Big names for literary festival

METRO REPORTER

THE written word takes centre stage as 20 writers from nine countries arrive in Durban for a week of workshops, readings, discussions and talks at the 12th Time of the Writer International Writers Festival. The festival, from 9 to 14 March, is co-ordinated by the Centre for Creative Arts at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. It features a strong South African and African presence with a diverse gathering of novelists, short story writers, journalists, cartoonists and political commentators, presenting their ideas.

The festival programme includes cartoonist Jonathan Shapiro, better known as Zapiro, in a panel entitled "I Write And Draw What I Like", which will be journalist and political commentator Max du Preez.

Other South African voices include poet, short story writer and novelist Marlene van Niekerk, who, with her acclaimed novels Agaat and Triomf and poetry collections Sprakeljier and Groenstaar, has established herself as one of the country's finest writers. She will be in a session entitled "What Are The Imperatives of South African Fiction?", is literary luminary Mandla Langa, who recently completed the allegorical novel 'The Last Colours of the Chameleon'.

Also in attendance is Muntuze Matsobha, a writer, playwright and screenwriter who is responsible for authentic depictions of everyday life in South Africa. Siphiwo Mahula, whose debut novel, When A Man Cries, showed a remarkably deft hand at balancing searing pain and black humour, shares the stage with Pietermaritzburg-born Futhi Ntshingila, whose debut Shameless is a feisty addition to local fiction.

Africans

The strong African presence this year includes Sade Adamtan (Nigeria), Mia Couto (Mozambique), Ugandan Moses Isegawa, Dinaw Mengestu (Ethiopia), and Fatou Diome, of Senegal. Diome's first novel, Le Venin de L'Atlantique, was a bestseller in France and her vivid style is influenced by the traditional oral literature of Africa.

Fittingly, the winners of this year’s Commonwealth Writers’ Prize for Best Book and Best First Book Africa Region will be announced at the festival.

Crime fictions has a strong presence in this year’s festival, including Deon Meyer, the undisputed king of South African crime and thriller writing.

The crime fiction contingent includes Mike Nicol, Angela Makholwa, and Margie Orford.

But crime comes in many forms and in a panel entitled "Crimes of History", Yvette Christianië (South Africa) and Mourid Barghouti (Palestine) delve into their writing and into two very distinct injustices: slavery and the occupation of Palestine.

Christianië’s ‘Unconfessed tells the epic story – inspired by court records – of Sila van den Kaap, a slave of 19th century South Africa. Barghouti is an acclaimed poet with more than 12 collections. His celebrated autobiographical novel ‘I Saw Ramallah!’ – written after 30 years of exile – was described by the late Edward Said as “one of the finest existential accounts of Palestinian displacement we now have”. Readings, discussions and book launches will take place nightly at the Elizabeth Sneddon Theatre at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. During the day there will be workshops, school visits, a day-long forum on 11 March on publishing issues – including literary magazine publishing, self-publishing, book promotion, crime writing and the new explosion of graphic novels.

Tickets are R25 for the evening sessions, or R10 for students, through Computicket or at the door. Workshops and seminars are free. For details call 031 260 2506.

STUFF OF DREAMS: Hermione Spies

Coleman’s ‘En Route With Men’

Sentimental Things is part of an exhibition entitled Under My Skin at artSPACE. Call: 031 776 7979

Andrew Zondo exhibition – “Why I did it”

KwaMuhle Local History Museum

Until April

Call: 031 311 2220

Darwin Relevant

Revolutionary Exhibition

Natural Science Museum

Until December

Call: 031 311 2249

Educational workshops

“Introduction to Human Evolution”

Natural Science Museum

26 March

9am – 14pm

Call: 031 311 2249

Q Compiled by Thembisa Khumalo. To have your events included in the Durban Diary, fax 031 306 4603 or email khumalo@durban.gov.za.

THE RUSSIANS ARE COMING: The Bolshoi Ballet will be performing at the Playhouse Opera Theatre on 7 March

Tickets: R150, includes buffet

Call: 031 328 8068

ART

Wakaba Mutheki and Friends

Kzo Art Gallery

Until 15 February

Call: 031 566 4324

Under my skin at artSPACE

22 February

Tickets: R218 to R294

Call: 011 794 9536

Guy Buttery

Pharsi Museum

13 February, 7pm

Tickets: R60

Call: 031 206 2889

Watershed

Botanic Gardens

14 February

24 February

Tickets: R50 to R100

Call: 031 202 5819

EVENTS

Miss India Worldwide

Suncoast

14 February

Tickets: R500 to R1000

Call: 031 309 4498

KZN Conservatory of Dance

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Shark Frock

IT LOOKS like a ballgown fit for a swish affair. And so it is, but take a closer look. This glamorous garment is in fact made from hundreds of shocking-pink condoms. Talk about being prepared if someone makes you an irresistible offer! The rocky frog was created by Brazilian artist Adriana Bertini, and is part of an exhibition of thought-provoking pieces, entitled Make Art Stop AIDS, which opens at the Durban Art Gallery on 25 February. Bertini, 35, who was inspired by HIV-positive children whom she met at an AIDS prevention group, has also crafted sexy skirts and figure-hugging suits, made entirely from condoms rejected by quality testers. Her message is: ‘Condoms must be basic, like a pair of jeans, and so necessary, like a great love.’

Another highlight is Medicine Man, a sculpture by American artists Daniel Goldberg and Daniel Kapellas. It’s a larger-than-life figure of a man made from hundreds of empty Aids medicine bottles and syringes, used by the two over the past 20 years since they were diagnosed as being HIV positive. Another standout is the Koskaat失踪 artwork by 120 Eastern Cape artists. Top Local artists taking part in the exhibition include William Kentridge, Pieter Hugo, Gideon Mendel, Lisa Magwa, and Churchill Mudikiza. More than 50 works are on show and most of the international artists are new to South African audiences. The curators are David Gere and former Durban Art Gallery curator, Carol Brown. – Romita Hanuman

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DURBAN DIARY:

Your guide to entertainment in the city

DANCE, THEATRE AND COMEDY

Bolshoi Ballet

Playhouse Opera Theatre

7 March

Tickets: R70 to R150

Call: 031 566 3045

Big Band Magic

Barnyard Theatre

Until 22 February

Tickets: R70 to R105

Call: 031 305 6889

The Goller

Heritage Theatre

12 February

Tickets: R160 – R185, includes a two-course meal

Call: 031 765 4197

Abba: The Legend Continues

Northcliff Theatre

Until late February

Tickets: R70 – R100

Call: 031 201 9147

Blonde on Deck

uShaka Marine World

Until 14 March

Tickets: R50 to R100

Call: 031 328 8068

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