

# Unchained

## ON THE ROCK

Black liberation in Bermuda and beyond.



Photo: Nicola Muirhead

**Talks. Tours. Workshops.**  
Stories of Bermuda & the Atlantic Basin

**Led by Bermudian storytellers**  
Ajala & Liana Nanang Omodele

**Program Offerings**  
**2025**



An Unstori ed initiative

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# About

*Unchained on the Rock* is a Bermuda-based initiative that chronicles narratives of Black liberation and resistance throughout the Atlantic Basin.

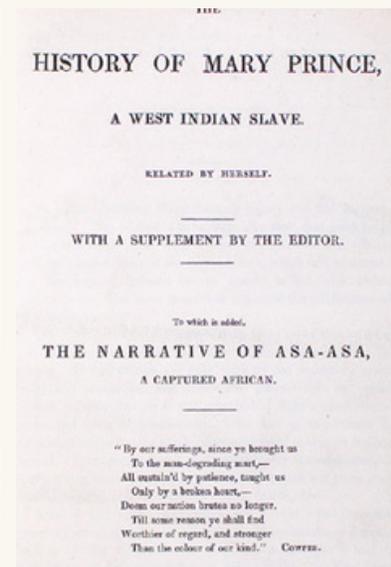
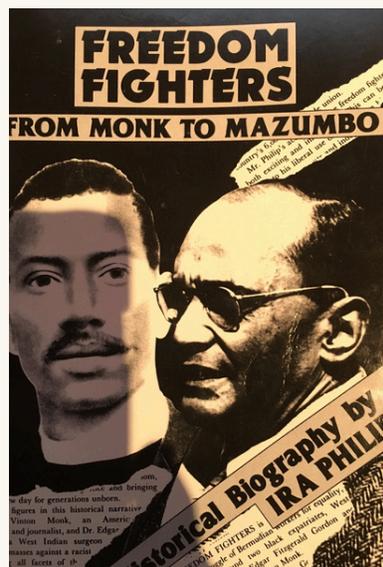
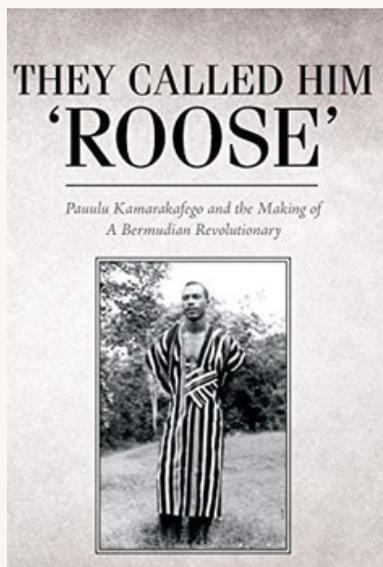
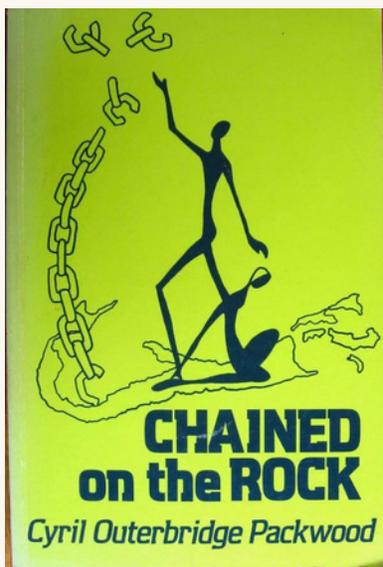
Named in honour of the seminal work by Bermudian scholar Cyril Outerbridge Packwood, 'Chained on the Rock', we offer talks, tours, workshops and consulting for companies, non-profits and schools that honour our Ancestors and storytelling forebears.

In 2025, *Unchained on the Rock's* offerings will be expanding to include a podcast and a series of short films.

Our programming is delivered by the leadership team of *Unstoried*, a social enterprise intended to educate, entertain and empower People of the Global Majority (aka people of colour).

*"A transformative storytelling experience."*

Megan MacLeod, Head of School, Class Afloat





# Meet OUR TEAM



Liana Nanang Omodele is a multidisciplinary storyteller and the founder and CEO of *Unstoried*, a social enterprise intended to educate, entertain and empower People of the Global Majority.

Inspired by her Black-Bermudian, Iban-Malaysian, and Indigenous-Peruvian heritage, Liana's work navigates race, nationality, trauma, resilience, spirituality, colonialism and her identity as a neurodivergent woman of colour.

