

Books alive at South African Book Fair

The South African Book Fair, a gathering of writers, poets, publishers and readers, turned Newtown into a hub of activity centred on the theme #OurStories. The past weekend saw South Africans engaging in things that matter to them, proving again that the book is not dead.



#OurStories theme at SA Book Fair.

The Fair, in association with the Fibre, Processing and Manufacturing (FP&M) Seta, brought Prof. Zakes Mda, Sindiwe Magona, Deon Meyer and Achmat Dangor together to discuss life and what writing has meant to them. The session was lauded as one of the highlights of the Fair.

“My success is to have youngsters like Kopano Matlwa growing up knowing they can become authors because they look like me. The first book I saw written by someone that looked like me, I was pushing 30. It was a book by Maya Angelou. We need a committed support for local authors and stories as Africans,” said Magona.

Stressing the importance of exploring alternative avenues for the survival of the book, Mda said, “To be a great writer, you have to be a great reader. We need to adapt to the kwaito music distribution system in literature. We cannot rely on book stores alone because they do not reach the masses.”

A book talk on the works of authors such as Ayòbámi Adébáyò, Lidudumalingani Mqombothi and Yewande Omotoso gave attendees a view into forthcoming literature being brewed on the continent.

“As Africans, we are up against many stereotypes and fiction writers are the ones who do the work of changing that,” said moderator Karabo Kgoleng.

Other literary sessions included Racism: The immovable stain with Gugulethu Mhlungu, Khadija Patel and Zimitri Erasmus and The Long Shadow: Colonialism, corruption and Apartheid, which saw Hennie van Vuuren (author of Apartheid Guns and Money), Mandla Langa and Michael Schmidt.

The Fair saw the conclusion of National Book Week, in association with the Department of Arts and Culture. Having travelled to all nine provinces, the South African Book Development Council (SABDC) saw the entire country reading and engaging the written word with fervour.

For more information, click [here](#).

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