

**Der Lettre Ulysses Award  
For the Art of Reportage**

Award Ceremony, 4. Oktober 2003

**Press Folder**

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### **Further Information:**

Further information on the idea of the prize and on the jury can be found at the home page:  
[www.lettre-ulysses-award.org](http://www.lettre-ulysses-award.org)

## **Lettre Ulysses Award for the Art of Reportage** **Project at a Glance**

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### **Intentions and Aims of the Project**

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The Lettre Ulysses Award for the Art of Reportage intends to

- place the authors and the achievements of literary reportage at the center of worldwide attention;
- contribute to the symbolic and financial support of reportage authors;
- raise awareness for the long and important tradition of reportage literature;
- direct attention to one of the most fascinating journalistic and literary forms.

### **The Jury**

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The Jury

- is made up of eleven prominent members;
- consists of native speakers representing eleven of the largest linguistic regions of the world (English, French, Spanish, Russian, Chinese (Mandarin), Japanese, Portuguese, Hindi, Turk and German);
- is composed entirely of authors who are at home in the genre of reportage literature;
- guarantees a linguistic sphere of perception with the broadest possible scope;
- works in the English language;
- will be selected each year anew.

### **Selection Process 2003**

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- Each member of the jury suggested two texts or books (from his/her native language and cultural sphere or from any other).
- Works nominated must have been published within December 2000 and January 2003.
- All members of the jury gave grounds for their nominations in detailed recommendations; Members of the jury received all works and recommendations in English translation.
- A project databank available to all members of the jury supported communication and the exchange of information among jurors.
- Two meetings (Berlin, May 2003 and Paris, September 2003) aimed at establishing common criteria for judging and selecting works for the "shortlist".
- The jurors selected the winner of the 2003 prize from the shortlist of nominated candidates.

## **Initiators and Project Partners**

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The award was initiated by the European cultural journal Lettre International. The project is supported and funded by the Aventis Foundation. The Goethe Institute Inter Nationes is partner in this endeavor.

## **The Prizes**

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The *Lettre Ulysses Award for the Art of Reportage*

1. Prize 50,000 Euros
2. Prize 30,000 Euros
3. Prize 20,000 Euros

### **Further awards:**

- Language study and work residency stipends, as well as fellowships in Germany for all candidates of the “shortlist”;
- Each candidate on the “shortlist” receives an English translation of his/her text. This helps the authors gain access to international publishing houses and media.

*Literary Reportage*

**Importance and Tradition of a Media Format**

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Reporters set out for unfamiliar territories and distant parts of the world as eyewitnesses to history and detectives of the unknown. They tell stories of the drama of life and the comédie humaine. They report on creation and destruction, hope and despair, fanaticism and cold calculation, on the hardship and the beauty of life. Their passion is reality.

Sometimes, their curiosity and courage, their talent for observation and their power of expression combine to create grandiose works that enrich our understanding of the world. The award winners and all works nominated for the Lettre Ulysses Award document this potential.

**The most fascinating journalistic and literary form**

Reportage literature has a long and distinguished tradition and it is counted among the most fascinating journalistic and literary forms. Some works in this genre reach beyond the concrete situation of their creation and achieve importance as great works of literature. Some are counted as works of history. Surprisingly, until today no world prize for reportage literature has existed.

On the occasion of the award of the Nobel Prize for Literature to V. S. Naipaul in Stockholm, Gunter Grass spoke of his desire for a “second Nobel Prize for reportage literature.” That was in 2001.

Indeed, seen before the background of the complex and conflict-laden process called globalization, the art of reportage and its ability to describe the world seem to become ever more important. One need only recall the explosive events prepared somewhere beyond the horizon of our perception.

## The Jury

### **The Nomination of the Award Winners**

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The jury will consist of independent literary personalities. Further, the jury will represent a high degree of competence and experience; the majority being profoundly dedicated writers of reportage. Jury members guarantee through personal competence, experience and reputation, independence and quality. They are obliged to defend their judgment publicly. Book publishers, literary agents and state cultural representatives shall not be part of the jury due to potential conflicts of interest.

The composition of the jury will be subject to annual change.

The task and goal of the jury is to select the most outstanding texts of literary reportage on a worldwide scale published within the two preceding years. The exact dates for the beginning and ending of the year in question must be defined.

"Text" means a book or a magazine text. It is probable that in general books will be nominated but it has to be taken into consideration that there could also be a selection of extraordinary magazine texts.

The jury consists of twelve members (two for the English language), each member at least bilingual. Each member represents his native language as one of the entry languages as well as English which will be the jury's conference language.

#### **Responsibilities and duties of the Jury members**

Each jury-member will inform himself in an appropriate way on the important publications of reportage writing in his native language, and will to develop considered personal judgment on these texts. He may ask the advice of third persons taking full personal responsibility.

#### **Jury criteria**

The jury defines a series of consensual main criteria for the awarding process: a.) relevance of the subject, b.) originality, c.) complexity, d.) credibility and authenticity, e.) structure, f.) language and style, and whatever other elements that tend to make a work outstanding.

#### **Nominations**

Each jury-member has the right to make two nominations (for two different texts). He can make use of these rights but he is not obliged to. It is likely that he will find nominees from his own language; he can also nominate candidates from whatever other languages he reads. Altogether there will be a maximum of 24 nominations.

#### **Evaluation**

Each jury member will justify his nominations in a substantial written proposal (synopsis and evaluation) of 10-15 pages in the English language. This evaluation should explain why the relevant text has been selected within the parameters of the criteria and why this working has been nominated for the "Best Reportage Text of the Year" worldwide.

### **Jury and Judging Process**

The multi-lingual jury is made up exclusively of authors who are at home in the genre of reportage. The members of the jury are native speakers representing eleven of the largest language areas and thus guarantee a sphere of linguistic and cultural perception with the greatest possible scope. The following languages are represented by one jury member each: English, French, Spanish, Russian, Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), Japanese, Portuguese, Hindi, Turkish and German. During the selection process, the jury members considered the works written in their own languages that they deemed to be most significant. They were also free to nominate works written in any language. The working language of the jury is English.

### **Members of the Jury 2003**

- Svetlana Alexievitch, Belorussia
- Hans Christoph Buch, Germany
- Jorge Edwards, Chile
- Isabel Hilton, Great Britain
- Philip Gourevitch, U.S.
- Nedim Gürsel, Turkey
- Natsuki Ikezawa, Japan
- Pedro Rosa Mendes, Portugal
- Nirmal Verma, India
- Abdourahman Waberi, Djibouti/ France
- Yang Xiaobin, China

**The “shortlist” of 2003**

**Overview texts and books**

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The international jury of the Lettre Ulysses Award for the Art of Reportage decided on the finalists for the first world prize for reportage literature in Paris at the beginning of September. Transcending the borders of language and culture and after intensive discussion and translations processes, the jurors agreed upon the literary reportage works that they would like to place at the center of worldwide attention. Both famous and less well-known representatives of the genre are included among the authors.

As eyewitnesses to history and detectives of the unknown, "literary reporters" made their way through supposedly familiar and through forgotten regions of the world. They tell stories of creation and destruction, hope and despair, fanaticism and cold calculation, of the hardship and the beauty of life. Their passion is the reality of a multiform world.

With their talent for perception and their power of expression, with their courage and curiosity, the seven authors chosen document and develop the following topics:  
Both famous and less well-known representatives of the genre are included among the authors.

The Shortlist of works chosen for the Lettre Ulysses Award for the Art of Reportage (ordered alphabetically)

**1.**

**Democracy and exile - the lives of Chinese dissidents**

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Ian Buruma

***Bad Elements – Chinese Rebels from Los Angeles to Beijing***

Random House, New York, 2001. English

**2.**

**The Somalian Diaspora after the disintegration of a state**

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Nuruddin Farah

***Yesterday Tomorrow: Voices from the Somali Diaspora***

Continuum International, London, New York, 2000. English

**3.**

**Poaching and the exploitation of nature in Inner Mongolia**

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Jiang Hao

***Revealing the Secrets of Poachers***

Qunzhong chubanshe, Beijing, 2000. Chinese

**4.  
Life in the Bronx poverty, drug trafficking and the laws of the street**

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Adrian Nicole LeBlanc  
*Random Family: Love, Drugs, Trouble, and Coming of Age in the Bronx*  
Scribner, New York, 2003. English

**5.  
The war in Chechnya – a close-up of a tragedy**

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Anna Politkovskaja  
*Tchéchénie: le déshonneur russe*  
Buchet/Castel, Paris, 2003. Russian/French

**6.  
Haiti, Somalia, Rwanda and others United Nations crisis intervention**

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Linda Polman  
*We Did Nothing*  
Viking, London, 2003. Dutch

**7.  
A multi-faceted panorama of the Indian subcontinent**

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Mark Tully and Gillian Wright  
*India in Slow Motion*  
Viking, London, 2002. English

## The finalists of 2003

### **The Authors**

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#### **Ian Buruma**

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Ian Buruma was born in 1951 in The Hague, Netherlands, to a Dutch father and an English mother. Educated in Holland and Japan, he decided to study Chinese literature and history in the 1970s. Afterwards, he focused his attention on Japan. Ian Buruma spent six years living in Tokyo, first as a film student at *Nihon University College of Arts*, then as a photographer, actor, dancer, translator, film reviewer and journalist. In the 1980s he spent seven years in Hong Kong. During these years he traveled almost everywhere in Asia.

