the diasporas; journalist **Edith Kimani** talks to historian **David Olusoga** about the impact of his work in rethinking black history; editor **Nguru Karugu** talks breaking taboos with photographer **Sarah Waiswa** and poet **Ngartia**; writer and activist **Zakaria Ibrahimi** talking to **Nesrine Malik** about decolonising perspectives on social media; and **Djamila Ribeiro** and **Brenda Wambui** explore Black Feminism.

Artists insights

Artists offer insights into their craft as writing pair **Ibrahima Balde** and **Amets Arzallus** join visual artist **Kamwathi Peterson Waweru** to explore how art helps us tell the hardest stories; content creators **Justine Wanda**, **Swiry Nyar Kano** and **Astar** talk digital storytelling with publicist **Anyiko Owoko**; poet **Nombeko Nontshokweni**, Kiswahili author.

Publishing

Edwin Omindo and lawyer **Deborah Tendo** share insider publishing tips; author **Sihle-isipho Nontshokweni** helps her mother, **Nombeko Nontshokweni** fulfill her life-long dream of publishing a treasured 40-year-old manuscript in South African documentary, *uNobuntu*; and Booker Prize winning novelist **Bernardine Evaristo** discusses crafting spaces for underrepresented voices.

Projects

Hay Festival Global projects continue to spread new ideas around the world. The **Lviv BookForum Series** event sees author **Adania Shibli** and historian **David Olusoga** explore their memories of home; while a panel of acclaimed writers revisit the Hay Festival **Africa39** project a decade on, including **Edwige-Renee Dro**, **Richard Ali A Mutu**, **Shafinaaz Hassim** and **Stanley Gazemba**.

Celebrating **UNESCO's International Decade** of Indigenous Languages (2022 - 2032), author **Richard Ali A Mutu**, journalist **Nesrine Malik**, **Edwige-Renee Dro** talk the importance of indigenous languages; meanwhile film producer **Mumo Liku** joins LOOTY founder **Chidi Nwaubani** to talk radical acts of reclamation.

