

•fuel

SOMERSET
HOUSE

Fuel presents

The 419

A photography and poetry exhibition

Poetry by Inua Ellams
Photography by Logor



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

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Welcome / How far?

The 419 is a playful poetry and photography exhibition where 14 sonnets and 14 portraits show how money flows through 14 lives on a typical day in Lagos, Nigeria.

Whilst researching his play *Barber Shop Chronicles* in Lagos, Inua Ellams kept seeing the warning “This house is not for sale. Beware of 419” spray-painted on houses. His guide explained this referred to conmen breaking into and selling properties when their owners were away.

But the term ‘419’ is used widely, to include any kind of calculated manoeuvre; from a child hustling to get extra sweets from a parent, to a car dealer inflating a vehicle’s price.

Curiosity into what set of circumstances could drive such ‘entrepreneurial’ risk-taking led Inua to write a series of interlinked ‘Nigerian Sonnets’ in the voices of men and women of various ages and socio-economic backgrounds, from a market labourer to a musician to an elected official.

These poems are snapshots of the hurdles faced by each individual and those they ask for help. Humorous and heartfelt, they collectively shed light on the economics of life in Africa’s most populous city.

Poet and playwright, Inua Ellams, has worked with photographer and filmmaker, Oluwamuyiwa "Logor" Logo, to create this stunning series of photographic portraits.

Commissioned by Fuel.

The 419 was developed with the support of the Immersive Storytelling Studio, National Theatre.

Supported by Arts Council England.



Programme Note

Life is often described as a lottery and most of the 250 million strong population of Nigeria suggests that even more unfavourable odds are stacked against its people. Yet without a functional system of social security, Nigeria boasts one of the largest economies in Africa. Much of its economy is informal and organic, and *The 419* invites you to witness and wonder as the numbers play out.

Lotto card tabs from the infamous Baba Ijebu Lotto numbers, directly from the streets of Lagos, are incorporated throughout the portraits to reflect the abstract yet tangible ways these numbers drive lives and offer hope, however fragile.

As you look, listen and read, Logor and I invite you to consider other terms for what plays out: perk, bonus, dividend, gratuity, commission, lobby, stipend, honorarium, incentive and premium.

We ask you to think of the nature of paid and unpaid work, what organic ties bind us to each other, and the parallels there may be in your working world.

Inua Ellams



Creative Team

Inua Ellams - Poet

Oluwamuyiwa “Logor” Logo - Photographer

Audio Recordings Team

Gbolahan Obisesan – Director

Pelly Adesoya - Voice Actor

Jonathan Ajayi - Voice Actor

Valentina Ajayi - Voice Actor

Hammed Animashaun – Voice Actor

Antonia Layiwola – Voice Actor

Sule Rimi – Voice Actor

Diana Yekinni - Voice Actor

Clintzmix - Sound Engineer

Ross Flight – Sound Engineer



Fuel leads the field in independent producing in the UK's live performance sector, working with brilliant artists to explore the big questions of our times. From theatres to car parks, from schools to public spaces, Fuel produces high quality new theatre that reaches diverse audiences across the UK and internationally.

Celebrated for its pioneering producing model that develops innovative ideas through attentive collaboration, a spirit of curiosity, and an emphasis on trust, Fuel has developed a reputation for spirited and surprising new theatre, deep relationships with a wide range of artists, and passionate commitment to inclusion and care for young and diverse audiences.

Founded in 2004 and led by Kate McGrath, Fuel has produced shows, festivals, films, installations, podcasts, apps and books, supporting the development of over 120 lead artists or companies and reaching over 1.5 million people, live and digitally, and is recognised with awards for its work.

Fuel is currently working with artists and companies including Khalid Abdalla, Will Adamsdale, Jay Bernard, Inua Ellams, Natalie Ibu, Racheal Ofori, Toby Olié, Suspect Culture, Joelle Taylor, Uninvited Guests, and Melanie Wilson. Fuel is supported by Arts Council England as a National Portfolio Organisation, the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, and the PRS Foundation (Talent Development Network).

If you'd like to support Fuel's work, you can contact us on info@fueltheatre.com

fueltheatre.com @fueltheatre



SOMERSET HOUSE

As the home of cultural innovators, Somerset House is a site of origination, with a cultural programme offering alternative perspectives on the biggest issues of our time. We are a place of joy and discovery, where everyone is invited to Step Inside and Think Outside.

From our historic site in the heart of London, we work globally across art, creativity, business, and non-profit, nurturing new talent, methods and technologies. Our resident community of creative enterprises, arts organisations, artists and makers, makes us a centre of ideas, with most of our programme home-grown.

