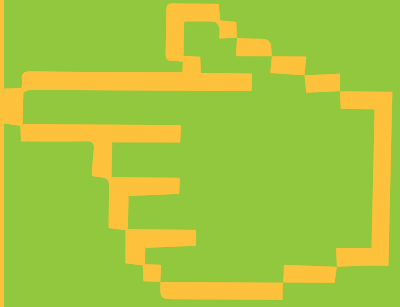
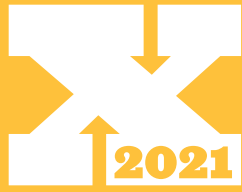


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Since its inception, the NGC Bocas Lit Fest has worked diligently in service of Caribbean literature, lending to the preservation of our national identity and heritage.

As proud title sponsor, NGC remains committed to supporting the NGC Bocas Lit Fest in its effort to develop the literary arts in Trinidad and Tobago and across the region. We celebrate your journey and salute your accomplishments.

BEST WISHES TO THE NGC BOCAS LIT FEST FOR CONTINUED SUCCESS IN THE CHAPTERS YET TO COME!

I never imagined we would be welcoming you to yet another virtual festival, but here we are, together again, at this annual celebration of Caribbean literature, the NGC Bocas Lit Fest, albeit via our computer screens.

Those of you who were in Trinidad for our festivals from 2011 to 2019 would know that being in the physical company of the writers we admire, and those we have learned from or derived a certain pleasure from, takes some beating. Fortunately, Bocas started streaming some of our festival events several years ago, so the transition to the flat screen has not been such a shock for some seasoned, if remote, festival followers. We on Team Bocas miss rubbing shoulders with you, but are delighted that you joined us last year and that so many of you have continued to access the 2020 events online.

To enhance what you enjoy, we started a project to digitise and archive our valuable audio and visual recordings, and through our new **Friends of the Bocas Lit Fest** you will have easy access. It's one of the ways in which the pandemic had a silver lining. We were able, too, to produce a **filmed literary walking tour of Port of Spain**, which Derek Walcott dubbed a "writer's heaven." It is being premiered during this festival. We also got the chance to put together a **commemorative anthology** of 10 years of Bocas writers, to be launched on Caribbean Literature Day on 12 July. It's just some of what we have been up to. See it all on our **completely redesigned website**. Please let us know what you think.

Last year was not such a good one for our writers. The lockdown put paid to most literary tours and festival appearances, leading to fewer book sales and less general recognition for the several memorable titles that appeared. Happily, quite a few of them ended up on prize shortlists and even took some big awards home. Our **2021 OCM Bocas Prize** longlist is impressive and I am sure the overall winner, to be announced on festival Saturday, will not disappoint. And the list of new books being published in 2021 is another very fair crop. We are showcasing some of those in our **Bios and Bookmarks** series of 24 author one-on-ones each year, already underway.

Wonderful new literary voices are coming through, and the Bocas festival programme continues to earmark **Stand and Deliver** for their readings. For those seeking to improve their writing, we have moved our **workshops** to a year-round cycle and you can find those online. As a Friend, you can also get a discount. The **First Citizens National Poetry Slam** final is scheduled for October, and in August we will host our very first **NGC Bocas Youth Festival**.

Our 2021 festival programme is rich in variety and includes videos, readings, and wonderful storytelling and animations for children. I hope you enjoy it all, and also the next eight months of ongoing virtual events for all age groups.

Marina Salandy-Brown
Festival Founder and Director

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Bocas continues to be an avenue for artistic expression and consumption, and a fillip to the creative industries

The National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited (NGC) is proud to stand as title sponsor of the NGC Bocas Lit Fest, now launching into the 2021 edition of the region's premier literary festival.

The world continues to grapple with the fallout from the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, and so once again, this year's festival will be delivered virtually to the literary faithful across the globe.

At a time of economic uncertainty, employment instability, and with scarce opportunity for collective diversions, the value of this festival is even more pronounced.

Bocas continues to be an avenue for artistic expression and consumption, and a fillip to the creative industries, which must begin to assume a greater role in national economic development. From the standpoint of sustainability, which is now the principal driver of strategy at NGC, this festival also maintains its role in preserving our local stories and articulating our culture through both written and spoken word.

The NGC Bocas Lit Fest shines bright as a beacon for Caribbean literature, constantly growing in audience, reach and impact. We at NGC remain committed partners of this beloved festival, and wish the team all the best for another successful edition.



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How to join our virtual festival

Tune in to the NGC Bocas Lit Fest on any of the following platforms:



www.bocaslitfest.com

[facebook.com/bocaslitfest.com](https://www.facebook.com/bocaslitfest.com)

[youtube.com/bocaslitfest.com](https://www.youtube.com/bocaslitfest.com)

Friday 23 April
4.30-9.30 pm

Saturday 24 April
10 am-8 pm

Sunday 25 April
9 am-7.30 pm

Accessing the Festival

All events of the festival are free and open to the online public. Tickets or registration information are NOT required. A Facebook or YouTube account is not required in order to view the Festival events on these platforms

The recordings of Festival's events will remain available on our Facebook and YouTube pages for a limited time post-Festival, for those wishing to revisit or view events at their leisure

NGC Children's Bocas Lit Fest

Children's programming takes place on Saturday 24 April at 10-10.30 am, and on Sunday 25 April at 9-10 am

Open mic

Stand and Deliver is our main platform for new writers of fiction, poetry or spoken word, where they can read their work for peers and the festival audience — check the programme!

Books and Merchandise

You can reserve, pre-order or pick up copies of any of the books on our programme (and others) from the Festival's booksellers:

Paper Based Bookshop

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 Email: paperbasedbookshop@gmail.com
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Metropolitan Book Suppliers

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Our Festival merchandise

T-shirts and tote bags are available on our website with online payment and local delivery via TPost, or in-store at Paper Based Bookshop. Trinidad and Tobago audiences can also purchase the Festival's commemorative 10-year anniversary poster by revered artist Jackie Hinkson from Paper Based or at 101 Art Gallery

Hashtag

Tweeting, blogging, or posting about the Festival online? Our 2021 hashtag is #bocas2021

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4.30-5 pm

Our 2021 festival goes live! We start with a look back at festival highlights from the past decade to mark the 10th anniversary of the NGC Bocas Lit Fest

5-5.30 pm

Welcome message from **Mark Loquan**, President of the National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago, commemorating ten years of the company's title sponsorship of the festival. Followed by **Stand and Deliver**: our signature open mic event for writers sharing fiction, poems, spoken word, and more.

6-7 pm

Crowdsourcing a canon

Online projects like Rebel Women Lit's Caribbean Readers' Awards and the Bocas Lit Fest's 100 Caribbean Books That Made Us draw on a community of avid readers, active on social media, to crowdsource ideas of what Caribbean books and writers matter most. How is our sense of a Caribbean literary canon — historical or contemporary — being reshaped by this predominantly young, female, and networked readership?

Writer **Donna Hemans**

— winner of the 2020 Caribbean Readers' Award for best adult fiction — and bookstagrammer

Ambika Jadoonanan

(ambi_reads) — winner of the best content creator award — join Rebel Women Lit founder

Jherane Patmore

and the Bocas Lit Fest's **Alana-Marie Gopaul** for a frank discussion

Presented in partnership with Rebel Women Lit

7-8 pm

Cereus Blooms at Night at 25

Celebrating the quarter-century anniversary of **Shani Mootoo's** groundbreaking and now classic debut novel and its impact on Caribbean LGBTQ literature. The author talks to **Shivane Ramlochan** about *Cereus* and the subsequent direction of her career, while writers **Andre Bagoo**, **Nadja Nabbie**, and **Stephanie Ramlogan** read new short pieces inspired by or responding to Mootoo's text

8.30-9.30 pm

Shake it up

A special Friday night session celebrating the legacy of Vincentian musician and poet **"Shake" Keane**, with biographer **Philip Nanton** in conversation with musician **Ruth Osman**. Featuring readings from and discussion of Nanton's new book *Riff: The Shake Keane Story*, and the premiere of a new musical collaboration with **Gene Lawrence**, setting Keane's *Volcano Suite* to music

10-10.30 am

Children's programming

see page 11

11-11.30 am

The premiere of **Port of Spain: "A Writer's Heaven"**, a special half-hour film, commissioned to mark the festival's tenth anniversary. Join host **Wendell Manwarren**

as he explores Trinidad and Tobago's capital through works of literature

In collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts

12-1 pm

Placing the "Caribbean" in Caribbean writing

For writers, readers, publishers, and scholars, "Caribbean" is a universally accepted category of literature — but do we all mean the same thing by it?

