

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Tenth anniversary Caine Prize shortlist announced

The shortlist for the 2009 Caine Prize for African Writing has been announced (Wednesday 13 May 2009). The Caine Prize, widely known as the 'African Booker' and regarded as Africa's leading literary award, celebrates its tenth anniversary this year.

Selected from 122 entries from 12 African countries, the shortlist is once again a reflection of the Caine Prize's pan-African reach. The winner of the £10,000 prize is to be announced at a celebratory dinner at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, on Monday 6 July.

The 2009 shortlist comprises:

- Mamle Kabu (Ghana) *'The End of Skill'* from 'Dreams, Miracles and Jazz', published by Picador Africa, Johannesburg 2008
- Parselelo Kantai (Kenya) *'You Wreck Her'* from the St Petersburg Review, NY 2008
- Alistair Morgan (South Africa) *'Icebergs'* from The Paris Review no. 183, NY 2008
- EC Osondu (Nigeria) *'Waiting'* from Guernicamag.com, October 2008
- Mukoma wa Ngugi (Kenya) *'How Kamau wa Mwangi Escaped into Exile'* from 'Wasafiri' N°54, Summer 2008, London

Two other entries were highly commended: 'Devils at the Door' by Sierra Leone's Brian James, and Ghanaian writer Nii Parkes's 'Socks Ball'.

This year the judging panel is chaired by *New Statesman* Chief Sub-Editor Nana Yaa Mensah, and joining her are Professor Jon Cook of the University of East Anglia, award-winning novelist and Georgetown University professor Jennifer Fink, *Guardian* journalist and author Hannah Pool, and Mohammed Umar, the Nigerian novelist, journalist and bookseller.

Once again the winner of the £10,000 Caine Prize will be given the opportunity of taking up a month's residence at Georgetown University, Washington DC, as a 'Caine Prize/Georgetown University Writer-in-Residence'. The award will cover all travel and living expenses.

Last year the Caine Prize was won by South African writer Henrietta Rose-Innes for her short story *Poison*, from 'Africa Pens', published by Spearhead, an imprint of New Africa Books, Cape Town, 2007. Chair of judges Jude Kelly said at the time that the story showed "a sharp talent, a rare maturity and a poetic intelligence that is both subtle and deeply effective. It is writing of the highest order."

Previous winners include Uganda's Monica Arac de Nyeko, for *Jambula Tree* from 'African Love Stories', Ayebia Clarke Publishing, 2006, and Brian Chikwava, from Zimbabwe, whose first novel *Harare North* has just been published by Jonathan Cape.

This year the shortlisted writers will be reading from their work at the Royal Over-Seas League on Friday, 3 July at 7pm and at the London Literature Festival at the Southbank Centre, on Sunday, 5 July at 7pm. There will also be a seminar at the Institute for English Studies, Senate House, University of London, on Wednesday, 8 July at 1.30pm.

-Ends-

Notes to Editors

The Caine Prize, awarded annually for African creative writing, is named after the late Sir Michael Caine, former Chairman of Booker plc and Chairman of the Booker Prize management committee for nearly 25 years. The Prize is awarded for a short story by an African writer published in English (indicative length 3,000 to 10,000 words). An "African writer" will normally be taken to mean someone who was born in Africa, or who is a national of an African country, or whose parents are African, and whose work has reflected that cultural background.

The African winners of the Nobel Prize for Literature, Wole Soyinka, Nadine Gordimer and J M Coetzee, are Patrons of The Caine Prize, as is Chinua Achebe. Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne is President of the Council and Jonathan Taylor is the Chairman.

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