Ian Buruma writes political and cultural commentary on Asia for several western publications, including the *New York Times*, *New York Review of Books*, *Newsweek*, *Le Monde*, *Lettre International* and *Die Zeit*. His writing focuses on, but is not limited to Japan, Korea, Myanmar and the Philippines and addresses readers who are “curious, reasonably well-informed, but not specialists in Asian affairs.”

Among his non-fiction works are *Behind the Mask: On Sexual Demons, Sacred Mothers, Transvestites, Gangsters, Drifters, and Other Japanese Cultural Heroes* (1984), *God's Dust: A Modern Asian Journey* (1989), and *The Wages of Guilt: Memories of War in Germany and in Japan* (1994). *Voltaire's Coconuts* (1999) examines Europe's relationship to England and its culture. *The Missionary and the Libertine: Love and War in East and West*, a collection of essays revolving around the idea of nationhood, was published in 2000. His last publication, *Bad Elements* (2001) is a work on Chinese dissidents.

Ian Buruma has been a fellow at the *Woodrow Wilson Institute for the Humanities* in Washington, D.C. and at *St. Anthony's College* in Oxford. He has taught at several universities including *Harvard*, *Princeton* and the *University of Groningen*. Since 2003 Buruma has been *Luce Professor of Democracy, Human Rights & Journalism* at *Bard College*, New York. He lives in London.

#### **Nuruddin Farah**

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Nuruddin Farah was born in Baidoa, the Italian-administered region of Southern Somalia, in 1945. His mother was a traditional storyteller, his father a merchant who later worked as an interpreter for the British governor. As a child he attended the Koran school as well as the British colonial school. Through his family's escape to Ogaden, he grew up in a multi-lingual environment: Farah speaks Somali, Amharic, English, Italian and Arabic. He studied philosophy, literature and sociology at *Punjab University* in Punjab, India, and later theatre in London.

Farah's first novel, *From a Crooked Rib* (1970) earned him the reputation of a “male feminist”. In 1974 the publication of his novel *Tallow Waa Telee Ma* in a government magazine

was discontinued after being censored. He was awarded a grant from the UNESCO, left Somalia and worked for two years in a London theatre. After being sentenced to death in absentia by Siad Barre's regime in the late 1970s, Farah decided to remain abroad. He did not return to his home country for 22 years and lived in England, Italy, Sweden, Germany and the US. In 1996 Farah returned to Somalia for the first time.

Nuruddin Farah's literary purpose is "to keep my country alive by writing about it." He is the author of several books and dramas. In addition, he works as a political commentator. His novel trilogies, *Variations on the Theme of an African Dictatorship* (1980-1983) and *Blood in the Sun* (1986-1999), are the core of his work.

His novel, *Maps*, studies the pain of cultural uncertainty in postcolonial reality and Somalia's violent recent history. Recurrent themes in his writing are women's rights, the relationship between industrialized and developing countries and the pre-Islamic understanding of religion in Somalia. Farah's writing is inspired by the orator, a mixture of orally transmitted knowledge such as proverbs, allegories and legends, theatre and music. His new novel, *Links* was published in South Africa in June of 2003 and will be released in the USA in the coming year.

He was awarded the *Premio Cavour* in Italy, the *Kurt Tucholsky Prize* in Sweden, the prize for the best novel in Zimbabwe and in 1998 the *Neustadt International Prize for Literature*. In the same year the French edition of *Gifts* won the *St. Malo Literature Festival's prize*.

Nuruddin Farah's books have been translated into 17 languages. He is father of two sons and a daughter and lives in Cape Town.

## **Jiang Hao**

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Jiang Hao was born in 1954 in the Inner Mongolian Province, China. He left home when his parents divorced and lived a vagrant's life in the grassland. As a teenager he followed this way of life, digging medical materials in the Da xing an ling forests and working as a horse thief on the Ke er qin grassland. In 1971, he was forcibly sent to a Mongolian camp in Wu li ji mu ren community to accept spiritual reeducation there. There he learned the Mongolian language. This period of his life inspired Jiang Hao to write his first film script, *Hunting Field Miscellanies*.

At the age of 20 he began studying art at the *zha lu te Banner Normal School*. In 1986, Jiang Hao was admitted to the literature and arts graduate student class of *Inner Mongolian Normal University*. After graduation, Jiang Hao worked as a professional film screenwriter in the *Film Studio of Inner Mongolia*.

In the 1990s film studios in China made films out of a number of his works such as *Sloping*, *A Prison Van to the West* and *Snow Wolf and his Lover*. After studying in the advanced scenery class of *Beijing Film Academy*, Jiang Hao directed five screenplays he had written himself. Among them were works like *Guardian Warriors in Fierce Fire*, which won the *Hua Biao Award* founded by the Chinese government, and *Heroes without Tears*. In 1990 his reportage *Blood Sacrifice to Black River* sold 800,000 copies. A four-volume collection of his works was published in 1996.

In 2002 his film *Polar Rescue*, which is based on materials from the Tibet works, won the highest award of a Chinese screenplay, the *Xia Yan Screenplay Award*. In the same year, Jiang Hao's reportage *Revealing the Secrets of Poachers* received the *Chinese Writer Excellence Award*.

Jiang Hao is honorary chairman of the *Inner Mongolian Screenwriters' Association*. He lives in Beijing as a freelance writer, director and independent producer.

### **Adrian Nicole LeBlanc**

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Adrian Nicole LeBlanc was born in 1964 and grew up in the working-class town of Leominster, Massachusetts. Her father was a union organizer, and her mother worked as fiscal coordinator at a substance abuse treatment center. Her parents encouraged her to obtain a college education.

After studying in the United States and Great Britain, she received a Bachelor of Arts from *Smith College*, a Master's in Philosophy and Modern Literature from *Oxford*, and a Master of Law Studies from *Yale University*. In the 1990s she worked as an editor for *Seventeen Magazine* and began working as guest lecturer for non-fiction prose at several universities, including *Yale*, *Boston University* and *Columbia*. Adrian Nicole LeBlanc's debut, *Random Family: Love, Drugs, Trouble, and Coming of Age in the Bronx* was published in 2002. The book chronicles the struggles of an impoverished extended family in New York. Adrian Nicole LeBlanc's research into these realities was extensive and took her more than ten years. She was present at prison visits, welfare appointments, and parent-teacher conferences. She absolved a Master's program in law at *Yale* in order to understand her subject's trials. After completing the book she is now considering a follow-up project on some of the children in the book.

LeBlanc's text *Falling* won second place in the *John Bartlow Martin Award for Public Interest Journalism*, was the *Esquire Magazine* nominee for the *National Magazine Award*, finalist for the 1995 *Livingston Award* and 1995 *Casey Medals for Meritorious Journalism*. She has been a *Knight Foundation Fellow* at *Yale Law School* and a Fellow at *Radcliffe's Bunting Institute*. Previously published stories and features include *Gang Girl: When Manny's Locked-Up* (August, 1994), which was nominated for the *George Polk Journalism Award*, *When the Man of the House is in the Big House* (Cover, January, 2003), *Landing From the Sky* (*The New Yorker*, April 23, 2000), which was included in the collection *The New Gilded Age* (*Random House*, 2000). The *Centre on Crime, Communities, and Culture of the Open Society Institute* awarded her a 2001 *Media Fellowship*.

Adrian Nicole LeBlanc is a frequent contributor to the *New York Times Magazine* and other journals and is currently visiting scholar at the *New York University School of Journalism*. She has been a *New Yorker* since 1989 and now lives in Manhattan.

### **Anna Politkovskaia**

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Anna Politkovskaia was born in 1958. After studying at the *Moscow State University*, she received a diploma in journalism. Anna Politkovskaia has worked for various newspapers and collaborated with TV and radio stations.

While working for *Obshchaya Gayeta*, she visited Chechnya for the first time in 1998 to conduct an interview with President Maskhadov. Already working for the *Novaya Gazeta*, the independent democratic newspaper, she concentrated on the second Chechnyan war and has visited Chechnya, Dagestan and Ingushetia over fifty times.

Her works include *Russia Under Putin* and *A Dirty War: A Russian Reporter in Chechnya* (2001), a compilation of dispatches written between 1999 and 2000. *A Small Corner of Hell: Dispatches from Chechnya* was published in 2003.

In February 2001 Anna Politkovskaia was arrested while in southern Chechnya. She was formally accused of violating the strict laws controlling media coverage of the conflict and was ordered out of the enclave. In October 2001, after receiving death threats related to her reporting in Chechnya, Anna Politkovskaia relocated to Vienna for a time. Supported by the *Vienna Institute for Human Sciences*, she was able to write her new book. During the hostage drama at the *Nordost Theatre* in 2002, Anna Politkovskaia agreed to the hostage-takers' request to assist during negotiations.

Anna Politkovskaia was decorated with the *Participant in Battles Medal* for her work in the field. In addition to other awards, Anna Politkovskaia received the *2000 Golden Pen Award* from the *Russian Union of Journalists*, the *Freedom of Expression Award* of the *Index on Censorship*, the *IWMF Courage in Journalism Award*, and the *OSCE Prize for Journalism and Democracy*.

Anna Politkovskaia is currently writing her fourth non-fiction book entitled *Putin's Russia*. She writes for the Muscovite *Novaya Gazeta* and holds lectures in Great Britain, France, Holland, Germany and other Western European countries.

Anna Politkovskaia lives with her family in Moscow.

