

Diane Awerbuck

Diane Awerbuck is a prizewinning writer, reviewer, editor and teacher. She writes femme/goth thrillers (Home Remedies); memoirs (Gardening at Night); pandemic cowboy thrillers (South, as Frank Owen; North, as Frank Owen); doctorates on trauma (The Spirit and the Letter); holy-wholly poetry (As above, so below); and short story collections (Cabin Fever; Inside your body there are flowers). She is the co-author of *How do you Sleep?* together with Alex Latimer.

Clyde Beech

Kwezi - New Africa

Clyde Beech is a professional colourist and digital painter. He boasts pure passion with a fine hand, and appreciation of contrast in his work. Born and bred in the Cape he beats sand bags in a martial arts gym in hope to someday become one of the superheroes he applies colour and life to. He is part of the Kwezi team.

Kirsten Deane

Kirsten Deane is a Creative Writing Masters student at the University of the Western Cape. In her thesis, she explores the relationship between poetry and photography. She majored in English literature in her undergraduate degree and decided to focus on creative writing in her honours year. Kirsten has worked as a creative editor for her university and also tutored undergraduate students in English Literature. Her poems have appeared in *New Contrast*, *The Best New African Poets 2019* and *2020* anthologies, as well as various international literary journals. Kirsten has also published a short story through *New Contrast*. She was a guest speaker at the 8th International Symposium of Poetic Inquiry in 2022.

Bianca Flanders

Pumpkin Finds Her Queen

Pumpkin Finds her Kindness

Pumpkin Finds her Beat

PRH

Bianca is an actor, voice artist, writer, producer and director from Cape Town. In 2011 she graduated from UCT with her degree in Theatre and Performance. In 2012, she went on to complete her Post-Graduate Certificate of Education in English and Drama.

Bianca has performed in various stage productions such as *Krotoa: Eva van de Kaap*, *District 6*, *Kanala*, *The Demon Bride*, *Happy New Year*, *Aunty Merle: The Musical*, *Orpheus in Africa*, *In Ongenade*, *Kristalvlakte*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Niqabi Ninja* and *Alice in Wonderland*.

She has also had roles in various films and series such as *Troukooors*, *Nêrens Noord Kaap*, *Barakat*, *Swirl*, *Our Girl*, *A Christmas Chorus* and *The Riviera*.

In 2021 Bianca wrote and directed her first feature film, *Nativity* which is available on Showmax. She has also written a number of children's books such as *The Baboon*, *The Dassie and the Berries* (Available at Wimpy nationwide), *Yolisa's Might Mission* (Available on the Gautrain) and she is of course, the author of the bestselling children's books, *Pumpkin Finds Her Queen* and *Pumpkin Finds Her Kindness*.

When Bianca's not busy with all things creative, you can find her in her kitchen cooking up a storm and listening to South African Jazz, or lying on the couch nose-deep in a book. Bianca lives in Woodstock with her husband Dean, and their cat Mishu Petronella Flanders Balie. (And yes, that is her cat's full name...)

Xolisa Guzula

Imbokodo Series - Jacana

Dr Xolisa Guzula is a Senior Lecturer in Applied Language and Literacy Studies with a focus on multilingual and multiliteracies education at the University of Cape Town. She specialises in multilingual education, especially in teaching children to speak, read and write in two or more languages. She is one of the founders of a network of reading clubs growing across the country starting from the Vulindlela Reading Clubs to Nal'ibali Reading Clubs and the Stars of Today Literacy Club. She has written several children's books including the recent series, *Imbokodo: Women who Shape us*. She has translated many children's books from English to isiXhosa including books by award winning authors such as Astrid Lindgren's *Brothers Lionheart*, Niky Daly, Sihle-isipho Nontshokweni and Refiloe Moahloli and Nicholas Maritz' books. She won an IBBY/Exclusive Books award for best translation of *The Elders at the Door* by Shale and Maryanne Bester to linkonde eMnyango. Her translation of Wendy Hardie's book, *The Singing Stone/Ilitye Eliculayo* made the honour list of IBBY 100 recommended books across the world. Xolisa is a member of Bua-lit Language and Literacy Collective (www.bua-lit.org.za), working on social justice in language and literacy education.

Siphokazi Jonas / Makazi Nomabali

Makazi Nomabali, *The Aunt Who Tells Stories*, is a South African storyteller. She reads English and isiXhosa books and tells stories written by various authors for children ages 4-10. Makazi Nomabali believes in the power of books, and she uses both digital and live readings to enrich the imagination. Her story sessions include interactive short poems where children can participate through performance.

