

# SOUTHBANK CENTRE

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## Press Release

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**Press images:** available to download [here](#)

## Primary school children given chance to become authors through Southbank Centre's *Imagine a Story* writing project

- Key Stage 2 pupils (years 3-6) to collaborate with children's book author **Zanib Mian** and illustrator **Selom Sunu**



Credit lines: Zanib Mian (© Fatima Mian), Selom Sunu (© Ceri Sunu)

On World Book Day, the Southbank Centre is inviting 40 primary schools to take part in this year's creative writing project ***Imagine a Story***, giving young children the chance to become published authors. Children's author **Zanib Mian** and illustrator **Selom Sunu** are collaborating on the project, which is open to classes of Key Stage 2 children (years 3 – 6), with online applications closing Sunday 14 March.

In this project inspired by a 'game of consequences' each school group writes one segment of a creative story based on a framework devised by **Zanib Mian** (*Planet Omar: Operation Kind -*

published for World Book Day 2021; *Planet Omar: Incredible Rescue Mission*; *Planet Omar: Unexpected Super Spy*), the author of brilliant and diverse children's fiction, who will inspire them to develop their collaborative work in classrooms to support their development and personal wellbeing.

These chapters will then be combined into a collection of short stories and professionally published by Southbank Centre, with illustrations by **Selom Sunu** (*Ghost*; *Patina*; *Sunny*; *Lu*; *Look Both Ways*) Zanib Mian and Selom Sunu will read the final stories which will be live-streamed to participating primary school classrooms in July and each child will receive a copy of the published book.

The creative writing project aims to inspire and support children's creativity, nurturing their skills as creative writers, as well as bringing literacy to the foreground in the classroom. ***Imagine a Story*** offers primary school children the opportunity to see their ideas brought to life, while motivating their development as 'real life' authors. ***Imagine a Story*** also aims to address a chronic lack of diversity in children's publishing, highlighted in the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE) report which found that just 7% of children's books published in the UK between 2017-2019 feature characters from a Black, Asian or minority ethnic background.

**Alexandra Brierley, Director of Creative Learning at the Southbank Centre, said:**

"We believe every child has the right to a creative and cultural education, and that creative expression is key to the wellbeing and development of us all. *Imagine a Story* provides a unique opportunity for hundreds of children to collaborate with a celebrated children's author, while becoming published authors themselves. The project puts the creativity of young children into print, emboldening their imagination and empowering our younger generation to know that they, too, have important stories to share with the world."

More information on ***Imagine a Story*** and how to apply can be found [here](#).

**# ENDS #**

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

This project supports the following areas of the KS2 curriculum:

- developing understanding and enjoyment of reading and writing
- planning, drafting and evaluating their writing
- discussing words and phrases that capture the reader's interest and imagination
- developing well-structured descriptions, explanations and narratives
- using language to develop understanding through imagining and exploring ideas
- predicting what might happen from details stated and implied
- practicing good mental health and wellbeing

### **Zanib Mian Biography**

Zanib Mian was a science teacher before launching small independent publishers, Sweet Apple Publishers and Muslim Children's Books Ltd. Passionate about representation in children's publishing, she is on the panel of judges for the prestigious Young Muslim Writers Awards.

### **Selom Sunu Biography**

Selom Sunu studied MA Character Animation at Central Saint Martins in 2016 and since then he has balanced a day job with freelance illustration and character design. He is rarely found without a pencil in

hand and characters are at the heart of everything he creates. He loves thinking up backstories, whether it's for a brief he's given or for a personal project.

**Join the Conversation:**

@southbankcentre  
#ImagineAStory

**About the Southbank Centre**

The Southbank Centre is the UK's largest arts centre and one of the UK's top five visitor attractions, occupying a prominent riverside location that sits in the midst of London's most vibrant cultural quarter on the South Bank of the Thames. We exist to present great cultural experiences that bring people together and we achieve this by providing the space for artists to create and present their best work and by creating a place where as many people as possible can come together to experience bold, unusual and eye-opening work. We want to take people out of the everyday, every day.

The site has an extraordinary creative and architectural history stretching back to the 1951 Festival of Britain. The Southbank Centre is made up of the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room and Hayward Gallery as well as being home to the National Poetry Library and the Arts Council Collection. It is also home to four Resident Orchestras (London Philharmonic Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra, London Sinfonietta and Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment) and four Associate Orchestras (Aurora Orchestra, BBC Concert Orchestra, Chineke! Orchestra and National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain).

**About the Southbank Centre - Creative Learning**

The Southbank Centre runs a year-round music, literature, visual art and performance programme of participatory learning experiences for children, families, young people and adults. We aim to create arts experiences that are accessible to everyone with more than 36,000 people taking part each year. Our activities range from in depth project work and resources for schools and teachers to inspire a love of the arts and support creative learning, to programmes and initiatives that develop and nurture diverse young artists, providing them with the skills and knowledge to thrive. We also deliver a significant Arts and Wellbeing programme because we believe that arts and creativity play a vital role in improving people's quality of life and mental health. Our projects respond to both our local community needs, as well as champion on a national level the positive health benefits of the arts.

Further information: [www.southbankcentre.co.uk](http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk)