

The Asian Writer Festival
#AsianWriterFest2018
Saturday 20 October 2018

The Asian Writer Festival brings together the contents of its website – interviews, masterclasses and features on literary trends - in a live format. The festival aims to support and encourage writers, by offering advice and inspiration and seeks to raise the profile of emerging voices.

Organised and programmed by Farhana Shaikh, Editor of The Asian Writer, Dahlia Publishing.

LOCATION

Address: 81-103 Euston Street, Camden, London, NW1 2EZ, United Kingdom
Telephone number: (24 hour reception) 020 7380 0001

Located next to London's Euston Station, The Wesley is well-served by public transport. The hotel and conference centre has free WiFi access and a sustainable international fusion bar and restaurant, The Savannah. The hotel is within a 2-minute walk from the nearest tube and bus connections, providing easy access to any part of the city.

SPONSORS & PARTNERS

We are grateful to our sponsors and partners, without whom this festival would not have been possible. ALCS, The Literary Consultancy, Arvon, Spread the Word, Mslexia, The Writing Magazine and Wasafiri.

REGISTRATION OPENS AT 9.30 AM IN THE JOHN WESLEY ROOM

Please bring your printed ticket to the registration desk

STALLS: NEWHAM BOOKSHOP, ARVON, DAHLIA PUBLISHING

RAFFLE PRIZES (for all-access pass ticket holders only):

Entire box set of books by Abir Mukherjee, poetry mentoring with Rishi Dastidar with Ticker-Tape and Rope in a Nine Arches Press tote, 3 sets of back issues of Wasafiri and Mslexia, The Asian Writer Celebrating 10 Years collection x 3, and an annual digital subscription to Writing Magazine.

LUNCH & REFRESHMENTS

The venue will be providing us with bottled still and sparkling water. Additional drinks and snacks can be purchased from the bar which is adjacent to the John Wesley Room.

Lunch options: you are welcome to bring a packed lunch. Alternatively there are several places to buy food including the hotel's own restaurant and bar, cafés and a Sainsbury's at Euston Station and some independent Indian restaurants a short walk away on Drummond Street.

Programme Schedule and Speaker Bios

JOHN WESLEY ROOM

10:00 – 10:15 AM Welcome and Keynote by Vaseem Khan: Call me a writer

In this keynote, Vaseem will explore lessons from the two decades it took him to get published, and what it means to be a British Asian writer trying to find a voice in a highly competitive modern publishing industry.

Vaseem Khan is the author of the bestselling Baby Ganesh Detective Agency series featuring Indian detective Ashwin Chopra and his baby elephant sidekick. The first book in the series, *The Unexpected Inheritance of Inspector Chopra* was a Times bestseller and a Waterstones Paperback of the Year. The second won a prestigious Shamus Award in the US. In 2018 he was awarded the Eastern Eye Arts, Culture and Theatre Award for Literature. Vaseem was born in London, but spent a decade working in India. With his books, he aims to take readers on a journey to the heart of modern India, exploring social issues and the realities of life in a country being transformed by unprecedented global change.

Twitter: @VaseemKhanUK

10:30 - 11:30 AM Write what you know: should new writers follow the rule book?

Advice on how to write well can be confusing and contradictory. How do new writers navigate this and who do they listen to? In this session, new and emerging writers will share their experiences and discuss whether writers new to the craft should follow writing rules or break them. Featuring readings from new and emerging voices, Deepa Anappara, Gautam Malkani and Winnie M Li. Chaired by Joe Sedgwick from The Literary Consultancy.

Speakers:

Deepa Anappara is currently doing a PhD in Creative-Critical Writing at the University of East Anglia, Norwich. She has a Masters in Creative Writing (Prose Fiction) from UEA. Her novel-in-progress, *Djinn Patrol on the Purple Line*, won the Bridport/Peggy Chapman-Andrews Award for First Novel in 2017, the Lucy Cavendish Fiction Prize in 2018, and the Deborah Rogers Foundation Writers Award in 2018. Her short fiction has won: the Dastaan Award, the Asian Writer Short Story Prize, the second prize in the Bristol Short Story award and the third prize in the Asham award. Her reports on education and human rights, published in newspapers and magazines in India, have won the Developing Asia Journalism awards, Every Human has Rights Media awards, and the Prabha Dutt Fellowship in Journalism.

