

# Taiye Selasi

Writer

Taiye Selasi was born in London to Nigerian and Ghanaian parents. She holds a BA from Yale and an MPhil from Oxford. Selasi made her fiction debut in *Granta* in 2011 with *THE SEX LIFE OF AFRICAN GIRLS*, which was selected for Best American Short Stories in 2012. Her first novel, *GHANA MUST GO*, was published in March 2013. Now moving into film/TV, Taiye is writing on *RIVIERA* for Sky/Archery and developing her original drama *BOA* for Deborah Martin Chase and Radical Media. Taiye is co-repped by CAA Global.

## Film and Television

Founder | Creator  
Cocoa Content

In 2019, when Netflix greenlit Selasi's first series, she founded Cocoa Content, a full-service creative production company devoted to premium African content. Cocoa Content has five series on its slate -- *Table Mountain* (Cape Town), *Victoria Island* (Lagos), *Cape Three Points* (Accra), *Boa* (Lisbon) and *Poor but Sexy* (Berlin) – in addition to two features with German producers attached.

Writer, 2020  
RIVIERA Series 4  
Archery Pictures / Primo Productions for Sky Atlantic  
Participating in the writers' room.

Executive Producer, 2015  
AFRIPEDIA: A VISUAL GUIDE TO THE ART, FILM, DESIGN AND MUSIC OF AFRICAN CREATIVES  
(Teddy Goitom, Stocktown Films)

Writer | Producer, 2014  
EXODUS  
A feature documentary depicting the realities of global human dislocation  
(Fernando Meirelles, *City of God*)

Supervising Producer, 2006–8  
CONVERSATIONS WITH CARLOS WATSON  
A quarterly political interview series (New York)

## Select Publications

*Ghana Must Go*. New York: Penguin Press, 2013. New York Times and Der Spiegel bestseller.  
"Love in the Time of Qalandiya." *Kingdom of Olives and Ash: Fifty Years of Occupation*. Eds. Michael Chabon and Ayelet Waldman. New York: HarperCollins, 2017.  
"Afropolitan: No More but No Less." In *In Search of the Afropolitan: Encounters, Conversations and Contemporary Diasporic African Literature*. Eds. Eva Rask Knudsen and Ulla Rahbek. London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016.  
"We Need More Names: In Defense of the African Novelist." *The Guardian*, 4 July 2015.  
"Aliens of Extraordinary Ability." *Tale of Two Cities: The Best and Worst of Times in Today's New York*. Ed. John Freeman. New York: OR Books, 2014.  
"Das Land meiner Mutter versagt." *Der Spiegel* 21, 19 May 2014.  
"La letteratura africana non esiste." *Internazionale* 1031, December 2013.  
"Driver." *Granta* 123: Best of Young British Novelists 4, Spring 2013.

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"The Sex Lives of African Girls." Granta 115: The F World, Summer 2011.

"Bye-Bye, Babar (Or: What is an Afropolitan?)." The LIP Magazine #5: Africa Issue, March 2005.

## Select Presentations

"There's No 'I' in Country: On Being Multi-Local." TED Talk, 7 October 2014. TEDGlobal 2014, Rio de Janeiro. Watched by 2.75 million unique viewers.

"Wole Soyinka in Conversation with Taiye Selasi." NYU-IAAA Wole Soyinka Scholar-in-Residence program, 7 October 2016.

"African Literature Doesn't Exist." Paper presented at the Swiss Institute for International Studies, Churchill Grand Hall of Zurich University, 2 April 2014.

Keynote address of the Berlin International Literature Festival (ILB), 4 September 2013.

## Awards & Honors

Civitella Ranieri Fellowship (2016)

Sacatar Foundation Residency (2015)

Hay Festival's Africa39: Best African Writers Under 40 (2014)

10 Best Books of 2013, The Wall Street Journal and The Economist

Granta's Best of Young British Writers (2013)

Waterstone's 11, a literary prize aimed at promoting debut authors (2013)

Best American Short Stories (2012)

ORISHA Studentship for Research in the Humanities in Africa (2002)

James Andrew Haas Prize (2001), awarded to that member of the senior class in Yale College whose breadth of intellectual achievement, strength of character, and fundamental humanity shall be adjudged by the faculty to have provided leadership for his or her fellow students, inspiring in them a love of learning and concern for others.

Norman Holmes Pearson Prize (2001), awarded to a senior in Yale College majoring in American Studies for the best senior essay.

Andrew W. Mellon Fellowship (2000)

## Languages

Fluent Italian

Proficient French and Portuguese

Basic German