

PEN South Africa newsletter / Issue 23 2016

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Issue 23
15 December 2016
ISSN 2410-2210



Dear Friends

2016 has been a turbulent year in South Africa and in the world. This has meant that PEN South Africa, like our sister PEN centres around the world, has been very busy. Do read here about **all the things we have been doing**.

Political turbulence – of the kind caused by the reactionary and dangerous politics of the likes of Turkey's Erdogan, Russia's Putin and the United States' Trump have seen free expression and a free press come under sustained attack. It does not look like

2017 will ease up. Writers in South Africa and around the world will need to be both creative and vigilant if we are to speak truth to power – never more important in an this era of fake news – and if we are to imagine other ways of being. Ways that cherish values of inclusion, tolerance, diversity and attentiveness to the voices and wishes of others.

This year saw PEN South Africa expand our remit in interesting ways. We commissioned research to take the pulse of free expression in South Africa. This in a year in which the political establishment has been rocked by the numerous scandals that swirl around President Zuma. This work will be published soon and it is also the basis of submission we made for the **Universal Periodic Review** on human rights in South Africa.

PEN South Africa has hosted some important and ongoing discussions. The first was the **series of wonderful essays in response to the University of Cape Town's disinvitation of Flemming Rose**. These essays reveal the range of complex and nuanced thinking around the nature of free expression in a complicated and transforming society. They are well worth revisiting as we brace ourselves for 2017.

We hosted **an important conversation about the #FeesMustFall movement and the role of the press in that** – research and a conversation that will be invaluable in the coming years as South Africans try to address the inequalities of education and access.

There has also been some **marvelous literature**. Despite or perhaps because of the complexity of our society, there have been so many fabulous books! Fiction, non-fiction, poetry. Writers – established and new – have responded to the world around them with imagination, humour, horror and beauty. Writers and publishers – thank you for that. And thanks to all of you who have joined PEN this year. It makes for a creative, argumentative and highly functional family.

I would like to thank the people who have made PEN South Africa what it is – to Lindsay Callaghan for transforming the website and for running **the many projects we**

do and Deborah Horn-Botha for making things work and for keeping the books, to Oratile Mashazi for the work she did in Johannesburg. I would like to introduce and to welcome Myolisi Sikupela as our new Centre Co-ordinator. Myolisi is a fabulous writer – he won the 2016 Caine Prize. He is a filmmaker and a staunch advocate of free expression. I am sure you will join me in welcoming him to PEN South Africa. He has his work cut out for him!

I would like to thank **the board** – they have offered so much support and guidance, nuanced and measured interpretations of events and a fierce commitment to free speech, human rights and the messy complexity of how we make that happen. We welcome three new members – Mark Heywood, Nadia Davids and Karina Szczurek to the board. Mandla Langa and Raymond Louw – both vice presidents – have been consistently wise and decisive. Raymond, who turned ninety was awarded the inaugural **PEN South Africa Freedom of Expression Champion Award**. I ask you to think of who you would like to nominate for the 2017 award.

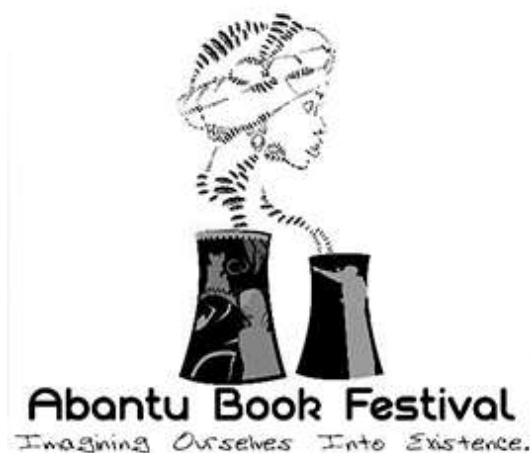
There has been so much more – it is there in all the wonderful newsletters put together by Lindsay Callaghan and on our website. I encourage you all to get involved where you can – there is much of interest lined up for 2017. I wish you all some peace and quiet over this holiday season and very sharp pens for the year ahead.