As even more diverse voices enter the literary fray, and establish transnational identities, will "Caribbean" remain a useful label? Those are among the questions raised by the new three-volume *Caribbean Literature in Transition*. Editors **Alison Donnell** and **Ronald Cummings** are

joined by writer **Vahni Capildeo** and publisher **Tanya Batson-Savage** for a conversation about definitions, limits and possibilities

1-1.30 pm

New writing

A taste of brand-new work from writers in all genres

1.30-3 pm

"Toussaint was a mighty man"

2021 is the 230th anniversary of the start of the Haitian Revolution, led by Toussaint Louverture — possibly the most influential figure in Caribbean history. How has our image of Toussaint been shaped by historians and creative writers — and what do his ideals mean for Caribbean civilisation? Biographer **Sudhir Hazareesingh** (author of *Black Spartacus*) joins literary scholar **Marlene Daut** (co-editor of *Haitian Revolutionary Fictions*) for a conversation that ranges wide. Hosted by **Amílcar Sanatan**

3-3.30 pm

Stand and Deliver

Our signature open mic. With special guest writer **Brandon Mc Ivor**,

shortlisted for the 2020 Commonwealth Short Story Prize

3.30-4.30 pm

Making history

Two authors of new historical fiction, **Lawrence Scott** (*Dangerous Freedom*) and **Lauren Francis-Sharma** (*Book of the Little Axe*), read from their novels and discuss how imagination meets research to bring the past to life. Hosted by **Ayanna Gillian Lloyd**

5-6 pm

Raised voices

T&T diaspora poets **Rosamond S. King** (*All the Rage*) and **Desiree C. Bailey** (*What Noise Against the Cane*) meditate on their work on personal and family history, and the intersections of race and migration. Hosted by **Daria-Ann Martineau**

6.30-8 pm

Winners' row:

celebrating the winners of the **2021 OCM Bocas Prize**, the **2021 Johnson and Amoy Achong Caribbean Writers Prize**, and the **2021 Bocas Henry Swanzy Award**, with readings, tributes, and the highly-anticipated prize announcements

9–10 am
Children's programming
 see page 11

10.30 am–12 pm
The big idea: The way ahead

Two decades into the 21st century, Caribbean states face unique challenges in their politics, economics, climate change crisis, and more. The COVID-19 pandemic, we've been told, is an opportunity to rethink the meaning of "normal" and recalibrate our plans for the future. What does that really mean? This special two-part event brings together the voices of our young people and the expertise of our leaders for a debate about our region's future.

Part 1: 10.30–10.45

Three young people in their 20s — representing the Caribbean generation of the new millennium — share their worries and hopes about the future, in specially commissioned reflections. With **Jeanelle Clarke**, **Mareeka Dookie**, and **Omari Joseph**.

Part 2: 10.45–12 pm

A high-level panel shares frank perspectives on the way ahead for the Caribbean and debates the possibilities and potential pitfalls. With regional thought leaders including climate scientist **Prof. John Agard**, economist **Dr. Justin Ram**, and ANSA McAL Group CEO **Anthony N. Sabga III**, hosted by **Natalee Legore** *In partnership with the Caribbean Futures Institute*

12–12.30 pm

Extempo Debate: a longtime festival favourite! Calypsonians **Black Sage** and **Brian London** debate possible futures for the Caribbean in inimitable Extempo style, with witty improvised lyrics!

12.30–1.30 pm

Family ties Jamaica-born writers **Wandeka Gayle** (*Motherland*) and **Alecia McKenzie** (*A Million Aunties*) read from and discuss their fiction reflecting on family connections across oceans and continents. Hosted by **Sharon Leach**

1.30–2 pm
Stand and Deliver
 Our signature open mic

2–3 pm
Imaginary homelands
Barbara Lalla (*One Thousand Eyes*) and **Leone Ross** (*This One Sky Day*) discuss their new novels that explore alternate geographies and histories, present and future. Hosted by **Karen Lord**

3.30–4.30 pm
In a cold country
 In their short story collections, **Andre Alexis** (*The Night Piece*) and **Kaie Kellough** (*Dominoes at the Crossroads*) explore the stories and fates of outsiders in the Canadian landscape. Hosted by **Anton Nimblett**

5–6 pm
Love is war
 In new novels by **Lisa Allen-Agostini** (*The Bread the Devil Knead*) and **Cherie Jones** (*How the One-Armed Sister Sweeps Her House*), love and violence are constant companions. Hosted by **Sharma Taylor**

6.30–7.30 pm
The 100 Caribbean Books That Made Us: the launch of a special project by the NGC Bocas Lit Fest
 Almost a year in the making, the 100 Caribbean Books That Made Us is a crowdsourced list of the books — in all genres — that have shaped Caribbean readers and writers. We launch the list of 100 classic and contemporary books with a provocative discussion featuring newly appointed Jamaica Poet Laureate **Olive Senior**, scholar **Aaron Kamugisha**, and publisher **Johnny Temple** of Akashic Books, hosted by **Ardene Sirjoo**



Stories written by children from every corner of Trinidad and Tobago come alive in myriad engaging ways in the virtual 2021 NGC Children's Bocas Lit Fest.

The Children's Storytelling Caravan toured the country annually for ten years, guiding children in writing stories, and publishing them in the NGC Children's Bocas Lit Fest colouring books. While the pandemic has paused the Caravan, the words written by children for children in the past years provide a rich treasure trove of stories for a new crop of young readers and writers

Saturday 24 April
10–10.30am

Join us for all-new tales from **Dragonzilla's Storytime**, a series where the Caravan's stories are dramatised by some of the best storytellers and orators, including Joan Osborne and Farouk Jr. **Reading with Dragonzilla**, our new read-along learning video series, also premieres with *Lost in Jouvart*. The animation *Lagahoo in the Lagoon* brings our unique folklore and culture to the fore, along with readings

by children's authors Summer Edward and Yolanda T. Marshall.

Sunday 25 April
9–10 am

Let's Remember
 A fun look back at the past 10 years of the NGC Children's Bocas Lit Fest, drawing from our successful activities, including the Storytelling Caravan, our Imagine New Worlds feature at City Hall, and the Bocas Literacy Boot Camp at NALIS.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING

Animation

The premiere of two new feature animations *Drama at the Tobago Heritage Festival* and *Rock Fishing at Bloody Bay*, both based on stories written by the children of Tobago.

Dragonzilla's Storytime

A third Caravan story is dramatised, this time by Nikki Crosby: *Trapped in My Phone*, written by the children of Port of Spain.

Readings

Readings by Reea Rodney, Danielle Boodoo-Fortuné, and Gregory Thompson.

Drama

Teamwork and cooperation are highlighted in Mary Cuffy's original drama *Lola and the Battle of the Bugs*. Directed by Penelope Spencer, the children enter the stickfighting gayelle, as Lola and the Ladybugs try to win the competition. And, a second chance to see our 2018 and 2019 **Page to Stage** school performances at the Central Bank Auditorium in which children dramatised stories from the NGC

Children's Bocas Lit Fest story books.

Dragonzilla's Storytime

A second episode of our video series aimed at helping children to read along with our stories debuts: *Drama at the Moriah Wedding*.

A sneak peek

See what's upcoming in 2021. **Dragonzilla's Short Story Writing Challenge**, launched last year in partnership with NALIS, returns in 2021 with more opportunities for our young participants to develop their writing talents, and more great prizes. Plus more animations, episodes of Dragonzilla's Storytime, and the announcement of our new Children's Book Prize.

Catch up with all our previous children's content on the NGC Children's Bocas Lit Fest playlist on our YouTube channel, and stay tuned to our website and social media channels for all the updates!

PARTICIPANTS

Danielle Boodoo-Fortuné is a Trinidadian visual artist and award-winning poet. Her accolades include the 2019 OCM Bocas Prize for Caribbean Literature for Poetry for her debut collection *Doe Songs*, the 2012 Small Axe Literary Competition, the 2015 Hollick Arvon Caribbean Writers Prize and Wasafiri New Writing Prize. Danielle is the illustrator of *Lost! A Caribbean Sea Adventure* (CaribbeanReads) and *The Jungle Outside* (HarperCollins Publishers), both written by Joanne C. Hillhouse.

Nikki Crosby is a popular broadcaster, stand-up comedienne and a multiple Cassique Award winner for her work in theatre. In 2008, she formed the first all-female theatre production company, Ha Ha Ha Productions, along with Penelope Spencer and the late Mairoon Ali.

Mary Cuffy is an Early Childhood Curriculum Programme Facilitator. Her educational background includes a Bachelor's degree

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CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING

in education with a concentration in Early Childhood Care Education (ECCE), and Masters of Education in Literacy Instructions from the University of the West Indies. She is the author of the book series, *Learning with Lola the Ladybug*.

Summer Edward is a Ginkgo Prize longlisted author who writes for children and adults. Her new children's book is *The Wonder of the World Leaf* (HarperCollins UK/ Collins Big Cat). She is also a children's fiction editor at Heinemann, a readers' advisory specialist at EBSCOHost Novelist, and reviews Caribbean children's and young adult books for *The Horn Book Magazine*. Trinidad-born and US-raised, she currently divides her time between the two places.

Farouk Jr. was born in San Fernando, Trinidad and Tobago. He is currently pursuing singing, songwriting, and acting wherever opportunities arise. He graduated with honors, obtaining a B.Sc. in Music Business from the Trevecca Nazarene University in Nashville,

TN USA. He has most recently taken part in the stage production *Believe: Bring Us Hope*, held at Queen's Hall, as well as the *The Scent of Water*, a film by Sian Raghoo which is still in post-production.

