



**S.A. LITERARY
AWARDS**
Advancing our literary heritage

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MEDIA RELEASE

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SALA Inaugural Regional Poets Laureate Announced

The South African Literary Awards (SALA) inaugurated the Regional Poet Prize on the International African Writers' Day, 7th November 2021, at a virtual ceremony held in Johannesburg. The Eastern Cape and Limpopo provinces' Ronelda Kamfer and Themba Patrick Magaisa, respectively, scooped the coveted prize.

The two poets laureate, Kamfer and Magaisa, who write in Afrikaans and Xitsonga, respectively, were awarded this prestigious prize for their ground breaking poetry and overall contribution in the literary field. They joined the 29 awardees spread across 15 categories for the 2021 SALA Awards, bringing the total recipients, to date, to 251.

"The inauguration of the 15th category, the Regional Poet Laureate Prize, sets another milestone in the history of SALA, thus broadening the National Poet Laureate Prize which was announced on 5th March 2005, in eThekweni, Kwa-Zulu Natal Province, when we bestowed it on the Professor Mazisi Kunene, for his selfless dedication to foregrounding and championing African literature, especially poetry, in African languages, in particular, isiZulu", remarked Mr Morakabe Seakhoa, the Managing Director of the wRite associates and founder of the South African Literary Awards.

Upon the passing on of Prof. Kunene, the baton was handed over to fellow activist artist, poet and contemporary, Prof. Keorapetse Kgositsile, "who", said then-Minister Jordan, "has more than earned this title", on 8th December 2006, in Mangaung, Free State.

On 7th November 2018, after the transitioning yonder of Prof Kgositsile, the 3rd South African National Poet Laureate Prize was given to Prof Mongane Wally Serote, like his two predecessors, one of South Africa's world-renowned scholars, authors, eminent yet unsung poets of majestic epics and literary genius, Seakhoa continued.

"The Poet Laureate is a significant figure in the arts and culture of their country. He/She advances the literary arts and culture by promoting a national appreciation of poetry through engaging programmes and services, a vibrant and interactive series of community activities, and a focus on initiatives which support and sustain the cultural life of the country. In general, Poets Laureate serve to raise national awareness and appreciation of poetry. We are proud of Ms Kamfer and Mr Magaisa for winning this prestigious accolade and we look forward to a robust provincial programme roll-out when they take up their roles as Regional Poet Laureates", concluded Seakhoa.

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Indeed, South African literature is making strides and that many interesting books had to be adjudicated. The remarkable steps made are despite the difficult conditions under which we find ourselves as South Africans and people of the world since the advent of Covid-19. 440 books were submitted and it was not an easy task for the adjudicators to come up with the final list.

The doyen and sage, Lefifi Tladi was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Literary Award, while the late Ntongela Masilela received the Chairperson's Literary Award.

"SALA also saw improvement in the number of African language books submitted. Out of the 29 winners, 13 went to authors writing in African languages, and most being the first time published authors. This gives hope that, with time, African languages will gain a prominent place in the literary space", concluded Seakhoa.

SALA is proud to announce the 2021 finalists as:

1. First Time Published Award shortlist

- (1) Rešoketšwe Manenzhe - *Scatterlings*
- (2) Lynthia Julius - *Uit die kroes*

2. Youth Literature Award

- (1) Kobate John Sekele - *Mararankodi Mafelelo*
- (2) Pamela Newham - *The Boy and the Poacher's Moon*
- (3) Sipho Richard Kekezwa - *Ubomi, ungancama!*

3. k.Sello Duiker Memorial Literary Award

- (1) Lihle Sokapase - *Yapatyalaka Ibhobhile*
- (2) Karen Jennings - *An Island*
- (3) Brian Fredericks - *As die Cape Flats kon praat*

1. Children's Literature Award

- (1) Andre Trantaal - *Keegan & Samier: Die sokkerfiasko*

4. Poetry Award

- (1) Tshepiso Makgoloane - *Tša maAfrika*
- (2) Johann de Lange - *Die meeste sterre is lankaal dood*
- (3) Ayanda Billie - *KwaNobuhle Overcast*
- (4) Kgwadi Kgwadi Gladwell - *Ithuteng Mogolokwane*
- (5) Babalwa Fatyi - *Hlahl'indela Nohombile*

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(6) Nndanduleni Mulaudzi - *Khonadzeo*

5. Nadine Gordimer Short Story Award

- (1) Nakanjani Sibiya - *The Reluctant Storyteller: A collection of Short Stories*
(2) Madoda Ndlakuse - *Mhla latsh'iBhayi*

6. Creative Non-Fiction Literary Award

- (1) Sabata-mpho Mokae and Brian Willan - *Sol Plaatjie: A Life in Letters*
(2) Mzoli Mavimbela - *Masibuyel'embo Konakele Phi Na?*

7. Novel Award

- (1) Fred Khumalo - *Ngenxa yeMendi*
(2) Ezra Mcebisi Nkohlhla - *Zajik'izinto*

8. Literary Translators Award

- (1) Jeff Opland and Peter T.Mtuze - *limbali Zamandulo: Stories of the past (1838-1910)*

9. Literary Journalism Award

- (1) Jean Meiring – *Body of Work*

10. Chairperson's Literary Award

- (1) Ntongela Masilela – *Body of Work*

11. Lifetime Achievement Literary Award

- (1) Lefifi Tlali – *Body of Work*

12. Regional Poet Laureate Prize

- (1) Ronelda Kamfer – *Body of Work*
(2) Themba Patrick Magaisa – *Body of Work*

Preceding the SALA Awards ceremony was the 9th Africa Century International African Writers Conference (ACIAWC), under the theme: *“Decolonised Literary Arts, Culture, Heritage and Expression in Times of Pandemic Crises: Celebrating the International Year of Creative Economy and Sustainable Development”.*

Prof Puleng LenkaBula, Principal and Vice Chancellor of the University of South Africa (UNISA), deliver the *9th International African Writers Day Lecture*, and the respondents were Dr Asante Lucy Mtenje, Associate Professor - Department of English, University of Malawi, Chancellor College and Mr Eugene Skeef: A South African percussionist,

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composer, poet, educationalist, animate and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts who has also served on the board of directors of the London Philharmonic Orchestra (LPO).

For more information, please visit www.sala.org.za and www.africacenturyconference.co.za

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