

CURRICULUM VITAE

Name: YVONNE VERA
Date of birth: 19 September 1964
Nationality: Zimbabwean

Current Position

Novelist
Art Director and Curator

Academic Background

Ph.D. (Doctor of Philosophy, Literature) York University, Toronto, Canada 1995
M.A. (Master of Arts, English) York University, Toronto, Canada 1991
B.A. Honors (Bachelor of Arts, English *summa cum laude*) York University, Toronto, Canada 1990

Phd. Dissertation The Prison of Colonial Space (explores writing from within prison such as that of Wole Soyinka, Emma Mashinini, Ruth First and Ngugi wa Thiongo)

Fields of Study and for written and oral examination: *Prose Narrative and Post-Colonial Studies*

On 2 & 3 December 1993 the report on the post colonial examination reads: "The written examination showed such exceptional knowledge of the field that the committee agreed that there was no need for an oral. Among the features noted by the committee were her engagement with a wide range of theoretical idea, her highly articulate prose and her use of apposite and unusually lengthy quotations. One examiner stated that this was is the most accomplished examination he has seen in this field...." F.Birbalsingh, A. Mukherjee, T.Goldie, H. Bouraoai (it was the first time the university had waived an exam)

Previous Employment

Regional Director – National Art Gallery of Zimbabwe, Bulawayo 1995-2003
Assistant Professor - Solusi University, Zimbabwe 1997
Assistant Professor - Trent University, Peterborough, Canada 1995
Teaching Assistant - York University, Canada 1993-1995

Publications

Novels

The Stone Virgins. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. New York. 2002.
Weaver Press: Zimbabwe 2002
Butterfly Burning. Harare: Baobab and Academic Books, 1998.
Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York 2000
Under the Tongue. Harare: Baobab Books, 1996.
Farrar, Straus and Giroux: New York, 2002
Without a Name. Harare: Baobab Books, 1994.
Farrar, Straus and Giroux: New York, 2002
Nehanda. Harare: Baobab and Academic Books, 1993.

Short Stories

Why Don't You Carve Other Animals. Toronto: TSAR, 1991

Opening Spaces: An Anthology of Contemporary Writing by African Women.
editor. London: Heinemann, 1999

The works have been translated into several languages:
Italian, Norwegian, German, Danish, Swedish, Dutch, Spanish, Catalana, Finnish, French, Greek

Literary Awards

2003 Butterfly Burning - Primo Feronia - Citta di Fiano - Italy (to be presented in Rome 12 July 2003)
2002 Butterfly Burning - Winner of the Initiative LiBereturpreis (best novel in German translation by a female writer from Asia, Latin America, Africa) - Germany
2002 Butterfly Burning among Africa's 100 Best Books of the last century. ZIBF Pan African Project, 2002
2002 The Stone Virgins Winner of the first Macmillan Writer's Prize for Africa 2002 - U.K
1999 Under the Tongue Winner of the Voice of Africa Award - Sweden
1997 Under the Tongue Winner of the Commonwealth Prize -U.K

Commonwealth short-list for best novel 1995; 1994; 1993

Zimbabwe:

Zimbabwe Publisher's Literary Award 1999 (Butterfly Burning)
Zimbabwe Publisher's Literary Award 1997 (Under the Tongue)
Zimbabwe Publisher's Literary Award 1995 (Without a Name)
Zimbabwe Publisher's Literary Award 1994 (Nehanda)

Critical Texts on Yvonne Vera

Sign and Taboo: Perspectives on the Poetic Fiction of Yvonne Vera ed. Robert Muponde and Mandi Taruvinga. Publishers James Currey (Oxford) & Weaver Press (Zimbabwe) 2002
Brings together critics from Zimbabwe, South Africa, Britain, the Caribbean and the United States with diverse theoretical approaches to explore the departure and expansion of this work from previous conventions of the African novel.

Studies on Yvonne Vera may also be accessed through an internet search.

Reviews

among numerous positive reviews in over twelve languages are, in English.....

The New Yorker reviews **The Stone Virgins** – “Stone of the Heart” by Edna O’Brien. March 24, 2003 p83-4
Boston Globe on **The Stone Virgins** – “A Vivid Portrait of a War torn Zimbabwe” Eric Grunwald 2 February 2003
Detroit Free Press on **The Stone Virgins** “War and Love in a Troubled Zimbabwe” by Jeff Guinn
The Washington Post on **The Stone Virgins** by Jabari Asim 3/4/03
New York Times on **The Stone Virgins** “The Enemy was Everyone” by Alex Wilber 2/23/03
Kirkus Review **The Stone Virgins** Dec 15, 2002

The Village Voice chooses **Butterfly Burning** among Favourite Books of the Year 2000

The Village Voice on **Butterfly Burning** “Vera’s Novel of Colonial Chaos” by Michelle Cliff Sept 2000.
Seattle Weekly on **Butterfly Burning** by Judy Lightfoot October 5, 2000
Publisher’s Weekly on **Butterfly Burning** Aug, 2000
World Literature Today **Butterfly Burning** in, vol 74, no.1 by Adele Newson

Ruminator Review on **Without a Name** and **Under the Tongue** “Sirens of Change” Fall 2002

Exhibitions

“Thatha Camera – the Pursuit of Reality” Township Photos from Matebeleland from 1900 to 2000. This exhibition is currently showing in Bamako.

“Thatha Bhasikili” Stylised bicycles in and around the city of Bulawayo.

“Touch Art” an exhibition of sculpture prepared for the blind.

“Africa Exhibit” an exhibition of Zimbabwean works held in Burghausen, near Salzburg

In an exciting and educative art directing and curatorial career spanning 7 years, prepared and held over seventy solo, group, and international exhibitions. Established the character of the gallery in Bulawayo, making it a warm and friendly spot, and developed the work of both young and mature artists. The first two selected stand out in involving the community in every stage of the exhibition and were viewed by most people. They inspired dance groups like **Siyaya arts** of Bulawayo which is currently on tour with a dance called *Thatha*.

Readings and lectures

Spoken in numerous international and international literary festivals and panels most recently in Mantua, Italy September 2002. Presented keynote addresses e.g. Frankfurt Bookfair Main Forum 2002 “Building Bridges”; “Versions and Subversions: International Conference on African Literature” held in Berlin March 2002; delivered Zimbabwean Lives: the Visual Arts, Books, and National Development – at the Royal Palace in Amsterdam and published in the Prince Claus Journal Vol. 1 1997. Held substantial residencies, grants and awards including Villa Waldberta in Feldafing, Germany 2001, Civitella Ranieri Center, a castle in Perugia, Italy 2002. Recently awarded the DAAD (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst, a one year scholarship in Germany for 2003). Have presented numerous readings and discussion internationally. Columnist for Die Weltwoche, a newspaper in Switzerland. Written essays on literature such as *Writing Near the Bone* for Neue Zürcher Zeitung and written for a variety of newspapers on visual arts magazines such as for *Contemporary Art in Zimbabwe – from Centre to Margin* for Revue Noire. Given presentations on television and radio internationally. Juror for the Berlin International Literature Festival and for the Neustadt Prize (U.S.) for which an issue of *World Literature Today* also becomes dedicated.

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Prof. Ted. Goossen tgoossen@YorkU.CA

Prof. Charles Larson crlaron@erols.ca

Prof. Eldred Jones @ National Policy Advisor Committee, State House, Freetown, Sierra Leone