Yolanda T. Marshall is a Guyanese born author of *Keman's First Carnival*, *Sweet Sorrel Stand*, *A Piece of Black Cake for Santa*, *Miles Away in the Caribbean*, and *My Soca Birthday Party: with Jollof Rice and Steel Pans*, which made CBC's Best Picture Books list 2020. She lives in Canada and is dedicated to writing children's books celebrating Caribbean children and cultures.

Joan Osborne, better known as Auntie Queenie, is a librarian, actress, storyteller and lecturer. She is a retiree from the NALIS after thirty four years of service, serving in several positions such as Deputy Executive Director and Director of the Heritage Library of NALIS. Apart from performances, Joan conducts storytelling workshops and has judged many storytelling competitions. She

also judges the Best Village, Village Chat, Short story and Poetry competitions.

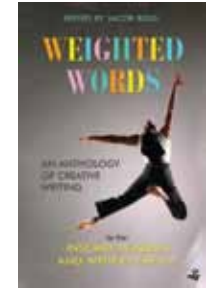
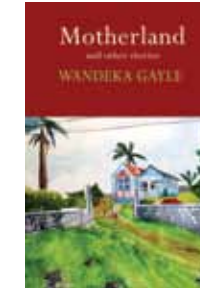
Reea Rodney is a US-based Trinidadian Amazon #1 bestselling author for her series, *Juniper and Rose*. She works as a Self-Publishing Consultant and Book Coach, Parent and Children Personal Development Life Coach, Cognitive Behavioral (CBT) Coach, Motivational Speaker.

Penelope Spencer is an award-winning Trinidadian actress, well-known in local theatre and film production. She is currently a director with the Necessary Arts Company and drama school, where she teaches, writes and produces.

A primary school teacher for twenty five years, **Gregory Thompson** is the author of *The Adventures of Manti and Andy*, a series of environmentally aware picture books.



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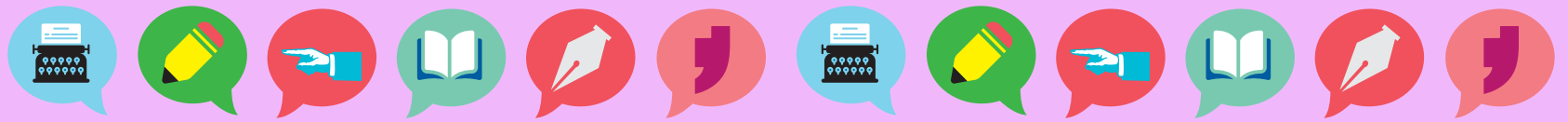
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PARTICIPANT BIOS



Professor John Agard is one of the region's leading scientists, and co-Chair of the high-level, interdisciplinary group of 15 scientists appointed to draft the UN 2023 Global Sustainable Development Report. He is the Director at the St Augustine Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (STACIE) and a Professor of Tropical Island Ecology, Department of Life Sciences, Faculty of Science and Technology, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine.

Lisa Allen-Agostini is a writer, editor and stand-up comedian from Trinidad and Tobago. Her books include *The Bread the Devil Knead* (Myriad Editions), *Home Home* (Papillote Press; Delacorte Press), *Swallowing the Sky* (Cane Arrow Press), and *Trinidad Noir* (Akashic Books). Her short fiction and poetry are widely published.

Akhim Alexis is a Trinidadian writer pursuing an MA in Literatures in English and a part-time Assistant Lecturer in the Writing Centre at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine. His poetry and creative non-fiction have been widely published. In 2020 he was shortlisted for the Brooklyn Caribbean Lit Fest Elizabeth Nunez Award for Writers in the Caribbean and in 2021 he is a finalist for the Johnson and Amoy Achong Caribbean Writers Prize.

André Alexis, is a Trinidad-born, Canada-based author of six novels. His fifth, *Fifteen Dogs* (2015) received many

honours, including the 2015 Scotiabank Giller Prize, and was followed by *The Hidden Keys* (2016). In 2017 he won a Windham-Campbell Prize for fiction. His latest book is a career-spanning collection of stories titled *The Night Piece* (McClelland & Stewart).

Andre Bagoo is a Trinidadian author of four books of poetry. His collection of essays on art and literature *The Undiscovered Country* (Peepal Tree Press) is the winner of the 2021 OCM Bocas Prize for Non-fiction. His poetry received an honourable mention in the 2005 Derek Walcott Writing Prize and his short fiction was recently a finalist in the Ernest Hemingway Foundation Prize.

Desiree C. Bailey, Trinidad-born and US based, won the 2020 Yale Series of Younger Poets Prize for *What Noise Against the Cane* (Yale University Press). *In Dirt or Saltwater* (O'clock Press) is her fiction chapbook and her short stories and poems have appeared in *Best American Poetry*, *Best New Poets*, *American Short Fiction*, *Callaloo*, the *Academy of American Poets*.

Tanya Batson-Savage, writer, filmmaker, publisher and creative consultant is also the publisher and editor in chief of the online magazine *Susumba* and its literary offshoot *Susumba's Book Bag* as well as the award-winning independent publishing house, *Blue Banyan Books*.

Vahni Capildeo, an award-winning poet from Trinidad and Tobago, is the chief judge of the 2021 OCM Bocas Prize for Caribbean Literature. Their recent publications are *Skin Can Hold* (Carcenet), *Odyssey Calling* (Sad Press), and *Light Site* (Periplum Poetry). They have received the Cholmondeley Award (Society of Authors); the Forward Poetry Prize for Best Collection for *Measures of Expatriation* (Carcenet, 2016); the Judith E. Wilson Fellowship and Harper-Wood Studentship (University of Cambridge); a Douglas Caster Cultural Fellowship (University of Leeds), and a UNESCO Poetry Fellowship (University of East Anglia).

Maisy Card is the author of *These Ghosts Are Family*, winner of the 2021 OCM Bocas Prize for Fiction. She is Jamaica-born and US-raised and her writing has appeared in *Lenny Letter*, *School Library Journal*, *Agni*, *Sycamore Review*, *Liars' League NYC*, and *Ampersand Review*.

Jeanelle Clarke is a trade and development policy specialist with a focus on creative economy and Small Island Developing States, currently serving as Advisor to the Executive Director of the International Trade Centre in Geneva.

Ronald Cummings is an academic and book reviews editor at *sx salon*. He co-edited two critical volumes: *Caribbean Literature in Transition 1970-2020* with

Alison Donnell (Cambridge University Press) and *The Fire That Time: Transnational Black Radicalism and the Sir George Williams University Occupation* with Nalini Mohabir (Black Rose Books). He is also the editor of *Make the World New: The Poetry of Lillian Allen* (forthcoming with Wilfrid Laurier University Press).

Marlene L. Daut specializes in Caribbean, African American, and French colonial literary and historical studies. She co-edited *Haitian Revolutionary Fictions: An Anthology*, to be published by the University of Virginia Press in October 2021. She is co-creator and co-editor of H-Net Commons' digital platform, H-Haiti and she curates a website on early Haitian print culture at lagazetteroyale.com. She also developed an online bibliography of fictions of the Haitian Revolution, haitianrevolutionaryfictions.com.

Alison Donnell is Head of School of Literature, Drama and Creative Writing at the University of East Anglia (UK). Her latest research project on Caribbean Literary Heritage (2017-2020) is funded by the Leverhulme Trust and brings her critical interest in recovering neglected writers together with her commitment to safeguarding the future of the literary past.

Mareeka Dookie is the founder of Sustainable Support Services. She represented the Caribbean at the first-ever

United Nations Youth Climate Summit in 2019.

Wandeka Gayle is the author of *Motherland and Other Stories* (Peepal Tree Press). She is a Jamaican writer, visual artist, and Assistant Professor of Creative Writing at Spelman College. Her writing has appeared in *The Rumpus*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Transition*, *Interviewing the Caribbean* and other journals and magazines.

Alana-Marie Gopaul is the Marketing and Media Manager at Bocas Lit Fest. Her professional experiences span the fields of Psychology, Human Resource Management and Corporate Communications.

Sudhir Hazareesingh has written extensively about French intellectual and cultural history; among his books are *The Legend of Napoleon*, *In the Shadow of the General* and *How the French Think*. He won the Prix du Mémorial d'Ajaccio and the Prix de la Fondation Napoléon for the first of these, a Prix d'Histoire du Sénat for the second, and the Grand Prix du Livre d'Idées for the third. In 2020, he became a Grand Commander of the Order of the Star and Key of the Indian Ocean (G.C.S.K.), the highest honour of his native Republic of Mauritius. His latest book, *Black Spartacus*, was shortlisted for The Baillie Gifford Prize For Non-Fiction, 2020, shortlisted for The Slightly Foxed Best First Biography Prize, 2020, and a finalist for the Pen/Jacqueline Bograd Weld Award For Biography, 2020.

Donna Hemans is the author of two novels: *River Woman* and *Tea by the Sea*. Her work has appeared in *Electric Literature*, *Ms. Magazine*, *The Rumpus*, *Crab Orchard Review*, among others. She received her undergraduate degree in English and Media Studies from Fordham University and an MFA from American University. She lives in Maryland and is the owner of DC Writers Room, a co-working studio for writers.

