

# NGC Bocas Lit Fest 2024 PROGRAMME

## 25 to 28 APRIL TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

Daytime events take place in the National Library and Old Fire Station, Abercromby and Hart Streets, Port of Spain. All events (except workshops and First Citizens National Poetry Slam Finals) are free to the public — no tickets required. Register in advance for workshops. #bocas2024

**ONE ON ONE**  
In her new book *Ordinary Notes*, Christina Sharpe steps past conventions of academic scholarship and literary genre to explore public and private histories, Blackness, language, memory, and the power of art. In conversation with **Gabrielle Hosein**  
1-2 pm • Old Fire Station

**WORKSHOP**  
**Reading for Mental Health**, with **Ella Berthoud**  
How does reading enhance your well-being? In a world of digital overload, escaping into fiction provides an essential tool kit to enhance personal and professional life. This unique, interactive session will explain the full psychology of reading and end with personalised book prescriptions  
1-3 pm • 1st Floor Seminar Room

**BIG IDEAS**  
**The History We Need**  
The late historians Brinsley Samaroo and Gérard Besson had different approaches to their research, but shared a passion for documenting and narrating T&T's past, always with an eye on the present. What are their legacies for today's writers of history, scholarly or literary, academic or popular? Historians and writers **Bridget Brereton**, **Claudius Fergus**, and **Jerome Teelucksingh** tackle these questions in conversation with **Judy Raymond**  
1-2.30 pm • AV Room

**TAKE TWO**  
In this cross-genre session, **Canisia Lubrin** (*Code Noir*) and **Nicole Sealey** (*The Ferguson Report*) read from their searing books about history, race, and justice, writing from and back to formal archives, in conversation with **Michael A. Bucknor**  
2-3 pm • Old Fire Station

**SALON**  
**Black Light Void: Between the Brushstrokes**  
What do you see and feel when you experience a work of art? Join **Marsha Pearce**, editor of *Black Light Void: Dark Visions of the Caribbean*, and artist **Edward Bowen** in this interactive, hands-on salon session, as they share art from the new book to spark your creative expression. Participants will be invited to write, draw, and make collages in response to the images in *Black Light Void*  
2-4 pm • 2nd Floor Seminar Room

**TAKE THREE**  
What can poetry do that other forms of writing can't? T&T poets **Paula Obé Thomas** (*Remembering her brown head-tie*), **Ruth Osman** (*All Made of Longing*), and **Derron Sandy** (*The Chaos*) read from their work exploring family and ancestry, love, loss, public and private tensions and tenderness, in conversation with **Desirée Seebaran**  
2.30-3.30 pm • AV Room

**TAKE TWO**  
Novelists **Rabindranath Maharaj** (*The Amazing Absorbing Boy*, *Fatboy Fall Down*) and **Kevin Jared Hosein** (*Hungry Ghosts*) discuss their fictional explorations of Trinidad's past and present, secrets and ambitions, in conversation with **Camille Hernández-Ramdar**  
3-4 pm • Old Fire Station

**TAKE TWO**  
The bonds of family — and the very definition of "family" — are at the heart of new novels by **Myriam J.A. Chancy** (*Village Weavers*) and **Barbara Lalla** (*By Such a Parting Light*). They read from and discuss their books, in conversation with **Alake Pilgrim**  
3.30-4.30 pm • AV Room

**AMAZING SCENES**  
**The launch of the long-awaited collection of Seepersad Naipaul's Journalism**  
Originally published in the *Trinidad Guardian* in the 1930s and '40s and long unavailable to readers, Seepersad Naipaul's articles are vivid accounts of a boisterous colonial society. A new selected edition gives this "lost" writing back to us. With an introduction by publisher **Jeremy Poynting** and conversation and readings by co-editors **Kenneth Ramchand**, **Nivedita Misra**, and **Aaron Eastley**  
4-5.30 pm • Old Fire Station  
In partnership with the *Friends of Mr. Biswas* and *Peepal Tree Press*

**FIRST CITIZENS NATIONAL POETRY SLAM FINAL**  
**The festival's grand finale!**  
It's the year's biggest night of poetry, as T&T's top performance poets vie for the championship and the first prize of TT\$50,000  
6.30-9 pm • Queen's Hall  
Tickets \$200

### THURSDAY 25 APRIL

**SPIRITS IN THE DARK**  
Celebrating the 30th anniversary of the groundbreaking novel by **H. Nigel Thomas**  
The Vincentian-Canadian author reflects on his landmark debut novel, first published in 1993, exploring Caribbean-Canadian LGBTQI+ issues, and what has and hasn't changed a generation later — in an intimate, far-ranging conversation with writer and activist **Angelique V. Nixon**  
7-8.30 pm • The Writers Centre, 14 Alcazar Street  
In partnership with the High Commission of Canada