## **Linda Polman**

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Linda Polman was born in 1960. Since her father worked for an airline, she had the opportunity early in life to travel to countries such as Israel, Somalia and Haiti. Linda Polman studied journalism at the *Faculty of Mass Communication* of the *Utrecht School of Journalism*. Over fifteen years of work are filled with documentaries for public radio. Features for almost all Dutch and Belgian national newspapers and magazines, as well as for *Granta* were the result of extensive travels through Australia, Europe and places "off the beaten track" like Kisangani, Nepal and Haiti.

She made her debut in 1991 with *De varende stad*. Her second book, *Bot pippel*, was published in the Netherlands two years later. Linda Polman has reported from UN Headquarters in New York, and for three years she traveled with UN troops on peacekeeping missions in Somalia, Haiti and Rwanda. Her experiences during the UN mission in Rwanda in 1995 decisively changed her way of thinking. She became an eyewitness to the slaughter of an es-

estimated four thousand refugees in the refugee camp at Kibeho. Linda Polman gives her account of the experience in her latest book, *We Did Nothing: Why the truth doesn't always come out when the UN goes in* (first Dutch publication 1997, revised edition 2003). It is has recently been translated into Italian and will also be published in Japanese next year.

Linda Polman lives in Freetown, capital city of Sierra Leone, where she works as an independent freelance journalist. She is investigating UN camps and the work of international aid agencies.

## **Mark Tully**

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Mark Tully was born in Calcutta in 1935. Son of a wealthy accountant, he was brought up by a strict European nanny. In 1946, a year before Indian independence, the family moved to Great Britain.

After military service and after receiving an M.A. in History and Theology from *Cambridge University*, Mark Tully considered becoming a priest in the Church of England. After just two terms at *Lincoln Theological College*, he decided to abandon these studies.

Joining the *BBC* in 1964, he was soon offered a position as India Correspondent in Delhi. He has mapped the great events on the sub-continent, including Bangladesh's independence war and separation, the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, the Indian army attack on the Golden Temple of Amritsar and the assassinations of both Indira and Rajiv Gandhi. For 25 years, Mark Tully had been the familiar face and voice of the *BBC World Service*.

Among his books are *Amritsar: Mrs. Gandhi's Last Battle* (1986), *India: Forty Years of Independence* (1988), *No Full Stops in India* (1991), *The Defeat of a Congressman: And other Parables of Modern India* (1992), *The Heart of India* (1997), *Jesus: Prophet, Messiah, Rebel* (1997) und *India in Slow Motion* (2002).

Mark Tully received in 1985 the *Dimbleby Award* of the *British Academy of Film and Television* and an OBE from the British Empire. He received *Honorary Doctorates* from the *University of Strathclyde* and the *Richmond American International University* of London. Tully is an *Honorary Fellow* of *Trinity Hall*, Cambridge. The Government of India awarded him the title *Padma Shri*.

Mark Tully works as a freelance broadcaster and writer for *BBC radio*. He lives in India and England.

## **Gillian Wright**

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Gillian Wright was born in the UK in 1957. After studying at the *School of Oriental and African Studies of London University*, she received a first class degree in South Asian Studies.

Gillian Wright visited India for the first time in 1977 and has since spent more than twenty years in this country, working for radio and television and especially for the *BBC World Service* in London. She has worked as a researcher on several programs, including *Faces of India*, a series celebrating fifty years of Indian independence, and a documentary on the railway line from Karachi to the Khyber, *Great Railway Journeys of the World*. Her recent radio productions include *Hour*, a documentary on the *Mahakumbh Mela* of 2001, and a documentary on the *Grand Trunk Road* from Kolkata to Delhi.

Gillian Wright has written a number of books on Indian wildlife, history and politics, including *Birds of India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka* (1993), *The Odyssey Illustrated Guide to Sri Lanka* (1993) and *Sri Lanka: Our World in Color* (1998). To collect the necessary material for *An Introduction to the Hill Stations of India* (1991), the very first guide to the hill stations, she traveled the mountain ranges of the subcontinent. She co-authored *India in Slow Motion* (2002) with Mark Tully and has collaborated with him on a number of books, among them *Mrs. Gandhi's Last Battle* (1985), *No Full Stops in India* (1991) and *Heart of India* (1996).

Formerly a columnist with the *Kolkata Telegraph* and *The Tribune*, she regularly writes reviews for *India Today* and contributes to *Outlook*, *The Hindu*, *The Telegraph* and *Book Review*.

Gillian Wright speaks Hindi and Urdu. She has translated numerous Urdu books and several modern classic Hindi novels into English. Gillian Wright lives in New Delhi.

Long List 2003

**Texts and books nominated by the jury**

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The jurors of 2003 were requested to nominate two works apiece that they considered to be a significant literary reportage from their linguistic and cultural region. All works nominated by the jury members were translated into English. Every member of the jury laid forth the grounds for his/her nomination in a detailed recommendation.

All recommendations and all nominated texts were provided to the jury, in order to facilitate the judging process.

The Longlist of works nominated for the Lettre Ulysses Award for the Art of Reportage (ordered alphabetically with specification of the original language/ first language of publication)

- **Kemal Anadol**, *Büyük Ayırlı* [The great separation], Turkish
- **Ian Buruma**, *Bad Elements*, English
- **Christian Dedet**, *Au Royaume d'Abomey*, French
- **Fan Wen**, *The Mist on The Ancient Path*, Chinese
- **Nuruddin Farah**, *Yesterday, Tomorrow: Voices from the Somali Diaspora*, English
- **Ruben Gonzalez Gallego**: *Beloïé na tchiornem* (White on Black), Russian
- **Sergio González Rodríguez**, *Huesos en el desierto* [Bones in the Desert], Spanish
- **Jiang Hao**, *Revealing the Secrets of Poachers*, Chinese
- **Jean Hatzfeld**, *Dans le Nu de la Vie*, French
- **Sae-Hwa Hong**, *The Seine Divides Left and Right, The Hang Gang Separates North and South*, Korean
- **Christina Lamb**, *The Sewing Circles of Herat. A Personal Voyage Through Afghanistan*, English
- **Adrian Nicole LeBlanc**, *Random Family: Love, Drugs, Trouble, and Coming of Age in the Bronx*, English
- **John Pilger**, *The New Rulers of the World*, English
- **Sergio Pitol**, *El Viaje*, Spanish
- **Anna Politkovskaja**, *Tschetschenien. Die Wahrheit über den Krieg* [Chechnya. The Truth about the War], Russian
- **Anna Politkovskaja**, *Tchéchénie: le déshonneur russe*, French
- **Linda Polman**, *We Did Nothing: Why the Truth Doesn't Always Come Out When the UN Goes in*, Dutch
- **Ramesh Chandra Shah**, *Along the Dark Shores*, Hindi
- **Mark Tully and Gillian Wright**, *India in Slow Motion*, English
- **Bernd Wagner**, *Wie ich nach Chihuahua kam. Eine amerikanische Reise* [How I got to Chihuahua. An American Journey], German

Members of the Jury

**Biographical Information and Publications**

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***Svetlana Alexievitch, Belarus***

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*“Chernobyl is a leap into a completely new reality. What happens there not only exceeds our knowledge but our imagination as well ... The whole time I asked myself the question: Whom are we to learn from? In any case, science is not helping us along and culture is powerless. Do we perhaps have to learn from the animals? Or from simple people who live close to nature? Those for me are the major questions.”*

Journalist, writer, screenplay writer, theater and radio writer. Svetlana Alexievitch was born in 1948 in the Ukrainian village of Ivano-Frankovsk. Her Belarusian father was a school director, and her Ukrainian mother was a teacher. As a child, Alexievitch was already confronted with her family’s painful memories: Eleven families members were victims of the war and the Stalin period.

Like her father, Alexievitch studied journalism at the *Belarusian State University* in Minsk, which is where, after finishing her studies, she worked as an editor until she was forcibly transferred to the Polish border for a year.

Her career began with the publication of two books on the Second World War, which were controversial in her native country: *War’s unwomanly face* (Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1988) was published in 1985 after a two year fight against censorship and was followed by a volume of childhood memories about the war, *Die letzten Zeugen (Last Witnesses)*. She was attacked by the Communist and military press when with her third book *Zinky Boys* (W.W. Norton & Company, New York, 1992; Chatto & Windue, London, 1992) she touched on the mythos of the glorious Soviet army. It was a book about the Russian invasion of Afghanistan, which questioned Soviet politics and military leadership, thereby causing a scandal. Thereafter, her study *Im Banne des Todes, Geschichten russischer Selbstmorde (Under the Spell of Death, Stories of Russian Suicides)* was published; it investigates the problems of suicidal disturbances in a traumatized post-Soviet society, which has not yet come to terms with the loss of the past.

Her book *Voices from Chernobyl. Chronicle of the Future* (Aurum Press, London, 1999), which is based on talks with hundreds of witnesses and victims of the 1986 nuclear catastrophe, displays both shocking evidence and profound analysis. She describes how the people in the affected region try to resume their lives after the accident at Chernobyl. But for Alexievitch, Chernobyl is more than just an accident. It is a sign of how with the radioactive catastrophe an era of new dangers has dawned for human life, which can only be measured by “astronomic time.” Chernobyl was a technical accident, an accident on the part of human understanding and even more: a crisis in our view of the world.

Alexievitch has also been involved in 21 documentary films and has written various theater pieces. Her books have been published in 19 countries; some have also been filmed, set to music, or dramatized. In 2002, she took part in the exhibition *Die Kriegerinnen und der Tod: Das Schicksal der Frauen in der Roten Armee (Female Soldiers and Death: The Fate of Women in the Red Army)*, which could be seen in the *Deutsch-Russisches Museum Karlshorst* near Berlin. She also took part in Paul Virilio’s exhibition “Ce qui arrive” in the Parisian *Fondation Cartier*.

Her texts have received various international prizes including the *Kurt Tucholsky Prize* of the Swedish PEN 1996, the *Triumph Prize for Russian Art and Literature* 1997, the *Leipzig Book Award for European Understanding* 1998, the *Prix Témoin du Monde* from Radio France *Internationale* 1999, the *Erich Maria Remarque Peace Prize* 2001.

Svetlana Alexievitch has lived in France since October 2002, since having received a scholarship from the *International Parliament of Writers*.

### **Hans Christoph Buch, Germany**

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Writer, literary critic, and journalist. Hans Christoph Buch was born in 1944 in Wetzlar and grew up between Wiesbaden, Bonn, and Marseille. His grandfather was a diplomat in Haiti, which is how he came to develop a special interest in this country. From 1964 to 1972, he studied German and Slavonic studies at the Free University, Berlin and at the Technical University, Berlin.

He lived for some time in West Africa, Latin America, and Haiti and was a visiting professor at universities in Germany, the United States, Hong Kong, Buenos Aires, and Cuba. He speaks fluent Russian, Spanish, English, and French. Hans Christoph Buch is a member of the PEN.

Hans Christoph Buch first drew attention to himself with his collection of stories *Unerhörte Begebenheiten* at a conference held by *Gruppe 47*. Additional important literary stages were the political satires from the years 1971–75, which, under the title *Aus der neuen Welt*, told stories and news from America. At the end of the seventies, he wrote a journal about how Wendland protested against the atomic waste facility in Gorleben (*Bericht aus dem Inneren der Unruhe. Gorlebener Tagebuch*, 1979). His novel *Die Hochzeit von Port-au-Prince* was published in 1984 and received a lot of attention. In the same year, he was named *Officier de l'Ordre de l'Art et des Lettres* by the French minister of education and the arts. In 1991, his lecture on poetics *Die Nähe und die Ferne. Bausteine zu einer Poetik des kolonialen Blicks* was published at Frankfurt University. In the mid-nineties, Buch traveled to Rwanda and Burundi to report on the war between the Hutus and Tutsis. He has traveled in various conflict areas including Bosnia, Chechnya, Haiti, Algeria, Zaire, Cambodia, East Timor, Pakistan, and Liberia. He regularly works as a correspondent for *Die Zeit* and the *Spiegel*. Numerous reportage collections have been published including *Tropische Früchte. Afro-amerikanische Impressionen, Die neue Weltunordnung. Bosnien, Burundi, Haiti, Kuba, Liberia, Ruanda, Tschetschenien, and Blut im Schuh. Schlächter und Voyeure an den Fronten des Weltbürgerkrieges*. His novel *Kain und Abel in Afrika* thematizes the massacre in Rwanda. His most recent publication was *Wie Karl May Adolf Hitler traf und andere wahre Geschichten*.

Hans Christoph Buch lives in Berlin.

## ***Jorge Edwards, Chile***

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Writer, journalist, and diplomat. Jorge Edwards was born into a well-known, upper-class family in 1931 in Santiago de Chile. He attended an old Jesuit school, where he discovered reading and secretly started to write. While studying law he tried to connect his growing passion for literary writing with his studies. After he had become a lawyer, he embarked on a diplomatic career at the foreign ministry. During this time, he had to do his reading and writing at night; a first volume with stories – *El Patio* – came into being and was published in 1952.

From 1957 Edwards above all dedicated himself to his diplomatic career, but he did not give up writing; more stories ensued and in 1965 his first novel *El Peso de la noche (The Weight of the Night)* was published. He worked at the Chilean embassy in Lima until 1971. In the same year, Salvador Allende's new government sent Edwards to Cuba as the first ambassador of his country; the reason was to break the diplomatic blockade against Cuba and to reactivate relations with Havana. His arrival coincided with that critical time during the Cuban Revolution when Castro turned against the intellectuals whom he had previously supported. In his book *Persona non grata* (1973) Edwards writes about these experiences with Fidel Castro, who had called him a "middle-class intellectual" and accused him of acting against the Cuban Revolution. Edwards was then deported as a "persona non grata."

The military coup in 1973 in Chile meant the end of his diplomatic career. Edwards then went to Paris with the Chilean ambassador to France, Pablo Neruda, and spent five years in exile between France and Spain. He now exclusively dedicated himself to literature and journalism. In 1978 Edwards returned to Chile. In 1979 he was appointed member of the *Academia Chilena de la Lengua*. In 1981 Edwards published *El museo de Cera (The Wax Museum)*, in 1985 *La mujer imaginaria (The Imaginary Woman)*, in 1988 *El anfitrión (The Host)*, and in 1996 *El origen del Mundo (Origin of the World)*. His last novel was published in 2000: *El sueño de la historia*.

Jorge Edwards is among Chile's most important authors. With his novels, volumes of stories, and essays, he has won important prizes including the *III Premio de Comillas de biografía, autobiografía y memorias* (1990) for *Adiós Poeta*, a book about his memories of Pablo Neruda. In 1994 he was awarded the *Premio Nacional de Literatura de Chile* for his complete works and in 1999 after authors like Octavio Paz, Jorge Luis Borges, Carlos Fuentes, and Mario Vargas Llosa, the *Premio Cervantes*. The *Cervantes* literature prize includes prize money of, in U.S. dollars, \$ 96,000 and is considered the "Nobel prize of the Ibero-American region." The jury in Madrid explained that with his complete works Edwards contributed to the literary riches of the Spanish-speaking world; the jury emphasized that his work was an outstanding example of a literature, whose most important concern was the "fight for freedom".

Jorge Edwards' books have been translated into many languages. He lives in Santiago de Chile.

## **Philip Gourevitch, USA**

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*“In reporting, just like fiction writing or any other kind of writing, you're selecting the material out of a vast universe, and you talk to a lot of people. In order to write a piece in which, say, there are five or six main characters, you quite often go through a hundred people that you talk to in one way or another who give you tidbits. Then suddenly somebody comes along who says things and then takes them further. You know that you're hearing something new. It takes time. (...) I think André Gide said it perfectly well: expressing the general in the particular, the particular in the general, that is the drama of our lives, and he was speaking as a writer. It's not hyperconscious. The one has to contain the other and vice versa.”*

Journalist and reporter. Philip Gourevitch was born in 1961 in Philadelphia / USA. He studied at Cornell University and at Columbia University. From 1991–1992 he was the director of the New York office of the newspaper *Forward*, and from 1992–1993 he was the culture editor. Since 1997 he has been a permanent staff writer for the *New Yorker*, for whom he wrote reportages and essays from Africa, Asia, Europe, and the United States about, for instance, the boat people in Vietnam, the civil war in the Congo, and the situation in North Korea.

His first book *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families* (1998) is about the background to the genocide in Rwanda and has been translated into numerous languages. In the U.S. it has received many awards: the *National Book Critics Circle Award*, *Los Angeles Times Book Award*, *George K. Polk Award for Foreign Reporting*, *PEN / Martha Algrand Award for First Nonfiction*, *New York Public Library's Helen Bernstein Award*, as well as the *Overseas Press Club Book Award*, and England's *Guardian First Book Award*. In 1999, in an investigation that received a lot of attention, he exposed the fraudulent story of the Holocaust swindler Bruno Doessekker alias Binjamin Wilkomirski under the title *The Memory Thief*. His second book *A Cold Case* that was published in 2001 is about a crime investigation that takes places almost three decades after a double murder in New York City has been committed. A film version of this book is in the making. In the *New Yorker* in March 2003, he published a lengthy portrait of Kofi Annan and the United Nations.

In 1996, 1998, and 2001, Gourevitch's texts for the *New Yorker* were among the finalists at the *National Magazine Awards*. His contributions have been published in numerous international newspapers including *Granta*, *Harper's*, *The New York Review of Books*, *Lettre International* (Germany), *Politiken* (Denmark), *Svedectvi* (the Czech Republic), *Die Woche* (Germany), *Corriera della Serra* (Italy), and *Le Monde* (France). Gourevitch's short stories have been published in publications such as *Story*, *Southwest Review*, *The Quarterly*, *The Moth*, and *Zoetrope*.

In talks, he above all addresses the relationship between Realpolitik, morality, and human rights.

Gourevitch has received numerous scholarships to carry out his work – for instance, in 1992 from Arts International, New York, and in 1994 from Atelierhaus Worpsswede, and for the years 1996–1997 from the United States Institute for Peace.

He is active in various institutions and committees. Since 1996, he has been both chairman of the International Committee of PEN American Center as well as Senior Fellow at the World Policy Institute. Since 2001, he has also been a Fellow at the New York Institute for the Humanities and since 2003 a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. Since the fall of 2002 he has taught literary journalism at Baruch College.

Philip Gourevitch lives in New York City.