Siphokazi Jonas is a multi-award-winning poet, playwright, actor, and producer based in Cape Town, South Africa. She holds an MA in English Literature and an undergraduate degree in Drama and English.

Her awards include a South African Film and Television Award for Best Short Film, Most Innovative Young Artist Western Cape Cultural Affairs Award, and 100 Sunday World Unsung Heroes. Her most recent stage production, *#WeAreDyingHere*, was adapted into an award-winning poetry short film screened at numerous international film festivals.

Siphokazi has attended poetry sessions and festivals worldwide, including conferences and festivals in Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Tunisia, and Nigeria.

Her work is freely available in numerous anthologies and journals.

She was the 2016 runner-up for the national Sol Plaatje European Union Award and headlined as the first Featured Poet at Poetry Africa Festival in 2021.

Chanel Joseph

Chanel Joseph is a qualified social worker and a community outreach worker – but her favourite job is being a mother to her one-year-old daughter, Khai. In 2019 she graduated with a Master's degree in Social Development from the University of Cape Town with a thesis focused on youth development. Chanel has over 10 years' experience in the non-profit sector and sits on the executive committee of the Athlone Church of Christ Educare Centre. She is a dedicated outreach programme manager and facilitator at the Cape Town Museum of Childhood, a flagship project of the Centre for Early Childhood Development.

At this unique and interactive museum, the first of its kind in Africa, Chanel enjoys connecting people from different backgrounds and ages through their childhood stories. While her work is based in Rondebosch, Cape Town, her outreach role takes her to diverse communities.

Website: <https://www.museumofchildhood.org.za/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CTchildhood>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/ctchildhood>

Lisa Julie

Lisa Julie is a writer, performer, and literary scholar. She is a Mellon Mays fellow, has an MA in Creative Writing from the University of the Western Cape, and is currently completing a PhD on Literary Pedagogies. Her dissertation considers the treatment of the self in the literature classroom and appeals for epistemological care in Humanities education. Her work has been published in several anthologies including *Cutting Carrots the Wrong Way* (uHlanga, 2017), *New Contrast*, *New Coin*, and *Notes from the Body* (UKZN Press, 2023). Lisa is a member of The Red Wheelbarrow Poetry Collective based in Cape Town. The Red Wheelbarrow was launched in January 2021 to provide opportunities for poets, and those who love poetry, to meet and read. Lisa and The Red Wheelbarrow Poetry Collective has an existing relationship with Open Book Cape Town, the Cape Cultural Collective (CCC), and the McGregor Poetry Festival. She spends her time between Muizenberg and Kleinmond.

Alex Latimer

Alex Latimer is an award-winning South African writer and illustrator. His picture books for children have been published and translated around the world. He has written one novel, *The Space Race*, and has co-written two others, *South and North* – both with Diane Awerbuck under the pen name Frank Owen. His story 'Extinction' was shortlisted for the 2019 Commonwealth Short Story Prize. He co-authored *How do you Sleep?* with Diane Awerbuck.

Qarnita Loxton

NB

Qarnita Loxton was born in Cape Town in 1974. She studied law at UCT, graduating in 1997, and worked as an attorney predominantly in the financial services industry. More recently she has trained and worked as an executive coach. Her first novel, *Being Kari* was published in 2017, followed by *Being Lily* in 2018, and most recently, *Being Dianne* which hit shelves in 2021. She is the co-author of *Chasing Marion*, written together with Amy Heydenrych, Pamela Power and Gail Schimmel.

Sindiwe Magona

Sindiwe Magona is an internationally renowned South African writer who has received widespread recognition for her writing, her activism and humanitarian work. She has written novels, children's books, short stories, poetry, biographies, autobiographies, essays, radio plays, and a screenplay. Magona was awarded the Order of iKhamanga by the President of the Republic of South Africa in 2011. She is Senior Research Fellow at the University of the Western Cape, South Africa.

Magona worked as a teacher, domestic worker and spent two decades working for the United Nations in the United States of America. She has received many awards for her fearless writing 'truth to power'. Her written work is often informed by her lived experience of being a black woman resisting subjugation and poverty.

Thabiso Mahlape

Thabiso Mahlape is a trailblazing publisher who is the owner of Blackbird Books. Blackbird Books, a globally recognised publishing house, was founded in August 2015, the first black owned publishing imprint in South Africa. The launch of Blackbird Books transformed the South African literary landscape and since 2015, Blackbird has put an immense amount of effort in pioneering and establishing a home for new African narratives and stories that reflect the African experience.

