

CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Monday 31 October, 2022. 5:30 pm online

Research Institute for Literature and Cultural History

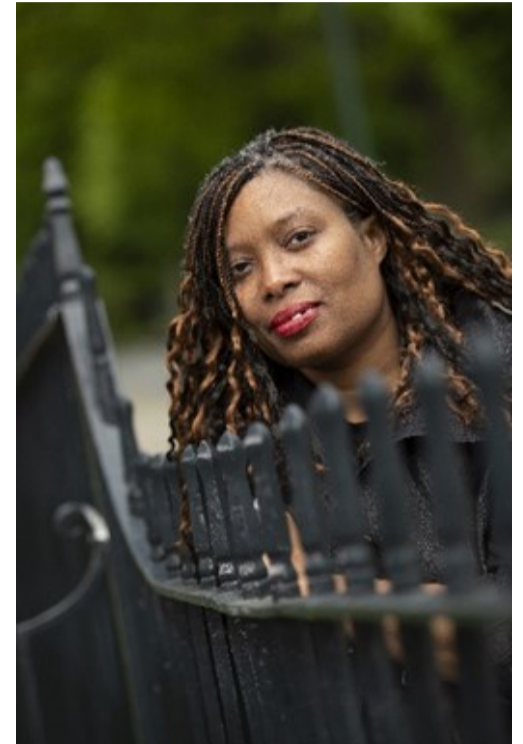
The Ebroje Azanuwha annual lecture, delivered by Yvonne Battle-Felton

To register: <https://ljamu.libcal.com/event/3944454>

Writing as Advocacy—writing our way in to the story

Someone once said, if we don't write our own story someone will write it for us. Imagine your story in someone else's hands. What do they think you want? What do they think you need? What stories would they tell about you? Would they be right?

Writing is a powerful tool. With it we can re-write the world—or at least, reimagination, recreate, and challenge our representation in it by writing stories that center us. How do you want to be remembered? Who can tell your story better than you? In this talk we will discuss the importance of writing for representation and writing as legacy. There will be writing exercises to stimulate and invite us to write ourselves into stories we want or need to read.



Yvonne Battle-Felton, author of Remembered, is an author, academic, host, creative producer, and writer. Remembered was longlisted for the Women's Prize for Fiction (2019) and shortlisted for the Jhalak Prize (2020). Winner of a Northern Writers Award in fiction (2017), Yvonne was commended for children's writing in the Faber Andlyn BAME (FAB) Prize (2017) and has six titles in Penguin Random House's The Ladybird Tales of Superheroes and The Ladybird Tales of Crowns and Thrones. Yvonne has received a British Library Eccles Centre and a Kimbilio Fiction Fellowships and teaches creative writing at Sheffield Hallam University where she is a Principal Lecturer and Humanities Business and Enterprise Lead. Host of Write Your Novel with Yvonne Battle-Felton, a write-along podcast series developed with New Writing North, Yvonne creates and hosts literary and storytelling events and opportunities, news of her second novel, Curdle Creek will be released soon. Yvonne is Senior Commissioning Editor (fiction) at John Murrays.



IN MEMORY OF EBROJE AZANUWHA

MA Writing student, LJMU 2017 – 2019

This lecture is dedicated to the memory of Ebroje Azanuwha, a student in the MA Writing from 2017 – 2019. Sadly, Ebroje passed away a day before her graduation ceremony in Liverpool Anglican cathedral. She'd been looking forward to wearing her cap and gown and celebrating her academic achievements. Ebroje was a woman of great substance. She was the daughter of migrants from Nigeria and grew up in working class Liverpool. She was proud of her cultural heritage and also her fighting spirit. She didn't walk away from racism and racist abuse and helped members of the black community to fight injustice through her work with the city's homeless and youth communities. At her funeral people smiled at the memory of Ebroje advising young people to stand up for their rights.

Ebroje promised her late mother that she would complete her MA Writing and this she did, despite the persistent health issues that often made writing physically difficult. She rarely missed a class and always contributed to class discussion and feedback. Her own writing was particularly powerful as she wrote more and more about her experiences of growing up black in the city. She was tigerish about her family too, and wrote about her brother and sister and her young nephews. That Ebroje died just before graduation was particularly sad. She was a credit to her family and to all students from the BAME community who are determined to overcome adversity so they can achieve their dreams. At the graduation her family collected her award to a standing ovation. This inaugural annual lecture in her memory during Black History Month is a tribute to Ebroje and to the cultural wealth of Black History across the world.

