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AFRA ATIQ

http://www.afraatiq.com/

Born in Dubai, Afra Atiq, the first female Emirati spoken word artist, says, ‘Where will the world be without the poets, writers, artists, painters and sculptors?’ Be prepared to be mesmerized when Afra performs her poems.

Afra will present her poems, share some tips about performing spoken word, talk about the importance of poetry and spoken word in today’s world and answer questions.

Afra Atiq is a spoken word artist and the first Emirati to perform at the legendary Nuyorican Poet’s Café in New York and winner of the Poets NY poetry slam.
HARRY BAKER

http://www.harrybaker.co/

Harry Baker loves words, and he has used his love of words, combined with puns and poetry, to travel the world giving awe-inspiring performances and become the youngest ever World Slam Poetry Champion. Harry will share some of his work and talk about his personal journey of how he started writing in Secondary school and where it has taken him. He will touch on the themes of fitting in and bullying, and present some playful and silly poems about falafel and dinosaurs.

Harry Baker, author of The Sunshine Kid, and the UK Poetry Slam Champion is known for his wordplay and rhymes.
FLOELLA BENJAMIN

Floella Benjamin speaks from the heart about her childhood journey to England as a ten year old girl. Her account is both funny and thought provoking, full of inspirational messages and uplifting anecdotes. She goes on to talk about her transition to creating and producing TV programmes, her philosophy of life and how she overcame obstacles by learning to face them with a smile.

Baroness Floella Benjamin is a Trinidadian-British actress, best known for her children’s television programmes; Play School, Play Away and Fast Forward, a singer, television presenter and author of Coming to England, Sea of Tears and Skip Across the Ocean.
Mark Billingham is an English novelist, actor, screenwriter, comedian and a self-confessed fan of crime fiction. His bestselling crime series features detective Tom Thorne, his favourite character to write about. He will talk to a large group about reading or discuss creative writing with a small group. Come prepared with plenty of questions as Mark enjoys engaging with his audience.

Mark Billingham is an award-winning crime writer best known for his detective Tom Thorne series. He has also written the children's thriller Triskelion series. His latest novel is *Love Like Blood.*
ERIC BROUG
http://www.broug.com/

Geometric Design can be found throughout Islamic cultures in mosques, schools, homes and palaces. Although complex, it can be created with only a compass and a ruler. Eric will introduce students to Islamic Geometric Design using examples from art and architecture. He can provide a lecture for a large group or a Workshop for up to 40.
Eric’s Workshop would be 75-90 minutes and include:
• A 20 minute introduction to Islamic Geometric Design showing how patterns work
• Developing skills to better read these patterns
• Drawing, colouring and tessellating two patterns

Eric Broug is an artist specializing in Islamic art and the author of *Islamic Geometric Design* which was hailed as essential reading by Islamic Arts Magazine.
After completing her medical training, Nadia Hashimi pursued her love of reading and combined that with her past experiences to write stories that feature strong female characters based in her homeland of Afghanistan. Nadia will share her journey to becoming a writer and talk about how students can imagine themselves as storytellers.

Internationally bestselling author Nadia Hashimi’s, *One Half From the East*, is the winner of the NCTE Charlotte Huck Award for Outstanding Fiction for Children 2017. Her other books are *When the Moon is Low*, and the *Pearl That Broke Its Shell*. 
MO GAWDAT
http://www.solveforhappy.com/

In *Solve for Happy* Mo Gawdat questions some of the most fundamental aspects of our existence, shares the underlying reasons for suffering, and plots out a step-by-step process for achieving lifelong happiness and enduring contentment. Join Mo as he talks about his book, presents his ‘equation for happiness’ and shows how to be content in the present and optimistic about the future.

Mohammad ‘Mo’ Gawdat is the Chief Business Officer for Google X, an entrepreneur, and the author of the book *Solve for Happy*. 
CHARLIE HIGSON

http://www.charliehigson.co.uk/

Be prepared to be scared ‘just enough’. Charlie is a huge fan of horror films and books and his Enemy series is a post-apocalyptic zombie, horror fest for young adults. Charlie will talk about horror and zombies in his own writing, how he became a writer and the magic of writing.

Charlie Higson is an author and comedy writer, best known for his book series Young Bond and The Enemy, and TV shows including The Fast Show.
JOE HILL
http://www.joehillfiction.com/

Joe Hill is the award-winning horror writer of the modern comic classic *Locke and Key* series, pitting a grieving family against the forces of evil and their own buried secrets. *Locke & Key* has sold over a million copies worldwide and is now in development as a TV series for Hulu. His novel *Horns* went on to become a celebrated cult film starring Daniel Radcliffe. Joe will tell the story of how he found his way into writing and his particular method of writing novels and graphic novels.

Joe Hill is a number one New York Times bestselling author, known for his novels *Heart-Shaped Box, Horns* and the comic series *Locke and Key*. His latest books are *The Fireman, NOS4A2* and *Strange Weather.*
PAULO HORTA


Paulo Horta is a scholar whose interest focuses on the cross-cultural collaborations that influenced The Thousand and One Nights. He will talk about the Arabian Nights to either a large group or in a Masterclass with a small group.

