

PEN South Africa newsletter / Issue 07.

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September has been full of the Open Book festival which seems to have exhilarated and exhausted audiences, organisers and participating writers. It was wonderful to see the range of engagements with the issues that are as pressing in South Africa as they are in the rest of the world. Discussions around identity, place, belonging and the power of literature to shape how we understand the world and live in it.

There was similar excitement at the Edinburgh Festival in August which brought together writers from across the world. A world that is currently in enormous and tragic flux as people flee the intolerable violence that has been unleashed by the wars in Syria, Afghanistan and the Horn of Africa. Europe is closing its borders and there is fear and xenophobia - something that has blighted South Africa's response to refugees and

migrants.

Writers - like everyone - struggle to bear witness to these things. However it is in the exchange of views, the voices of writers from parts of the world different to ours, the testimony of those who have suffered that enable us to understand and to find ways to heal the ruptures through language and through writing.

Margie Orford
PEN SA President



**PEN Dialogue: Lives of
Writers with Andrey Kurkov
and Mandla Langa**

In this PEN Dialogue event, *Lives of Writers: Andrey Kurkov and Mandla Langa* talk to Karina Szczurek, interesting parallels emerged between the situation of these two writers. Both



**PEN Dialogue: Russia Under
Putin with Masha Gessen and
Andrey Kurkov**

The second PEN Dialogue at Open Book 2015 was held in a packed studio at the Fugard Theatre on Saturday night, with Pippa Green hosting a fascinating discussion on *Russia Under Putin* with

are Vice-Presidents of their respective PEN branches, and both started their writing careers in “hot spots” of the world – the then Soviet Union and apartheid South Africa. Both have criticized the abuses perpetrated under their respective regimes. And both wrote poetry at an early age, before turning to prose...[read more](#)



Alain Mabanckou on *Charlie Hebdo*, Edinburgh and the Open Book Festival

Congolese author Alain Mabanckou, who splits his time between France, Congo and the US, spoke at the 2015

Masha Gessen and Andrey Kurkov...[read more](#)



Tweets from the 2015 Open Book Festival

We've shared coverage of the two PEN Dialogues that were held at the Open Book Festival. But if you'd like a more general look at what happened at the festival then we've collected tweets from members' talks from each of the days:

[Day One](#)

[Day Two](#)

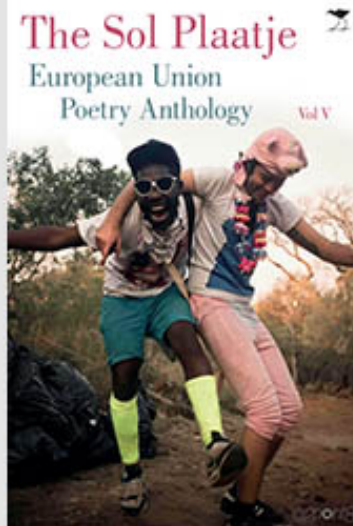
[Day Three](#)

[Day Four](#)

[Day Five](#)

Open Book Festival last week. We caught up with him for a quick interview after his talk on his Man Booker-longlisted book on James Baldwin, *Letter to Jimmy*. [...read more](#)

NEW MEMBERS' TITLES



PEN SA members have published several new titles in the last few months. Click through to see them all [...read more](#)

CONGRATULATIONS!

Lauren Beukes has won the 2015

UPCOMING EVENTS

Take a look at what's happening in September [...read more](#)

CALLS FOR SUBMISSIONS

2016 Kathy Fish Fellowship - a virtual residency for a flash fiction writer [...read more](#)

Call for poetry submissions for *Best "New" African Poets 2015: 100 Poems, 100 Poets* [...read more](#)

2016 Commonwealth Short Story Prize [...read more](#)

Writer/Storyteller-in-Residence at the University of Manitoba, Canada [...read more](#)

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Mbokodo Creative Writing Award...[read more](#)

Jim Pascual Agustin, Margaret Clough, Christine Coates, Kerry Hammerton and Athol Williams have all been longlisted for the 2015 Sol Plaatje European Union Poetry Award...[read more](#)

LITERARY AWARDS NEWS

The Man Booker Prize 2015 shortlist has been announced...[read more](#)

British author Jonathan Tel was announced as the winner of the 2015 Commonwealth Short Story Prize...[read more](#)

[Send us your news](#)

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.

Jacqui L'Ange, Mark Winkler and Pippa Green.

SPECIAL OFFER

Junkets publisher and PEN SA member Robin Malan is raising money for the [Triangle Project](#) by offering a collection of writing by South African gay men, called *Yes, I am!*, at a discounted rate of R120. He will give you the book for free and pass the R120 on to the Triangle Project. Contact info.junkets@iafrica.com for more information.

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



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