

2019

Jakes Gerwel Foundation

ANNUAL REPORT

1 March 2019 tot 28 February 2020

Table of content

Registration 1

Vision 1

Mission 2

Management 3

- Trustees 3
- Executive director 4
- Manager of Paulet House 4
- Facilitators 5

Projects 6

- Mentorship Programme for Upcoming Writers 7
- Yoh! Project 8
- Book Project for Learners in the Foundation Phase 10
- Young Stars – Development of upcoming playwrights 11
- PEN Afrikaans Writer's Residency 13
- Flemish Dialogue Programme 14
- Opening of Paulet House 16
- Suidoosterfees 18
- Archive 20
- Songwriting Project 20

Donors & Partnerships 22









REGISTRATION

The Jakes Gerwel Foundation (JGF) is a registered trust (IT002437/2013) with PBO number 93005145 and VAT number 4690284114.

VISION

The purpose of the Jakes Gerwel Foundation is to advance the work and interests of Gert Johannes “Jakes” Gerwel by developing and promoting education, the arts, cultural activities, and social justice in South Africa.



MISSION

The Jakes Gerwel Foundation focuses on the promotion and advancement of South African literature with the following broad goals in mind:









To enrich and build out South African literature



To support upcoming writers who have a story to tell, but do not quite know how to put it in words



To give a voice to new perspectives and worlds of experience.





MANAGEMENT

Trustees



Mfundo Clement Nkuhlu



Prof. Brian Figaji (Chairperson)



Goolam Mohammed Aboobaker



Heinrich John Gerwel



Dr Wilmot Godfrey James



Dr. Anna Maria van der Merwe



Mustaq Ahmed Enus-Brey

Executive director



Mr Christiaan Theodorus (Theo) Kemp has been appointed permanently as executive director of the Jakes Gerwel Foundation from 1 January 2020.

Manager of Paulet House



Mrs Beneatha Adams resigned as general manager of Paulet House on 1 February 2020. This position will not be filled again. The tasks related to the writers' house will be handled by the executive director and ad hoc staff.



Facilitators

The various projects of the Jakes Gerwel Foundation are facilitated as indicated:

Mentorship Programme for Upcoming Playwrights
Amy Jephta & Rafiek Mammon

Mentorship Programme for Upcoming Writers
Suzette Kotze-Myburgh & Angela Briggs

Yoh! Project
Thérèse Hulme & Marcia Woolward

Archive
André Landman

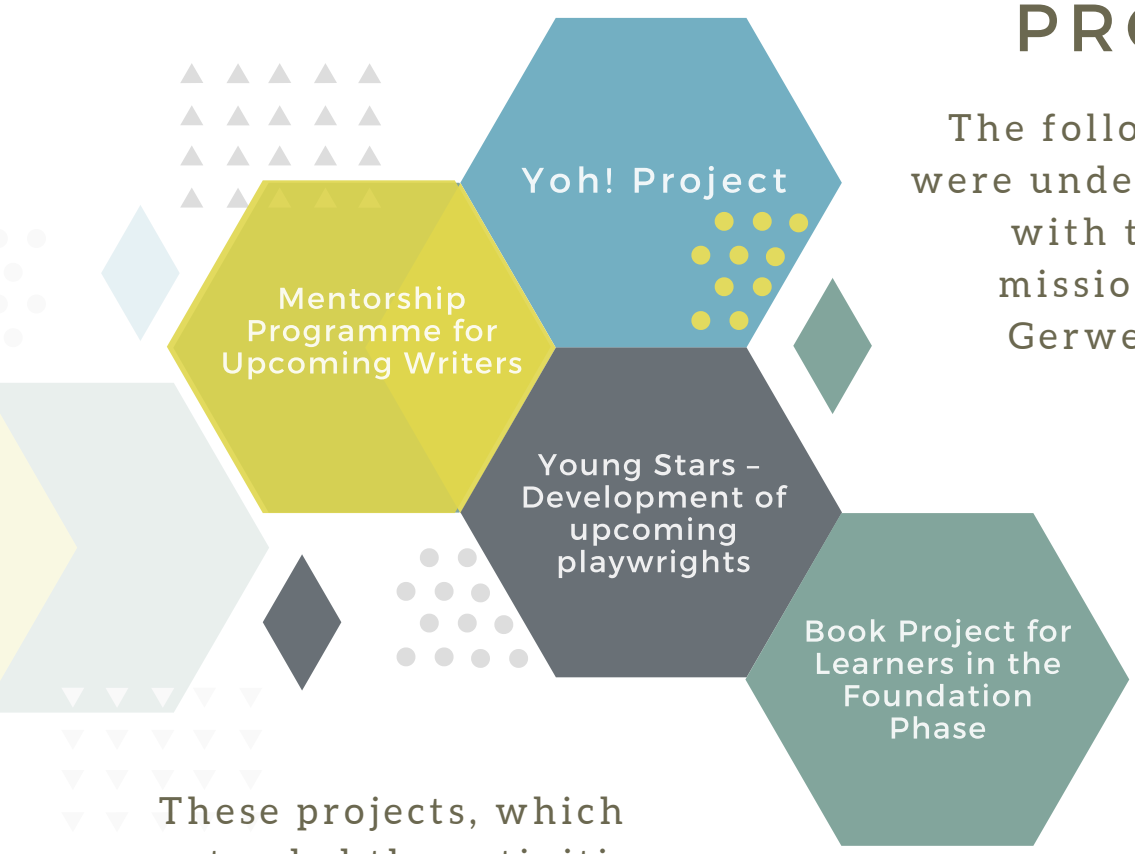
Mentorship Programme for Upcoming Lyricists
Frazer Barry