Ambika Jadoonanan is known as *ambi_reads* within the bookstagram community, and her aim is to read as many diverse books as possible containing stimulating topics that are relevant and critical in today's society. She is the Rebel Women Lit's Caribbean Readers' Awards Content Creator winner.

Jay T. John is a non-binary Trinidadian poet who uses art to contextualize and highlight the nuanced experience of otherness. Their poetry has appeared in the 2018 anthology *Unwritten: Caribbean Poems after the First World War* and they are a finalist for the 2021 Johnson and Amoy Achong Caribbean Writers Prize.

Cherie Jones is from Barbados and her debut novel *How The One-Armed Sister Sweeps Her House* received critical acclaim from the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times* and *Washington Post* and is *Good Morning America's* Bookclub pick for February, 2021. She was a fellowship awardee of the Vermont Studio Centre and

PARTICIPANT BIOS



received the Archie Markham Award and A.M. Heath Prize from Sheffield Hallam University (UK). Her first short story collection was published by Peepal Tree Press in 2004 and another won a 2016 Frank Collymore Literary Endowment Award.

Omari Joseph is a recent graduate in Tourism Management from the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, and the 2018 winner of the Eric Williams Essay Competition.

Aaron Kamugisha is Professor of Cultural Studies at the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus. He is the editor of eight collections on Caribbean and Africana thought, and his book *Beyond Coloniality: Citizenship and Freedom in the Caribbean Intellectual Tradition* was longlisted for the 2020 OCM Bocas Prize.

Kaie Kellough is a novelist, poet, and sound performer living in Montréal and with roots in Guyana. His book of poetry, *Magnetic Equator* (McClelland and Stewart) won the 2020 Griffin Poetry Prize. His collection of short stories, *Dominoes at the Crossroads* (Véhicule), won the Hugh MacLennan Prize for Fiction, was a finalist for the Grand Prix du Livre de Montréal, and was longlisted for the Giller prize. His novel *Accordéon* (ARP) was a finalist for the 2017 Amazon/Walrus Foundation First Novel Award.

Rosamond S. King is a critical and creative writer and performer from Trinidad and Tobago, based in the US. Her book *Island Bodies: Transgressive Sexualities in the Caribbean Imagination* was named "Best Book" by the Caribbean Studies Association. Her poetry publications include the forthcoming *All the Rage* and the Lambda Award-winning *Rock | Salt | Stone*. She is creative editor of *sx salon* and associate professor at Brooklyn College, part of the City University of New York.

Barbara Lalla, Professor Emerita of language and literature at The UWI, St. Augustine, is the author of many academic publications and the novels *Cascade*, *Arch of Fire*, *Uncle Brother*, and *Grounds for Tenure*. Her latest novel is *One Thousand Eyes* (UWI Press).

Gene Lawrence is a St. Lucian musician (finger-style acoustic guitarist), composer and arranger who has performed throughout the Caribbean and abroad, and has several albums to his credit.

Sharon Leach is a Jamaican writer and editor of the *Jamaica Observer's* "Bookends" section. She is the author of the short fiction collections *What You Can't Tell Him* and *Love It When You Come, Hate It When You Go*.

Natalee Legore is an experienced talk show host and journalist, currently based at TTT.

Ayanna Gillian Lloyd is Trinidad-born and her work has appeared in *The Caribbean Writer*, *Moko Magazine*, *Small Axe*, *Poui*, *FREE*, *Callaloo* and *Anomaly*. She is a commissioned writer for *Colonial Countryside: National Trust Houses Reinterpreted*, forthcoming in 2021, and a PhD candidate in Creative-Critical Writing, University of East Anglia. Her debut novel *When We Were Birds* is forthcoming from Hamish Hamilton (UK), Doubleday (US), and Bond Street Books (Canada) in 2022.

Karen Lord is a Barbadian author, editor and research consultant. Her debut novel *Redemption in Indigo* won several awards and was nominated for the 2011 World Fantasy Award for Best Novel. Her other works include the science fiction novels *The Best of All Possible Worlds* and *The Galaxy Game*, and the crime-fantasy novel *Unraveling*. She edited the anthology *New Worlds, Old Ways: Speculative Tales from the Caribbean*.

Canisia Lubrin is a St. Lucian writer, editor, critic and teacher of creative writing at OCAD University and poetry at the University of Toronto. She is the winner of the 2021 OCM Bocas Prize for Poetry (*The Dyzgraphxst*), a 2021 Windham Campbell Prize poetry winner and the incoming poetry editor at the literary press McClelland & Stewart. Her debut poetry collection *Voodoo Hypothesis* received wide acclaim.

Daria-Ann Martineau holds an MFA in Poetry from New York University and is an alumna of several writing conferences, including Bread Loaf and the Community of Writers at Squaw Valley. In 2017, Anomaly nominated her poem "When I have left my body" for a Pushcart Prize. Her poems have also been published by Split This Rock and the Academy of American Poets, among others. She is the founder of PRINT-Poets Reclaiming Immigrant Narratives & Texts.

Brandon Mc Ivor is a Japan-based Trinidadian writer whose work has been published by adda, the Caribbean Writer, Akashic Books and in literary journals. He was twice shortlisted for the Small Axe Literary Prize, and in 2020 was shortlisted for the Commonwealth Short Story Prize. He is currently working on his first novel.

Shani Mootoo is a novelist, poet, and visual artist. Her latest novel is *Polar Vortex*. Other novels include *Moving Forward Sideways Like a Crab*, longlisted for the Scotiabank Giller Prize, and shortlisted for a Lambda Literary Award; *Valmiki's Daughter*, longlisted for the Scotiabank Giller Prize; *He Drown She in the Sea*, longlisted for the Dublin Impact Award; and *Cereus Blooms at Night*, shortlisted for several prizes including the Giller Prize, and longlisted for the Man Booker Prize.

Philip Nanton is a performance artist and writer from St. Vincent and the Grenadines, living in Barbados. His most recent publication is *Riff: The Shake Keane Story* (2021). His publications include *Canouan Suite and Other Pieces* (2016), a work of literary non-fiction, *Frontiers of the Caribbean* (2017) and *Island Voices from St. Christopher and the Barracudas* (2014).

Anton Nimblett is a Trinidadian living and writing in Brooklyn. He has published two collections of short stories, *Sections of an Orange* and *Now/After*, and his writing is also included in several anthologies, including *Our Caribbean: A Gathering of Lesbian and Gay Writing From the Antilles*.

Ruth Osman is a Guyanese singer-songwriter and flautist based in Trinidad and Tobago.

Jherane Patmore is the owner and founder of Rebel Women Lit, the literary community book club that since 2018 has grown into a bookstore, community library, podcast and home to the Spoken & Seen Festival & Caribbean Readers' Award. Rebel Women Lit aims to centre communal reading as a way to disavow mastery and build strong communities of literary lovers.

Dr. Justin Ram is an international economist with over twenty-five years of international experience in

practice, research, development and management. He was previously Director of the Economics Department at the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB).

Shivane Ramlochan is a Trinidadian poet, critic, and book blogger. Her first book of poems, *Everyone Knows I Am a Haunting* (Peepal Tree Press, 2017) was a finalist for the 2018 People's Choice T&T Book of the Year, and was shortlisted for the Felix Dennis Forward Prize for Best First Collection. Shivane was shortlisted for the 2018 Bridport Prize for Poetry. "The Red Thread Cycle", from her debut collection, won a Small Axe Literary Competition Prize for Poetry (second-place), and was on audiovisual display at the National Art Gallery of the Bahamas.

Leone Ross is a UK-born, Jamaica-bred writer and academic. Her first novel, *All the Blood Is Red*, was longlisted for the Orange Prize, and her second, *Orange Laughter*, was chosen as a BBC Radio 4 Women's Hour Watershed Fiction favourite. Her short fiction is frequently anthologised and her first short-story collection, the 2017 *Come Let Us Sing Anyway* was nominated for the Edge Hill Short Story Prize, the Jhalak Prize, the Saboteur Awards and the OCM Bocas Prize. She is editor of the first black British anthology of speculative fiction, due out in 2022 with Peepal Tree Press.

PARTICIPANT BIOS



Anthony N. Sabga III is Group Chief Executive Officer of the ANSA McAL Group of Companies, T&T's largest conglomerate and one of the largest in the Caribbean. He began his career with the Group's media company, one of approximately 43 operational companies he now controls, having been involved in the directorship of many of them since completing his MA in International Business Administration in the UK in 2003.

Lawrence Scott is a prize-winning Trinidadian novelist and short story writer. He received a Lifetime Literary award in 2012 from the National Library of Trinidad & Tobago for his significant contribution to the national literature and was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature in 2019. His new novel is *Dangerous Freedom* (Papillote Press), 2021.