**CAISO presents BackChat: Celebrating Caribbean LGBTQI+ Voices: We Resist. We Empower. We Are Fierce**  
A festival favourite returns: poetry and music, stories and celebration, with some of T&T's most exciting LGBTQI+ voices and surprise guests  
9 pm until • CB's Bar and Lounge, 15 Rust Street

### FRIDAY 26 APRIL

**WELCOME TO THE FESTIVAL!**  
The NGC Bocas Lit Fest is back, for our 14th year! As we kick off, a NALIS representative welcomes audiences to the home of the festival, and festival director **Nicholas Laughlin** tells us what to expect over the coming days  
10-10.30 am • Old Fire Station

**WRITERS FIRST**  
Our series of free seminars for early-career and self-published authors returns, covering crucial aspects of the book business and tips to help unlock your creativity:

- **Helen Johnson**, Director, Information Networks Division at NALIS, on turning your book into an accessible ebook or audiobook
- **Aimée Felone**, Managing Director of the UK children's and young adult publisher Knights Of, on writing and publishing for young audiences  
10 am-12 pm • AV Room

**WORKSHOP**  
**Fantastic Friday: Genre Fiction 101**, with **Kevin Jared Hosein**  
A special interactive writing workshop for teens! Are you a lover of fantasy, speculative fiction, or horror? And ready to take your writing to the next level? The winner of the 2024 OCM Bocas Prize for Fiction offers practical tips and exercises to help you expand your imagination  
10 am-12 pm • 1st Floor Seminar Room  
Requires registration via schools; email [chinvere@bocaslitfest.com](mailto:chinvere@bocaslitfest.com)

**FANTASTIC FRIDAY: TAKE TWO**  
SFF writers **Karen Lord** (*The Blue, Beautiful World*, longlisted for the 2024 Women's Prize for Fiction) and **Premee Mohamed** (*No One Will Come Back for Us*) kick off our special day of events focused on Caribbean speculative fiction and fantasy, with readings and a conversation with **Akilah White**  
10.30-11.30 am • Old Fire Station  
In partnership with the *JB Fernandes Memorial Trust*

**THE TRAVELLING JOURNAL**  
Launching the latest *We Lit!* Student Chapbook! With readings from selected writers  
12-12.30 pm • Abercromby Street Arcade  
In partnership with the *JB Fernandes Memorial Trust*

**FANTASTIC FRIDAY: STAND AND DELIVER**  
It's a special version of our popular open mic event, just for writers of speculative fiction and fantasy! Hosted by **Jayron Remy**  
12.30-1.30 pm • Abercromby Street Arcade

**FANTASTIC FRIDAY: TAKE TWO**  
**Irenosen Okojie** (*Nudibranch*) reads from her tales of strange realities, and talks about her Afrofuturist festival *Black to the Future* — with host **Brandon O'Brien**  
1-2 pm • Old Fire Station  
In partnership with the *British Council*

**WRITERS FIRST**  
Our series of seminars for budding and self-published authors continues:

• **Natalie Fiwwo**, producer for the Africa Writes festival, on using digital content to promote your work  
• Literary agent **Elise Dillsworth** on the whats, hows, and whys of agenting  
1-3 pm • AV Room

**WORKSHOP**  
**Fantastic Friday: World-building 101**, with **Premee Mohamed**  
Creating a convincing and coherent imaginary world is a key task for all fiction writers — and especially those writing speculative fiction and fantasy. Where do you start, and what are the key techniques of imagination and craft?  
1.30-3 pm • 1st Floor Seminar Room

**FANTASTIC FRIDAY: NEW TALENT SHOWCASE**  
Meet four up-and-coming fantasy writers from Trinidad and Tobago, and hear from their works in progress! Featuring **Dixie-Ann Belle**, **Jolanda Charles**, **Janine Mendes-Franco**, and **Vindhar Suraj**  
2-3 pm • Old Fire Station

**FANTASTIC FRIDAY: TAKE TWO**  
SFF writers **R.S.A. Garcia** (*The Nightward*) and **Zalika Reid-Benta** (*River Mumma*) explore re-inventing traditional Caribbean folklore for a new generation of fantasy readers, in conversation with **Breanne Mc Ivor**  
3-4 pm • Old Fire Station