Book Project for Learners in the Foundation Phase
Nompumelelo Sokoyi

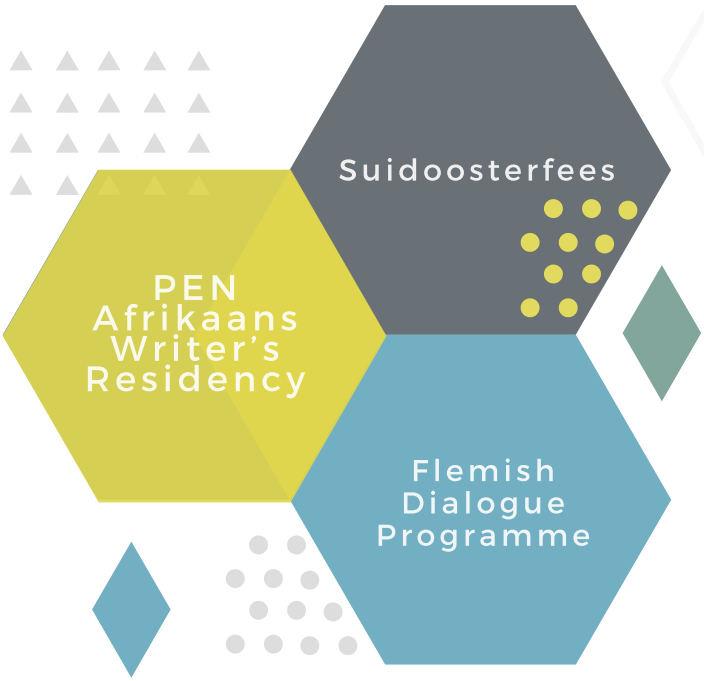


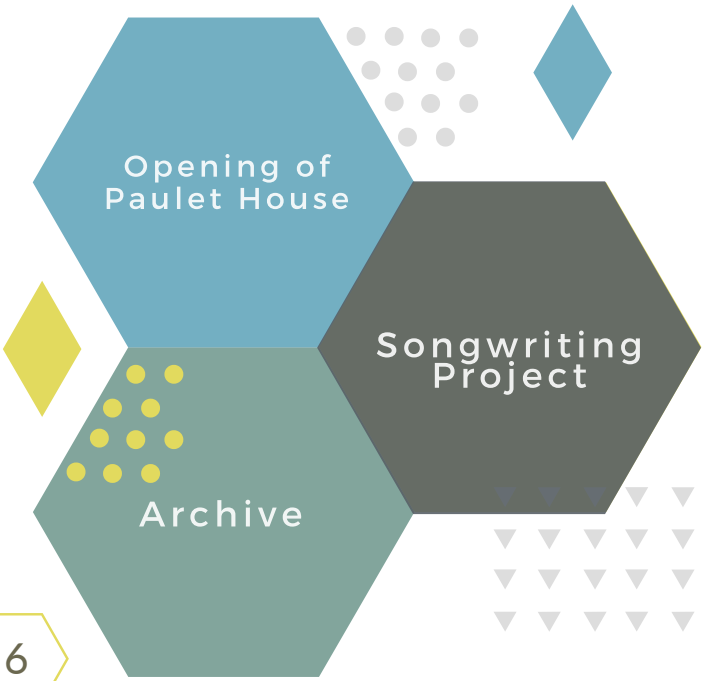
PROJECTS

The following projects were undertaken in line with the vision and mission of the Jakes Gerwel Foundation.



These projects, which extended the activities of the previous years significantly, aim to empower especially upcoming writers in all genres.





Mentorship Programme for Upcoming Writers

This programme that was implemented for the first time in 2019 aims to give a platform for a plurality of voices and to effect greater representation for our diverse communities in the rich South African literary world. We thus invest in the development of upcoming writers who do not have the opportunity to sharpen their skills. It happens often that these writers submit manuscripts that show a lot of potential but that are not yet publishable. The publishers do not have the time and the capital to take these writers' hands and to guide them to the point where their work is ready for publication. In this way many potential voices – worthy voices – disappear.



The intensive year-long mentorship programme, which includes writing sessions in the Foundation's Paulet House in Somerset East, thus contributes richly to the available opportunities for young writers. The Foundation covers all related travel and accommodation costs plus meals for these writers' quarterly visits to the Eastern Cape writers house. In 2019 the mentors were the experienced editor Suzette Kotze-Myburgh and the well-known writer Francois Bloemhof.