Liana's writing and photography have featured in *The New York Times*, and she has been interviewed live by *Forbes*, the UK's *BBC Breakfast* and *BBC World News*. She won Best Columnist in the 2017 Best of Bermuda Awards.

Liana obtained a law degree from *University College London* and is a New York-qualified attorney. She studied acting at *The Lee Strasberg Theatre & Film Institute* in NYC.

Liana won 'Use of Materials' in the 2021 Charman Prize at *Masterworks Museum*. Both her visual art and poetry were selected for the 2022 *Bermuda National Gallery Biennial*. She is the author of the Bermuda-based children's book *The Little Cottage*.

Liana is a seasoned PR strategist. She spent several years leading a communications and content development firm and has worked with multinational corporations, political campaigns, and governmental agencies. She is also the former Special Advisor to the Premier of Bermuda.

*"Liana is a fascinating woman... A talented writer, she is an outspoken advocate for women's rights, mental health care and all those struggling in an imperfect society."*

- The Bermudian

*"Ajala has a voice that requires one give immediate attention... combined with a rich reflective analysis that comes wrapped up in accessible and meaningful stories. His gift for speaking seems to come from a journey filled with grounded reflection."*

- Amanda Parris, TV Host, CBC  
(Canadian Broadcasting Company)

Ajala Nanang Omodele is Bermudian-Bajan educator, writer, poet, and lecturer. He is the Head of Research at *Unstoried*.

Ajala is the author of *Dame Lois: The People's Advocate, They Called Him 'Roose'* and *Look for Me in the Whirlwind: A Story of Marcus Garvey*. In 2025, he will publish his latest book *To Be Free is Very Sweet: Sally Bassett, Mary Prince & the True Story of Slavery in Bermuda*.

Holding a bachelor's in philosophy and a master's in education, Ajala has taught at the primary and middle school level as well as deigned and deliveted a graduate-level course at York University. He has conducted professional development seminars for Bermuda's educators on our history of slavery and Black resistance. He has been featured in a variety of international documentaries and been interviewed by *Forbes*.

Several of Ajala's poems have been published in *MOKO: Caribbean Arts and Letters*. His poem, entitled *the crossing (aka why I don't like tall ships)*, was selected for inclusion in the 2022 *Bermuda National Gallery Biennial*.

Ajala sees the study of African history as both a map and mirror that simultaneously shows us where we have been, where we are and where we can go, while reflecting our limitless capacity for courage.