Paulo Horta is Assistant Professor of Literature at New York University, Abu Dhabi. Horta teaches classes on The Thousand and One Nights, the theory and practice of literary translation, and a global history of magic realism, associated with contemporary Arabic and Persian works. His book is titled Marvellous Thieves: Secret Authors of the Arabian Nights.
Robert Irwin has a long association with the much-loved *The Arabian Nights*, having written a companion to the book and edited and written introductions for it in *Tales of 1001 Nights* and *Tales of the Marvellous* and *News of the Strange*, the original version of *The Arabian Nights*.

Robert will talk about the stories of *The Arabian Nights* and his own life in fiction.

Robert Irwin is a scholar of Middle Eastern history and culture, a teacher and author. His non-fiction work includes books on classic Arabic literature and the history of the Arab world. Irwin has authored seven books of fiction, with two more in progress. His most recent book is the historical novel *Wonders Will Never Cease*.
Peter James is one of the UK's most treasured crime and thriller novelists. He also supports and works with The Reading Agency, a charity with a mission to give everyone an equal chance in life by helping people become confident and enthusiastic readers.

Peter will present a Masterclass, on how to become a writer, for a small group.

Peter James is best known for his Roy Grace detective series which have sold over 18 million copies worldwide. Three of his books have been adapted as critically acclaimed plays and James has produced numerous films, including *The Merchant of Venice*, starring Al Pacino. He was voted by WHSmith readers as The Best Crime Author of All Time.
FRANCIS KONG
http://franciskong.com/

Francis Kong can help you become the best you can ever be. He is an engaging speaker who makes learning fun, and his collective insights are applicable to all aspects of life – personal, family, professional, social, and spiritual. Francis will speak to students about ‘Winning Choices for Success’ in the following areas; life-long learning, attitude and skills, and ownership, responsibility and control.

Francis Kong is a personal coach, broadcaster, motivational speaker and trainer, and author of 18 books including Leadership, One Day at a Time, The Early Bird Gets the Worm, Being the Best You Can Ever Be, and Famealy Matters.
NEEL KUMAR
http://www.neel-kumar.com/

Neel Kumar is a Dubai based film director and producer. He will speak about the importance of story, the dedication required to bring an idea to life and the ability to do it yourself, with a ‘learn everything’ kind of philosophy. Neel will hold a Masterclass with a small group or speak to a large group.

Neel Kumar is founder of the film production company Akela. His short film Security has screened at over fifteen major film festivals, and has wins and nominations for Direction, Screenplay, Cinematography, Acting and Editing. He is currently working on his first feature film Siren, set in Dubai.
Mark Kurlansky is an American journalist and prolific writer of general interest non-fiction and fiction books. Of his diverse writing, the Los Angeles Times has said: ‘Kurlansky continues to prove himself remarkably adept at taking a most unlikely candidate and telling its tale with epic grandeur’.

Mark will teach a writing Workshop for 6-8 Secondary/High School students. Each student will have written in advance, a 200 word paragraph, story, autobiography, or something about their life.

Mark Kurlansky is the New York Times bestselling author of *Havana, Salt, City Beasts, Cod, and Twenty-five Lessons From the History of a Dangerous Idea*. He has been awarded the Dayton Literary Peace Prize for Nonviolence, Bon Appetit’s Food Writer of the Year Award, the James Beard Award, and the Glenfiddich Award.
ALEXANDER MCCALL SMITH

http://www.alexandermccallsmith.co.uk/

From African stories to adventures aboard the School Ship Tobermory, there is always fun to be had with Alexander McCall Smith, one of the most prolific and best loved authors across the world. Be prepared to ask Alexander questions as he speaks about his books and discusses what it takes to write a good story.

Alexander McCall Smith is the creator of *The No. 1 Ladies’ Detective Agency* and has written many popular children's books including *The School Ship Tobermory*, *The Sands of Shark Island*, the Precious series, and the Akimbo series.
JENNİ MURRAY
http://www.emirateslitfest.com/authors/jenni-murray/

Jenni Murray is a respected broadcaster best known for her 40 years presenting Woman's Hour on Radio 4. Explore Britain’s history in a unique way as Jenni uses her wit, passion and piercing insight to tell the remarkable stories of 21 extraordinary women who changed the world.

Dame Jenni Murray is the author of A History of Britain in 21 Women, My Boy Butch, Memoirs of a Not So Dutiful Daughter and The Women's Hour.
NNEDI OKORAFOR

http://nnedi.com

Nnedi Okorafor’s stories reflect both her West African heritage and her American life. *Who Fears Death*, set in post-apocalyptic Africa, is being adapted for television by HBO and George RR Martin, and follows the journey of Onye, a young woman out to defeat her sorcerous father. She is currently writing the comic *Antar the Black Knight*, about a pre-Islamic Arab hero. Don’t miss this chance to hear from this rising star of sci-fi and fantasy fiction. Nnedi can speak to a large group to tell her unique story about how she became a writer, how she writes a story and the significance of science fiction and imaginative fiction or she can conduct a Workshop for up to 20 students on how to create a character.

