

The Winners of the Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) Awards: Book, Creative Collection and Digital Contribution 2018 reflect the relevance and vibrancy of South Africa's HSS community

Vuyo Dlamini
The third Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) Awards: Book, Creative Collection and Digital Contribution 2018, hosted by the National Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences (NIHSS), were held at the iconic John Kani, Market Theatre on 15 March 2018.

The awards laud the preeminent creative contributions of academics, curators and artists based at participating South African universities, who are working to advance HSS. The call for submissions opened in October 2017 and covered works completed between January and December 2016. Submissions comprised 39 non-fiction books, nine fiction books, 10 creative collections and seven digital contributions, and represented 23 publishers. Over 30 esteemed academics were selected as judges and reviewers, led by the Chairpersons; Dr Thoko Mnisi (digital humanities), Prof Jyoti Mistry (creative collection), Prof Pumla Dineo Gqola (books-fiction), and Prof Hlonipha Mokoena (books-non-fiction). According to Professor Sarah Mosoetsa, NIHSS CEO, "The HSS Awards were born of a strategic intent to build a robust post-apartheid higher education system shaped by an equally spirited HSS, while promoting, recognising and celebrating members of the HSS community who are creating post-apartheid and post-colonial forms of scholarship, creative and digital humanities productions. They honour outstanding, innovative and socially responsive scholarship as well as digital contributions."

"The impressive collection of books, creative and digital submissions, signals a growing HSS scholarship in dialogue with itself and broader society. Submissions explore, boldly challenge as well as address pertinent societal issues. For many who might still be asking that dreaded question - 'What is the value of the humanities and social sciences?' In light of this year's collection, I am pleased that this has been rendered an obsolete question," says Mosoetsa. The 2018 collection responds innovatively to the call for 'Africanising curriculum' through the use of extensive research in various fields and genres. What is particularly appealing is the strong multidisciplinary and collaborative approach evident in most submissions. She adds that "several contributions cover the dynamics of friendship, gender and environment that cut across disciplines such as history, sociology, politics, development studies, macroeconomics, inequality studies, hunger and poverty studies, education, land reform, and ethics and morality." Mosoetsa is excited that "new post-apartheid archives are growing, and being documented in new ways. The use of biography and photography provides a powerful encounter between the author and the reader, the humanities academy and society. The disciplines capture the complexities of landscape and histories of rural and marginalised communities, challenges of unemployment, alcohol abuse, domestic violence, sexual abuse, xenophobia, inequality, racism and exploitation." The collection compels us to reconsider and reimagine the

boundaries between private experiences and public encounters. A focus on indigenous knowledge and Africa-specific issues provides a unique scholarship by South Africans for us and the global academy. The use of puppetry as art practice and medium offers a different form of scholarship that transcends the written word, language, culture and contested histories. The link between the university and community is encouraged through various forms to engage, teach, and learn from communities. While English remains the dominant language in the collection, SeTswana, isiXhosa and Afrikaans also feature. "It is pleasing that the HSS narrative is taking seriously its role of shaping and redefining the South African and the broader continental African agenda. Although more effort is needed to support and promote such work to build a convincing body of African languages," adds Mosoetsa. This 2018 collection brings together young and longstanding voices, new and revisited narratives, engages with Sol Plaatje and Darwin, and explores the political consciousness and history of Dikgang Moseneke, the book on Thabo Mbeki, Kopano Matlwa's Period Pain, Jolyn Phillips' Gansbaai stories and the late Vytjie Klaase's photographs of her Namaqua home. Our collective memories of apartheid are seen through the eyes of cricket, Bantu education, Umkhonto weSizwe, poetry, theatre, African music and choral music. There are many narratives of resilience, resistance and possibilities of triumph in post-apartheid South Africa.

Mosoetsa concludes that "the 2018 HSS Awards signal a growing, dynamic and bold HSS community in and for South Africa and the world that we should all be proud of. As the NIHSS, we remain committed to advancing the transformation of our HSS community, universities and society."

Awards recipients expressed gratitude for the honour
 Accepting the award, for Sol Plaatje's Native Life in South Africa, Professor Bhekizizwe Peterson shared that "Plaatje's pioneering book arose out of an early African National Congress campaign to protest against the discriminatory 1913 Natives Land Act." He lamented that "the book tells the bigger story of the assault on black rights and opportunities in the newly consolidated Union of South Africa - and the resistance to it. And should not just be simplified as a plea to the British, however that it was much more than that." Sol Plaatje's Native Life in South Africa comes at a time when South Africa's is engaging with this land question and seeking to address the 1913 colossal injustice. Peterson went on to thank the Institute "for the great work it had committed to and was doing in supporting and growing the voice of the humanities." Hanging on a Wire is a joint-winner of the Book Non-Fiction: Edited Volume. The Hanging on a Wire's award was received by editors, Rick Rodhe and Sionna O'Connell in honour of the late Sophia Klaase who gives "voice to the voiceless in her depiction of her life in pictures. Klaase's images stood out for their intense and idiosyncratic representation of life in a materially