We sit at the meeting point of artistic and social innovation, bringing worlds and minds together to create surprising and often magical results. Our spirit of constant curiosity and counter perspective is integral to our history and key to our future.

somersethouse.org.uk
@somersethouse

Step Inside 25 birthday weekend at Somerset House

Saturday 13 & Sunday 14 September | Free for all

To mark Somerset House's 25th Birthday Year, Step Inside 25 will be a free, open-to-all invitation for audiences to celebrate Somerset House's milestone year and role as the home of cultural innovators. Opening up the entire building, audiences will be invited to discover and explore the lesser-known spaces including London's best kept secrets, the Deadhouse and Maker Street where visitors can rub shoulders with resident creatives who call Somerset House their home. Reflecting the range of multi-disciplinary talent, the diverse programme will span dance, music, performance, exhibition viewings, film showings, workshops, tours, family activities, retail and more.

Headshots and Biographies



Inua Ellams

Poet

Born in Nigeria, Inua Ellams is a poet, playwright and performer, graphic artist and designer.

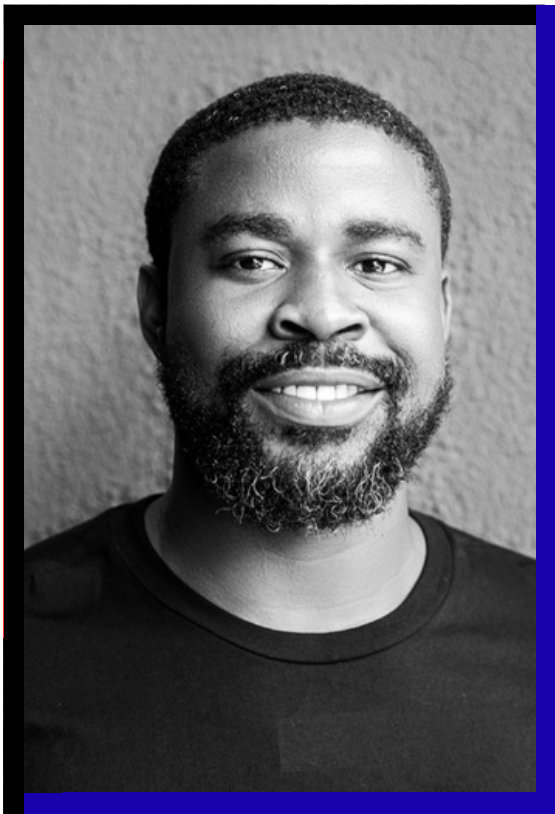
He is a Complete Works poet alumni and facilitates workshops in creative writing where he explores reoccurring themes in his work - Identity, Displacement and Destiny.

He founded The Midnight Run (an arts-filled, night-time, urban walking experience.) The Rhythm and Poetry Party (The R.A.P Party) which celebrates poetry and hip hop, and Poetry + Film / Hack (P+F/H) which celebrates Poetry and Film. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature.

Theatre includes: The 14th Tale (Fuel, Arcola/National Theatre/UK tour); Black T-Shirt Collection (Fuel, UK/World tour); The Riddler (Fuel, Theatre 503); Barber Shop Chronicles (also UK tour), Three Sisters (National Theatre); New Dogs (Fuel, Soho); The Calm (Fuel, RSC); The Half-God of Rainfall (Fuel, Kiln); An Evening with an Immigrant (Fuel, UK & international tour).

Awards include: Edinburgh Fringe First Award 2009; The Liberty Human Rights Award; The Live Canon International Poetry Prize; The Kent & Sussex Poetry Competition; Magma Poetry Competition; Winchester Poetry Prize; Best Theatre Production for The Half-God of Rainfall, Black British Theatre Awards; The Hay Festival Medal for Poetry.

inuaellams.com/



Logor

Photographer

Logor is a photographer & filmmaker who lives and work in Lagos, Nigeria. His approach also revolves around conceptual and documentary style photography.

Logor's interest in photography is to be a shrewd observer of the human carnival by capturing people, things and stories from perspectives that are often overlooked, ignored and taken for granted.

Logor was in London for his first solo exhibition and a month arts residency with the Future Assembly (2016). He was in Manila, the Philippines for a short residency where he developed his new series "Elephant in The Room".

He was also part of the Gated Communities workshop (2015), first in Manila, and then in Lagos.

Logor has shown in selected exhibitions like Lagos: Hustle & Hope (2015), Young Contemporaries (2016), Rele Gallery; Down The Rabbit Hole saloon exhibition, Alara Concept store (2016), Call & Response, Bozar Art Festival, Brussels (2016).

monochromelagos.com

Audio Recordings Team

Gbolahan Obisesan

Director

Gbolahan Obisesan, is an actor, director and writer. Gbolahan oversaw the Capital build relocation of Ovalhouse Theatre to Coldharbour Lane and opened Brixton House, serving as Artistic Director & Joint CEO 2020 to 2023. Gbolahan had prior been Associate Director/Genesis Fellow at the Young Vic Theatre. A strong advocate for inclusivity in theatre, he has spoken out about racial inequality in the arts, calling for meaningful institutional change.



Pelly Adesoye

Voice Actor

Pelly Adesoye is a Nigerian actor and storyteller with a strong passion for bringing characters to life. He began his creative journey through writing and performance, using both as tools to express emotion and connect with people.

Known for his versatility, Pelly is comfortable stepping into different roles whether dramatic, comedic, or action driven and approaches each one with honesty and depth.



Jonathan Ajayi

Voice Actor

Jonathan Ajayi's recent outstanding performances have led to selection by Screen International as one of their 2021 'Stars of Tomorrow'. In particular, he is known for his recent starring role in both seasons of the BBC's hit drama series 'Noughts and Crosses'. He played Lieutenant Lekan Baako, a military officer, Sephy's boyfriend and chief antagonist. The series was based on the Noughts & Crosses novels by Malorie Blackman and is set in an alternate history where black "Cross" people rule over white "Noughts".

Valentina Ajayi

Voice Actor

Valentina Ajayi is a voice over actor with a love for bringing words to life. Whether the project need a no-frills narration or the friendly girl next door, every read is delivered with clarity and smoothness.

when she is not in front of a mic, she is most likely being an amateur chef. She is based in Lagos, Nigeria.

@veemanny



Hammed Animashaun

Voice Actor

Hammed Animashaun received second prize in the 2021 Ian Charleson Awards which recognise actors under the age of 30 in classical roles, for his role as Bottom in A Midsummer Night's Dream at the Bridge Theatre. He also won Best Supporting Actor at the WhatsOnStage Awards for the same production. Other stage roles have included "Master Harold"...and the Boys, Athol Fugard's drama set in apartheid South Africa, and one of the Ugly Sisters in Cinderella at the Lyric Hammersmith.



Antonia Layiwola

Voice Actor

Antonia is a British actress from South London who trained at De Montfort University.

Stage credits include THE PURSUIT OF JOY (Jermyn Street Theatre); IS DAT U YH? (Brixton House); SILKWORM (Edinburgh Fringe), recipient of a Fringe First Award 2022; PROTESTS, HYMNS & CASKETS (Belgrade Theatre); FRAGMENTS OF A COMPLICATED MIND (Theatre503); LOVE THY FRO (Theatre Peckham); TELEPORTATION (Bunker Theatre); and ILÉ LA WÀ (UK tour).

Sule Rimi

Voice Actor

Television includes: Waiting For The Out, Dr. Who, Grace, Foundation S3, The One That Got Away, The Day of The Jackal, Classified, The English, Andor, Manhunt: The Nightstalker, Black Earth Rising, Death in Paradise, Birds of a Feather Christmas Special, Strikeback, Casualty, Unforgotten, Stella.

Film includes: Ear For Eye, Ashens & the Quest for the Game Child, Bad Fucking, The Adventurer: Curse of the Midas Box, The Machine, Elfie Hopkins and the Gammons, Daddy's Girl, Starter for Ten and Francis.



Diana Yekinni

Voice Actor

Diana Yekinni is a British Nigerian actress, from Peckham, London, with a dynamic career spanning film, television, theatre, and voice work. She honed her craft at the prestigious American Academy of Dramatic Arts in Los Angeles and The Brit School in London.

Her theatrical credits include significant roles in acclaimed productions such as Three Sisters at the National Theatre and Mrs. Cole with Complicité.

Diana's film career includes For Love (BBC), as well as Heart of Stone (Netflix), where she starred opposite Gal Gadot.

Clintzmix

Sound Engineer

Driven by an insatiable passion for the power of sound, Oluwafemi Clinton Adeleke has dedicated his career to the art of audio. As a Sound Engineer, Recordist, and Designer, he is the founder and creative engine of Clintzmix Productions, a company built on the principle that impeccable sound is the soul of any visual story.

Clinton's journey is defined by a deep understanding that great sound work is often invisible—it seamlessly immerses the audience, guides their emotions, and makes the visual world feel real.



Ross Flight

Sound Engineer

Sound designer, engineer and interactive technologist working in professional, educational and corporate environments for the last 10 years.

After completing his BA Hons in Creative Music Technology with Digital Arts at the University of Hull, in 2008 Ross began working as a studio technician as well as developing his own creative practice.

After gaining experience in project and production management as technical co-ordinator at the Barbican Centre in London, since 2015 he has been pursuing a freelance career in sound, video and interactive system design for contemporary performance, post production, and technical delivery for theatre and live art installations.



Fuel Team

Angela Bryan-Brown	Assistant Producer
Yingnan Chu	Executive & Fundraising Assistant
Alex Ferguson	Development Producer
Caitlin Gleeson	Senior Producer
Luke Holbrook	Senior Producer
Todun Illuyomade	Assistant Producer
David Lewis	Head of Finance
Kate McGrath	Artistic Director & CEO
Makeda Newman	Programme Assistant
V Reynolds	Communications Manager
Ine Van Riet	Executive Director
Marina Sacco	Senior Engagement Producer
Tanya Stephenson	Production Manager
Joanne Williams	General Manager

Audience Feedback

We want to know what you think! At Fuel we value the opinions of our audiences and would appreciate you filling in the survey [here](#). Your feedback is a crucial part of our work and will feed directly into the future life of The 419.

The 419 Music

Listen to the music that soundtracks The 419 on Spotify [here](#).