



## ASIAN LITERARY FESTIVAL - NAIROBI 2026

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### EVENT PROGRAMME

#	Session Title	Type	Participants	Location	Time	Session Description
<b>THURSDAY, 28<sup>th</sup> MAY 2025</b>						
3	OFFICIAL OPENING OF #ALFNairobi2026	Messages from ALF Global Co-founder and the CEO	Pramudith D. Rupasinghe Nadeera Nilupamali	Eugenia Park – Amphitheatre	8.00 AM – 9.45 AM	A word from the ALF leadership on the historic moment of Kenya becoming the first African nation to host the Asian Literary Festival.
4	'Nairobi as a UNESCO City of Literature'	Public Lecture	Alexander Nderitu	Eugenia Park – Amphitheatre	10.00 AM – 10.45 AM	Nairobi's kick-off towards 'UNESCO City of Literature' status. Award-winning author and critic Alexander Nderitu outlines the city's viability for cultural recognition, rich literary heritage, thriving publishing ecosystem, and the civic action required to place Nairobi firmly on the global literary map.
5	Friendship Tour (Africa and Poland Cultural Exchange Tour)	Guided Trip	Weronika Czyżewska-Poncyłjusz, Julia Fiedorczuk, Katarzyna Szweda, Jakub Pszoniak, Mikołaj Poncyłjusz. Host: Griffins Ndhine	National Museum, National Theatre, McMillan Library, National Archives, Nuria Bookstore	9.00 AM – 4.00 PM	A full-day cultural immersion through some Nairobi's most significant literary and historical landmarks. Polish and Kenyan artists engage in dialogue at the National Museum, National Theatre, McMillan Library and Nuria Bookstore, National Archives, celebrating friendship between two cultures through poetry, history, and shared storytelling.

6	'Undoing the Rejection of Digitalisation: Kipenzi Kids Platform'	Screening	Dr. Nadeera Nilupamali	Virtual	9.00 AM – 9.30 AM	Dr. Nadeera from Sri Lanka talks about her international literacy program, Kipenzi Kids Series that guides school-going children into writing and illustrating their own digital books. Through storytelling, games, and creative activities, Kipenzi Kids demonstrates how technology can be embraced rather than feared as a tool for bringing books, reading, and literary culture closer to young audiences.
7	'How to Draw Landscapes and Objects'	Children's Activities	Citrine Topaz	Eugenia Park – Gardens	9.00 AM – 9.30 AM	Citrine Topaz, author and illustrator of 17 books, teaches school-age children the tricks to drawing distant and nearby objects. Her work spans a wide range of genres, including early childhood development resources, children's coloring books, adult coloring books, and adult journals.
8	'One Kenyan Playwright's Inspiration'	Lecture	Speaker: John Sibi-Okumu. Host: Alexander Nderitu	Eugenia Park – Amphitheatre	12.00 PM – 12.45 PM	A rare lecture by one of East Africa's most distinguished theatre practitioners. John Sibi-Okumu reflects on a career spanning performance, direction, and cultural advocacy, exploring how the stage has served as both mirror and conscience for Kenyan society across decades of change.
9	'Hallyu: Is South Korean Entertainment the New Hollywood?'	Panel Discussion	Mildred Achoch, Wacera Gikonyo	Eugenia Park – Amphitheatre	1.00 PM – 1.45 PM	An exciting panel examining the global rise of Korean popular culture — from K-drama and K-pop to cinema and webtoons. The discussion asks whether Hallyu represents a genuine shift in soft power, and what African creators and audiences can learn from South Korea's cultural export phenomenon.
10	'Should Kiswahili Be Africa's Lingua Franca?'	Panel Discussion	Dr. Hamisi Babusa, Rebecca Nandwa.	Eugenia Park – Amphitheatre	2.00 PM – 2.45 PM	A bold and timely debate on the case for Kiswahili as the unifying language of the African continent. Linguists and writers examine the historical reach, political resonance, and literary vitality of Kiswahili, weighing its promise as a vehicle of pan-African identity against practical and postcolonial complexities.
11	'Monsoon Ocean'	Discussion	Panelists: Zahid Rajan, Nahida Esmail, Betty Kathungu-Furet	Eugenia Park – Amphitheatre	3:00 PM – 4:00 PM	A cross-cultural conversation uniting writers and artists from the Indian Ocean littoral — Kenya, Sri Lanka, and beyond. The panel explores how shared oceanic geographies, trade histories, and migration patterns have shaped a distinct literary imagination across East Africa and South Asia.