**Nedim Gürsel, Turkey / France**

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Writer and essayist. Nedim Gürsel was born in 1951 in Gaziantep, Turkey. Already as a young man, he published novellas and essays in various Turkish literary magazines. In 1971, Gürsel went to Paris to study Comparative Literature at the Sorbonne. In 1979, he received his doctorate with a dissertation on Louis Aragon and Nazim Hikmet. His literary activity includes numerous essays, travel stories, short stories, novels, as well as scholarly publications.

Two of his early books were censored under military rule. His first volume of stories *A Summer without End* was published in 1975 and received Turkey's highest literature prize, the "Prize of the Turkish Language Academy" in 1976. The book was then translated into many languages. In 1981, after the military coup d'état, the book was tried in front of a military tribunal for having slandered the Turkish army. In 1983, his novel *The First Woman* was charged with having offended the public moral and was also censored by the military for a number of years. The charges against Gürsel were later dropped, but for the years of the trial, both books were withdrawn from the Turkish public. In 1986, he received the *Ipekçi Prize* for *The First Woman* on occasion of an event promoting Turkish-Greek cultural understanding. In the same year he received the *Prix de la Liberté* of the French PEN club.

His novel *The Conqueror* describes the 1453 conquest of Constantinople from the perspective of the conqueror and the conquered and takes a critical look at the 1980 military coup d'état. In Germany, many copies of the book were sold. It was also very successful in France, Spain, and Italy and won international recognition for the author. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* characterizes this novel as one of the most outstanding postmodern Turkish novels. The writer Yasar Kemal sees Gürsel as one of the few contemporary writers, who is able to have an innovative effect on Turkish literature.

Nedim Gürsel's books have been translated in more than ten languages. He is a founding member of the *International Parliament of Writers*. Today he teaches contemporary Turkish literature at the Sorbonne in Paris, works as an editor, and is a principal employee at the *Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique* (CNRS).

He just published his literary travel reportage about the traces of Islam in Andalusian Spain, *La Mort au Soleil*. He is currently working on a book about the places of his childhood.

Nedim Gürsel lives in Paris and frequently visits Turkey.

### ***Isabel Hilton, Great Britain***

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Writer, journalist, reporter, commentator, broadcaster. Isabel Hilton was born in Aberdeen, Scotland. She is an expert in Chinese affairs, having gained an M.A. in Chinese at Edinburgh University. She has also received scholarships from the Peking Languages Institute and Fudan University Shanghai. Isabel Hilton's professional career began in 1976 when she joined Scottish television as a reporter. A year later she moved into print journalism as a feature writer for the *Daily Express*. Then in 1977 joined the *Sunday Times* as a feature writer. Subsequent posts included: News Reporter; Insight Reporter; Special Correspondent, China; Latin America Editor; Assistant Foreign Editor. She covered a wide range of home and foreign affairs. Her foreign assignments were in the United States, France, Spain, the Middle East, Japan, China, Hong Kong, and Africa. She covered the Falklands War from Buenos Aires, and subsequently reported extensively from Central and South America. In 1986 Isabel Hilton joined *The Independent* newspaper, pre-launch, as Latin America Editor. She set up and ran the network of correspondents and stringers in Latin America and the Caribbean, she also reported extensively from those regions. Subsequent posts included

European Affairs Editor, from 1989, covering the end of the Cold War, and the subsequent elections in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as overseeing the coverage of Western Europe, including the European Community in the run up to 1992. From 1991, Isabel Hilton was made Chief Feature writer, with a wide brief involving writing leaders, book reviews, profiles, magazine articles, reviews, and feature articles for the daily and Sunday newspapers. She left the *Independent* in 1995 to write a book on China and Tibet.

Isabel Hilton presented Radio 4's *The World Tonight* (1995–1998) and joined Radio 3's *Night Waves* as one of its presenters in 1999. Documentaries include: *Petra and the General*, an investigation of the life and death of Petra Kelly, (BBC 1994); *Kingdom of the Lost Boy*, an account of the search for the 11th Panchen Lama (BBC 1996); *City on the Edge*, a documentary about economic reforms in China (1998); *Condemned to Live*, a report on the aftereffects of mass rape and genocide in Rwanda (1999), and *The Caravan of Death*, on the case against Pinochet. She also worked on the far right in Germany and biopiracy in Ecuador. She presented a major Radio Four series on access to pharmaceuticals in the Third World. She has interviewed an extensive list of political, cultural, and religious personalities.

Isabel Hilton was a co-author on *The Falklands War*, 1982; *The Fourth Reich: Klaus Barbie and the Neo-Fascist Connection*, 1984; *Betrayed, Abuses of the Rights of the Child* (contributor), 1986. Her books include *The Search for the Panchen Lama* for Viking Penguin, 1999. She contributed to *The Best of Granta Travel*, 1990 and *The Best American Travel Writing*, 1999.

Since 1997 Isabel has also been a columnist for *The Guardian* and is a regular contributor to various publications, including the *New Yorker*, *New Statesman*, *Time*, *New York Times Magazine*, *Literary Review*, *Financial Times*, *The Independent*, *The Observer*, *The Economist* and *Lettre International*.

She has lectured extensively on foreign affairs, most recently in Edinburgh (Lothian lecture series) on the European Union's relations with the People's Republic of China, and at the School of Oriental and African Studies on economic reform in China. She is a member of the Royal Institute of International Affairs and has served on the editorial board of its main publication, *International Affairs*. She has also served on the advisory committee of the Federal Trust and of the European Movement. She is a member of the British Association of China Scholars and is currently on the advisory board of the Latin America Bureau.

She is currently working on a book of collected reportage writing from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Tibet, India, and the Middle East.

Isabel Hilton speaks fluent Chinese, Spanish, French, and German. She is married, has a son and daughter and lives in London.

### ***Natsuki Ikezawa, Japan***

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Novelist, poet, essayist, translator. Natsuki Ikezawa was born in 1945 in Hokkaido in the northern part of Japan. He is the son of the writer Fukunaga Takehiko. He is said to love islands and himself lives on one in the very south of the Japanese archipelago. He also loves to travel and has been to 40 countries.

After having studied physics at Saitama University for a few years, he went to Greece in 1975 and resided there for three years. After returning, Ikezawa first made himself felt as a lyric poet and translator (he has translated, among others, the American authors Kurt Vonnegut and Jack Kerouac). He translated modern Greek poetry into Japanese and also did the subtitles for the films of the Greek director Theodoros Angelopoulos. In 1984, he published his first novel, a modern adaptation of Robinson Crusoe. In 1987, Ikezawa published his highly praised collection of longer short stories *Still Lives*, which received the renowned *Akutagawa Prize*. He has published many stories and essays including *Ending with Happiness*, which received the *Yomiuri Prize*.

In 1995, the novel *Downfall of Macias Guili* was published, a political novel about the use and abuse of power, about the collision between the Western modern age and the archaic world of the South Pacific, a novel about spirituality, death, sexuality, and the archaic dimension of life, for which Ikezawa received the *Tanizaki-Junichiro Prize*. In many ways his works thematize the question of the cultural identity of people in their current political and societal context as well as in their relationship to nature and the cosmos. His novel *A Burden of Flowers* takes place in Bali and is an exciting story involving drug schemes, court dramas, and political conflicts.

His works have been translated into English, French, Russian, Turkish, and German and have received many praise-filled reviews.

In the fall of 2002, Ikezawa went to Iraq accompanied by the photographer [Seiichi Motohashi](#) to document what the country looked like before the approaching war. This resulted in the literary reportage *On a Small Bridge in Iraq*, which is available for perusal on the Internet. On his homepage [www.cafeimpala.com](http://www.cafeimpala.com), Ikezawa publishes a series of weekly columns, where in the form of journal-like entries he takes a stand on current events in the world.

Ikezawa is one of Japan's most important contemporary writers. Since 1995, he has been a member of the jury that awards the *Akutagawa Prize*.

Ikezawa lives on the island of Okinawa in Southern Japan.

### ***Pedro Rosa Mendes, Portugal***

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Writer and freelance journalist. Pedro Rosa Mendes was born in Cernache do Bonjardim in Portugal in 1968. After his jurisprudence studies in Coimbra, he worked as a journalist, mainly for the daily *Público* – the Portuguese partner in the “WorldMedia” syndicate of newspapers. He reported from conflicts in Zaire, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Western Sahara, Zimbabwe, Angola – he was *Público* correspondent in Luanda in 1997 –, Afghanistan and Yugoslavia. He was twice awarded the *Feature of the Year Prize* in Portugal and in 2000 he got the Lisbon Press Club's *Bordalo*, the most prestigious award for Portuguese journalists.

In 1996 he wrote accompanying texts for the photographs of Alfredo Cunha, the publication *O Melhor Café* was the result. In 1999, Pedro Rosa Mendes published *Baía dos Tigres* (Publicações Dom Quixote), voted as the best Portuguese novel by the Portuguese Pen Club. Ryszard Kapuscinsky praised the book as „a fascinating, lively and rich work of literature”.

The novel was so far translated in German, French, Italian and Spanish. In English the book is due to be released in May 2003 in the United States and Canada (*Bay of Tigers*, Harcourt&Brace, New York), United Kingdom (Granta Books, London), Ireland, Southern Africa, Australia and New Zealand and also, later the same year, in Denmark and the Netherlands. The book describes the three and a half month journey which the author made in 1997 from Angola to Mozambique. Pedro Rosa Mendes traveled over 10,000 km of the continent between the two former Portuguese colonies. The civil wars after independence from the former colonial power left, particularly in Angola, areas where there were more mines than people. Not only the landscape but also the political relationships were a testimony to the ravages of war.