Winnie M Li is an author and activist. Her debut novel, *Dark Chapter*, won The Guardian's Not The Booker Prize 2017 and will be translated into nine languages. It was also nominated for an Edgar Award, shortlisted for the Best First Novel Award, and runner-up for the SI Leeds Literary Prize and the CWA Debut Dagger. A Harvard graduate, Winnie has an MA in Creative Writing from Goldsmiths and is currently a PhD Researcher at the LSE. She served as a judge for the 2018 SI Leeds Prize. Her bylines have appeared in The Guardian, The Times, and The Independent.

Twitter: @winniemi

Gautam Malkani is the author of *Distortion*, a novel about the twisted lives of young carers and the distortive effects of search engines and social media. He also wrote *Londonstani*. Alongside writing fiction, he spent 19 years as a journalist and commissioning editor at the Financial Times.

Twitter: @GautamMalkani

Chair:

Joe Sedgwick is the Editorial Services Officer at The Literary Consultancy, having started at the company as a paid intern in 2015. He has an English Literature and American Studies degree from Manchester University and an MA in Publishing from Kingston University. He has also undertaken internships at Palgrave MacMillan and Bloomsbury. Joe supports TLC's core editorial and operational services, managing its team of readers and mentors and overseeing all database management. He is the first point of contact for all enquiries, and oversees the day-to-day running of the office. Joe is currently working towards becoming a qualified copy-editor through the Society for Editors and Proofreaders.

Twitter: @JoeSedgwick20

11:45 - 12:45 PM How publishing really works: Your questions answered

This interactive session will give you an exclusive opportunity to put your questions to a panel of literary agents and editors. If you've always wanted to know what agents really do and what editors are looking for from a manuscript, this is your chance to find out! Please send us your questions to put to the panel ahead of the session for this Question Time style event. Featuring literary agents, Lorella Belli and Federica Martin-Leonardis. Chaired by Rukhsana Yasmin, deputy editor of Wasafiri.

Speakers:

Lorella Belli studied languages and literature at the University of Venice and has worked in publishing since 1996. She set up LBLA Ltd in London's Notting Hill in 2002 and represents bestselling, award-winning, self-published and debut authors and clients worldwide (fiction, non-fiction; both commercial and literary).

The agency also handles UK rights on behalf of US and foreign literary agencies, and thanks to its broad international reach, are very successful at selling translation rights on behalf of publishers and other literary agencies, as well as our own authors. We work with co-agents in the USA and worldwide, as well as with film/TV agents, to ensure our writers are represented in all media and territories. We are particularly proud to represent authors from many different countries and are interested in books with a multi-cultural perspective and a genuine potential to sell well in the UK and internationally.

Twitter: @lblaUK

Federica Leonardis is the founder of Martin Leonardis Literary Management. Her past publishing career includes roles at Ed Victor Literary Agency, Orion Publishing Group, and Rogers, Coleridge & White Literary Agency before setting up on her own in July 2016. She's looking for commercial, cross-over and reading group adult fiction in various genres as long as they have inspiring characters, universal dilemmas and compelling plots. She's also interested in some non-fiction such as food writing and cookery, business, psychology, smart thinking and self-help. She welcomes submissions from writers regardless of race, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, political affiliation, or socio-economic background.

Twitter: @MissLeonardis

Chair:

Rukhsana Yasmin entered publishing in 2005 with a Diversity in Publishing Traineeship at Saqi Books. Prior to this she worked in the world of digital media, developing online marketing campaigns and project managing websites. Rukhsana has worked at Profile Books as editor where she acquired the award winning *In The Place of Justice* by Wilbert Rideau and *From Dictatorship to Democracy* by Gene Sharp. Rukhsana is now Deputy Editor at Wasafiri. She won the prestigious Kim Scott Walwyn Prize for women in publishing 2012.

Twitter: @rukhsanayasmin

1:45 - 2:45 PM Book launch: The Asian Writer 10 Year Anniversary Collection

The Asian Writer has been championing British Asian writers since 2007. This new collection published to mark the online magazine's ten year anniversary, brings together a selection of its much-loved contents in print for the first time. Emerging voices, CG Menon, Farhana Khalique, Mona Dash, Emma Smith-Barton will read from their work and discuss what role the magazine has played in their writing journey. Chaired by Farhana Shaikh.