The Festival in numbers

days **4**

artists **62**

events **32**

attendees **1002**

capacity **71%**

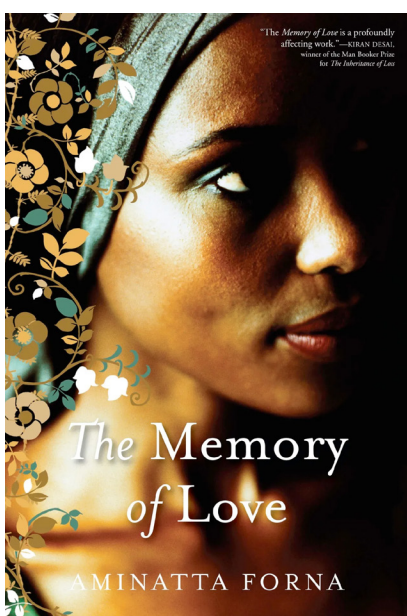
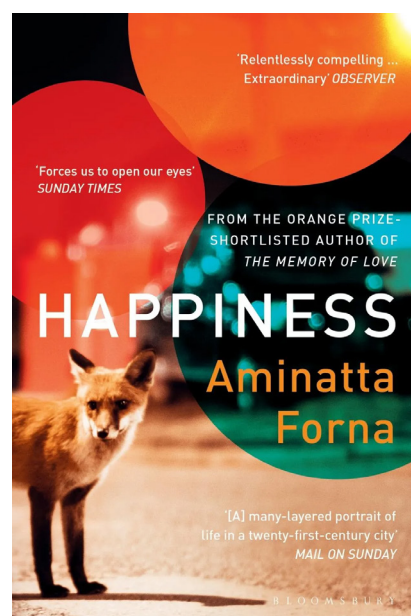
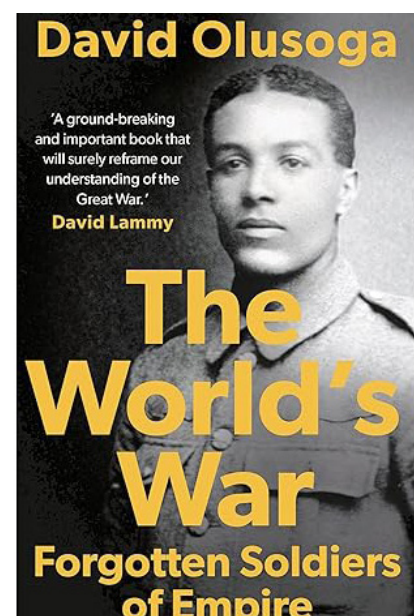
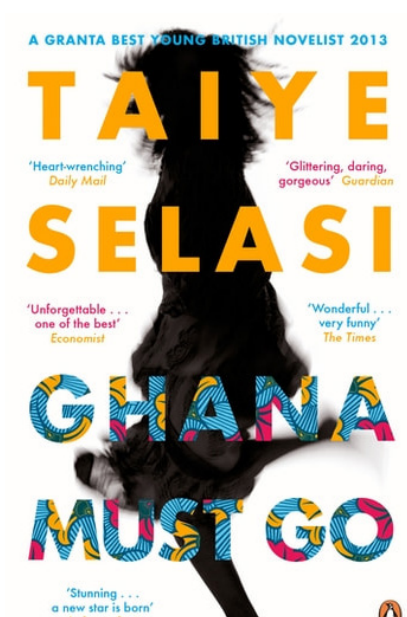