The French translation of *Baía dos Tigres* was short listed in June 2001 for the *Étonnant Voyageurs Book of the Year Award* (Saint Malo). A group of German, Swiss and Austrian critics voted the book for the monthly “bestenlist” in the months after it was released. In November 2002, Pedro Rosa Mendes published *Ilhas de Fogo* (ACEP, Lisbon), a reportage book with co-author French illustrator Alain Corbel, about civil society organizations in Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissao, São Tomé e Príncipe and Cape-Verde. Pedro Rosa Mendes is also the author of the novel, *Atlântico* (Temas e Debates, Lisbon, 2003), with co-author photographer João Francisco Vilhena.

Pedro Rosa Mendes works now as freelance journalist. He contributed with reportage and essays to different publications, including *Lettre International* (Berlin), *El Pais Semanal* (Madrid), *Terra Negra* (Brussels) and *Grand Street* (New York). In 2001, Pedro Rosa Mendes was invited to join the *Pro-Helvetia Foundation's* (Geneva) project *Über die Grenze. Au-delà des frontières. Frontiere a confronto. Borders and Beyond*, an international photography project and international exhibition commissioned by photographer Daniel Schwartz. In Fall 2000, Pedro Rosa Mendes was a *Stiftung Kulturfond* Fellow in *Künstlerhaus Schloss Wiepersdorf*, Germany. He is currently a Fellow of the *DAAD* writers-in-residence program in Berlin and works on a reportage book about Western Africa.

Pedro Rosa Mendes lives with his family in Portugal.

### ***Nirmal Verma, India***

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*“Development’ is not something for the lowest classes. It is and represents those who are all the way on the top. I traveled so as to meet the lowest classes. That was the dream of my youth. It became a trip from the light to darkness.”*

Nirmal Verma was born on 3rd April 1929 in the Himalayan district of Simla, India, where his father worked as an officer in the defence department of the British Indian government. His mother, though a housewife, was quite well-read for her times. He was the fifth child among his eight siblings.

Nirmal Verma wrote his first short story for a students' magazine in the early 1950's, barely realising that writing was going to be a lifelong vocation for him. A passionate activist and idealist since his student days, he used to go to Gandhi's morning prayer meetings in 1947-48 even though he was a card holding member of the Communist Party of India. For a period, he was involved with the relief work for refugees who had come to India in hordes as a result of Partition. This early preoccupation with the inner, private world of a human being vis-à-vis his responsibilities as a social being has continued till this day as is evident from the body of work he has produced.

After finishing M.A. in History from Delhi University's prestigious St. Stephen's College, Nirmal Verma taught for a short time besides writing for various literary magazines. In 1959, with the publication of *Parinde*, his first book of stories, he was acclaimed by renowned critics as the first signature of the New Story movement of Hindi literature. *The Birds* remains a milestone to this day. Soon after, Verma was invited by the Oriental Institute, Prague, Czechoslovakia, to initiate a programme of translation of modern Czech writers into Hindi. It was under his directorship that the works of Karel Capek, Jiri Fried, Joseph Skoversky, Milan Kundera, Bohumil Hrabal, etc. were first introduced in translations to the Hindi readership. In 1956 Verma resigned from the primary membership of the Communist Party as a protest against Soviet Union's invasion of Hungary. In 1968, he returned to India. He was a severe critic of Mrs. Indira Gandhi during the Emergency rule, 1975-77, and has given many an uneasy moments to the governments of India and China by advocating the cause of Free Tibet and an autonomous rule under His Holiness, the Dalai Lama. Today, he is considered a major moral voice among Indian intelligentsia who has consistently upheld the right of individual freedom, irrespective of nationality and religion.

During his European years, from 1959 to 1970, Verma travelled extensively around Europe, both in Eastern and Western parts, to write about the socio-cultural situation prevailing in these countries. His dispatches appeared regularly on the editorial page of *The Times of India* newspaper.

After his return to India in 1970, he was appointed a fellow of the *Indian Institute of Advanced Study* in Simla to work on the theme of "Mythic Consciousness in Literature". His role as a voice of resistance during the Emergency rule led to the writing of many essays on a civilisation in crisis. His writings over the years, such as the Challenges of Arts (*Kala Ka Jokhim*), *Word And Memory (Shabd Aur Smriti)* and *Concept of Truth in Art*, bear a testimony to his concerns as an Intellectual of modern India.

From 1980-83 Verma served as chairman of Nirala creative writing chair in Bharat Bhavan, Bhopal. In 1986, his book of short stories *Kavve Aur Kala Pani* was given the highest literary award by the *Sahitya Akademy, Indian Academy of Letters*. In 1988-90 he was director of *Yashpal Creative Writing Chair* in Simla.

Nirmal Verma has kept returning to Europe either on official visits or private ones. In 1988, he delivered the *Ajney Memorial Lecture at Heidelberg University*.

Verma has published five novels, eight collections of short stories and nine books of essays and travelogues. His books have been translated into several European languages such as English, Russian, German, Icelandic, Polish, Italian and French.

On the occasion of the publication of his book *The World Elsewhere*, by the Readers International in London in 1988, the *BBC Channel Four* telecast a film on his life and work. A film based on his short story, *Maya Darpan*, was adjudged the best Hindi "new wave" movie in 1973. In the recent years, a private channel made a film "Writer at Work" on him besides another film by the External Affairs Ministry of India.

In 1996, Nirmal Verma was nominated for the well known *Neustad Award of University of Oklahoma*, instituted by the magazine *The World Literature*. Verma has received *Sadhana Samma* for his literary contributions and was awarded the prestigious *Jnanpith's Murtidevi Award* for his book of essays *Bharat Aur Europe: pratishruti ke kshetra*. He received the highest literary award of India, *Bharatiya Jnanpith Award*, in 2000. In 2002, the President of India awarded him the third highest civilian award, *Padma Bhushan*. At present, he is Chancellor, *Mahatma Gandhi International Hindi University*, Vardha.

### ***Abdourahman A. Waberi, Djibouti and France***

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Novelist, journalist, essayist, poet. Abdourahman A. Waberi was born in 1965 in Djibouti. He spent his childhood and adolescence in Northeast Africa. He was 12 years old when Djibouti declared its independence in 1977. He was lastingly influenced by this upheaval and saw himself as a “contemporary” of his country, to which he wished to maintain a literary obligation. In 1985, he left Djibouti, which he called a “miniature republic” and went to Caen in France to study English language and literature. He wrote a Master’s thesis on the poetics of space and on politics in the fictional work of the Somalian writer Nuruddin Farah.

Waberi is the author of numerous novels, essays, articles, and travel reports. His articles, short stories, and reviews are published in many international newspapers, including *Le Monde diplomatique*, *Africultures*, *Le Monde*, *Libération*, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, *Jeune Afrique Economie*, *DU*, *Grand Street*, and *Lettre Internationale*. Waberi is a renowned authority on African literature and works as a consultant for the French publishing house *Le Serpent à Plumes* on the selection of African and Black Diaspora literatures.

Waberi’s first volume of stories *Le Pays sans ombre (Land without Shadows)* was published in 1994 and in the same year received the *Grand prix de la Nouvelle francophone* from the *Académie Royale de Langue et de Littérature Française de Belgique* and the *Prix Albert Bernard* of the *Académie des Sciences d’Outre-mer de Paris*. In 1996, another volume of stories followed *Cahier nomade (Nomad Notebook)*, which received the reputed prize *Grand Prix Littéraire de l’Afrique noire*. Waberi’s first novel *Balbala* was published in 1997. With this book and the volumes of stories that preceded it, he completed the Djibouti trilogy about his “native country.” For *Balbala*, Waberi received various prizes, including an author’s grant from UNESCO. In 2000, his first volume of poems *Les Nomades, mes frères, vont boire à la Grande Ourse* was published.

In 1998, the organizer of the festival *Fest’Africa* in Lille invited Abdourahman Waberi to come to Kigali in the context of the project *Rwanda: écrire par devoir de mémoire*. With 9 other writers as well as a film director and a sculptor, he attempted to artistically address the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. This resulted in the book *Moisson de Crânes: textes pour le Rwanda*, reflections about the Rwandan genocide. This mixture of essays, travelogues, and stories was published in Paris in 2000. In 2001, *Rift, routes, rails* was published, fiction-like variations on the twin themes of exile and nomadism. In 2003, his second novel *Transit* will be published, which he characterizes as a “universal chronicle on the subject of war and exile.” *Le Pays sans ombre (Land without Shadows)* and the project *Rwanda: écrire par devoir de mémoire* were adapted for the stage.

Waberi’s books have been translated into German, English, Italian, Spanish, and Serbian. He lives with his family in Caen, Normandy, where he works as an English teacher.

### ***Yang Xiaobin, Shanghai / China***

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Poet, writer, and literary critic. Yang Xiaobin was born in 1963 in Shanghai. He studied Chinese language and literature at *Fudan University* in Shanghai. In 1989, he went to the United States, where he studied Oriental languages and literatures at the *University of Colorado at Boulder* and East Asian languages and literatures at *Yale University*. Since 1996, he has taught Chinese literature at various American and Chinese universities. He is particularly interested in contemporary Chinese literature, film, cultural theory, and comparative cultural studies. Yang Xiaobin writes in both Chinese and English.

