

## Canary Wharf's Speakers' Corner promotes underrepresented Voices as part of Black History Month



(Credit: Laura Baehny, Roger Robinson reading one of his poems)

*As part of Black History Month, black poets shared their work at Canary Wharf's Speakers' Corner, an event by London based creative collective [SXWKS](#) (Six Weeks), to promote underrepresented voices.*

Black History Month is a way of igniting the conversation around the experience of black people in the UK, which Charles Olayinka, founder and director of SXWKS, said is very important:

“It allows non-black people to see our similarities.

“Art and creativity have healing properties.”

SXWKS is a collective of young artists and was founded in 2014 during a ‘six weeks’ summer holiday.

It is a platform for anyone with a passion to produce art through different mediums and continues to grow each year.

[Theresa Lola](#) describes poetry as a way a way to edit thoughts and ideas to bring about a greater sense of understanding, or a place of unrestricted expression and revelation.

For others, poetry is a means of understanding themselves and their surroundings.

While Canary Wharf's Speakers' Corner aims to strengthen and honour these ideas, not everyone is celebrating.

Poet and writer [Roger Robinson](#) said: "Black history is British history; all should interact with it all year."

Multidisciplinary artist, [Joladé Olusanya](#), who will read his poem this Saturday, said:

"Personally, I would like to see Black History Month become less of a thing in the sense that it exists to normalise us within a society that we are not from, but we want to thrive in.

"We do not want to put on a show to say like 'yo recognise us', we just want to exist."

According to [The Conversation](#), there has been an increased interest in Black British writing as well as in the British civil rights movement and the histories of colonialism in response to the Black Lives Matter protests in 2020.

However, Mr. Olayinka is still seeing "a lot of lip service and virtue signaling."

Poet and writer [Deanna Rodger](#) said:

"It doesn't have to be kind of a big conversation but an acknowledgment that there are other people in this world is a small and important step to empathy and trust."

While there has been some improvement, [research](#) suggests that the industry is still failing to address the inequalities black people face and is lacking representation of black writers.