Desiree Seebaran, a Trinidadian writer and editor, is a finalist for the 2021 Johnson and Amoy Achong Caribbean Writers Prize. She is an alum of the Cropper Foundation Residential Workshop for Writers (2010) and the inaugural *Moko Magazine* Poetry Masterclass (2018). Her work was shortlisted for the 2014 *Small Axe* Literary Competition (poetry) and the 2017 Frontier Poetry Award for New Poets Contest. Her poem 'Picong' won the 2019 Queen Mary Wasafiri New Writing Prize for poetry.

Olive Senior is a Jamaican writer, currently based in Canada. She is the author of several prizewinning books, including the Commonwealth Writers Prize-winning *Summer Lightning*. Her non-fiction book *Dying to Better Themselves: West Indians and the building of the Panama Canal* was the winner of the 2015 OCM Bocas Prize for Caribbean Literature, non-fiction category, and her collection of short stories *The Pain Tree* won the 2016 OCM Bocas Prize for Caribbean Literature. In 2021 she was named Poet Laureate of Jamaica.

Lauren Francis-Sharma is the author of *Book of the Little Axe* (2020). *Til the Well Runs Dry* debuted in 2014, was shortlisted for the William Saroyan International Prize, awarded the Honor Fiction Prize by the Black Caucus of the American Library Association, chosen as an *O, The Oprah Magazine* Summer Reading Pick and lauded by the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Essence Magazine*, and *People Magazine* amongst other publications.

Ardene Sirjoo is a popular voice on news and current affairs radio station i95.5FM. She is also co-founder and a director of Trini Good Media, a digital media company specialising in audio production.

Sharma Taylor is a Jamaican-born, Barbados-based lawyer. She won the 2020 Wasafiri Queen Mary New Writing Prize, the 2020 Frank Collymore Literary Endowment Award and the 2019 Johnson and Amoy Achong Caribbean Writers Prize. She was twice shortlisted for the Commonwealth Short Story Prize (2018 and 2020) and was a finalist for the 2020 Elizabeth Nunez Award for Writers in the Caribbean in the Brooklyn Caribbean Literary Festival's (BCLF) Caribbean Fiction Writers Competition. She gained Second Prize in the 2020 First Novel Competition (organised by Daniel Goldsmith Associates Ltd, UK). Her forthcoming (2022) debut novel *"What a Mother's Love Don't Teach You"* was bought at auction by Virago.

Johnny Temple is the founder of publishing house Akashic Books, based in New York City, and chair of the Brooklyn Literary Council. He edited the short story collection *USA Noir*.

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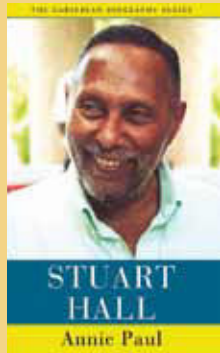


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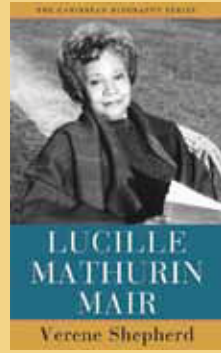
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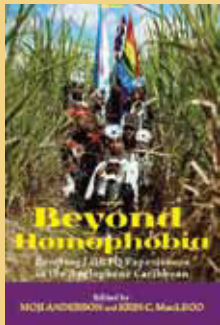
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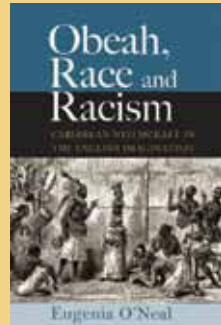
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Always Coming Home: Caribbean Writers and Their Journeys Through The World

Our commemorative 10th anniversary anthology

Where is “home”? Is it the island of your birth? The distant ancestral lands you imagine as much as remember? The place where you find yourself now, drawn by love or family or economic necessity or simple restlessness? Or all of the above? Generations of Caribbean writers have confronted these questions in their lives as in their books, creating a global literature always aware of shores and horizons, boundaries and connections, in which the Caribbean is a space of the imagination as much as a place on a physical map.

Over the past decade, the NGC Bocas Lit Fest has become a meeting place for Caribbean and diaspora writers to encounter each other’s stories and ideas, gathering to imagine and debate what a transnational Caribbean could be, and what it could teach the world. In this far-ranging anthology, approximately thirty past Bocas authors — including all ten winners of the OCM Bocas Prize from 2011 to 2020 — offer stories, essays, and poems reflecting on the constant tidal play between “home” and “away”, and the unceasing restlessness of contemporary Caribbean writing.

Always Coming Home includes pieces by all ten past winners of the OCM Bocas Prize for Caribbean Literature — from Derek Walcott to Richard Georges — alongside such beloved writers as Dionne Brand, Edwidge Danticat, Marlon James, Lorna Goodison, Vahni Capildeo, and many more. Look out for the launch of this special commemorative anthology, in July 2021. Sponsored by NGC.

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**VIRTUAL FILM TOUR
PORT OF SPAIN: "A WRITER'S HEAVEN"**

Were it not for a pandemic, the NGC Bocas Lit Fest would see us gathered at Old Fire Station in downtown Port of Spain, awakening thought and ideas in a thriving hub of a literary and arts community.

To those who miss the magic of the Festival's home, or have never experienced it, Port of Spain: "A Writer's Heaven", a thirty minute documentary of Port of Spain's literary heritage, will attempt to unearth the shadows of literary legacy, casting new light on stories and sites in a way that the city has never been seen before. Host Wendell Manwarren leads the viewer to urban landmarks featured in the works of Derek Walcott, who gave POS the epithet of "a writer's heaven" and VS Naipaul, who described the "intense pleasure to observe from the verandah" in the city, along with Earl Lovelace, Ismith Khan, Oonya Kempadoo, Barbara Jenkins and Breanne McIvor.

From the Brian Lara Promenade, to Woodford Square and the Red House, the National Library Building and Old Fire Station, Piccadilly, Belmont, the lighthouse and South Quay, including the museum there, and around the Savannah to end on Lady Chancellor Hill overlooking the city, the tour will trace the built landscape that has inspired both classic and new writing. Our heritage characters like the Carnival Dragon and Midnight Robber also walk the streets during the tour, awakening the spirits, the likes of which only Port of Spain knows.

Scripted and produced by Janine Mendes Franco and directed by Dion Boucaud, the film will premiere online during the 2021 NGC Bocas Lit Fest. It is sponsored by NGC and the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts.

Premieres Saturday 24 April, 11 am

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NGC Bocas Youth Fes

The NGC Bocas Lit Fest is proud to launch its first youth festival! This curated event will be specially targeted towards teens, secondary school and tertiary level students (and anyone else youthful at heart). Look out for the launch soon, as the Youth Fest will take place during the months of July and August, and will feature master classes, youth-led author interviews, debates and the inaugural 'Youth Writer of the Year' award.

Youth Fest Programme

CSEC Author Interviews by Youth

Literary giants will get up close with young readers in this conversation series, intended to equip students in their CSEC literature journey.

Youth Spoken Word Masterclass

Some of the best spoken word poets will offer their knowledge and guidance in this Masterclass series, allowing young writers the opportunity to hone their spoken word skill and have their work featured on the NGC Bocas Lit Fest platforms.

Youth Blog Writing Masterclass

For those young people who are keen to share their views with the world and empower others.

Youth Lit Debate

In this debate series on contemporary topics in literature, youth teams will bring wit and flare to the fore as they dissect arguments and push the envelope on how literature is taught, learnt and understood.

Youth Writer of the Year Award

A social media first inter-genre writing award celebrating youth writing across multiple mediums: social media, blogs, printed press and short stories. This award will recognise the young people who are using writing to make an impact.

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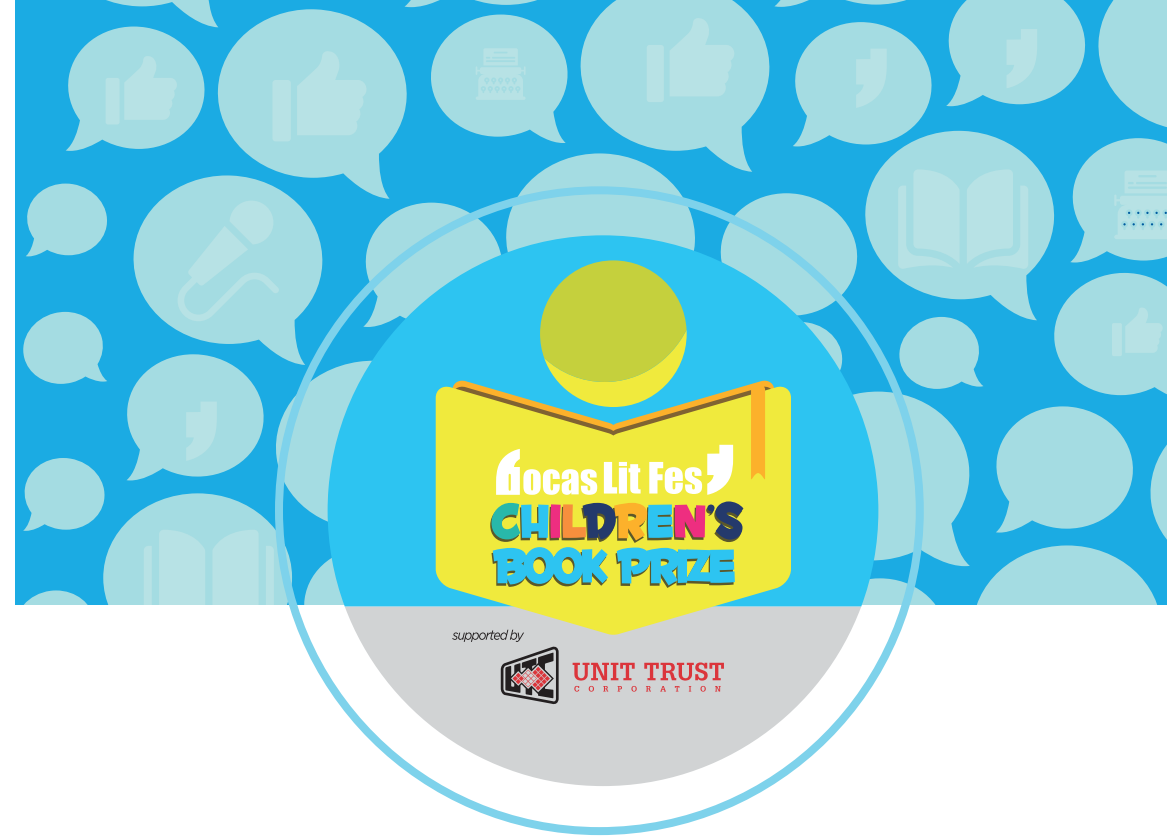