**NEW VOICES**  
A special showcase of debut and self-published books by T&T authors, exploring a diversity of voices, subjects, and styles. Featuring **Troy Hadeed**, **Jessica Gopaul**, **Yansie Rolston**, **Joel Frederick**, **Christine Salandy**, **Stuart W. Ramon Fortuné**, **True Nicks**, and **Shehnaz Mohammed**, hosted by **Jean-Claude Cournand**  
3-4.30 pm • AV Room

**BIG IDEAS**  
**They don't write them like they used to**  
Do people read the print newspapers mostly for the columns? What should good analysis in the daily press look like? Can a column in the daily newspapers be considered "literary"? And what are the legacies of late star columnists like Keith Smith, Wayne Brown, and B.C. Pires?  
**Marina Salandy-Brown** leads a discussion on the present and future of the newspaper column, with journalists **Asha Javeed**, **Mark Lyndersay**, and **Franka Philip**  
4-5.30 pm • Old Fire Station

**AT THE FULL AND CHANGE OF THE MOON**  
A big night of words and music at the **Big Black Box**, celebrating the 25th anniversary of the landmark novel by **Dionne Brand**  
A novel that ranges over centuries and continents, full of unforgettable voices and stories, *At the Full and Change of the Moon* is the definition of a classic — ripe for rediscovery by today's readers. Author **Dionne Brand** reads from her fiction masterpiece, with dramatised readings by **elisha efua bartels**, **Mandisa Granderson**, and **Conrad Parris** — plus music from **3canal!** Get ready for revolutionary ideas and words!  
7 pm until • Big Black Box, 33 Murray Street, Woodbrook

### SATURDAY 27 APRIL

**ONE ON ONE**  
*Nomenclature: New and Collected Poems* firmly establishes **Dionne Brand** as one of the major poets writing in any language today. Ranging from her experience of the Grenada Revolution to the Iraq War of the early 1990s to the catastrophes of the burning present, these poems combine an acute political awareness with deep formal experiment. She joins **Shivane Ramlochan** for a wide-ranging conversation about literary commitment  
10-11 am • Old Fire Station

**FILM + TRIBUTE**  
**Green Days by the River**  
Our two-part tribute to the late T&T author Michael Anthony begins with the film adaptation of his beloved 1967 novel, followed by a conversation between filmmaker **Michael Moolleedhar**, scholar **Roydon Salick** (*Mayaro Gold: The Fiction*

of *Michael Anthony*), and writer **Hadassah Williams**, with interlocutor **Rose-Ann Walker**  
10 am-12.30 pm • AV Room  
In partnership with 24P

**WORKSHOP**  
**Postcard Poems**, with **Kayo Chingonyi**  
An exploration of the possibilities of mixing text and image to form epistolary poems drawn from the particular sensory resonances of a place, led by the award-winning UK poet and editor  
10 am-12 pm • 1st Floor Seminar Room

**BIG IDEAS**  
**Quarrelling with History**  
How are conflicts and tensions of the present — from racism to war in the Middle East, xenophobia to climate change — rooted in injustices of the past? And what is the work of the creative imagination in envisioning better and more just futures? **Christina Sharpe** (*In the Wake, Ordinary Notes*), **Karen Lord** (*The Blue, Beautiful World*), and **Myriam J.A. Chancy** (*Harvesting Haiti*) join the debate, moderated by **D. Alissa Trotz**  
11 am-12.30 pm • Old Fire Station

**STAND AND DELIVER**  
Our signature open mic event is back! With special guest readings by members of the Tobago Writers Guild: **Crystal Gittens Cabie**, **Deidre Prescod**, and **Clement Williams**. Hosted by **Amir Denzel Hall**  
12.30-1.30 pm • Abercromby Street Arcade

**TAKE TWO**  
**Marchelle Farrell** (*Uprooting*) and **Safiya Sinclair** (*How to Say Babylon*) discuss their new memoirs exploring the making and remaking of the self in contention with history, family, nature, and religion, in conversation with **Tracy Assing**  
1.30-2.30 pm • Old Fire Station

**TAKE TWO**  
**Carol Mitchell** (*What Start Bad a Mornin'*) and **Shinie Antony** (*Can't*) read from and discuss their new novels about how secrets from the past complicate the present, in conversation with **Caroline Mackenzie**  
1.30-2.30 pm • AV Room

**WORKSHOP**  
**Short Short**, with **Zalika Reid-Benta**  
For most budding fiction writers, the short story is where their journey begins. What are the fundamentals of good short fiction, and what lessons do shorter forms teach a writer about moving on to the novel?  
2-4 pm • 1st Floor Seminar Room