With the warmest wishes

Margie Orford

President, PEN South Africa

(Image by Giorgia Fanelli)



Translation Issues Discussed at the Abantu Book Festival

The Abantu Book Festival, a brainchild of novelist Thando Mgqolozana, took place in Soweto from the 8th to the 10th of December 2016. Held in two venues, the Eyethu Lifestyle Centre and Soweto Theatre, the inaugural festival was a space for black authors and readers to imagine themselves into existence...[read more](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Take a look at the literary events still coming up this year...[read more](#)

Prevention and Combating of Hate Crimes and Hate Speech Bill

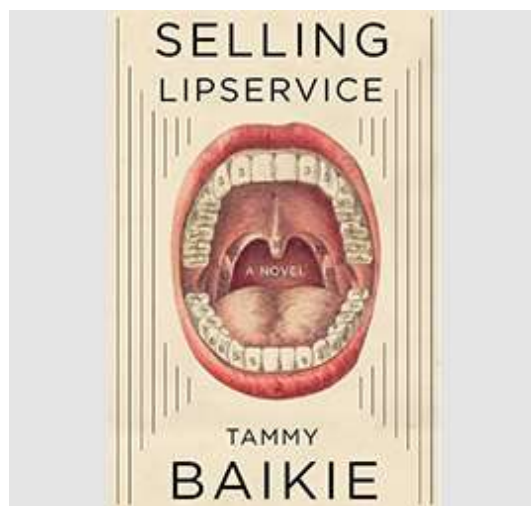
Call for Responses to the Draft Hate Speech Bill

The South African Department of Justice and Constitutional Development has extended the deadline for submissions on the draft Prevention and Combating of Hate Crimes and Hate Speech Bill to 31 January 2016. Hate speech and freedom of expression is a complex, nuanced issue and we invite you to send us your thoughts on the matter. We also encourage you to read the draft Bill and submit your comments...[read more](#)

CALLS FOR SUBMISSIONS

Ballymaloe International Poetry Prize 2016...[read more](#)

NEW MEMBERS' TITLES



Recent titles from PEN SA members include [Selling LipService](#) by Tammy Baikie (which won the 2015/16 Dinaane Debut Fiction Award), [On My Watch](#) by Harvey Tyson, [Three Radio Plays: school boys, rent boys and klevva boys](#) by Robin Malan and [We. the People](#) by Albie Sachs...[read more](#)

BOOK OFFER

PEN SA member Ann Weinberg is offering PEN SA members free copies of her book (including post or delivery), *Storytelling in Jo'burg 1984-2014*, until 31 December 2016. Read more about

2017 Caine Prize for African Writing...[read more](#)

2016 Bodley Head/Financial Times Essay Prize...[read more](#)

Asymptote's Close Approximations International Translation Contest...[read more](#)

Speculative Fiction Magazine FIYAH calling for submissions...[read more](#)

uHlanga poetry press accepting submissions in February...[read more](#)

CONGRATULATIONS!

Sindiswa Busuku-Mathese has been shortlisted for the inaugural Gerald Kraak Award...[read more](#)

Jim Pascual Agustin won the Gabo Prize for Literature in Translation & Multilingual Texts...[read more](#)

Petina Gappah has been longlisted for the PEN Open Book Award...[read more](#)

Ameera Patel has sold the German

the book and find her contact details [here](#).

CENTRE NEWS

As Margie mentioned, Myolisi Sikupela has taken on the role of Centre Co-ordinator from Lindsay Callaghan and so will be taking over the communications@pensouthafrica.co.za email address. All your news, comments and questions can continue to be sent to that address. Please also do let us know if your contact details change at any point so we can keep the mailing lists updated.

WELCOME!

Welcome to new PEN SA Professional member Melissa Volker, Tammy Baikie and Mark Dryden.

[Send us your news](#)

rights to her debut novel *Outside the Lines*...[read more](#)

Short Story Day Africa has announced the winners of the 2016 Prize - Sibongile Fisher won the Prize, TJ Benson was named the runner-up and Megan Ross was named the second runner-up...[read more](#)

Amy Heydenrych and Nick Mulgrew were [shortlisted for the 2016 Morland Writing Scholarship](#) and Lidudumalingani Mqomboti was [named one of the four winners of the scholarship](#).

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Two wonderful independent book stores celebrated their birthdays this month: Kalk Bay Books turned 10 and The Book Lounge turned 9. Congratulations!

Had a book published recently? Attended or participated in a festival? Won an award? Achieved a personal milestone of note? We welcome any news of your activities for future issues of the PEN SA newsletter.

Please email your contributions
to communications@pensouthafrica.co.za



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