### FRIDAY, 29TH MAY 2025

12	Tribute to Recently Departed Writers	Panel Discussion and Screenings	Zahid Rajan, Lexa Lubanga, Eric Rugara	Eugenia Park – Amphitheatre	9.00 AM – 9.45 AM	A solemn and celebratory tribute honouring writers lost to the literary community in recent years. Through panel reflection and curated screenings, participants pay homage to lives devoted to the written word, examining the legacies these authors leave behind and the silences their passing creates in literature.
13	'Children's Literature in English and Other Languages'	Panel Discussion	Nahida Esmail, Rebecca Nandwa, Wangari the Storyteller	Eugenia Park – Amphitheatre	10.00 AM – 10.45 AM	A forward-looking conversation on the power and responsibility of writing for children in Africa and beyond. Panellists debate representation, language choice, and the role of children's books in shaping young imaginations, asking what stories the next generation needs and who should be telling them.
14	'Colours of Love: Dating Across Cultures'	Panel Discussion	Wamuyu W. Yvonne, Ayaz Shah,	Eugenia Park – Amphitheatre	11:00 AM – 11:45 PM	A candid and lively panel on the joys, tensions, and revelations of cross-cultural romance. Writers and commentators draw on personal experience and literary imagination to explore how love crosses borders of language, custom, and expectation, and what intercultural intimacy reveals about identity and belonging.
15	'Borderland Animation Film Studio'	Screening	Weronika Czyżewska-Poncyłjusz	Eugenia Park – Amphitheatre	11.00 AM – 2:00 PM	Screening of films produced by the Borderland Animation Film Studio as an independent event within the festival programme, separate from the university session. The screening presents artistic animation as a medium of memory, intercultural dialogue, and work with the experience of borderlands.

