

Winner of the 2015 Sylt Foundation African Writer's Residency Award announced!

Ugandan writer and poet **Mildred Barya** has been selected as the 2015 winner of the Sylt Foundation African Writer's Residency Award.

Mildred Barya, who lives in Denver right now and teaches and pursues a PHD at the University of Denver is the recipient of the Writer's Residency Award which she will take up at the Sylt Foundation's headquarters in 2016.

This new residency opportunity is awarded annually to writers of contemporary African literature. The previous winners were Nigerian writer Chika Unigwe in 2013 and Ghanaian writer and poet Nii Parkes in 2014.

The Sylt Foundation African Writer's Residency Award (AWRA) provides a two months stay in a subsidized apartment to writers of contemporary African literature, who engage with current themes and concerns related to Africa and the African diaspora. The award is open to published writers of poetry, prose, plays and novels.

The Sylt Foundation is located on the island of Sylt off the coast of Hamburg in Germany. Its residency programme has been running for several years and offers opportunities to South African as well as international visual artists, writers, composers and film makers. The programme is managed under the directorship of literary scholar and curator Indra Wussow.

The winner was selected by the three independent judges Professor Helon Habila (writer and literary scholar, Nigeria), Nii Parkes (writer, poet, editor, Ghana/GB), and Dr Katharina Fink (literary scholar and writer, University of Bayreuth/Germany) out of an impressive list of strong contenders out of 12 African countries.

The jury commented: „Mildred Barya is an extraordinary writer who brings into the English language both a technical proficiency and a spirit of a distinctly non-English imagination. The ambitious literary project she will be working on during her residency is very contemporary in its exploration on traveling and identity.“

Mildred Barya is a writer and poet from Uganda. She was awarded the 2008 Pan African Literary Forum Prize for Africana Fiction, but had earlier gained recognition for her poetry, particularly her first two collections, *Men Love Chocolates But They Don't Say* (2002) and *The Price of Memory: After the Tsunami* (2006).

Barya has also worked as journalist and travel writer. From August 2007 to August 2009, she served as Writer-In-Residence in Dakar, Senegal. She graduated from MFA

program at Syracuse University, New York City, in 2012, and currently teaches and pursues her PhD at the University of Denver in the USA.

Besides her career as a writer, Barya has also worked as a Human Resource Advisor in Uganda.

Barya is a founding member and currently serves on the advisory board of „African Writers Trust“ a non-profit entity which seeks to coordinate and bring together African writers in the Diaspora and writers on the continent to promote sharing of skills and other resources, and to foster knowledge and learning between the two groups

Winning this award Mildred Barya commented: “I gladly accept the award! I'm honored and feel pure joy about winning the award. I look forward to working on my project for two good months in such a lovely and inspiring place. Thank you, Sylt, and thank you to the committee that has chosen me.”



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