



# FESTIVAL REPORT



## STORYMOJA HAY FESTIVAL Nairobi 15–18 September 2011



IDEAS



MUSIC



EDUCATION



Yusef Komunyakaa

“ Kenya does have its problems, but that doesn't mean culture has to die here. Culture could be just the thing that saves us. ”  
Chief Nyamweya

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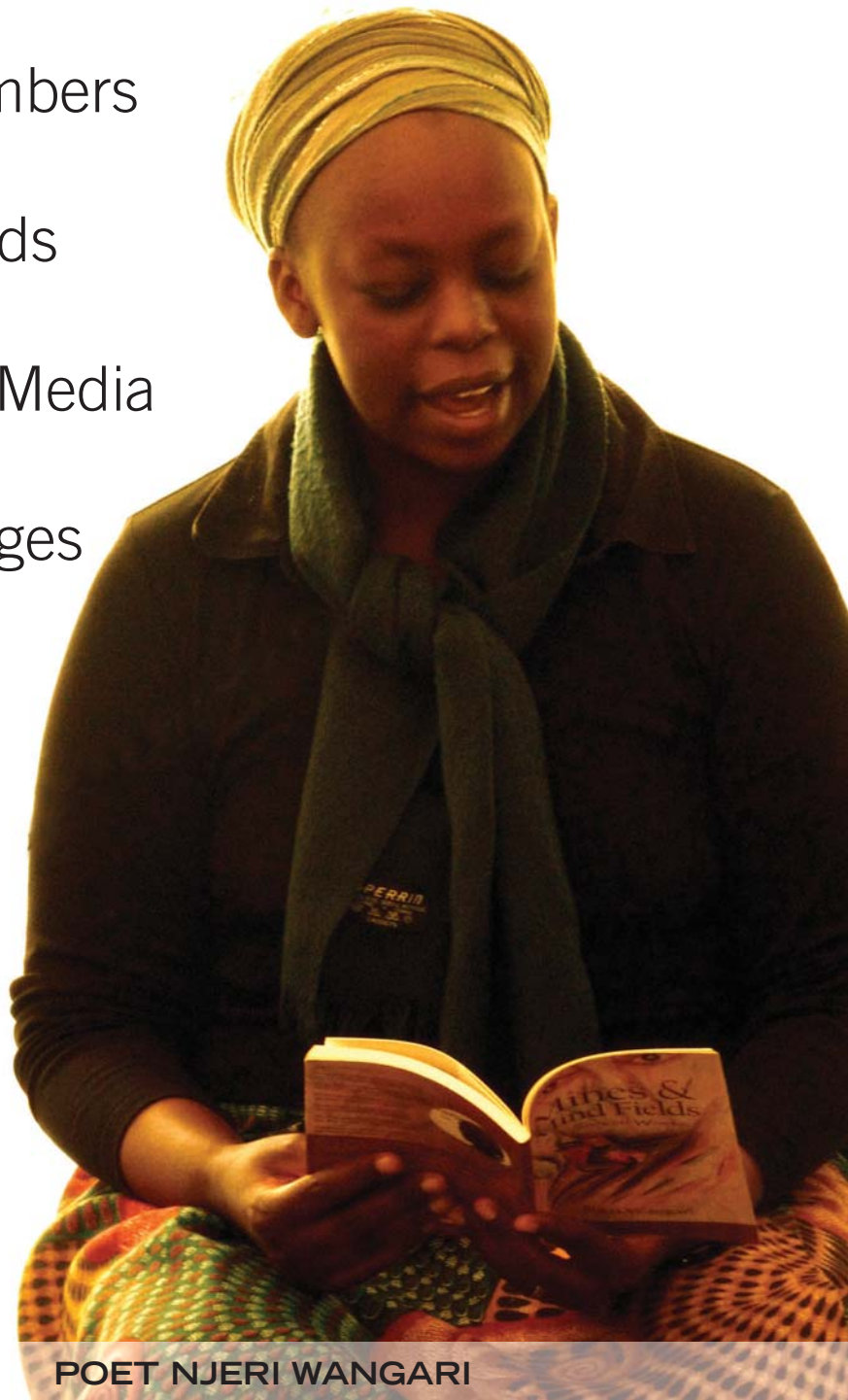
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Thank You