From 1994 to 1999 he was the Editor-at-Large of *Qingxiang (Tendency)* (Chinese journal of Chinese humanities and literature) in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and from 1995 to 1996 Editor-in-Chief of the most prestigious poetry journal in Taiwan, *Xiandaishi (Modern Poetry Quarterly)*. Since 1997, he has been a manuscript reviewer for the journal *Positions: An East Asian Cultural Critique* (winner of *Best New Journal*) and since 2000 also for *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture*. In 1994, his first volume of poetry *Chuanyue yangguang didai (Across the Sunlight Zone)* received the *Award for the First Collection of Poems* of the *Modern Poetry Society*. His most important publications include *Fouding de meixue: Falankefu xuepai de wenxue lilun yu wenhua piping [Negative Aesthetics: Literary Theory and Cultural Criticism of the Frankfurt School]*, (Shanghai: Sanlian shudian, 1995 and 1999), *Lishi yu xiuci: Dangdai Zhongguo wenxue lun [History and Rhetoric: On Contemporary Chinese Literature]*, (Lanzhou: Dunhuang wenyi chubanshe, 1999), and *The Chinese Postmodern: Trauma and Irony in Chinese Avant-Garde Fiction* (University of Michigan Press, 2002).

His essays and lectures have been published in numerous international newspapers in the United States, China, Taiwan, Japan, and Europe, including *American Imago, Asian Culture Quarterly, Tamkang Review, Dushu, Jintian (Today)*.

Yang Xiaobin has received numerous prizes, honors, and grants, including in 1988 the *Special Achievement Award* of the *Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences*, in 1994–95 the *Research Grant* of the *Pacific Cultural Foundation*, and in 2001 the *Fulbright-Hays Faculty Research Abroad Grant* of the *U.S. Department of Education*. He has organized conferences and has participated in numerous events on the Chinese postmodern, the relationship between aesthetics and politics, and on contemporary Chinese literature.

He is presently teaching in Peking as a visiting professor at *Beijing Normal University*.

Yang Xiaobin is a frequent traveller between the two sides of the Pacific Ocean.

The Sculpture  
**The Artist**

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**Jakob Mattner**

Born in 1946 in Lübeck. Sculpture, drawing, theater design.

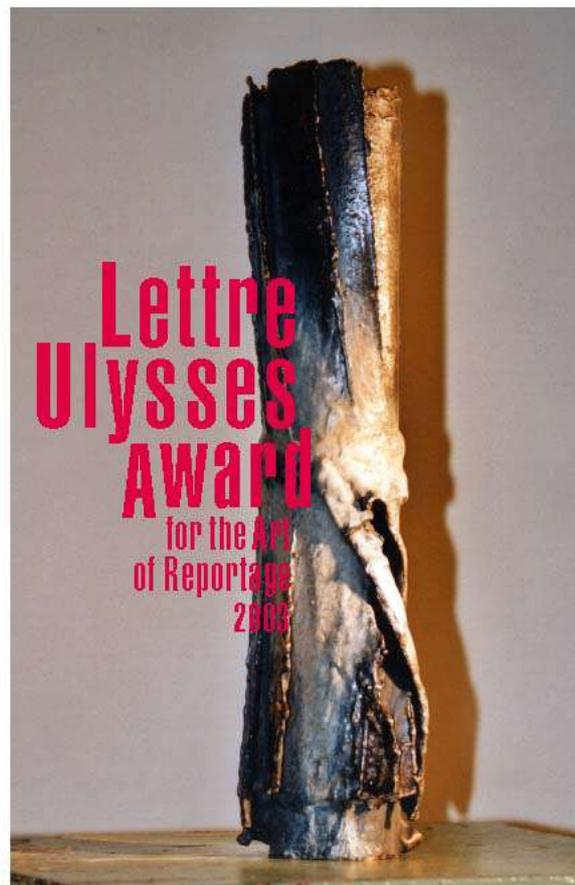
Solo exhibitions at the *Kestner-Gesellschaft*, Hannover; Pervaja Gallery, Moscow; Carpenter & Hochmann Gallery, New York.

Artworks shown in the *Akademie der Künste*, Berlin and in the *Hamburger Bahnhof*, Berlin.

In 2000 he did the stage design for the German Pavilion at the EXPO Hanover.

In 2002 he held an exhibition at the *Moritzburg* in Halle.

The artist lives in Berlin.



Realisation: Jakob Mattner

**On the genre of (literary) Reportage Comments**  
**Comments**

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“Eyewitnessing” is the linchpin of literary reportage.

**Nedim Gürsel (jury member 2003, Turkey)**

Documentary prose ought to transcend the strict boundaries between the formats of literature and journalism. The person of the author, his mentality, his philosophy and his sensitivity must be unified by a good writing style. Documentary work means using reality as the raw material to create a new reality.

**Swetlana Alexijewitsch (jury member 2003, Belarus)**

When history reaches up to the present, works in which living human beings play the leading role can emerge from these themes. That gives the work strength, depth and an especially an intense humanity. People and their history speak out of it. The author lends them expression. That is where the particular strength of literary reportage lies, and that is where it differs from memoirs and biographies.

**Pedro Rosa Mendes (jury member 2003, Portugal)**

The human depth of literary reportage communicates more to us than the news in CNN. This depth can only develop because the authors had time for their work, time that allowed them to understand situations and backgrounds.

**Abdourahman Waberi (jury member 2003, Djibouti France)**

The first source is traveling as discovery, as exploration, as exertion: the journey as a search for truth, not as relaxation. My travels mean paying attention, having patience to look into things, wanting to know, to see, to understand and to accumulate the entirety of knowledge. Such traveling is devotion and hard work.

**Ryszard Kapuscinski (ceremonial speaker 2003)**

Reportage means a journalistic text and that implies a certain code of honesty with the reader and relationship with facts. It can be more or less literary but that comes afterwards. First you have to have journalism.

**Pedro Rosa Mendes (jury member 2003)**

A distinguishing feature of good reportage is that it combats this inevitable and planned retreat of language from the real.

**John Carey**

I consider myself to be a detective of otherness other cultures, other ways of thinking, other patterns of behavior. I am a detective of an unknown, understood in a positive way, an unknown, with which I would like to come in contact, in order to understand it. It is all about the question of how I can describe reality in a new and adequate way. Sometimes this type of writing is called non-fictional writing. I would rather call it creative non-fictional writing.

**Ryszard Kapuscinski (ceremonial speaker 2003)**

The good reporter must cultivate the innocent eye, but must not be innocent."

**John Carey**

"My writing is a combination of three elements. The first is travel, travel as exploration, as concentration, as a purpose. The second is reading literature on the subject. The third is reflection, which comes from travel and reading."

**Ryszard Kapuscinski (ceremonial speaker 2003)**

Nietzsche said the writing of history is to introduce structure and coherence to elements that are chaotic. We are near to that kind of literature when we speak of reportage. It is not invention, it has a respect for reality, it has to discover, it has to add something, and understand. And it has to have a good language.

**Jorge Edwards (jury member 2003)**

Reportage means a journalistic text and that implies a certain code of honesty with the reader and relationship with facts. It can be more or less literary but that comes afterwards. First you have to have journalism.

**Pedro Rosa Mendes (jury member 2003)**

I am always astonished about reality. It's not just the duty to inform, you want to convey this initial experience to the reader that you are irritated sometimes because things don't fit into the clichés. All the clichés are somehow proven wrong when you read a good reportage

**Hans Christoph Buch (jury member 2003)**

Style is the author. It's not just beautiful writing or the capacity for beautiful language, it's also philosophy, personality, the author's individual approach. It all goes together.

**Svetlana Alexievitch (jury member 2003)**

Writers have the duty to observe. And sometimes give a voice to those who have none or can not make use of.

**Antonio Tabucchi**

I think we live in such a banality of horrors, horrors surround us, so a real reportage is a kind of break through this banality. When we speak about any situation, be it Chechnya or something else, to speak not only about this concrete situation but also about something of deep human nature.

**Svetlana Alexievitch (jury member 2003)**

There's no objective text. However, there are degrees of attention given to personal response and personal feeling, and I think reportage should err on the side of the more objective. So it's not memoir, it's not autobiography, it's not internal journey.

**Isabel Hilton (jury member 2003)**

The first condition in Russian culture is the assumption that life is not a pleasure but that life is something rather tragic. I think this condition that we should speak about the most difficult experiences, is a very important condition. And the second condition which seems to me absolutely necessary is that the writer has a new approach, a new circle of ideas.

**Svetlana Alexievitch (jury member 2003)**

Maybe the core of very good reportage is a journalistic piece with human beings inside. That human depth cannot be of the author. Even if it enlightens his own human condition, it is external to the writer.

**Pedro Rosa Mendes (jury member 2003)**

A good reportage must not necessarily be linked with topical or political events which are taking place around us. I think the miracle of things lies not in showing the extraordinary but in showing ordinary things in which the extraordinary is hidden.

**Nirmal Verma (jury member 2003)**

Literary reportage is an engagement with reality with a novelist's eye but with a journalist's discipline.

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**Pedro Rosa Mendes (jury member 2003)**

I think this documentary prose should really break fixed boundaries.

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**Svetlana Alexievich (jury member 2003)**

I don't see the problem with literary reportage providing we get the noun and the adjective in the right order. Reportage as the noun and literary as the adjective. I think that literary reportage is a difficult art to practice because you are restricted to reality as you see it and what you can bring to it.

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**Isabel Hilton (jury member 2003)**

If you want to report on an issue that is so deep, the only honest way to report it is to have a commitment in time.