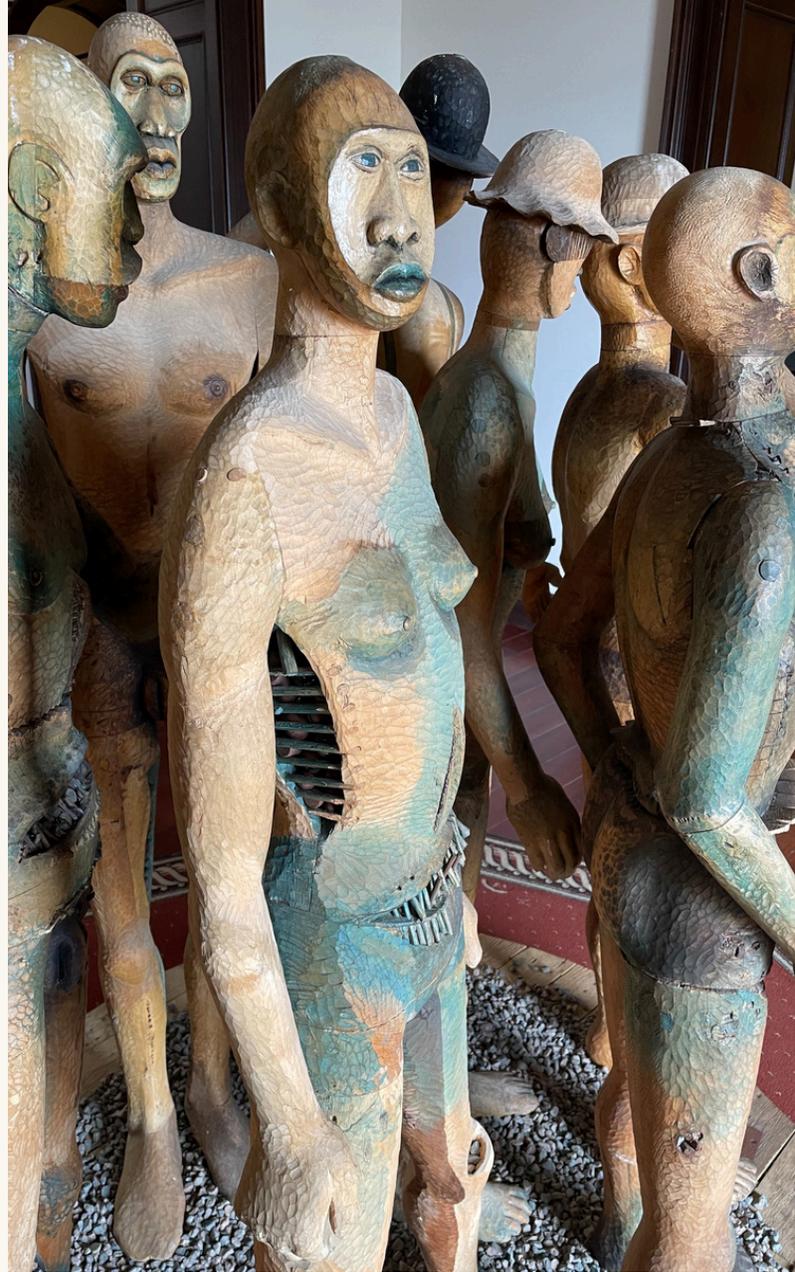
# What WE DO

We are storytellers who draw on the oral tradition of *jalis* (whom the French misnamed “griots”). We channel our Ancestors and our programming is designed to show respect and reverence for their sacrifices and resistance.

We offer dynamic talks, tours, workshops and educational curriculum and corporate consulting, delivered on our clients' premises or at sites around the island. We periodically host ticketed events and will launch a podcast in 2025.

Our sessions range from 1 hour to multiple days and can include Q&A. Our workshops are tailored for the size and age of our audience and can include slide presentations, videos and increased opportunities to directly engage with the presenters.

Pricing starts at \$5,000 for talks, presentations and workshops. Fireside chats and panel appearances start at \$2,500. Some programming is available at discounted rates for non-profits and educational institutions. Contact us at [unchained@un-storied.com](mailto:unchained@un-storied.com) for a quote.



**TALKS**

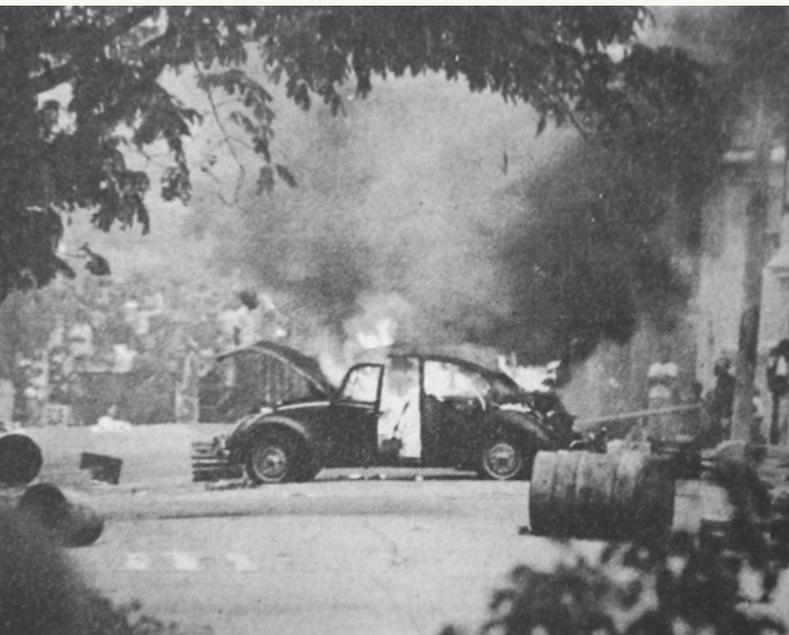
**TOURS**

**WORKSHOPS**

**CONSULTING**

**PODCAST & FILMS**

[www.unchainedontherock.com](http://www.unchainedontherock.com)



# Testimonials

Liana and Ajala are not merely presenters, but masterful storytellers and insightful thinkers. Their deep connection to the subject matter resonated in every word, creating a dynamic presentation that seamlessly blended dialogue, humor, and scholarly insights. The audience was captivated, both intellectually and emotionally, by their engaging delivery. Individually, Liana and Ajala are captivating speakers; together, they are an unstoppable force.