**TAKE TWO**  
**Ingrid Persaud** (*The Lost Love Songs of Boyse Singh*) and **Soraya Palmer** (*The Human Origins of Beatrice Porter & Other Essential Ghosts*) share their new novels about tempestuous families, dangerous loves, and a longing for freedom, with host **Teresa White**  
2.30-3.30 pm • Old Fire Station

**LIFE WRITING**  
New biographies by **Vaneisa Baksh** (*Son of Grace*) and **Celeste Mohammed** (*A Different Energy*) tackle real-life stories about breaking through barriers of race, class, and gender. They discuss their books with **Franka Philip**  
2.30-3.30 pm • AV Room

**ONE ON ONE**  
In her International Booker Prize-winning novel *Tomb of Sand*, **Geetanjali Shree** explores the traumas of history and how they shape the present — and what it means to be a woman in today's India. She talks about the groundbreaking elements of this work with **Ira Mathur**  
3.30-4.30 pm • Old Fire Station

**TAKE TWO**  
Family and legacy are constant themes for poets **Anthony Joseph** (*Sonnets for Albert*) and **Kayo Chingonyi** (*A Blood Condition*). They read and discuss their most recent books with **Arielle John**  
3.30-4.30 pm • AV Room

**WRITERS UNION PRESENTS**  
A festival fixture returns: members of the Writers Union of T&T share their latest work and offer a

snapshot of current directions in contemporary Caribbean writing, with special guest **Carol Mitchell**  
4.30-6 pm • AV Room

**OLE MAS COMPETITION AND EXTEMPO DEBATE**  
Ideas meet costumes and performance in T&T's traditional protest masquerade, on the theme "Quarrelling with History" — plus **Black Sage** and **Dion Diaz**, two of T&T's wittiest calypsonians, face off in the ever-popular Extempo Debate!  
4.30-6 pm • Hart Street Arcade  
In partnership with the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts

**OCM BOCAS PRIZE + BOCAS HENRY SWANZY AWARD**  
**2024 announcement ceremony**  
The festival's centrepiece award ceremony recognises the past year's best books of poetry, fiction, and literary non-fiction, and the winner of this year's award for distinguished service to Caribbean letters. Hosted by **Ardene Sirjoo**  
7-11 pm • Esperanza Alta, St. Ann's  
By invitation only

### SUNDAY 28 APRIL

**ONE ON ONE**  
Haitian-American writer and 2024 OCM Bocas Prize chief judge **Edwidge Danticat** is one of the contemporary Caribbean's most beloved authors. She speaks with **Elizabeth Walcott-Hackshaw** about the roots of her work, and if and how writing can bridge gaps of empathy  
10-11 am • Old Fire Station

**FILMS**  
**We Rebuild. We Reclaim.**  
This touring programme of short films curated by *We Are Parable* and supported by the British Council explores Black British and Caribbean people's experience, reflecting on wider issues of migration and identity  
10-11.30 am • AV Room  
In partnership with the *British Council*

**WORKSHOP**  
**Inner Landscapes**, with **Marchelle Farrell**  
What does it mean to be in intimate relationship with the landscape? The author of *Uprooting* (winner of the 2021 Nan Shepherd Prize for Nature Writing) leads a relaxed writing session where you are encouraged to explore the relationship between our inner and outer worlds  
10 am-12 pm • 1st Floor Seminar Room

**A LITERARY FRIENDSHIP**  
**Launching the late Gordon Rohlehr's book on his long friendship with Kamau Brathwaite**  
Combining penetrating insight with frank self-awareness, *A Literary Friendship* is at once memoir, literary analysis, and meditation on fame and obscurity. Publisher **Jeremy Poynting** introduces this important work, followed by a conversation among scholars and writers **Aaron Kamugisha**, **Anu Lakhani**, and **Paula Morgan**, chaired by **Barbara Lalla**  
11 am-12.30 pm • Old Fire Station  
In partnership with *Peepal Tree Press*

**BOCAS BREAKTHROUGH FELLOWS SHOWCASE**  
Readings from works in progress by the five 2024 Bocas Breakthrough Fellows: **June Aming**, **Heather Barker**, **Stephanie Koathes**, **Rhea Manley**, and **Amilcar Sanatan**. Introduced by **Shivane Ramlochan**  
11.30 am-12.30 pm • AV Room  
In partnership with *Creative Caribbean*

**STAND AND DELIVER**  
Our signature open mic event is back! With special guest readings by members of the Tobago Writers Guild: **Chrisan Daniel-Roachford**, **Kevon Foderingham**, and **Latoyaa Roberts**. Hosted by **Jayron Remy**  
12.30-1.30 pm • Abercromby Street Arcade

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