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**Pedro Rosa Mendes (jury member 2003)**

I travelled in order to meet the lowest. That was the dream of my youth. It became a journey from light into darkness.

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**Jan Stage**

## Initiators and Prize Partners

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The prize has been initiated by the journal Lettre International. Through its publication work and world-encompassing projects, this renowned international cultural journal, which has been published since 1984 in a number of Western and Eastern European languages, has proven its unique capability to realize international cultural projects.

In the Aventis Foundation, Lettre has found a strong and committed project partner. Legal subject of the project is the Foundation Lettre International Award, a non-profit society with limited liability, which was founded for this purpose.

The Goethe Institute with its worldwide infrastructure supports this project as a partner. It will place the communicative infrastructure (contacts, press office, homepage, meeting rooms and event spaces) of its worldwide network of ca. 130 branches in the service of the project.

### Die Aventis Foundation

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The Aventis Foundation is a charitable foundation headquartered in Frankfurt am Main, Germany, which serves to promote music, theater, art, and literature, projects in the social and political arena with a focus on healthcare, as well as science, research, and higher education.

The Aventis Foundation was established in 1996 as the Hoechst Foundation with an endowment of € 50 million. In 2000 the foundation was renamed the Aventis Foundation subsequent to the 1999 merger of Hoechst, the founder, with the French company Rhône-Poulenc which created Aventis, one of the world's leading pharmaceutical companies. Since its inception, the Aventis Foundation has been promoting music, art, theater and literature. The projects promoted should be international, interdisciplinary and innovative. We want to support artists who cross boundaries, eliminate prejudices, create original works and seek new horizons.

**Contact:** Aventis Foundation, Industriepark Höchst, Geb. F 821, 65926 Frankfurt/Main, Germany, **Eugen Müller**, Tel.: +49 069 305 7256, Fax: +49 69 305 80554, Mobile: +49 172 661 2960, eugen.mueller@aventis-foundation.org, www.aventis-foundation.org

### Lettre International

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Lettre International is ...

- an international and interdisciplinary publication that was first published in France in 1984;
- a unique intellectual forum which connects several editorial boards in Europe and which is published in many languages;
- a medium with a trans-cultural worldwide network of contributors, contacts, and publication;
- a cultural publication that is exclusively orientated towards quality, as opposed to fashion, sensation or celebrity stories.

- In general, the editorial policy of Lettre is to publish well researched articles and material that is outstandingly original and fresh in outlook.
- an important platform within the cultural and creative world and an influential cultural paper for opinion makers.

#### **Lettre International, German edition is ...**

considered to be one of today's leading German cultural publications and has gained a high reputation. Outstanding artists, writers, journalists, poets and scientists from all over the world contribute to it. In each issue contrasting temperaments and cultures of the world coalesce to form a powerful intellectual presence. This has made Lettre International one of the most important platforms for the cultural and creative world and it has made Lettre an influential cultural paper for opinion makers.

a publication which initiates innovative concepts for the advancement of world consciousness through bringing together the diverse aspects of economics, politics, art, and literature. a focal point of creative ideas that builds on vast experience to develop innovative and successful world-wide projects.

**Contact:** Lettre International, Berlin. Erkelenzdamm 59-61, Portal 3B, 10999 Berlin Frank Berberich (Editor in Chief), Esther Gallodoro (Projects) Phone: +49- (0)30-308 704 52/-61 Fax +49 (0)30 283 31 28, @ [lettre@lettre.de](mailto:lettre@lettre.de)

#### **The Goethe Institute**

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Goethe-Institut Inter Nationes is the largest organisation promoting German cultural and educational policy abroad. The fusion of the Goethe-Institut and Inter Nationes in January 2001 has resulted in a network of 3,100 employees working at 141 cultural institutions in 77 countries.

- Together with our partners we plan and organise programmes of events focussing on the arts, society, education, science and research, the media and information.
- Ca. 175,000 students of German attend courses at our institutes in Germany and abroad each year. We also support teachers in their work.
- Our information centres and libraries are well equipped to supply you with media and information on the language, culture and society of Germany.
- We also stock a wide range of books, magazines, games and documentaries on Germany, supplemented by various online services we produce and maintain ourselves.
- Ca. 1,500 foreign guests per annum take part in highly-qualified study and contact trips to Germany run by our visitors' service.

The Goethe Forum in Munich brings world culture to Germany, thus encouraging the international cultural debate. Goethe-Institut Inter Nationes is financed by the Foreign Office, the German Press Office, sponsors and income from the various institutes. The budget for 2001 was ca. 242 million euros, around a third of which was generated by the institutes themselves.

President: Prof. Dr. Jutta Limbach, Provisional General Secretary: Dr. Horst Harnischfeger

**Contact:** Ulrike Hofmann-Steinmetz; Hauptstadtbüro Goethe-Institut Inter Nationes, Tel.: 030/ 259 06 470, 030/ 259 06 565; E-Mail: [hofmann-steinmetz@goethe.de](mailto:hofmann-steinmetz@goethe.de)

Aventis Foundation

**Reasons for supporting the *Lettre Ulysses Award***

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**Why is the Aventis Foundation supporting the Lettre Ulysses Award?**

For one very good reason: to promote a multicultural understanding of the world. Representing all the world's major languages is an international approach that is unique to the Lettre Ulysses Award. The original texts of a Chinese or Turkish author are accorded the same attention and weighting as those of a French or Anglo-American author. As a result, the blinders and customary views within personal language and cultural spheres are removed, opening up prospects for a true global view, a literary review that connects people all over the world. Within this framework, the literary reportages are about living conditions in highly disparate regions, they reflect observations, experiences and conversations, they are the witness to this day and age. The genre tells us how little we know, yet if we choose to join the journey, we will learn about the breadth and depth, the historical roots, the horrors and the strength of human existence. A multicultural understanding of the world could be a way to solve many of the world's problems and conflicts or perhaps prevent them from arising in the first place— if more people would embark on this journey, whether as authors or readers.

When Lettre International approached the Aventis Foundation with the proposal for this project, it became quickly clear that our criteria for cultural promotion would be ideally met—the projects should be international, innovative, interdisciplinary and help to break down barriers, eliminate prejudices and create something new. The pharmaceutical company Aventis, which established the Aventis Foundation, operates globally in nearly every country of the world, employing people and providing patients, physicians and healthcare systems with pharmaceuticals and human vaccines. By supporting international authors and the literary reportage genre, the Aventis Foundation wants to promote a better and deeper understanding of the living conditions in forgotten areas of the world, as well as those that we presume we know well.

Our special thanks is due to Lettre International for their extraordinary dedication to the realization of this project as well as the project partners the Goethe Institut and Script for their support.

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## Partners and sponsors

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Many thanks to our partners, sponsors and supporters of the of the *Lettre Ulysses Award*.

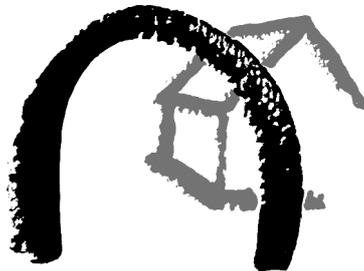
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## Digital Photos and Texts

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Photographs of

- members of the jury,
- award winners,
- jackets of works selected (shortlist),
- logos of initiators and project partners

of the “Lettre Ulysses Award” can be found at the web page

[www.lettre-ulysses-award.de](http://www.lettre-ulysses-award.de)

as a downloadable file.

The texts

in the press folder can be found at

[www.lettre-award.de](http://www.lettre-award.de).

## Die Finalisten

Fotos als download unter [www.lettre-ulysses-award.org](http://www.lettre-ulysses-award.org)

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⇒ **Adrian Nicole LeBlanc**



⇒ **Anna Politovskaia**



⇒ **Gillian Wright**



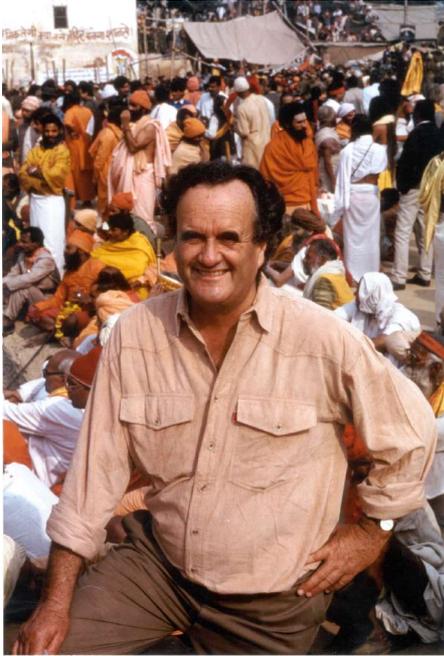
⇒ Ian Buruma



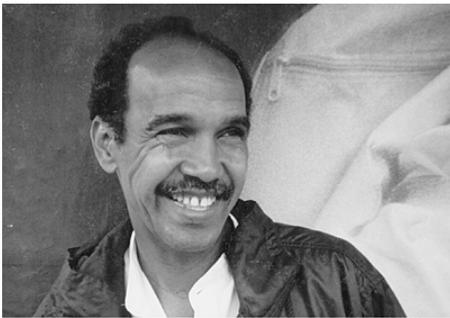
⇒ Jiang Hao



⇒ Linda Pohlman



⇒ Mark Tully



⇒ Nurrudin Farrah

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