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In 2021, the Bocas Lit Fest is proud to introduce a new prize, the Bocas Children's Book Prize, supported by the Unit Trust Corporation (UTC).

This prize aims not only to recognise writing talents in the genre of Caribbean children's literature, but to develop young readers through the encouragement of the publication of titles for 7-12 year olds. At that age, chapter books with intriguing storytelling capture the imagination of children, and it is hoped that this prize will receive and highlight submissions that engender a love of reading amongst young Caribbean people.

The Prize consists of a cash award of US\$1,000, and Caribbean-born authors, resident anywhere in the world, of English-language books which have been published between January 2020 and July 2021 will be eligible. Self-published books are welcome.

The first winner of the Bocas Children's Book Prize will be announced in November 2021. Full details and entry guidelines will be published on www.bocaslitfest.com.

Prize opens for entries on 1 May, 2021.

OCM BOCAS PRIZE FOR CARIBBEAN LITERATURE

In its eleventh year, the OCM Bocas Prize, sponsored by One Caribbean Media, the largest media organisation in the Caribbean, is well-established as a highly coveted Caribbean writers' prize. It recognises the best books of poetry,

fiction, and literary non-fiction published in the previous calendar year by an author of Caribbean birth or citizenship.

The overall winner will be announced on Saturday 24 April, during a prize-giving

ceremony at 6.30pm, and will be awarded the sum of US\$10,000. The other two category winners in each genre will receive US\$3,000.

The 2021 OCM Bocas Prize Longlist

POETRY

The Dyzgraphxst, by Canisia Lubrin (McClelland & Stewart)

Guabancex, by Celia Sorhaindo (Papillote Press)
Country of Warm Snow, by Mervyn Taylor (Shearsman)

FICTION

These Ghosts Are Family, by Maisy Card (Simon & Schuster)

Love After Love, by Ingrid Persaud (Faber UK/One World US)

The Mermaid of Black Conch, by Monique Roffey (Peepal Tree Press)

NON-FICTION

of colour, by Katherine Agyemaa Agard (Essay Press)

The Undiscovered Country, by Andre Bagoo (Peepal Tree Press)

Musings, Mazes, Muses, Margins, by Gordon Rohlehr (Peepal Tree Press)

OVERALL CHAIR: Vahni Capildeo (Trinidad and Tobago/United Kingdom)

Vahni Capildeo FRSL is Writer in Residence at the University of York. Their poetry and non-fiction is informed by the plurality of voice, time, and place in lived experience. Recent publications are *Skin Can Hold* (Carcenet, 2019), which offers interactive texts for readers to bring to life, with a central response to Martin Carter; *Odyssey Calling* (Sad Press, 2020) which deals with migrations of the animate and inanimate, and *Light Site* (Periplum Poetry, 2020), 'expanded translations' including sixteenth-century French love poetry translated into calypso. They have received the Cholmondeley Award (Society of Authors); the Forward Poetry Prize for Best Collection for *Measures of Expatriation* (Carcenet, 2016); the Judith E. Wilson Fellowship and Harper-Wood Studentship (University of Cambridge); a Douglas Caster Cultural Fellowship (University of Leeds), and a UNESCO Poetry Fellowship (University of East Anglia).

WINNER, POETRY



The Dyzgraphxst is the sophomore collection by Canisia Lubrin. "Reading this collection makes you hold your breath and dive to the ocean-floor and emerge riding the waves," write the judges. "A concern for our world, and a speaking out against exploitation and climate disaster, remain central, intact, and allow necessity to direct the experimentation. These are not easy poems, but there is undeniable music to them, a tidal ebb and flow beneath the complexities of language and questions of identity, place and environmental concerns."

Publisher: **McClelland & Stewart**



Canisia Lubrin is a St. Lucian writer, editor, teacher and critic. Her winning *The Dyzgraphxst*, is her second poetry collection, following on her awards-nominated debut collection *Voodoo Hypothesis*. Frequently anthologized, her work has been translated into Spanish and Italian. Lubrin teaches creative writing at OCAD University and poetry at the University of Toronto, and is the incoming poetry editor at the literary press McClelland & Stewart. In April 2021 she was named a Windham Campbell Prizes poetry winner.

POETRY JUDGES

Opal Palmer Adisa, Chair (Jamaica)

Opal Palmer Adisa has 20 published books, and her poetry, stories, essays and articles on a wide range of subjects appear in over 400 journals, anthologies and other publications. *Portia Dreams* is her recently completed authorized children's picture book of Jamaica's first female Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller, and she is at work on a children's book on Louise Bennett. Now the University Director of the Institute for Gender and Development Studies, The University of the West Indies, Mona, Adisa is the former distinguished professor of creative writing/literature in the MFA program and the Diversity Studies program at California College of the Arts, where she taught for twenty three years.

Danielle Boodoo-Fortuné (Trinidad and Tobago)

Danielle Boodoo-Fortuné is a Trinidadian poet and visual artist. Her accolades include the 2012 *Small Axe* Literary Competition, the 2015 Hollick Arvon Caribbean Writers Prize and Wasafiri New Writing Prize, and the 2019 OCM Bocas Prize for Caribbean Literature for Poetry for her debut collection *Doe Songs*. Her poetry is featured in the bilingual anthology *The Sea Needs No Ornament*, edited by Loretta Collins Klobah and Maria Grau Perejoan.

Kaie Kellough (Guyana/Canada)

Kaie Kellough is a novelist, poet, and sound performer. He lives in Montréal and has roots in Guyana. His last book of poetry, *Magnetic Equator* (McClelland and Stewart, 2019) won the 2020 Griffin Poetry Prize. His collection of short stories, *Dominoes at the Crossroads* (Véhicule, 2020), won the Hugh MacLennan Prize for Fiction, was a finalist for the Grand Prix du Livre de Montréal, and was longlisted for the Giller prize. His novel *Accordéon* (ARP, 2016) was a finalist for the 2017 Amazon/Walrus Foundation First Novel Award.

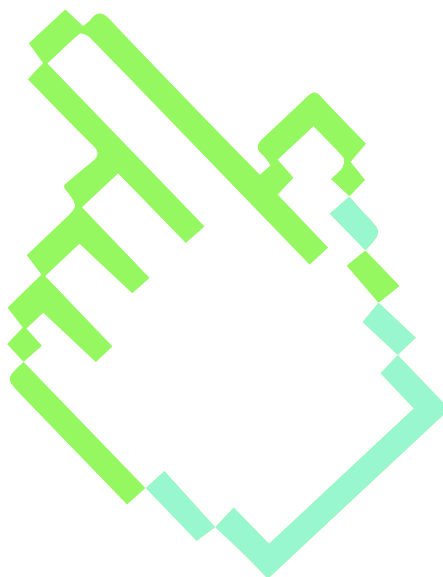
WINNER, FICTION



These Ghosts Are Family is the debut novel by Jamaica-born, US-based Maisy Card. “At its heart is the story of Caribbean enslavement and the legacy of trauma it has passed down from generation to generation, but the way it tackles this live and current theme is always fresh and innovative,” say the prize judges. “The novel, across chapters, consistently surprises with the courses it takes and the outcomes of its scenes — the control over the material evident from the earliest chapters.”

Publisher: Simon & Schuster

Maisy Card holds an MFA in Fiction from Brooklyn College and is a public librarian. Her writing has appeared in *Lenny Letter*, *School Library Journal*, *Agni*, *Sycamore Review*, *Liar's League NYC*, and *Ampersand Review*. Maisy was born in Jamaica, but was raised in New York. Maisy has earned an MLIS from Rutgers University and a BA in English and American Studies from Wesleyan University.