Speakers:

Mona Dash writes fiction and poetry and her work has been anthologised widely and published in international journals. She has a Masters in Creative Writing (with distinction) from the London Metropolitan University. Her work includes 'Untamed Heart' (Tara India Research Press, 2016), her first novel and two collections of poetry 'Dawn- Drops' (Writer's Workshop, 2001) 'A certain way' (Skylark Publications, UK 2016) Mona was awarded a 'Poet of excellence' award in the House of Lords in 2016. Her short stories have been shortlisted and longlisted in various competitions such as The Asian Writer, Fish Short story, Strand International, Words and Women, UK, to name some. Mona leads a double life; she is a Telecoms Engineer and a MBA and works full time in a global technology organisation. Originally from India, she lives in London.
Twitter: @Dash2Mona

Farhana Khalique is a teacher, voiceover and writer from south-west London. She has been teaching English for over twelve years, and is often heard on TV as a Channel 4 announcer. Farhana's stories have been published in Issue 1 of *The Good Journal*, in *sister-hood* magazine, and in the *Happy Birthday to Me* (2010), *Dividing Lines* (2017) and *City of Stories* (2017) anthologies. She was also longlisted for the Bath Flash Fiction Award 2018 (Feb. round), shortlisted for The Asian Writer Short Story Prize 2018, and won a Word Factory Apprentice Award 2018.
Twitter: @HanaKhalique

CG Menon is the author of *Subjunctive Moods*. She's won or been placed in a number of competitions, including the Fish, Bridport, Bare Fiction and Short Fiction Journal awards. Her work has been broadcast on radio, and she's been a judge for several international short fiction competitions. She has a PhD in pure mathematics and is studying for a creative writing MA at City University. She's currently working on her first novel, set in 1980s Malaysia.
Twitter: @cg_menon

Emma Smith-Barton was born in South Wales to Pakistani parents. Growing up between cultures has heavily influenced her writing and she is especially interested in exploring themes of identity and belonging. Before writing, she taught in secondary schools for six years and is passionate about increasing awareness of mental health in young people. Her short stories have appeared in various publications such as Mslexia, The Bristol Short Story Prize 2016 anthology and The Asian Writer anthologies (under her pseudonym for adult fiction, Amna Khokher). Her first novel for young adults, *The Million Pieces of Neena Gill*, will be published by Penguin Random House in July 2019.

Twitter: @AmnaKhokher

Chair: Farhana Shaikh

3:00 - 4:00 PM Genre Fiction: Is the only way up commercial?

Sales of genre fiction have rocketed in recent years with thriller and detective novels now outselling all other fiction. At the same time, literary fiction sales have dropped dramatically and a recent report by ALCS has found author earnings are dwindling. In this session, writers of genre fiction discuss and debate whether now is the time to embrace commercial fiction. Featuring Ayisha Malik and Amer Anwar, in conversation with Namita Elizabeth Chakrabarty.

Speakers:

Amer Anwar grew up in West London. After leaving college he had a variety of jobs, including; warehouse assistant, comic book lettering artist, a driver for emergency doctors and chalet rep in the French Alps. He eventually landed a job as a creative artworker/graphic designer and spent a decade and a half producing artwork, mainly for the home entertainment industry. He holds an MA in Creative Writing from Birkbeck, University of London and is a winner of the Crime Writers' Association Debut Dagger Award. *Brothers in Blood* is his debut novel and the first in the Zaq and Jags series. Twitter: @ameranwar

Ayisha Malik is a British Muslim born and raised in South London. She holds a First Class MA in Creative Writing. Her novels *Sofia Khan is Not Obligated* and *The Other Half of Happiness*, starring 'the Muslim Bridget Jones' were met with critical acclaim. She was a WHSmith Fresh Talent Pick, contributed to the anthology *A Change is Gonna Come* (Stripes Publishing): short stories and poems by BAME authors. Ayisha is also the ghost writer for Great British Bake Off winner, Nadiya Hussain. Twitter: @Ayisha_Malik

Chair:

