

PEN South Africa newsletter / Issue 09 2017

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Nick Mulgrew Reflects on uHlanga's Open Submissions Period

PEN SA member and uHlanga Founder and Publisher Nick Mulgrew has written about the poetry submissions received during uHlanga's recent open submissions period and what they can tell us about the state of poetry in South Africa. Below is an excerpt from the piece, which can be [read in full on the uHlanga website](#):

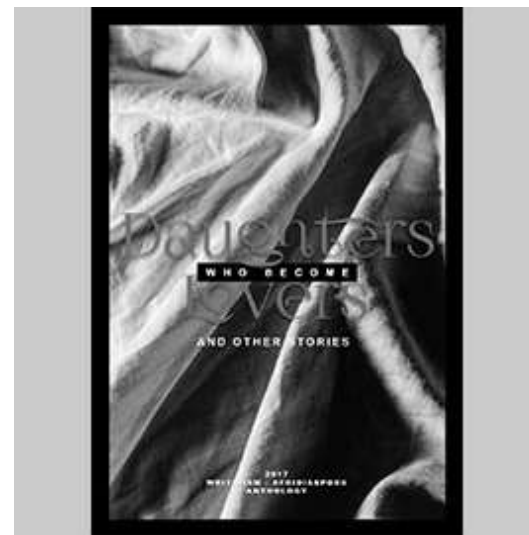
"The fact remains: Aspiring poets want people to read their poems without reading other people's poems. How do I know this? Two reasons. First, sales numbers don't

add up. Second, aspiring poets aren't reading contemporary poetry.

The vast majority of manuscripts that we will reject this period show little to no engagement with South African poetry. The average South African poetry book sells anything between 50 and 200 copies. Magazine subscriptions are also in this realm. We had around 200 writers register their interest in submitting their work to us. I have my reservations about whether the 200 people who submitted their work constitute the poetry book-buying public of Southern Africa.

It's easy to read when someone doesn't read. The same ideas and idioms, cliches and tropes, subjects and experiences, replay themselves over and over across many of the manuscripts we received. If some of these writers engaged with those who were writing in their close proximity, they would know that the poems that they write have already been written. They would know that the best writing often comes from a place of exact and specific context and subjectivity. They would know that poetic forms and techniques have specific uses; that some are old hat, and some are aching to be transformed in new ways."[...read more](#)

(Image courtesy of [Aerodrome](#))



Modjaji Books to Release An A to Z of Amazing South African Women

Modjaji Books has launched a crowdfunding campaign, through Thundafund, to support the publication of *An A to Z of Amazing South African Women* which "tells the stories of 26 trailblazing South African women through accessible stories and illustrations that are as bright and bold as the women they depict" [...read more](#)

(Image courtesy of [Modjaji Books](#))

PEN SA PULSE

A Cameroonian journalist has been sentenced to 10 years in prison, a Nigerian journalist detained over a comment was granted bail and Verashni Pillay, former *Huffington Post South Africa* editor, plans to appeal the press ombudsman's hate speech ruling on a blog carried by the publication [...read more](#)

Ugandan activist and writer Dr Stella Nyanzi has been granted bail, Independent Media has launched an

Free Writivism Anthology Launched and a New Issue of Itch

The Writivism Literary Initiative, in collaboration with Afridiaspora, has published its first creative non-fiction anthology, titled *Daughters who become Lovers*, [which can be downloaded for free here](#). Ten of the stories were written for and through the 2016 Writivism Creative Non-Fiction workshop held in Accra, which was facilitated by PEN SA Board Member Yewande Omotoso. PEN SA members Rachel Zadok and Tiah Beaumont were among the writing mentors for the creative non-fiction programme [...read more](#)

Itch Issue 20: Vision has been published, featuring work by PEN SA members Frank Meintjies, Karen Jennings and Sihle Ntuli [...read more](#)

(Image courtesy of [Afridiaspora](#))

UPCOMING EVENTS

Take a look at the [literary events on this month](#), including the Franschoek

internal Office of the Ombudsman, University of Cape Town Vice-Chancellor Max Price has written about free speech and silencing at the university and Sudanese authorities are allegedly denying journalists access to certain areas...[read more](#)

NEW MEMBERS' TITLES



New titles by PEN SA members include [The Fifth Mrs Brink](#) by Board Member Karina M. Szczurek, [Get Up! Stand Up!](#) by Board Member Mark Heywood, [The Life of Worm & Other Misconceptions](#) by Ken Barris, [Multilingualism and Intercultural Communication](#) co-edited by Russell H Kaschula, [Recognition: An Anthology of South African Short](#)

Literary Festival this weekend, and see what's [coming up in June](#).

CALLS FOR SUBMISSIONS

7th Regional Residency for African Women Writers...[read more](#)

Black Letter Media's Short Story Competition...[read more](#)

Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award...[read more](#)

SA Shorts II: #2minutenoodles...[read more](#)

Nominations open for the 2017 Arts & Culture Trust Awards...[read more](#)

Call for submissions for Indentured Labour Anthology...[read more](#)

CONGRATULATIONS!

Mark Gevisser is one of the Bellagio Center Artist in Residency recipients...[read more](#)

[Stories](#) edited by David Medalie which features stories by PEN SA Board Members Mandla Langa and Nadia Davids and PEN SA members Mary Watson, Achmat Dangor and Kobus Moolman. Older titles by newly joined members include [Flame and Song: A Memoir](#) by Philippa Kabali-Kagwa and [The Street](#) by Paul McNally...[read more](#)

AWARDS NEWS

The Caine Prize shortlist has been announced, see all the shortlistees and read their stories on the Caine Prize website...[read more](#)

WELCOME

Welcome to new PEN SA Professional members Philippa Kabali-Kagwa and Paul McNally.

Send us your news

Had a book published recently? Attended or participated in a festival? Won an

William Kentridge has been awarded the 2017 Princess of Asturias Award for the Arts...[read more](#)

Bronwyn Law-Viljoen's debut novel, *The Printmaker*, will be published in French by Swiss publishing house Éditions Zoé...[read more](#)

Lidudumalingani's Caine Prize-winning story "Memories We Lost" has been translated into Spanish for the Cuban-based journal *Revolución y Cultura*...[read more](#)

CENTRE NEWS

We are pleased to announce that Yewande Omotoso has been co-opted to the PEN SA Board.

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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