16	Babusa Kids TV	Screening and Children's Activities	Dr. Hamisi Babusa	Eugenia Park – Gardens	2:15 PM – 3:00 PM	An engaging programme of children's screenings and interactive activities led by Dr. Hamisi Babusa, combining Kiswahili language and storytelling with visual content. The session is designed to strengthen children's connection to African languages and oral traditions through play, creativity, and shared narrative experience.
17	Makhan Singh and Jevanje Memorial	Exhibitions	Zahid Rajan	Eugenia Park – Gardens	All day	An immersive visual art installation curated by Zahid Rajan, underlining the achievements of two of the most influential and beloved historical figures from the South Asian community in Kenya.
18	'Distributing Literature in the Digital Age'	In Conversation	Bennet (Nuria Bookstore)	Eugenia Park – Amphitheatre	12:00 PM – 12:45 PM	Examining how African publishers, writers, and platforms are navigating shifting landscapes, asking whether digital tools are democratising access to literature or deepening existing inequalities.
19	Alexander Nderitu Prize for Literature: Winner Announcement	Panel Discussion	Mildred Achoch, Jacob Oketch, Ayaz Shah	Eugenia Park – Amphitheatre	1:00 PM – 1:15 PM	The eagerly anticipated announcement of the winner of the Alexander Nderitu Prize for Literature, one of the festival's signature moments. The panel discusses the prize's mandate to recognise bold and original voices, before the winning work is celebrated and its author welcomed into the ALF community.
20	Introducing 'La Victoria' (novel)	Lecture	Speaker: Ayaz Shah Host: Vera Omwocha	Eugenia Park – Amphitheatre	1:30 PM – 2:30 PM	An introduction to Ayaz Shah's debut novel La Victoria. Discovering the creative process behind the book, its literary influences, and the questions it poses about success, sacrifice, and the cost of belonging.
21	'Storytelling With Wangari'	Storytelling performance, Meet the Author, Book signing	Wangari the Storyteller	Eugenia Park – Gardens	11.00 AM – 12:30 PM	Wangari Grace, more popularly known as 'Wangari the Storyteller', shows rather than tells how to tell a story, demonstrating the transformative power of narrative. This is also an exclusive chance, even at the ALF Festival, to get one of the author's 20 books personally signed by her.
22	"Conversation With Iman"	Interview	Speaker: Iman Verjee Host: Eric "Miyamoto Muswahili" Rugara	Eugenia Park – Amphitheatre	3:00 PM – 3:45 PM	A conversation with Iman Verjee about her acclaimed novel, set against the backdrop of Kenya's shifting political and social landscape. The discussion explores memory, family, and belonging, examining how the novel navigates the complex inheritance of postcolonial East Africa through the intimate lens of one family's story.
23	'Translation as a Bridge Between Languages and Cultures'	Panel Discussion	Julia Fiedorczuk, Ayaz Shah, Scholastica Moraa, Mercy Kirui, Katarzyna Szweda, Jakub Pszoniak, Dr. Hamisi Babusa	Eugenia Park – Amphitheatre	4:00 PM – 5:00 PM	A panel devoted to translation as a tool for dialogue between languages, cultures, and experiences. The Polish delegation contributes perspectives rooted in contemporary poetry, Central and Eastern Europe, local languages, historical memory, and literature understood as a practice of dialogue.
24	'Café Europa Africa'	Poetry and Music	Host: Weronika Czyżewska-Poncyłjusz,  Poets: Julia Fiedorczuk, Katarzyna Szweda, Jakub Pszoniak, Carolyne "Afroetry", Spontaneous the Poet, Kikete F.M, Raya Wambui, Onyango "Rixpoet" Otieno, Alexander Nderitu, Eric "Miyamoto Muswahili", Rugara, Eudiah Kamonjo, Jacob Oketch, Wanjiru Thuku, Griffins "The Beast" Ndhine	Eugenia Park – Amphitheatre	5.00 PM – 7.00 PM	A poetry and music event featuring Café Europa artists and African poets. The programme combines poetry readings, music, performance, and discussion, presenting literature as a space of intercultural encounter.