Non-Fiction Monograph winner Dikgang Moseneke with Prof Hlonipha Mokoena, judge chairperson for Book Non-Fiction

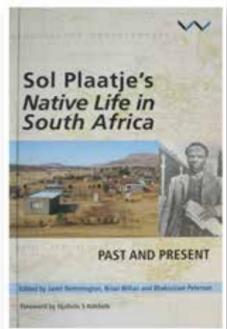
impooverished community, and for their frank exploration of Klaase's own relationship to her environment." The Modjaji Books publisher, who received the Best Non-Fiction: Single Authored Award for Tjieng Tjang Tjerries and Other Stories on behalf of Jolyn Phillips was grateful and proud for taking the leap of faith to forge ahead and publish the short stories renditions despite having less value in terms of commercial viability. Winner of Creative Collections' Best Public Performance - Kafka's Ape creator Phala shared his appreciation of standing "on the shoulders of the HSS giants." He explains that "the Humanities, as a discipline, hold the key to the

critical questions of our identity as humans, more so for us South Africans in this day in age." Through this play, he "talks to the issues of transformation and how we begin to do that by reimagining ourselves as a different people not bound by the limitations of our past, that which through the years of colonisation and apartheid has kept us in the worst emotional bondage which has resulted in us having internalised and learned so well the dysfunctional behaviour such the language of violence, among many other forms of "bondage and oppression". Receiving her Best Visual Art Award for her work When the moon waxes red, Sharlene Khan thanked the many influential

people in her life, "my mother for her generosity; my father for giving me his voice; my sisters for being inspirations and support networks...and the amazing women that I've met and not met." She expressed her gratitude to all the women she has met and worked with, for "the soil which I was planted to be able to do this work...the idea of being 'the inside-outsider and outside-insider; working with my own community dealing with them with a sense of love, responsibility and criticality and not even trying to be objective.'" Khan was particularly pleased that a worthy working class Indian community's story is shared and celebrated, a book that is

not about Ghandi or the Guptas. Retired deputy chief justice Dikgang Moseneke was the winner of the Book Non-Fiction Best Monograph for his book My Own Liberator: In a touching tribute to his late mother, Mrs Karabo Moseneke, he dedicated "this special award to my recently passed mother as she sits at the heart of my story, our story, and our search for freedom and our humanity. She is quite warm, still even in her grave". He expressed his deep gratitude to the judges who saw it fit to confer on him this prestigious recognition. Moseneke also dedicated the award to all the good people of South Africa and concluded that "Morena a boloke sechaba sa heso".

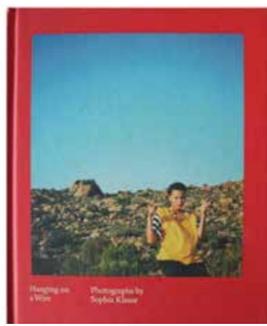
AND THE WINNERS ARE...



Non Fiction
Non-fiction Edited Volume
Sol Plaatje's Native Life in South Africa: Past and Present, by Brian Willan, Janet Remington and Bhekizizwe Peterson (Wits University Press)

"This collection of essays focuses on Sol Plaatje's Native land through a multimodal approach thereby allowing readers from multiple disciplines to access and find relevant pieces of the puzzle. This is done in a manner which gives the original text a contemporary feel thereby touching on very critical current themes such as identity, discrimination, media censorship, gender just to mention a few. The essays are well presented and present a balanced critique of the original text. The book comprises of photographs, maps, copies of old newspapers, poems in different languages. This is innovation at its best. This collection couldn't have come at the right

time and touching on issues of student protests, decolonisation of the curriculum, the radical economic transformation, to mention a few. - Judging panel comment



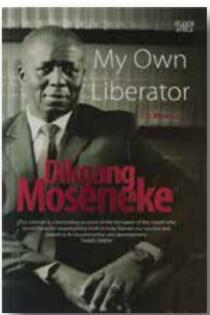
Non Fiction
Non-fiction Edited Volume
Hanging on a Wire, by Rick Rodhe and Sionna O'Connell (Fourthwall Books)

"The visual language of the photographs presented in this book is a powerful account of what it means to be young, rural and poor in South Africa. The photographs cover a range of social interactions from weddings, 21st birthday parties to funerals. But, more importantly the photographer captures people as they wish to be captured by the camera - irreverent, jubilant, mourning and wrapped up in the insignia of popular and global cultures." - Judging panel comment



Fiction
Best Fiction Single Authored
Tjieng Tjang Tjerries and Other Stories, by Jolyn Phillips (Modjaji Books)

"The book's quality and style of writing is of high standard. Its content is South African. Tjieng Tjang Tjerries and Other Stories... is a long-awaited body of knowledge about the lives of the very ordinary, the poor and marginalised. It is a strikingly original work of narrative fiction based on the mimetics of life. The texture of the writing is finely laced and covers a wide range of emotional modalities from the tragic to comical." - Judging panel comment