Namita Elizabeth Chakrabarty is an interdisciplinary artist using creative and critical writing to explore themes of race, gender and sexuality. The novel emerging from her doctoral study, *If Hamlet was a Girl*, was long-listed for the 2016 Peggy Chapman-Andrews Award for a First Novel, while a story 'Eurovision' short-listed the Asian Writer Short Story Prize is published in *Dividing Lines* (2017). Her creative and critical work has appeared in English and in translation, in books and journals and online, including in *Critical Race Theory in England*, *New Writing Dundee*, *Women and the Arts*, *Glänta*, *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *Research in Drama Education*, and her poetry has appeared in *Visual Verse*. At present Namita Elizabeth is working on a literary crime novel. Twitter: @DrNChakrabarty

4:15 - 5:45 PM SI Leeds Prize Readings

Words of Colour director, Joy Francis hosts the shortlist of the 2018 SI Leeds Literary Prize for a lively roundtable of discussions and readings. Joy will be speaking to the authors about their books, experiences and the current publishing climate. Come along to hear some exciting new voices in literature. Featuring Kavita Bhanot, Mona Dash, Omega Douglas, Yoanna Pak, Yvonne Singh and Shereen Tadros. In partnership with SI Leeds Prize.

MANDELA ROOM

10:30 - 11:30 AM Going mainstream: From self-publisher to Penguin

Sufiya Ahmed will discuss her writing journey from self-publishing to landing a publishing deal with Penguin. Sufiya will draw on her experiences as a children's/YA author initially self publishing and marketing her own books, to working in schools as a published author. She will invite you to share your own experiences and discuss the recent #ReflectingRealities report in this interactive session.

Speaker:

Sufiya Ahmed is the award winning author of the Young Adult novel, *Secrets of the Henna Girl*. She is a public speaker on girls' rights. Sufiya regularly visits secondary schools to deliver author sessions and participates in book festivals. She has addressed over 10,000 pupils in 130 schools. She also discusses her previous career in the Houses of Parliament to educate and inspire pupils about the democratic process and discusses how her political activism influences her writing. Sufiya's 2019 publishing release includes a picture book *Miss Bandari's Big Golden Heart* with Tiny Owl Publishing and an essay in *It's Not About the Burqa*. Sufiya is the founder and director of the BIBI Foundation, a non profit organisation which arranges visits to the Houses of Parliament for diverse and underprivileged children. She regularly contributes to the Huffington Post and The Independent.

Twitter: @sufiyaahmed

12:55 - 13:35 AM Agent one-to-ones

Jamilah Ahmed has worked in publishing for over fifteen years, as a Development Editor, Commissioning Editor, and most recently Literary Agent. Her remit at the Barbara Levy Literary Agency is to find new writers of fiction and non-fiction. She is also a Prize administrator for the Jhalak Prize 2019. Jamilah has had her own fiction and non-fiction published, as well as winning The Asian Writers Short Story Award in 2016, and the SI Leeds Readers Choice Award, 2016.

Twitter: @JamilahSyal

Jonathan Ruppin has worked in the UK book trade for 23 years, including 13 years at London's most famous bookshop Foyles. He founded The Ruppin Agency in 2017 – handling literary and commercial fiction and serious non-fiction – with the aim of promoting writers from underrepresented communities. He has judged a dozen literary awards, including the Costa Novel Award, the Geoffrey Faber Memorial Prize and Desmond Elliott Award. He has interviewed hundreds of authors in print and on stage, and his journalism encompasses television, radio and print.

Twitter: @tintiddle

MASTERCLASSES (HELD IN THE MANDELA ROOM)

11:45 - 12:45 PM Masterclass: Finding your voice with Preetha Leela Chockalingam

In this masterclass, published writer Preetha Chockalingam will invite you to consider the importance of viewpoint and voice in capturing the spirit of your work in progress. How do you decide to tell a story in the first person or third and which point of view should you use? Through a series of practical exercises, Preetha will help you to find the natural rhythm of your writing and show you how best to capture your voice.

Speaker:

Preetha Leela Chockalingam is a Writer, Editor and Writing Tutor with a background in prose. Starting out as a copywriter in India, she went on to become a literary editor and journalist in the UK. As a writer, Preetha is published by Puffin Books India, Ibbey Books UK and Monsoon Press, UK. The novel is her favourite genre, but she also loves writing screenplays and short stories. She is currently a writing mentor on the 'Pen to Print' programme run by Barking and Dagenham Libraries. Preetha holds an MA in Creative Writing from Sheffield Hallam University.