A winner of the Hugo, the Nebula and the World Fantasy Award as well as the Wole Soyinka Prize for African Literature, Nnedi Okorafor, is a science-fiction and fantasy author whose books include the Binti series, *The Book of Phoenix* and *Lagoon*. 
RHIANNA PRATCHETT

http://www.rhiannapratchett.com/

Rhianna Pratchett's remarkable career has seen her redefine video game storytelling, rebooting the Tomb Raider series and creating whole new worlds in Mirror's Edge and Heavenly Sword. Her aim is to help developers embrace storytelling in games and improve the ways in which interactive narrative is defined, integrated and received. She also works to preserve the legacy of her father, Terry Pratchett, and his beloved Discworld books. Rhiannna will be in conversation with a moderator and welcomes questions from the audience.

Rhianna Pratchett is an English video game writer, narrative designer, and journalist. She has also authored the Tomb Raider: The Beginning comics with Dark Horse and the 6-part Mirror's Edge miniseries with DC Comics and several of her own short stories. She was awarded a Writers' Guild of Great Britain ‘Best Videogame Script’ award for Overlord.
Stephen Ritz is comfortable speaking about a range of topics from his own odyssey as a professional to his weight loss, health, wellness, STEM / STEAM initiatives, urban gardening / farming, whole school development and asset-based community development. Stephen says, ‘I enjoy sharing my experience, strength and hope rooted in passion and purpose. I like talking about being relentlessly unafraid of failure and how to get to ‘yes!’ I’m told I am a motivational speaker but I prefer to be a motivational doer and inspiring people to reach deep within and burst their own bubbles!’

Stephen Ritz is a South Bronx educator, innovator, and author who believes that students shouldn’t have to leave their community to live, learn, and earn in a better one. He was named a Top 10 Finalist for the prestigious $1m Global Teacher Prize in 2015. He is also the Founder of Green Bronx Machine. His recently released book is The Power Of A Plant.
Yrsa Sigurðardóttir

http://www.emirateslitfest.com/authors/yrsa-sigurdardottir/

Yrsa Sigurðardóttir had never thought of writing, until she noticed the books that her son was reading. Then she wrote a series of comical children's books including *We Want Xmas in July*. She then turned to writing crime novels as a desperately needed break from writing humorous books, stating, 'It's really hard to be funny all the time.' With *The Legacy*, she has proven her position as a master storyteller at the top of her game. Yrsa will speak about crime novels, specifically Nordic Noir, and writing crime novels from a peaceful country like Iceland.

Yrsa Sigurðardóttir is an Icelandic writer of both crime novels and children's fiction. She was awarded the IBBY for *We Want Christmas in July*. She has since gone on to write a number of acclaimed thriller novels, including the Thóra Gudmundsdóttir series and Freyja & Huldar Children's House series and is translated into more than 30 languages.
LEMN SISSAY
http://www.lemnsissay.com/

Lemn Sissay is an explosive performance poet and was the official poet of the 2012 Olympics. He wrote his first poetry book at the age of 17 and since then his poems can be found sculpted in granite on landmarks, recorded on albums and performed throughout the world. He will talk about his life, how he found poetry, read from his poems, and finish with a question and answer session.

Lemn Sissay, MBE, is an award-winning poet, playwright, actor and broadcaster. His books include; Gold From the Stone, Internal Flight, Listener, Tender Fingers in a Clenched Fist, and Rebel Without Applause.
Sjón
http://sjon.siberia.is/

Sjón’s poems and stories weave together history, myth, folklore and ancient storytelling using the Icelandic language of both past and modern times. Sjón will present a Masterclass about how we can use our childhood experiences of books, film, art, toys and games to inspire and enhance our writing today.

Sjón, is an Icelandic poet, novelist, lyricist and children’s author. His pen name, meaning ‘vision’, is an abbreviation of his given name Sigurjón. He is the author of The Blue Fox, which won the Nordic Council literature prize, From the Mouth of a Whale, The Whispering Muse and Moonstone: The Boy Who Never Was.
CEOs around the world turn to Dr. Tommy Weir for trusted leadership advice on how to become the best they can be and how their organizations can achieve rapid growth. Dr. Weir has helped over 3,000 executives from more than 80 nationalities achieve peak performance. Dr. Weir will speak about leadership in today’s world.

Dr. Tommy Weir is a CEO Coach and author of *Leadership Dubai Style*, *10 Tips for Leading in the Middle East*, and *The Cheeseburger Theory*. 
LEVISON WOOD

www.levisonwood.com/

Bestselling author, explorer and photographer Levison Wood is a gripping speaker who has stories of adventures on five continents. In his new book *Eastern Horizons: Hitchhiking the Silk Road*, he recounts his shoestring budget journey from England to India and the eccentric characters he encountered on the way. Wood will present a Masterclass on the writing process.

Levison Wood is the winner of the 2016 Edward Stanford Adventure Travel Book Of The Year Award. His books include *Walking the Americas, Walking the Himalayas* and *Walking the Nile*. 