Unchained on the Rock is fast becoming an integral part of Bermuda's cultural fabric.

They are the "Memory Keepers," chronicling the ever-evolving narrative of the island and challenging us to confront the lessons written in our collective past. Through their work, Liana and Ajala are doing more than simply preserving history—they are shaping the future of Bermuda's cultural landscape and inviting us all to be part of that transformation."

Nzingha Ming, Executive Director, Bermuda Society of the Arts

"Liana and Ajala delivered their transformative storytelling experience for our school, Class Afloat, during a visit to Bermuda... the sessions with them stand out as true highlight for our crew and ones that viscerally shifted our perspective. There are few experiences that have the kind of durable impact on a person the way that our session with Unchained on the Rock had on our students and faculty.

Although Liana and Ajala are oral storytellers, there was a palpable energy in the spaces we visited being transmitted from the orators to listeners. After engaging with their art – we left more knowledgeable, but also *feeling* quite different. There was no means of leaving and being able to unhear what had been said, no way to return to old ways of thinking or *being*.

Moreover, Liana and Ajala are genuine experts in their field. Their storytelling is deeply rooted in rigorous scholarship and cultural understanding, enabling them to engage listeners with remarkable skill, grace, and authenticity.

Their ability to respond thoughtfully to audience questions and reflections further demonstrated the depth of their knowledge and the care with which they approach their craft. As an educator, I was deeply humbled by their mastery."

Megan MacLeod, Head of School, Class Afloat

# Programming

For 2025, we have developed engaging, thought-provoking topics tailored to key cultural, historical, and celebratory moments throughout the year. From Black History Month to Cup Match, our sessions highlight pivotal themes that resonate with diverse audiences, fostering engagement and deepening understanding. Below is an easy-to-read guide to key months and suggested topics (detailed in the following pages) for your selection. However, all topics are available throughout the year. Clients may hire us for one-off events, ongoing consulting, or request that we present a syllabus over the year via monthly, quarterly or semi-annual workshops. All offerings are tailored to the audience.

Month	Event/Observance	Suggested Topics
February	Black History Month (Americas)	All
March	International Women's Month	To Be Free is Very Sweet
May	Bermuda Day & Heritage Month	Culture Shock
June	National Heroes Day	They Called Him Roose; To Be Free is Very Sweet
July & August	Emancipation & Cup Match Celebrations	Emancipation Celebration; To Be Free is Very Sweet, What's in a Name?
September	Labour Day	Uprising
October	Black History Month (UK/Europe) Bermuda Art Month	All; Beyond Seascapes
November	Thanksgiving	Indigenous Americans in Bermuda; Stolen!

# Topics

## **UPRISING**

**BLACK PROTEST &  
RESISTANCE IN  
BERMUDA**

Contrary to popular belief, Black Bermudians have never shied away from engaging in acts of resistance. We discuss the planned insurrections of the 1600s, the Poison Plots of the 1700s, the 100+ years of work stoppage that led to the Cup Match holiday, the 1959 Theatre Boycott, the 1965 BELCO uprising and the relentless turbulence of 1970s. We then bring the resistance history into contemporary focus by looking at the civil disobedience of the last decade.

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## **TO BE FREE IS VERY SWEET**

**SALLY BASSETT, MARY  
PRINCE & DAME LOIS  
BROWNE-EVANS**

On an exceedingly hot afternoon in June 1730, an elderly Black woman, Sarah (Sally) Bassett, is sacrificed to the fire in the presence of her enemies, for the unpardonable 'crime' of declaring through her actions, that she was a human being who deserved to be free. And as the hungry flames crept up her body, she screamed, she wailed, but she did not break.

Nearly a hundred years after Bassett stared down her executioner, a similarly defiant and unbroken Mary Prince refused to cower in the face of monstrous brutality visited upon her by her enslavers. Instead, she distilled her experiences into a compelling eyewitness account that laid bare the horrors of the 'peculiar institution' as it was practiced in Bermuda, Turks Island and Antigua.

Coming into her own in the middle of the twentieth century, Lois Browne-Evans, a brilliant and fearless lawyer, embarks upon what will become a decades-long struggle to ensure that the rights of Bermuda's discarded and downtrodden are respected and protected.

Through the stories of these three courageous Black women, we will trace the often-bloody contours of the island's four centuries of development and the still-ongoing struggle to achieve justice for all.