Blackbird Books is also a pioneer for young black voices and focuses on amplifying brilliant young authors and their writing in order to give them the opportunity to tell stories that showcase the wealth of their African experiences. Blackbird Books is especially proud of this goal and their success in publishing young black authors so far. As stated in their website: “We pride ourselves in being a launchpad for black narratives that would otherwise not get the attention they deserve.”

Thabiso is currently a Publishing Specialist at Nal'ibali Trust.

Lebohang Masango

Soft Landing - NB

Mpumi books - New Africa

Lebohang Masango is a South African poet, author, and anthropologist, celebrated for her captivating storytelling and insightful commentary on social issues. With a background in anthropology, Masango delves into the intricacies of human behaviour and societal structures, bringing a unique perspective to her writing. Her award-winning Mpumi series is available in all 11 of South Africa's official languages. Through her writing, she strives to inspire empathy, understanding, and positive change in the world. Her debut book for adult-readers, *The Soft Life: Love, choice and modern dating* (Tafelberg, 2022) is based on her Master's research into the intersection between our collective socio-economic condition and the romantic lives of young women in South Africa and has been longlisted for The Sunday Times Literary Awards 2023. Her work continues to resonate with readers of all ages, making her a leading voice in contemporary African literature.

Nonikiwe Mashologu

Nala Sings - Jacana

Nonikiwe Mashologu is the Literacy Project Director at the Otto Foundation Trust; a small philanthropic foundation that seeks to support primary schools in becoming sites for quality education by setting up libraries and running literacy programmes. She sits on the board of Nal'ibali and is one of the current judges for the Exclusive Books IBBY SA Award.

She has been in the early literacy field for over a decade having worked with organisations such as Centre for the Book (on the First Words in Print project), PUKU children's literacy foundation, Biblionef, Room to Read and Nal'ibali. Here she fulfilled various roles such as; project manager, editor, facilitator, translator and reviewer and she is also the previous Chairperson for IBBY SA. She was celebrated as one of 12 women in South Africa who is working to drive literacy change and is passionate about getting books and stories to children across the country.

Athambile Masola

Ilifa - UHlanga

Noni Jabavu - NB

Imbokodo Series - Jacana

Dr Athambile Masola received her PhD from Rhodes University. Her dissertation was an exploration of black women's life writing with a particular focus on Noni Jabavu and Sisonke Msimang's memoirs. Her primary research focuses on black women's life writing and historiography. Her research is also informed by the early 20th century newspaper archive in South Africa (particularly written in isiXhosa). She is primarily concerned with the nature of erasure and the ways in which multiple forms of reading a variety of texts can inform archival research.

Her debut poetry collection, *Ilifa*, was published in 2021. Together with Makhosazana Xaba, she introduces *Noni Jabavu: A Stranger At Home* (published through Tafelberg in 2023), and co-authored the *Imbokodo: Women Who Shape Us* series with Xolisa Guzula.

Nondwe Mpuma

Peach Country - Uhlanga

Nondwe Mpuma was born eMaXesibeni in the Eastern Cape province. She holds an MA Creative Writing degree from the University of the Western Cape, where she currently lectures. Her work has been published widely in South Africa and abroad. In 2017 she won the 2017 Patricia Schonstein Poetry in McGregor Award. She is one of the hosts of The Red Wheelbarrow Society based in Cape Town. *Peach Country* is her debut poetry collection.

Instagram: [@nondwe](#)

Zandile Ndhlovu

Zandi's Song - Pan Macmillan

Zandile Ndhlovu is a Freediving Instructor and the founder of The Black Mermaid Foundation, an organization seeking to create diverse representation in the ocean arena. Zandile's work centers around creating the first encounter that exposes the youth to the ocean. As an ocean conservationist, diversity and inclusion specialist, and avid speaker and storyteller, she uses these skills to advocate for diversely represented and inclusive oceans while working to reshape incomplete narratives. Zandile is a change agent, passionate about human potential being the critical currency that creates the worlds we want to live in while focusing on the collective ability to bring change. She wrote *Zandi's Song*, an inspirational children's picture book based on her own life.

Refilwe Nsibande

Zibu and Zizo - Book Dash

Nikiwe's Magical Glass Doors - Self

Refilwe is a creative technical expert with 15 years of experience in the ICT sector and is currently a pre-sales Architect for MTN South Africa. She studied Information Technology at the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) for both her Diploma and Bachelors degree.

She loves engrossing herself in the imaginatively created worlds of authors, as well as writing. She participated in the gruelling 2022 BookDash challenge and survived. Her passion for writing also won her a spot as a coauthor in the Open Book Festival Writing Competition during 2019 for the "Writing My City" anthology.

She is an advocate for justice and fairness, especially for women and the vulnerable who usually have no voice.