FICTION JUDGES

Malachi McIntosh, Chair (United Kingdom)

Malachi McIntosh is Editor and Publishing director of Wasafiri. He previously co-led the Runnymede Trust's award-winning Our Migration Story project and spent four years as a lecturer in postcolonial literature at the University of Cambridge. He is the author of *Emigration and Caribbean Literature* (2015) and the editor of *Beyond Calypso: Re-Reading Samuel Selvon* (2016). His fiction and non-fiction have been published widely, including in the *Caribbean Review of Books*, *Flash: The International Short-Short Story Magazine*, *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, *The Journal of Romance Studies*, *Research in African Literatures*, and *The Cambridge Companion to British Black and Asian Literature*.

Roland Gulliver (United Kingdom/Canada)

Roland Gulliver is the Director of the Toronto International Festival of Authors and former Associate Director of the Edinburgh International Book Festival. His programming explores the potential of the live performance from pop-up readings, creative writing masterclasses to reading workshops, literary afternoon teas to late night cabaret programmes, alongside commissions for new writing, podcasts, animations and installations. Alongside programmes working with communities to offer access and empowerment through the arts, and creating spaces for authors and audiences to engage in discussion on the contemporary issues affecting society, politics and culture. Gulliver is on the Board of Directors for the Toronto Arts Council and Chair of their Literary Advisory Committee. He is also a member of the Academy for the Walter Scott Prize for Historical Fiction.

Tiphonie Yanique (US Virgin Islands/United States)

Tiphonie Yanique's poetry collection *Wife* won the 2016 Forward/Felix Dennis Prize for a First Collection. Her novel *Land of Love and Drowning* won the 2014 Flaherty-Dunnan First Novel Award from the Center for Fiction, the Phillis Wheatley Award for Pan-African Literature, and the American Academy of Arts and Letters Rosenthal Family Foundation Award, was listed by NPR as one of the Best Books of 2014 and also a finalist for the Orion Award in Environmental Literature and the Hurston-Wright Legacy Award. *How to Escape from a Leper Colony*, her short story collection won her a listing as one of the National Book Foundation's 5Under35 and the 2011 OCM Bocas Prize for Fiction. The *Boston Globe* named her one of the sixteen cultural figures to watch out for and her writing has appeared in the *New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *Best African American Fiction*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *American Short Fiction*. Tiphonie is from the Virgin Islands and is a professor at Emory University.

WINNER, NON-FICTION



The Undiscovered Country is an essay collection by T&T writer **Andre Bagoo**. The judges praise it as “a wonderfully intelligent and wide-ranging book. There's a touch of humour in much of this book, with some essays focused on particular works of art, and others telescoping out to analyse pressing political questions. Innovative and insightful, knowledgeable about both film and fiction, written by an author who is up front about surveying literature and politics as a gay man, it's much more than a collection of essays.”

Publisher: Peepal Tree Press



Andre Bagoo is a Trinidadian poet and writer, the author of four books of poetry. His poetry has appeared in international journals such as *Boston Review*, *Cincinnati Review*, *St Petersburg Review*, *POETRY*, and *The Poetry Review* and he was awarded The Charlotte and Isidor Paiewonsky Prize by The Caribbean Writer in 2017. He received an honourable mention in the Derek Walcott Writing Prize in 2005 and his fiction was recently a finalist in the Ernest Hemingway Foundation's short-fiction prize.



NON-FICTION JUDGES

Rosamond S. King, Chair (Trinidad and Tobago/United States)

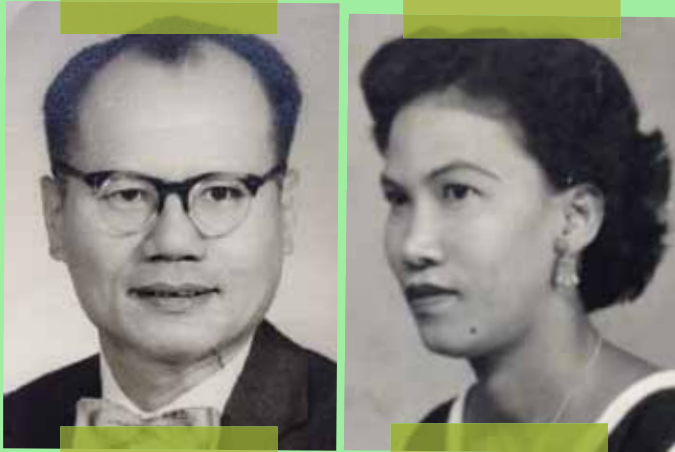
Critical and creative writer and performer Rosamond S. King's book *Island Bodies: Transgressive Sexualities in the Caribbean Imagination* was named “Best Book” by the Caribbean Studies Association. Her poetry publications include the forthcoming *All the Rage* and the Lambda Award-winning *Rock | Salt | Stone*. King's essays have appeared in *LitHub*, the *Ms. blog*, *Sargasso*, *The Progressive*, *The Caribbean Review of Gender Studies*, and elsewhere. She has performed at biennales, festivals, bookstores, and other venues around the world and in cyberspace. King is creative editor of *sx salon* and associate professor at Brooklyn College, part of the City University of New York.

Gaiutra Bahadur (Guyana/United States)

Gaiutra Bahadur is a Guyanese-American essayist, critic and journalist who writes frequently about literature, history, memory, migration, and gender. Her book *Coolie Woman, a personal history of indenture*, was shortlisted in 2014 for the Orwell Prize, the British literary prize for artful political writing, and the OCM Bocas Prize for Nonfiction. A former daily newspaper reporter in the United States and a Harvard Nieman Fellow at 32, she is a regular contributor to *The New York Times Book Review*, *The Nation*, *The New Republic*, *The New York Review of Books* and *Dissent Magazine*. She is an assistant professor in the Department of Arts, Culture and Media at Rutgers University, New Jersey. The recipient of literary residencies from the MacDowell Artists Colony and the Rockefeller Foundation's Bellagio Center in Italy, Bahadur is the winner of a national award for creative prose from the Barbara Deming Memorial Fund for American feminist writers and is a two-time winner of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts Award for creative prose.

Blake Morrison (United Kingdom)

Blake Morrison is a poet, novelist and the author of two bestselling memoirs, *And When Did You Last See Your Father?*, winner of the J. R. Ackerley Prize for Autobiography, and *Things My Mother Never Told Me*. His most recent book, *The Executor*, is a novel with poems. He is Professor of Creative and Life Writing at Goldsmiths University, London. A Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, and former Chair of the Poetry Book Society and Vice-Chair of PEN, Blake has written fiction, poetry, journalism, literary criticism and libretti, as well as adapting plays for the stage.



Johnson and Amoy Achong Caribbean Writers Prize

This is the final year of the Johnson and Amoy Achong Caribbean Writers Prize, an annual award which provides an emerging Caribbean writer living and working in the Anglophone Caribbean with the developmental opportunity to advance or finish a literary work, with support from an established writer as a mentor. The winner will be announced during the 2021 NGC Bocas Lit Fest, on Saturday 24 April at 6.30pm.

For the past three years, the Johnson and Amoy Achong Caribbean Writers Prize was sponsored by philanthropist Dr. Kongshiek Achong Low and administered by the Bocas Lit Fest and the UK literary

charitable trust, Arvon. The first year, dedicated to fiction, was won by Jamaican writer Sharma Taylor, while the second year, dedicated to non-fiction, was won by Trinidadian Amanda Choo Quan.

The 2021 Johnson and Amoy Achong Caribbean Writers Prize will be awarded for a poetry work in progress.

Finalists:
Akhim Alexis
 Trinidad & Tobago

Jay T. John
 Trinidad & Tobago

Desiree Seebaran
 Trinidad & Tobago

Longlist:
Akhim Alexis
 Trinidad & Tobago

Kamille Andrews
 Trinidad & Tobago

Wendy Brewster
 Trinidad & Tobago

Linda Deane
 Barbados

Jannine T. Horsford
 Trinidad & Tobago

Jay T. John
 Trinidad & Tobago

Kirese Narinesingh
 Trinidad & Tobago

Derron Sandy
 Trinidad & Tobago

Desiree Seebaran
 Trinidad & Tobago

Scott Leon Ting-A-Kee
 Guyana



2021 BOCAS HENRY SWANZY AWARD FOR DISTINGUISHED SERVICE TO CARIBBEAN LETTERS

The **Bocas Henry Swanzy Award for Distinguished Service to Caribbean Letters** is named for the late BBC World Service producer (1915–2004) of *Caribbean Voices*. The programme provided a landmark platform for Caribbean writing in the 1940s and 50s, broadcasting fiction and poems by West Indian writers across the region.

Since 2013, the NGC Bocas Lit Fest has honoured Swanzy's memory and recognised the achievements of editors, broadcasters, critics, and others via the annual Bocas Henry Swanzy Award. Awardees are chosen by the Bocas Lit Fest. The Bocas Henry Swanzy Award has been presented to scholar and editor Kamau Brathwaite (2020); publisher Ian Randle (2019); editor and scholar Anne Walmsley (2018); Joan Dayal, proprietor of Paper Based Books (2017); Jeremy Poynting, founder of Peepal Tree Press (2016); editor and broadcaster Margaret Busby, OBE (2015); literary critics Kenneth Ramchand and Gordon Rohlehr (2014); and publishers John La Rose and Sarah White of New Beacon Books (2013).