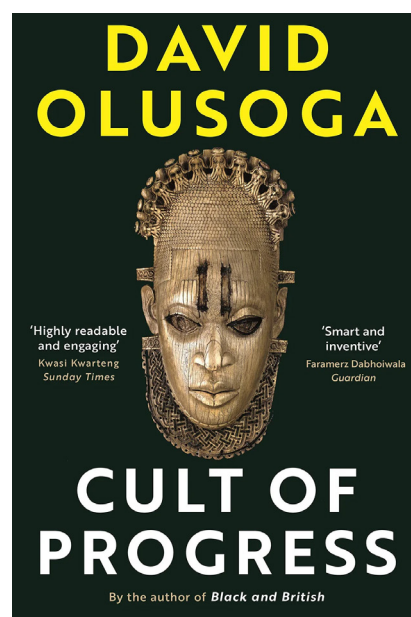
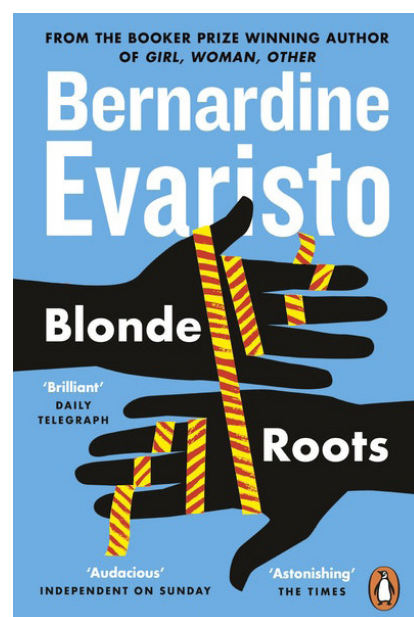
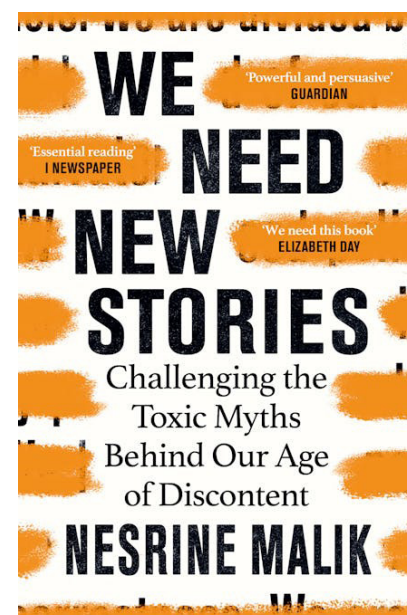
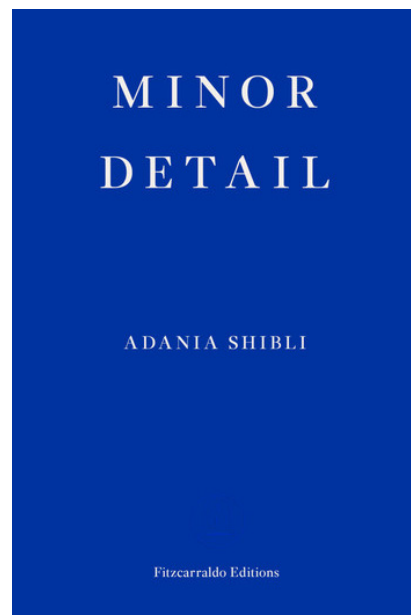
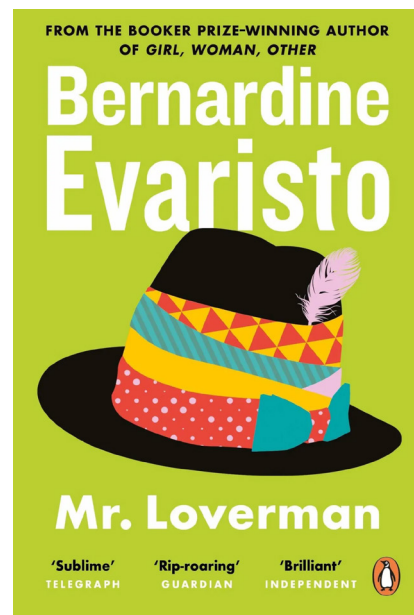
social media impressions
via Festival channels **200k**

