

21st Century New African and African Diaspora Writings and Arts

A roundtable discussion with
Taiye Selasi, Chris Abani, and Binyavanga Wainaina



Taiye Selasi



Chris Abani



Binyavanga Wainaina

Monday, October 16, 2017
6:30pm

NYU Law School, Vanderbilt Hall
Tishman Auditorium, 1st floor
40 Washington Square South
New York, NY



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The Institute of African American Affairs (IAAA) at New York University was founded in 1969 to research, document, and celebrate the cultural and intellectual production of Africa and its diaspora in the Atlantic world and beyond. IAAA is committed to the study of Blacks in modernity through concentrations in Pan-Africanism and Black Urban Studies.





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Taiye Selasi

Taiye Selasi is an author and photographer. Born in London and raised in Boston, she holds a BA in American Studies from Yale and an MPhil in International Relations from Oxford. In 2005 she published the seminal essay “Bye-Bye, Babar (Or: What is an Afropolitan?),” sparking a movement among young transnational Africans. In 2013 Selasi’s debut novel, the *New York Times* bestseller *Ghana Must Go*, was selected as one of the 10 Best Books of 2013 by *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Economist*. The same year Selasi was named to *Granta*’s once-in-a-decade list of Best Young British Novelists. Her 2015 TED talk, “Don’t Ask Where I’m From; Ask Where I’m a Local,” has reached over two million viewers, redefining the way a global society conceives of personal identity.



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Chris Abani

Chris Abani is a novelist, poet, essayist, screenwriter and playwright. Born in Nigeria to an Igbo father and English mother, he grew up in Afikpo, Nigeria and has resided in the United States since 2001. The recipient of many honors, including a Guggenheim Award, Abani’s fiction includes *The Secret History of Las Vegas* (Penguin 2014), *Song For Night* (Akashic, 2007), *The Virgin of Flames* (Penguin, 2007), *Becoming Abigail* (Akashic, 2006), *GraceLand* (FSG, 2004), and *Masters of the Board* (Delta, 1985). His poetry collections are *Sanctificum* (Copper Canyon Press, 2010), *There Are No Names for Red* (Red Hen Press, 2010), *Feed Me The Sun - Collected Long Poems* (Peepal Tree Press, 2010) and others. Through his TED Talks, public speaking and essays Abani is known as an international voice on humanitarianism, art, ethics, and our shared political responsibility. He is Board of Trustees Professor of English at Northwestern University.



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Binyavanga Wainaina

Binyavanga Wainaina won the 2002 Caine Prize for African Writing. He is the founding editor of *Kwani?*, a leading African literary magazine based in Kenya, and his work has appeared widely in *The New York Times*, *Vanity Fair*, *Granta*, *The EastAfrican*, *National Geographic*, *The Sunday Times*, *Virginia Quarterly Review*, and *The Guardian*, among other publications worldwide. In 2011, Graywolf published his memoir *One Day I Will Write About This Place* to acclaim and praise from Teju Cole, Alexandra Fuller, and many others. Wainaina served as the Director of the Chinua Achebe Center for African Writers and Artists at Bard College. *TIME* named Wainaina one of their 100 Most Influential People of 2014.

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African and African diaspora writers and artists have met the 21st century with unprecedented new images and visions of Africa and the world. From Lagos, Johannesburg and Dakar to Paris, New York, London, or Berlin, writers and artists of African descent are using their locations not only to reimagine and rewrite Africa – but the world; they are mobilizing the resources available to them, wherever they are, to think with the world and redefine the contemporary in their own images. Join us as three of the best among these writers and artists discuss Africa, the world, and multiple identity positions.