POET NJERI WANGARI





# STORYMOJA HAY FESTIVAL NAIROBI 2011

Storymoja Hay Festival is a collaboration between Kenyan publishers Storymoja and Hay Festival to create a forum for sharing great literature, poetry and ideas in the country's capital, Nairobi.

From the grounds of the Railways Sports Club in Nairobi's Uhuru (Freedom) Park, with a backdrop of the city skyline, we celebrated the third annual Storymoja Hay Festival from 15–18 September. Poetry and storytelling, technology, culture, Gay rights, religion, football, politics, comedy and music were all shared over the four days of the festival. Artists came from Australia, America, Europe, and of course from across Africa.

The Festival is supported by the British Council, the US Embassy, Google, the Australian Government's Australia Council for the Arts, The Telegraph Media Group, Arts Council England, Oxfam, the Dutch Foundation for Literature, and a wide coalition of cultural organisations.

## ABOUT STORYMOJA

Storymoja is a publishing company based in Nairobi. Five writers, committed to spreading the gospel of reading, writing and ideas formed the company in 2007. Their mission is to get a book in every hand in Kenya. [www.storymojafrica.co.ke](http://www.storymojafrica.co.ke)



# THE EVENTS

“ *The Storymoja Hay Festival is a big African mamma of a festival. It throws its big, generous arms around you, listens to what you have to say and then shows you how to dance to its rhythms... It was happy, chaotic and life-affirming. A bit like Africa itself.* ”

Peter Moore

Woven throughout the programme were the most magical events for children, held in the **Storyhippo Village**, where children published their own books, wrote songs, listened to stories, danced with the drummers and acrobats and watched the delightfully funny comedian for kids, **James Campbell**. Children had the chance to meet their heroes – comic artist **Chief Nyamweya**, children’s writer **Edwin Mokaya** and illustrator **Stian Hole**.

The festival was also a celebration of the **Get Kenya Reading** campaign that saw 84,000 children reading simultaneously in June 2011.



KIDS' COMEDIAN JAMES CAMPBELL GETS THE JOKES ROLLING

The **StoryHippo Village** was the joyful heart of the festival, full of colour, creativity and laughter.



STUDENTS AT AN EDUCATION WORKSHOP





KENYAN POET  
NGWATILO

## MASTERCLASS SERIES

The first two days of the festival were dedicated to masterclasses and workshops: **Yusef Komunyakaa**, **Njeri Wangari** and **Ben Okri** on poetry; writing for children with **Edwin Mokaya**; illustration with **Stian Hole**; creative writing with **Hari Kunzru** and **Peter Moore**; and storytelling with **Beth Lisick**, **Mshai Mwangola**, **Arline Klattel** and **Nick Hennessey**.

## GLOBALISATION & TECHNOLOGY

**Dayo Forster**, **Jonathan Ledgard** and **Hari Kunzru** gave their personal perspectives on the modern world we live in.

Google's **Susan Pointer** shared her passion for the power of the freedom of expression in the digital age with social activist and founder of the FeedKE campaign, **Ahmed Salims**.



BEN OKRI

## POETS

**Ben Okri**, **Yusef Komunyakaa**, **Sitawa Namwalie**, **Claudette Odour**, **Ngwatilo**, **Njeri Wangari** read work, shared experiences and captivated audiences.

## TRAVELLERS

**Abdelkader Benali** and **Peter Moore** compared notes on journeys across the continent of Africa, breaking hearts, riding Matatus and playing football along the way.