press mentions **57**

web page views **11,526**

live digital event views **479**





Bestsellers



Overall bestsellers

- 1 Bernardine Evaristo
Girl, Woman, Other
- 2 Bernardine Evaristo
Mr. Loverman
- 3 Adania Shibli
Minor Detail
- 4 Nesrine Malik
We Need New Stories
- 5 Bernardine Evaristo
The Blonde Roots
- 6 David Olusoga
Cult of Progress
- 7 Taiye Selasi
Ghana Must Go
- 8 David Olusoga
The World's War: Forgotten Soldiers on Empire
- 9 Aminatta Forna
Happiness
- 10 Aminatta Forna
The Memory of Love

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The Festival in the media

Features Press:

Brittle Paper

NBO LitFest 2024 in Nairobi Reveals Star-Studded Program Ft. Bernardine Evaristo, Taiye Selasi, Aminatta Forna, and More

KBC Channel 1 TV Show

Entertainment Thursday: Nairobi Litfest 2024

The Trend live on NTV

NBO Litfest

Kenyan Vibe

How The Third Edition Of NBO Litfest Went Down

Afrolivresque

NBO Litfest celebrates African literature in Nairobi

BBC News Africa

Masterclass: Non-Fiction/Reportage

BBC News Swahili

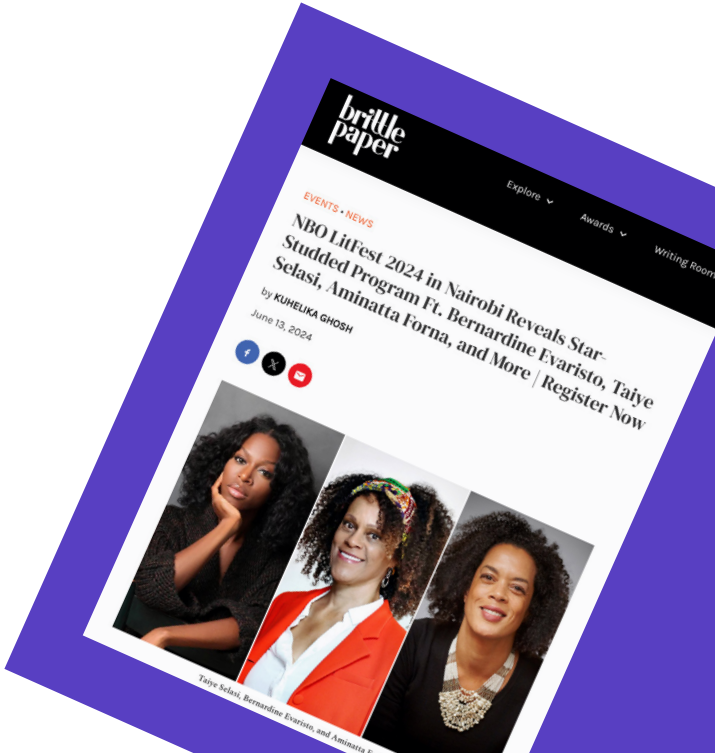
From 24 min. onwards

The Eastleigh Voice

Authors discuss global issues, pay tributes to anti-tax protest victims at Nairobi Literature Festival

Capital FM The Sauce

2024 NBO Litfest – A Festival Of Ideas Is Back For A Third Edition



The Festival in quotes

“My experience has been more than amazing, I love the variety of the books and the interior design is just splendid. NBO Litfest being hosted at my local library is just exciting.”

Mercy, Festival attendee

“The 2024 NBO Litfest was more than just a celebration of literature; it was a platform to discuss pressing social issues. The discussions challenged conventions and inspired change, fostering a rich environment for cultural exchange, political awareness, and intellectual engagement. NBO Litfest 2024 successfully highlighted the power of literature and dialogue in addressing socio-cultural issues.”

Kenyan Vibe

“It’s not often that we see spaces that really actively cultivate joy for children and it’s such a heavenly thing to see on earth.”

Sihle Nontshokweni, writer

“It was two days of the most glorious conversations, with some of my favourite writers and thinkers, and Nairobi got to welcome Amitav Ghosh, Bernadine Evaristo, Taiye Selasi, Aminatta Forna and so many other faves...the team that put this NBO Litfest together is extraordinary!”

Aleya Kassam, Festival MC

“I left [Nairobi] feeling rejuvenated to continue doing the work for the culture and with a revived network of storytellers from across the continent. [NBO Litfest was] totally worth it and then some.”

Muwando.com

“I moderated an incredibly informative session around research, archives, and the importance of libraries... I appreciate NBO Litfest for amplifying the current conversations around injustice and impunity in Kenya and look forward to engaging with more incredible writers, poets, artists and more, tonight and beyond.”

Janet Mbugua, journalist

“Thanking the curator and organisers of NBO Litfest for giving my book and myself as a budding Kenyan author an opportunity. I was discussing ‘Writing my first book’ and the session was very enlightening...You gave me an opportunity to rub shoulders with Literature greats like Bernadine Evaristo, David Olusoga... It was a wildly successful event.”

Deborah Tendo, writer



With thanks

Hay Festival, one of the world’s leading cultural charities, was founded in Hay-on-Wye, Wales in 1987, providing audiences with dynamic platforms to come together to share ideas, different perspectives and provoke conversations that can create a better world.

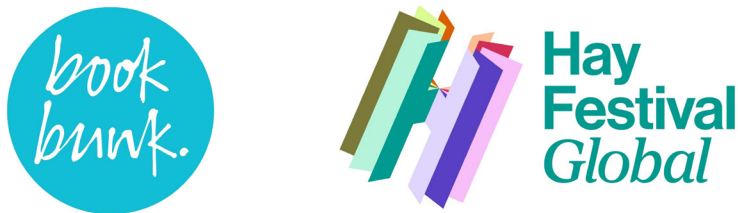
This new collaboration is the next chapter of the Festival’s South-to-South programme, forging creative connections across the Global South through events and partnerships. The projects are supported by funding from the Open Society Foundations.

