



SAFE HAVENS – FREEDOM TALKS

Safe Havens - Freedom Talk #18

Freedom Talk@The Importance of Storytelling

The Novelist as Knowledge Keeper

Safe Havens Freedom Talks (SH|FT) is delighted to present an upcoming Freedom Talk titled “The Novelist as Knowledge Keeper”. This event will highlight the conversation between two different writers and will be streamed on **Friday, 14 October 2022** at **2.30 pm CEST** on

<https://www.facebook.com/events/770929794010067>

<https://howlround.com/happenings/livestreaming-conversation-freedom-talk-importance-storytelling>

<https://sh-ft.org/freedom-talks/>

For novelists whose works are situated in conflict zones, could it be said that they must be seen as having multiple roles? In these worlds where books are banned and libraries are lost, can the novel then be considered an archival site, a place where the people's histories can be documented? Though this can often be said about historical fiction, novelists writing about conflict zones have the added pressure of recording history as it happens or from recent memory. Kagiso Lesego Molepe and Zakes Mda are both apartheid survivors and have written extensively about apartheid. They are in conversation about the role of the novelist, the importance of documenting history in fiction and the burden of the survivor as a storyteller. This event was produced in collaboration with **Gothenburg Book Fair**.

About Freedom Talks

The Freedom Talks series is focused on issues regarding threats towards artistic freedom, free press and intangible heritage. It is closely connected to the annual global Safe Havens conference. Guests in the Freedom Talks series are highly knowledgeable and prolific actors in the global Arts Rights Justice sector – fighting for artistic freedom. The Freedom Talks aim to share space and broaden the narrative of who can take centre stage, by lending the brand to different organisations within the sector. The talks are presented in – or translated to – English. The talks can be watched through our [website](#), our [Facebook page](#) and through our partner [Howlround](#), where also previous events are archived.

The Participants @The Importance of Storytelling



Kagiso Lesego Molohe is an Indigenous South African, an award-winning novelist and playwright. She writes post-apartheid, feminist and resistance literature. Her work centres the history and experiences of indigenous South Africans and tackles issues of race, class, sexuality and identity and her books are read in schools across Southern Africa as well as in parts of Europe. Her published novels are *Dancing in the Dust*, *The Mending Season*, *This Book Betrays My Brother* and *Such a Lonely, Lovely Road*. Her play, *Maya Angelou: Black Woman Rising* has been produced and staged at Oslo's Nordic Black Theatre. She became the first indigenous South African writer to be on the IBBY List in 2006 and to win the Patrick Fitzpatrick Award for Young Adult Literature. In 2019 she won both the Ottawa Book Award and the Inaugural Pius Adesanmi Memorial award, for her third and fourth books respectively. She has been living in Canada for the past two decades.



Zakes Mda, full name Zanemvula Kizito Gatyeni Mda, was born in Herschel, Eastern Cape, South Africa, in 1948. His father, Ashby P. Mda, was an anti-Apartheid activist, a founding member and president of the African National Congress (ANC) Youth League. In the 1960's, his father was imprisoned and the family had to leave South Africa. Zakes Mda finished his schooling in exile in Lesotho. Later on, he went to the USA, studied drama and mass communication at Ohio University, and received his Ph.D. from the University of Cape Town in 1990. After thirty two years in exile, he decided to return to South Africa where he worked as a Professor of Drama at the University of the Witwatersrand, and later became a full-time writer, painter and filmmaker. He is currently a literary consultant at the Market Theatre in Johannesburg and Professor of Creative Writing at Ohio University in the US. The oft-awarded writer lives in South Africa and the USA and engages in many activities. He teaches creative writing at the University of Ohio, works as a bee-keeper in Eastern Cape, puts plays on stage in Johannesburg's Market Theatre and is director of the Southern African Multimedia AIDS Trust. *Photo retrieved from <https://tow.ukzn.ac.za/participant/03/2021/zakes-mda/>*

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**The event is organised by the independent international NGO Safe Havens Freedom Talks (SH|FT) through collaborations within the global Arts Rights Justice sector, and with Safemuse graciously supporting as its mentoring organisation in the start-up period. SH|FT is supported by The Swedish Arts Council under the Programme for Artistic Freedom, funded by Sida, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, and The Freedom Talks are sponsored by the Swedish Institute. The exhibition and platform project is funded by the Swedish Postcode Foundation.*

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