# Topics

## **BEYOND SEASCAPES**

BLACK ART IN  
BERMUDA

“The Black artist is dangerous.” ~ Sonia Sanchez

This multimedia presentation chronicles the history of Black art in Bermuda. We show how Black artists have, at times, capitulated to and, at other times, subverted and challenged expectations of what acceptable art in Bermuda should be. From this vantage point, we examine the work of Chesley Trott, Bill Ming, Gherdai Hassell, April Branco and many others. Featuring music, video and archival clips, this talk will change your understanding of an art talk forever.

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## **THEY CALLED HIM 'ROOSE'**

THE REVOLUTIONARY  
LIFE OF PAUULU  
KAMARAKAFEGO

This talk brings to glorious life the little-known story of the revolutionary iconoclast and Bermuda National Hero, Dr. Pauulu Kamarakafego. Put under surveillance by the CIA, FBI, MI-5, Interpol and other secret service organisations, he was shot and wounded in both Cuba and Liberia for the ‘crime’ of demanding justice for the oppressed. Upon meeting Pauulu, Nelson Mandela said to him, “It is truly an honour to meet you.” Learn about the incredible life of this home-grown UN environmental scientist and Pan-Africanist – the man they called ‘Roose’ – directly from Ajala, the author of the book of the same name.

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## **STOLEN!**

THE THEFT OF  
TUCKER'S TOWN

Tucker’s Town was once a haven for a small but flourishing, tight-knit Black community. Why was this community stripped of their land and how was it transformed into a lily-white hideaway for the ultra-wealthy? The speakers will take you to the early 1920s, where you will learn how powerful interests conspired to lay claim to the land and permanently banish the Black families whose dead remain buried below manicured golf fairways.

# Topics

## **CULTURE SHOCK**

### WHO YA PEOPLE?

What is culture in the context of the Isle of Devils? How has Bermudian culture been shaped by the collision between Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Europe? And how has Bermudian culture responded to the infusion of cultural elements from the UK, the West Indies, the Azores and, more recently, the Philippines and newer additions from the Global South? We will explore these and other related topics with the intention of illuminating how Bermudians have melded their myriad cultural expressions and practices in ways that have been refreshingly innovative and, in some instances, deeply problematic. A helpful history lesson for newly arrived guest workers and long term locals alike!

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## **EMANCIPATION CELEBRATION**

### THE ORIGINS OF CUP MATCH & THE STORY OF FREEDOM

August 1st 1834: Emancipation is granted to all enslaved persons in the British colonies. August 1st 1835: newly emancipated Blacks choose to mark the anniversary of their liberty by not going to work on that day. And thus begins arguably the longest work stoppage in history, spearheaded by the island's Friendly Societies. In 1902, the Friendly Societies handed over the organising of the unofficial 'holiday', which now stretched to two days, to the St. George's and Somerset Cricket Clubs...and the first Cup Match was born.

We will delve into the motivations behind the establishment of the holiday and its enduring cultural significance as a courageous act of self-determination and collective action for the Black descendants of our formerly-shackled ancestors.

# Topics

## **NO THANKS (GIVING)**

INDIGENOUS  
AMERICANS IN  
BERMUDA

The effect that the arrival of Europeans on the peoples of the so-called 'New World' can be described in one word: catastrophic. Indigenous populations were decimated; their civilisations were razed; entire continents were claimed, and their raw resources exploited for the sole purpose of fattening the pockets of the invaders. Bermuda's Indigenous Peoples can point to what we call The Columbian Catastrophe as their point of origin, with the island acting as a subtropical POW camp for the various wars of acquisition engaged in by the bloodthirsty and savage British. We will examine their resistance practices, how they often intermarried with enslaved and free Blacks, and how these unions created a melding of cultures and traditions that endured well beyond their capture and bondage.

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## **WHAT'S IN A NAME?**

THE BRANDING  
OF A PEOPLE

Why abandon your "family" names of "Hall" and "Burchall"? We explain the reasons behind our decisions to rename ourselves and place the process of renaming the enslaved African into its larger, socio-historical context. We graphically demonstrate how our surnames – as well as Smith, Tucker, Butterfield, Gibbons, Dill, and all other names forced upon Africans - are inextricably linked to the transformation of human beings into non-human commodities. We examine the importance of reviewing our legacies and why a Dutch city recently permitted all descendants of slavery to change their names free of charge.

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## **CUSTOM TALKS**

GOT A TOPIC OF INTEREST?  
ASK US ABOUT IT!



an  
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initiative

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