The British Council is supporting the partnership between Hay Festival and Book Bunk as part of its Kenya 2025 season, which celebrates creativity and innovation through the arts, culture and education in the UK and Kenya.

Ford Foundation and Hawthornden Foundation support us in different projects around the world.

Thank you

NBO LITFEST HOSTS



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PROGRAMME SPONSORS



MEDIA PARTNER



NBO Litfest story

A literary festival synonymous with the city of Nairobi and rooted in its vibrant public libraries, NBO Litfest was created by Book Bunk in 2021. Held the same year, the first edition was themed “Writing African Cities”, coinciding with the city’s oldest library’s 90th year anniversary. It highlighted new writing, narratives and ideas about Nairobi; a 90-year journey of the library and 100 years of the city, with the library’s evolution as the main springboard.

This inaugural edition focused on the reimagining of spaces with contested colonial and other histories such as the **McMillan Memorial Library** and was hosted virtually over three days, attracting a total of 835 people to 20 events.

In 2023, a second edition explored cultural memory under the theme of “Mtaa Narratives”, celebrating stories that shape Nairobi and its surroundings. The 2024 edition, delivered in partnership with **Hay Festival Global**, will expand these conversations.

About Book Bunk

Book Bunk is a charitable trust established by author Wanjiru Koinange and publisher Angela Wachuka that transforms public libraries into “Palaces for The People”; vibrant, inclusive community spaces. The Trust has overseen the architectural restoration of Eastlands Library (opened in 1967) and Kaloleni Library (opened in 1969) as well as the restoration and digitisation of archives, arts and skill-based programming as well as the acquisition of over 19,000 book collections.

The organisation is currently fundraising for the restoration of **McMillan Memorial Library** – Nairobi’s oldest library, opened in 1931. Collectively, these rejuvenated spaces are now home to a treasure trove of books and operate as hubs of community engagement, cultural events and learning opportunities.

Nairobi City County owns all three libraries and partnered with Book Bunk in 2018 to drive the restoration of some of the city’s most iconic public libraries.





Hay Festival around the world

Hay Festival Global is a charity providing global festivals of stories, ideas and new possibilities.

The antidote to polarisation, we bring together diverse voices to listen, talk, debate and create, tackling some of the biggest political, social and environmental challenges of our time. Through one-of-a-kind festivals, in unique locations around the world – plus forums, digital platforms and learning programmes – Hay Festival Global celebrates and inspires different views, perspectives and points of view.

In 1987, Hay Festival Global was dreamt up in the booktown of Hay-on-Wye, Wales. Thirty-seven years later, the charity runs events and projects all over the world, from the historic town of Cartagena in Colombia to the heart of cities in Peru, Mexico, Spain and the USA.

Hay Festival Global reaches an audience of millions each year and continues to grow and innovate, earning multiple awards over the years, including Festival of Sanctuary status from refugee charity City of Sanctuary UK and, in 2020, Spain's Princess of Asturias Award in Communication and Humanities.

Coming up...

Hay Festival Querétaro, Mexico
(5–8 September 2024)

Hay Festival Segovia, Spain
(12–15 September 2024)

Lviv BookForum, Ukraine
(2–6 October 2024)

Hay Festival Forum Dallas, USA
(11–13 October 2024)

Hay Festival Forum Moquegua, Peru
(6 November 2024)

Hay Festival Arequipa, Peru
(7–10 November 2024)

Hay Festival Hay-on-Wye Winter Weekend, UK
(28 November–1 December 2024)

Hay Festival Cartagena de Indias, Medellín and Jericó
(24 January–2 February 2025)

Hay Festival Forum Panama City, Panama
(28–29 January 2025)

Hay Festival Forum Seville, Spain
(March 2025)

Hay Festival Hay-on-Wye, UK
(22 May–1 June 2025).

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of different
ideas
books
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comedy
voices
possibilities
walks
poetry

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