

The Annual World-Prize for Reportage Literature

Berlin, July 6

The Lettre Ulysses Award for the Art of Reportage 2004

On October 2nd in Berlin, the Foundation Lettre International Award will present the Lettre Ulysses Award for the Art of Reportage for the second consecutive year. The annual Award, which is the only world prize for reportage literature, consists of prize money amounting to a total of € 100,000 (€ 50,000, € 30,000 and € 20,000). The award was initiated in 2003, and is organized by the cultural magazine Lettre International together with the Aventis Foundation, and in partnership with the Goethe Institut. A jury of distinguished writers from all over the world nominates texts and then decides upon the three best pieces of reportage. The founders of the project aim to draw international attention to the importance of reportage literature and to financially, morally and symbolically support writers who work in this genre.

On the 26th and 27th of June, the jury discussed the sixteen texts the jurors thought were the best published worldwide since January 2002. At the beginning of September, the jury will proclaim the seven finalists. The winning texts will be announced at the public award ceremony in the Berlin TIPI on 2 October 2004. Together with the monetary prizes, additional working grants—financed by the Goethe Institut—will be awarded.

In 2003, the first prize was awarded to the Russian writer Anna Politkovskaya for her book *Tchéchénie: le déshonneur russe*. The second prize went to the Somali author Nuruddin Farah for *Yesterday, Tomorrow: Voices from the Somali Diaspora*. The third prize was given to the Chinese writer Jiang Hao for *Revealing the Secrets of Poachers*. The prizes were announced during an award ceremony in the presence of 450 guests from the realms of literature, arts, media and politics. The Polish reportage writer Ryszard Kapuscinski gave the keynote speech. South African writer and artist Breyten Breytenbach moderated the evening.

The nominated texts for the 2004 long list (author, country of origin, title, publisher, first publication date) are:

Ales Adamovich & Daniil Granin, Russia: *The Blockade Book*, Peak Independent Publishers, Moscow, 2003

Suad al-Amiry, Palestine: *Sharon and my Mother-in-Law*, Feltrinelli (*Sharon e mia suocera*), Milan, 2003

Daniel Bergner, USA: *Soldiers of Light*, first published under the title *In the Land of Magic Soldiers*, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, New York, 2003

Chen Guidi & Chun Tao, China: *A Survey of Chinese Peasants*, People's Literature Publication Company, Beijing, 2003

Howard W. French, USA: *A Continent for the Taking. The Tragedy and Hope of Africa*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 2004

Rose George, UK: *A Life Removed. Hunting for Refuge in the Modern World*, Penguin, London, 2004

Amira Hass, Israel: *Reporting from Ramallah: An Israeli Journalist in an Occupied Land*, Semiotext(e), Los Angeles & New York, 2003

Jean Hatzfeld, France: *Une saison de machettes*, Seuil, Paris, 2003

Jiang Wei, China: *Who do You Represent?* Reportage Vol. 17, Beijing, 2003

Tracy Kidder, USA: *Mountains beyond Mountains. The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, a Man Who Would Cure the World*, Random House, New York, 2003

William Langewiesche, USA: *American Ground. Unbuilding the World Trade Center*, North Point Press, New York, 2002

Graciela Mochkofsky, Argentina: *Timerman. El periodista que quiso ser parte del poder (1923-1999)*, Editorial Sudamericana, Buenos Aires, 2003

Paulo Moura, Portugal: *Missnana. O sonho leve da morte & Um bebé é um passaporte para o Céu*, Púbrica: supplement of Público, Lisbon, 2003

Mikhail Ryklin, Russia: *A Time for Diagnosis*, Logos, Moscow, 2003

Åsne Seierstad, Norway: *The Bookseller of Kabul*, J. W. Cappelens Forlag (*Bokhandleren i Kabul - et familiedrama*), Oslo, 2002

Kayoko Yamasaki, Japan: *A Blue Darkness Whispers from There*, Kawade Shobo, Tokyo, 2003

Transcending the limits of language and culture

The goal of the Lettre Ulysses Award is to contribute to a better understanding of societal developments worldwide. Our reality, characterized by a contradictory globalization process, needs to be described accurately in all its complexity.

It is precisely the shocking events that take place beyond our horizon of experience (from Rwanda and Yugoslavia to Chechnya and Afghanistan through to September 11), which have shown the world's public how superficial and illusory the familiarity can be that audiovisual mass media purport to have with cultures and conflicts.

Accordingly, it is imperative that we have access to more profound, serious analyses and presentations of cultural differences and social developments in their simultaneity, without falling back on stereotypes.

Writers who combine the curiosity and courage of good journalism with the art of writing can make a decisive contribution to our perception of local and global developments. The nominated texts must be distinguished in their thematic relevance, originality, depth and literary quality. When these factors come together, the prize becomes a forum for forward-thinking and artistic ways of examining the world. In this way, the *Lettre Ulysses Award* strives to support international understanding, and to encourage a sense of global responsibility, and, ultimately, the development of “world consciousness”.

The jury: polyglot, professional, independent

The jury, composed of experienced writers of reportage, nominates the most outstanding pieces published in this genre world wide. The native languages of the jury members correspond with ten of the largest linguistic regions in the world, guaranteeing a language base that is as broad as possible. The jury members represent each of the following languages: English, French, Spanish, Russian, Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), Japanese, Portuguese, Hindi, and German. The *lingua franca* of the jury is English. A methodical process of nomination, group evaluation and discussion ensure that the texts are considered in a thoroughly professional manner. The composition of the jury is subject to annual change.

The members of the 2004 jury and their language areas:

Svetlana Alexievitch (Belarus): Russian. Writer, journalist, filmmaker, playwright

Hans-Jürgen Heinrichs (Germany): German. Writer, journalist, editor

Isabel Hilton (Great Britain): English. Writer, reporter, commentator

Natsuki Ikezawa (Japan): Japanese. Novelist, writer, essayist

Tomás Eloy Martínez (Argentina): Spanish. Novelist, essayist, journalist

Michael Massing (USA): English. Journalist, writer, lecturer

Pankaj Mishra (India): Hindi. Novelist, reporter, literary critic

Pedro Rosa Mendes (Portugal): Portuguese. Reporter, writer

Amjad Nasser (Jordan): Arabic. Lyricist, travel writer, editor

Abdourahman Waberi (Djibouti/France): French. Novelist, journalist, essayist, poet

Zhao Xinshan (China): Chinese (Mandarin). Writer, philosopher, university professor

International committee

An international advisory committee provides the project with active support. Members of the committee include the German writer and 1999 Nobel Prize Winner for Literature **Günter Grass**, the Polish reportage author **Ryszard Kapuscinski**, the French anthropologist **Jean Malaurie**, the Indian writer **Nirmal Verma**, and Danish war reporter **Jan Stage**, who recently passed away.

Additional information

News and background information can be found at: www.lettre-ulysses-award.org

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