Musicians: Mikołaj Poncyłjusz, Michael Ongara

**SATURDAY, 30TH MAY 2026**

25	'Book Clubs / Literary Communities / Readers' Circles'	Panel Discussion	Ama Dadson, Wendy Njoroge, Bennet Owuonda (Nuria Bookstore), Weronika Czyżewska-Poncyłjusz Katarzyna Szweda Jakub Pszoniak	Eugenia Park – Amphitheatre	9.00 AM – 9.45 AM	A provocative interrogation of the book club phenomenon in Africa and beyond. Do reading groups genuinely expand literary culture, drive sales for authors, and build community — or do they primarily serve as social rituals for a privileged few? Panellists weigh the evidence and make the case for a more inclusive reading culture.
26	"Youth, Performance, and the Future of Cultural Narratives."	Open Lecture	Olwal Dickens	Eugenia Park – Amphitheatre	10:00 AM – 10:45 AM	In an era shaped by digital culture, AI, social media, and rapidly changing forms of communication, Olwal Dickens examines how literature, theatre, spoken word, film, and performance can connect with younger audiences while preserving African identity and cultural memory.
	Babusa Kids TV	Screening and Children's Activities	Dr. Hamisi Babusa	Eugenia Park – Gardens	9:15 AM – 10:30 AM	An engaging programme of children's screenings and interactive activities led by Dr. Hamisi Babusa, combining Kiswahili language and storytelling with visual content. The session is designed to strengthen children's connection to African languages and oral traditions through play, creativity, and shared narrative experience.
27	'Storytelling With Wangari'	Storytelling performance, Meet the Author, Book signing	Wangari the Storyteller	Eugenia Park – Gardens	11.00 AM – 12:30 PM	Wangari Grace, more popularly known as 'Wangari the Storyteller', shows rather than tells how to tell a story, demonstrating the transformative power of narrative. This is also an exclusive chance, even at the ALF Festival, to get one of the author's 20 books personally signed by her.
28	'Café Europa Africa'	Open Lecture	Speaker: Weronika Czyżewska-Poncyłjusz  Accompanied by: Julia Fiedorczyk, Katarzyna Szweda, Jakub Pszoniak, Mikołaj Poncyłjusz	Goethe-Institut Nairobi, intersection of Loita and Monrovia Streets.	10:00 AM – 1:00 PM	Café Europa engage with the Kenyan writers of the future at AMKA Literature Forum. The long-running literary and gender empowerment programme teaches literature and literary criticism to the general public. It also publishes books that tackle societal issues.
29	"Mumbi and the Full Nine"	Book Launch	Author: Gilbert Mwangi. Host: Ciku Kimani	Eugenia Park – Amphitheatre	11:00 AM – 11:45 AM	The launch of Gilbert Mwangi's highly anticipated new novel. Author and host explore the book's genesis, its characters, and the world it inhabits, in a celebratory conversation that marks a significant new addition to contemporary East African fiction.
30	Kenyan Readathon – The Literary Quartet Series	Panel Discussion	Guests: Benjamin Okama, Winnyann, Maurice Oginga aka 'Literature Guru'.  Co-hosts: Lexa Lubanga, Keith Ang'ana	Eugenia Park – Amphitheatre	2:00 PM – 3:30 PM	An exuberant celebration of Kenyan reading culture, bringing together online literary communities and passionate book enthusiasts for a dynamic panel rooted in reader response. The Literary Quartet Series format encourages spirited debate about beloved and contested texts, championing the idea that every reader's voice matters.
31	Makhan Singh and Jevanjee Memorial	Exhibitions	Zahid Rajan	Eugenia Park – Gardens	All day	A continuing day of the visual art installation by Zahid Rajan, underlining the achievements of two of the most influential and beloved historical figures from the South Asian community in Kenya.
32	'How to Draw Landscapes and Objects'	Children's Activities	Citrine Topaz	Eugenia Park – Gardens	1.00 PM – 3.30 PM	Citrine Topaz, author and illustrator of 17 books, teaches school-age children the tricks to drawing distant and nearby objects. Her work spans a wide range of genres, including early childhood development resources, children's colouring books, adult colouring books, and adult journals.

33	'The Art of the Memoir'	Panel Discussion,	Clifford "Odiyo" Oluoch, Michael Ngirigacha, Yvonne Wamuyu,	Eugenia Park – Amphitheatre	4:00 PM – 4.45 PM	Find out what goes into the making of the most intimate and perhaps controversial form of literature: the autobiography.
34	'The Role of Poets in Modern Society'	Panel Discussion, Poetry Performances and Screenings	Onyango "Rixpoet", Raya Wambui, Carolyne "Afroetry", Jakub Pszoniak, Julia Fiedorczuk, Katarzyna Szweda, Nahida Esmail, Griffins Ndhine	Eugenia Park – Amphitheatre	5:00 PM – 7:00 PM	A compelling examination of poetry's place in contemporary life, combining panel debate with live performance. Poets from Kenya, Uganda, Poland, and beyond ask whether verse still holds power to provoke, console, and mobilise — and what responsibilities the poet carries in an age of social media, political polarisation, and digital noise.

*\* Subject to changes*