“*For a moment, we were all left reeling in our seats.*”

*The Telegraph*  
on poet Yusef Komunyakaa

## SOCIETY

Human rights, sexual minorities and religion were all the subject of a debate led by **David Kuria** of Gay Kenya and **MaqC**, lay preacher and GM of Gay and Lesbian Coalition of Kenya (GALCK).

## NEW WORKS

The festival was a showcase for new Kenyan writing from **Tony Mochama**, **Sitawa Namwalie**, **Rasna Warah** and **Claudette Odour**.



IN BETWEEN EVENTS





# THE FESTIVAL IN NUMBERS

**4** days

**65** festival events

**57** participating authors

**5,000** tickets

**4** hours of TV coverage

**4** dedicated editions of festival daily news sheet, *The Hayly Telegraph*

**4,300** articles in the press

**1,200** children attending



# THE FESTIVAL IN WORDS

“KENYA DOES HAVE ITS PROBLEMS, but that doesn’t mean culture has to die here. Culture could be just the thing that saves us.”

**Chief Nyamweya**

“IT’S ALMOST A MAGICAL EXPERIENCE to be here. One of the values of art is that it enables us to see each other more clearly.” **Ben Okri**



“THERE WAS SOMETHING OF THE LITERARY SALON about the atmosphere on this first day. The Kenyan audience hung on the words of the other speakers – as attentively as if they had found an oasis in the desert.”

***The Telegraph***

“THE STORYMOJA FESTIVAL IS THE MAIN THING ON MY mind – the literary extravaganza that we saw in Nairobi over the past weekend.” ***Nairobi Living***

“BEING AT THE FESTIVAL ON THIS THIRD DAY FELT A little like being on that [children’s] ride: every encounter demanded some kind of intellectual or imaginative realignment, a shift of viewpoint.” ***The Telegraph***

“HEARING KOMUNYAKAA READ HIS POETRY HAS BEEN one of the undoubted highlights of the festival so far: when he speaks, a spell is cast, and all other sounds, including the creaking of the lunar park, seem to fade to nothing.”

**Ben Secher, *The Telegraph***

“IT WAS FOR ME A FANTASTIC EXPERIENCE, ONE THAT WAS both nourishing and broadening and full of laughter. There was a great community of both participants and crew, and the Hay staff were fantastic.”

**Nick Hennessey, professional storyteller**



# THE FESTIVAL IN THE MEDIA

STORYMOJA HAY FESTIVAL 2011 ACHIEVED EXTENSIVE MEDIA coverage, including national and regional newspapers, online and national and international broadcast media.

## COVERAGE IN INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL & REGIONAL PRESS:

Over 25 pieces featured in titles including Nation, The Star, Business Daily, The East African Magazine, The Standard, The Telegraph and The Economist.

## MAGAZINE COVERAGE:

The Festival was mentioned in Forbes Magazine, Drum Magazine, Bingwa and on a full page feature in UP Magazine.

## COVERAGE ONLINE:

Minimum of 4,300 articles/festival mentions on web pages, blogs relating to arts and culture, travel and literature as well as social networks such as Facebook and Twitter.



## TELEVISION COVERAGE:

NTV – 2 x half-hour guest interviews during the breakfast show  
KBC – 1 x one-hour guest interview on *Good Morning Kenya*  
KTN – 2 x one-hour guest interviews about the festival on *KTN Sunrise LIVE*  
BBC World Service – interview with Sitawa Namwalie broadcast on Global News and 3 editions of *The World Today*

## RADIO COVERAGE:

Metro FM – 1 x half-hour guest interview on Lively Up Breakfast Show (value Ksh 150,000)  
East FM – 3 x half-hour guest interviews on the Breakfast Show (value Ksh 200,000)  
Radio Africa – Kiss FM and Classic FM Classified ads  
30 presenter mentions during week of festival





# THE FESTIVAL IN IMAGES



# MANY THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS

The Hay Festival programme at Storymoja 2011 was supported by:



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**The Telegraph**



LOTTERY FUNDED



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## PHOTOGRAPHY

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# THANK YOU