Twitter: @SaraswathiDurga.

1:45 - 2:45 PM Masterclass: Writing short stories with Susmita Bhattacharya

In this masterclass, prolific short story writer Susmita Bhattacharya will teach the art of writing short stories. You will begin by discussing how to generate good ideas, then look at beginnings and endings, and learn how to think out of the box when working on a short story.

Speaker:

Susmita Bhattacharya was born in Mumbai. Her short fiction has been widely published, been nominated for the Pushcart Prize and broadcast on BBC Radio 4. Her novel, *The Normal State of Mind*, (Parthian Books, 2015/ Bee Books India, 2016) was long listed for the Words to Screen Prize by the Mumbai Association of Moving Images (MAMI) in 2018. She teaches contemporary fiction at Winchester University. She also facilitates the Mayflower Young Writers workshops, a SO:Write project based in Southampton. Her short story collection, *Table Manners*, is published by Dahlia Publishing.

Twitter: @Susmitatweets

3:00 - 4:00 PM A New Wave of Female Poets

Shivaneer Ramlochan joins us during her UK tour, to read from her Forward Prize shortlisted collection, *Everyone Knows I am a Haunting*. Shivaneer will be joined by Hafsa Aneela Bashir, Khairani Barokka, and Shazea Quraishi who will read from their first collections, *The Celox* and *the Clot, Rope* and *The Art of Scratching*. Writers will discuss their influences and inspirations and discuss the emerging poetry scene. Presented in association with Renaissance One.

Speakers:

Khairani Barokka is an Indonesian writer, poet, and artist in London, whose work has been presented extensively, in thirteen countries. Okka has received six residencies, multiple grants, and award nominations; among her honours, she was an NYU Tisch Departmental Fellow for her masters, and is a UNFPA Indonesian Young Leader Driving Social Change for arts practice and research. Okka is creator of shows such as *Eve and Mary Are Having Coffee*; co-editor of *HEAT: A Southeast Asian Urban Anthology* (Fixinovo) and *Stairs and Whispers: D/deaf and Disabled Poets Write Back* (Nine Arches); author-illustrator of *Indigenous Species* (Tilted Axis) and author of poetry collection *Rope* (Nine Arches). Her most recent art commission was *Annah: Nomenclature* for the ICA in August. She is a Visual Cultures PhD Researcher at Goldsmiths.

Twitter: @mailbykite

Hafsa Aneela Bashir is a British Pakistani writer, performance poet and playwright with an MA in Postcolonial Literary and Culture from the University of Leeds. She has a keen interest in writing as a form of resistance and liberty. With a strong focus on amplifying marginalized voices, she facilitates and delivers creative writing workshops within the community. Her work has been published in anthologies, *When Saira Met Sarah*, *80 Decibels above Sound*, *Elevator Fiction* and *Shots In The Dark* by Crocus Books. Her debut poetry collection launches in October 2018 published by Burning Eye Books. She is Co-Director of Outside The Frame Arts collective and is a 'Leader Of Tomorrow' with the Artistic Directors Leadership Programme 2018.

Twitter: @Hafsa_A_Bashir

Shazea Quraishi is a Pakistani-born Canadian poet and translator whose poems have appeared in UK and US publications including *The Financial Times*, *The Guardian*, *Modern Poetry in Translation* and *Poetry Review*. Her collection 'The Art of Scratching' was published by Bloodaxe Books in 2015, and she is adapting her chapbook 'The Courtesans Reply' as a play. She teaches with The Poetry School and Translators in Schools, and is an artist in residence with Living Words.

Shivaneer Ramlochan is a Trinidadian poet, arts reporter and book blogger. She reviews Caribbean literature for the Trinidad and Tobago Guardian's Sunday Arts Section, and is the Book Reviews Editor for Caribbean Beat Magazine. Shivaneer writes about books for the NGC Bocas Lit Fest, the Anglophone Caribbean's largest literary festival, as well as Paper Based Bookshop, Trinidad and Tobago's oldest independent Caribbean specialty bookseller. She is the deputy editor of The Caribbean Review of Books.

Twitter: @novelniche