The 2021 Bocas Henry Swanzy Award will be presented to Jamaicans **Edward Baugh**

and **Mervyn Morris** — both professors emeriti of the University of the West Indies.

Baugh and Morris are widely considered pioneers of the study of West Indian literature, over careers that each span half a century, and are both alumni of what was originally called the University College of the West Indies, and spent their careers teaching at UWI.

Based at the Cave Hill, Barbados, campus from 1965 to 1967, then at Mona, Jamaica, Baugh is best known as a scholar of Caribbean poetry, in particular the poetry of Derek Walcott, having written several books devoted to the work of the St Lucian Nobel Laureate. He also edited Walcott's 2007 *Selected Poems*. In his *West Indian Poetry 1900–1970: A Study in Cultural Decolonisation*, and in his broad-ranging scholarly essays — such as the groundbreaking “Towards a West Indian Criticism” and “The West Indian Writer and his Quarrel with History” — Baugh helped shape a distinctly Caribbean approach to criticism of the region's literature, grounded in the Caribbean's unique historical experiences.

Mervyn Morris, a lecturer at Mona since 1966, championed Caribbean oral poetry traditions from early in his career. His 1964 essay “On Reading Louise Bennett, Seriously”, was a landmark in scholarly attention to the literature of Jamaican Patwa, which Morris extended in the 1970s to the growing number of Jamaican dub poets. Many of his key earlier essays are collected in the book *Is English We Speaking*. Morris also mentored several generations of Jamaican poets, editing and anthologising their work. In 2014 was appointed Poet Laureate of Jamaica — the first since Independence — in which role he worked to raise the profile of poetry across the country, highlighting the work of younger writers.

Baugh and Morris are also accomplished and lauded poets, whose creative practice has inevitably informed and enriched their research. But it is their achievements as scholars, teachers, editors, mentors, and advocates which the 2021 Bocas Henry Swanzy Award recognises and honours.

The 2021 Bocas Henry Swanzy Award will be formally presented to Edward Baugh and Mervyn Morris during the Winners' Row segment of the Festival.

Saturday 24 April, 6.30 pm

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POLAR VORTEX A NOVEL BY **SHANI MOOTOO**

- Short-listed for the Scotiabank Giller Prize
- Short-listed for the 2020 Caribbean Readers' Awards (Best Adult Novel)

"A suspenseful story of desire, secrets, and an unexpected love triangle." —*Trinidad & Tobago Express*





A RIVER CALLED TIME SPECULATIVE FICTION BY **COURTTIA NEULAND**

"This is an ambitiously imagined book that, by removing the European lens on African cultures, creates a new reality that allows us to question how we view our own. Complex and multilayered, this novel opens the door to the possibilities of noncolonial worlds." —*Kirkus Reviews*



AKASHIC BOOKS: REVERSE-GENTRIFICATION OF THE LITERARY WORLD | www.akashicbooks.com | info@akashicbooks.com

The Friends of Bocas Lit Fest will soon be available for everyone to sign-up to. Since 2011, Bocas has built a community dedicated to the advancement of Caribbean literature, nurtured emerging writers from the region, instigated important conversations about the arts and culture, and brought renowned and internationally-acclaimed writers to the stage at our annual festival. We know that there are many like-minded individuals who support our work and believe in the sustainability of our mission.

We invite those who love Caribbean literature and appreciate our festival and projects to become a Friend of the Bocas Lit Fest. This will give you access to our full literary archives, as well as specially curated content such as writers' seminars, newsletters, book bulletins and early alerts to our year-round offerings. Friends' packages include discounts on our workshops, festival art, popular T-shirts and other merchandise, and we will be adding treats as we go along.

The Bocas Lit Fest has become an institution but its future is only guaranteed if we continue to grow this strong community of people committed to helping ensure our sustainability for generations to come.

The Friends of Bocas Lit Fest will be **launched during the 2021 festival** — stay tuned for updates on this exciting development via our website.



Marina Salandy-Brown is the founder and Vice President of the Bocas Lit Fest, Festival Director of the NGC Bocas Lit Fest, and a Newsday columnist. She is a former editor and prizewinning BBC programme maker with a publishing background and member of the Arts Council of London's Literary Panel. In 2005, she received the degree of Doctor of Letters (DLitt), *honoris causa*, from the University of Westminster (UK), and in 2013 from the University of the West Indies. She is a current member of the British Council's Arts Advisory Committee and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. Her writing has appeared in international magazines and literary anthologies, including *New Daughters of Africa* (2019). In 2020, she was honoured with the Chilean Strait of Magellan Award for Innovation, and named an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature.

Funso Aiyejina is the Deputy Festival Director. He is a prizewinning poet and short story writer, including the 2000 Commonwealth Writers' Prize (Africa). Born in Nigeria and based in Trinidad and Tobago since 1989, he is a former Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Education at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine and now Professor Emeritus. He is a widely published critic of African and Caribbean literature and a specialist on the work of Earl Lovelace.

Since 2000 he has co-run the Cropper Foundation Writers Workshop, for Caribbean writers. His third poetry collection, *The Errors of the Rendering*, was published by Peepal Tree Press in 2020.

Nicholas Laughlin is the Programme Director of the NGC Bocas Lit Fest. He is also the editor of the arts and travel magazine *Caribbean Beat* and co-director of the contemporary art space and network *Alice Yard*. He has published two books of poems, *The Strange Years of My Life* and *Enemy Luck*.

Danielle Delon is Director of the NGC Children's Bocas Lit Fest. She is the editor and publisher of several historical publications, including *The Letters of Margaret Mann*, *Bridges of Trinidad & Tobago*, *Ice Age Trinidad* (for children) and *A Handbook of Trinidad Cookery*.

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TrinEvo Studios, Dragonzilla's Animated Stories Animator
Jonathan Mora, Dragonzilla's Storytime Sound
David Williams, Dragonzilla's Storytime Makeup Artist
Baby Thorne Studios, Reading with Dragonzilla Voice and Dragonzilla's Animated Stories Sound
Necessary Arts Company, Cast *Lola* and *Battle of the Bugs*
Farouk Jr, Voice of Dragonzilla

The Bocas Lit Fest is a non-profit company incorporated and registered in Trinidad and Tobago in 2010.

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THANKS FROM ALL OF US TO ALL OF YOU WHO MADE THIS FESTIVAL POSSIBLE

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#bocas2021

YEAR ROUND PROGRAMMING

We've got many more projects and events lined up outside of the festival weekend. Not all have confirmed dates, but here are some of the many offerings in store for the year:

BIOS AND BOOKMARKS

Bios & Bookmarks, an online reading series with Caribbean authors powered by the NGC Bocas Lit Fest, was launched in the midst of the coronavirus "lockdown" period in April 2020, and is now one of our most popular virtual offerings. In 2021, we're back with four seasons, each with six episodes featuring readings and discussions with both familiar and new Caribbean writers across the region and diaspora – allowing us to get to know the faces behind the words and what's on their bookshelves. All previous episodes can be viewed on our YouTube page – www.youtube.com/user/bocaslitfest/.

The upcoming season will begin after the 2021 festival, promising to rile emotions and delve into relationships, love, identity and belonging, under the theme of "Telling Complex Family Stories". The episodes air live on Sundays at 3 pm on our Facebook page.

New season begins 16 May, 2021



YEAR ROUND PROGRAMMING



WORKSHOPS

Bocas Lit Fest workshops cater to beginner, intermediate and advanced level writers. These workshops are affordably priced, interactive, and happen online, via platforms such as Zoom, and we welcome regional and international participants.

The following is an overview of workshops for the duration of 2021. Stay tuned to www.bocaslitfest.com/workshops/ for registration, updates and forms.

May: Writing for Children, with Joanne Hillhouse

June: How to Make Your Book Look Good, with Melanie Archer

July: Images are poems: an introduction to visual poetry, with Andre Bagoo

July: Sentence by sentence: the language of fiction, with Barbara Lalla

August: Speculative Fiction Masterclass, with Karen Lord

September: Scriptwriting, with David Edgecombe

October: Writing and Performance, with Elisha Bartels

November: The History Around Me: Writing Popular History, with Bridget Brereton

THE FIRST CITIZENS NATIONAL POETRY SLAM



In eight years, the National Poetry Slam has established itself as the largest stage for spoken word in the Caribbean. Open to all ages, The First Citizens National Poetry Slam is T&T's national spoken word competition, sponsored by First Citizens. Every year hundreds of poets compete, through auditions, semi-finals and final, for a grand prize of TT\$50,000, a second prize of \$20,000 and third prize of \$10,000.

In 2021, as in 2020, the Slam will be televised. Auditions kick off in May, followed by semi finals in August and the final showdown in October. More information will be announced at a later date - stay tuned to our website here - www.bocaslitfest.com/youth/poetry-slam/.

May - October, 2021



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