Non Fiction
Non-fiction Monograph
My Own Liberator, by Dikgang Moseneke (Pan Macmillan South Africa)

"Dikgang Moseneke's book contributes to the diversification of the history of South Africa's complex liberation struggle. His memoirs go a great deal in filling a critical gap by telling the story of the PAC particularly on the question of negotiations. His memoir advances a new angle on existing knowledge." - Judging panel comment



Creative Collections
Best Visual Art
When the moon waxes red, by Sharlene Khan

"Sharlene Khan's work is located within her personal historical narrative and yet speaks to issues we are well acquainted with which transcend culture, tradition and form part of our contemporary discourse on reflections on lives affected through a Colonial/Apartheid and post-apartheid lens." - Judging panel comment

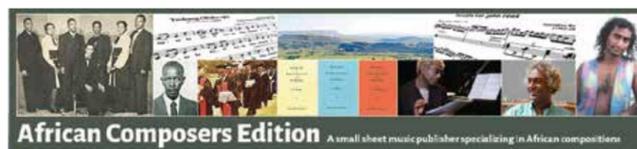


Creative Collections
Best Musical Composition
Kafka's Ape, by Tony Miyambo, Phala Phala

"When I heard that Tony Miyambo, a young actor was presenting this 1917 classic, I was scared for him, but when he entered the stage, my fears dissipated. He was commanding, convincing and I was absorbed and captured. He was an ape. I knew then that transforming into a human being, which he is, will come naturally and importantly, his physical built allows it and he used it to the fullest. He can swing and leap and gibber like an Ape. Today we leave in a South Africa society where identity matters. What it is means to be black, coloured and white. What do we need as people, what do we desire. Why do we judge each other based on skin colour. Myambo as the Ape brings this questions to the fore with flawless performance that is not supported by ape costumes but rather by the inner emotional strength and the understanding of the role." - Judging panel comment

Digital Humanities
Best DH Project for Community Engagement
Joshua Pulumo Mohapeloa Critical Edition in Six Volumes, by Christine Lucia

"This is one of the rare contributions to both the field and the scholarship of digital humanities that focuses on one of the most neglected, yet popular areas embraced by most southern African communities: choral music. The project is a great preservation of the historic work that spread across many decades. It will be used by other researchers to produce more research work." - Judging panel comment



Digital Humanities
Best DH Visualization or Infographic
Artists' Books in South Africa, by David Paton, Jack Ginsberg

"The project is presented in an excellent manner, a searchable database of all South African artists' books thus far researched; links to online resources and related sites of interest, news on book arts events as well as featured artists' books. The website exposes and supports research, practice, production, collecting and documenting of artist books in South Africa." - Judging panel comment



SHORTLISTED ENTRIES

Artists' books in South Africa by Paton, David; Ginsberg, Jack

Between Sisters by Lepere, Refiloe

Cricket and Conquest by Odendaal, Andre; Reddy, Krish; Merrett, Christophe; Winch, Jonty (HSRC Press the Best Red Imprint)

Darwin's Hunch: Science, Race, and the Search for Human Origins by Kuljian, Christa (Jacana Media)

Digital Fashion as Praxis: Transformative Collaboration in a DH Context by Madhoo, Nirma; Shuttleworth, Jessica

Hanging on a Wire by Rodhe, Rick; O'Connell, Sionna (Fourthwall Books)

Inside - out in South African Corrections Interests by Parry, Bianca; Katide, Gali; Fourie, Eduard; Terre Blanche, Martin

Joshua Pulumo Mohapeloa Critical Edition in Six Volumes by Lucia, Christine

Kafka's Ape by Miyambo, Bonani; Phala, Phala

My Own Liberator by Moseneke, Dikgang (Pan Macmillan South Africa)

Noem My Skollie by Shepherd, Kyle

Period Pain by Matlwa, Kopano (Jacana Media)

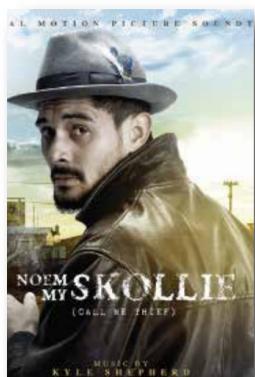
Seaweed Sky by Godsell, Sarah (Poetree Publications)

Sol Plaatje's Native Life in South Africa: Past and Present by Willan, Brian; Remington, Janet; Peterson, Bhekizizwe (Wits University Press)

The Fires Beneath by Morrow, Sean (Penguin Random House)

Tjieng Tjang Tjerries and other stories by Phillips, Jolyn (Modjaji Books)

When the moon waxes Red by Khan, Sharlene



Creative Collections
Best Musical Composition
Noem My Skollie, by Kyle Shepherd

"This body of work's music score was evocative, subtle (sparse), conscious of what it was written for; exciting to listen to even out of the context of the film. The work is refreshing and honest in its rendering. It offers a taste and reflection of South Africa and in particular, township life with its rawness and sharp survival of street life." - Judging panel comment