The Foundation has partnered up with NB Publishers (with imprints Tafelberg, Human & Rousseau, Queillerie, Kwela, Lux Verbi and Pharos) to select candidates for the programme by reviewing the potential of manuscripts submitted to them. The programme includes writers of both fiction and non-fiction and is presented in Afrikaans and English.

The writers in the first group taken on board of the programme were Engela Ovies, Sharon Mogoaneng, Shana Fife and Bronwyn Davids. We are proud that the manuscripts of three of these writers, namely Engela Ovies, Shana Fife and Bronwyn Davids, have been accepted for publication right after completion of the programme.

The 2020 candidates are as strong, with one more candidate to participate in the programme. Where there were three English and one Afrikaans writer in 2019, there are currently three Afrikaans and two English writers on board, namely Audrey Jantjies, Deidré Jantjies, Miriam Telanie, Zama Moyo and Lebohang Mazibuko. The mentors are Suzette Kotze-Myburgh and Angela Briggs.



Yoh! Projek

This project has been running since 2018 at Grassy Park High School in Cape Town. Grassy Park has been chosen for this poetry programme because Prof. Gerwel taught here for a while at the beginning of his career. The programme, presented by the narrative therapist Dr Thérèse Hulme, helps young people to find words for their innermost experiences and emotions and allows them to discover how they can express themselves in different forms of poetry. Learners that had traumatic experiences and who find themselves in poverty-stricken communities often cannot find a way to talk about their deepest pain. When negative narratives are internalised by the learners, this leads to further marginalisation.

This project is presented as a group programme for learners ever week. A strong bond forms between these creative young people and the presenter and, because learners are the witnesses of each other's narratives and eventual poetry, the impact of the program is enhanced. The learners experience the force of the poetry together and help each other to find alternative narratives. The number of learners vary, but there are mostly about twenty young people in the group. These learners often read their poems during sessions at the school, which helps them gain self-confidence.







Marcia Woolward, the head at the time of the initial implementation of the project at Grassy Park, was very positive about it right from the start. She also joined the group and started writing poetry herself. Her enthusiasm compelled her to get involved as co-facilitator of Yoh! at Grassy Park after her retirement at the beginning of 2020. This will enable Dr Hulme to expand the project to the three high schools in Somerset East: Gill College, Areoville and Johnson Nqonqosa in 2020. It is of the utmost importance to the Jakes Gerwel Foundation that we play a bigger role in Somerset East and the nearby towns. This project thus gives us a very important chance to reach rural children that often come from very isolated environments.

Book Project for Learners in the Foundation Phase

The Jakes Gerwel Foundation shares the vision of Book Dash to place books in the hands of learners whose parents and schools cannot afford to do so. Book Dash is a non-profit organisation that creates new books (in Afrikaans, isiXhosa and English) locally by bringing writers of children's books, illustrators and designers together for one day a year for this purpose. These books are then made available at a very reasonable price.







The Foundation got involved in this project in 2018 and its growth has been phenomenal. In 2018, 3 000 books were distributed to 1 000 learners of four schools in Somerset East. A year later 2 000 learners in Somerset East and the environment have been reached and 6 000 books were distributed. In 2020 the plan is to involve the greater Blue Crane Route area – inclusive of Somerset East, Kommadagga, Pearston and Cookhouse. This will mean that 3 000 learners from seventeen schools will be reached and about 10 000 books will be distributed.

It is of utmost importance to us that the learners we reach develop a love for reading in the Foundation Phase (Grades R – 3). This is why we involve the local storyteller Nompumelelo Sokoyi to dramatise the stories and combine this with dance, song and the colouring in of pictures that link up with the stories. Nompumelelo is fluent in Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa and has great success in making a connection with the learners we are targeting.

We realised very soon that learners do not only long to read, but that many of them do not own a schoolbag. Therefore we do not only donate books, but every child receives a sturdy schoolbag. These bags are made from good quality recycled plastic by a group of previously unemployed seamstresses.

Young Stars – Development of upcoming playwrights

Both the Jakes Gerwel Foundation and the Suidoosterfees are passionate about the development and promotion of young talent. Therefore these two organisations have partnered up to give a chance to young playwrights through the festival's existing Young Stars Project to refine their manuscripts. Whereas the Foundation is involved with the development of the texts, the Suidoosterfees takes the lead in staging the plays.



Through this project the passion of the late professor Jakes Gerwel for the performing arts is kept alive by giving talented individuals the support and mentorship to which they would not otherwise have had access. In addition, Gerwel was instrumental to the establishment of the Suidoosterfees that promotes inclusivity in the arts.

Herschelle Benjamin, Kanya Viljoen, Tasneem Daniels, Du Toit Albertze and Keanen Engel were the first group of Young Stars who benefited from the mentorship programme in 2019. Their productions will be staged at the Suidoosterfees, should it be possible to proceed with it. The festival has had to be postponed because of the Covid-19 pandemic.



Amy Jephta – the award-winning playwright known for, among other plays, Kristalvlakte – is the mentor for the text development while Rafiek Mammon, the respected theatre maker, has been appointed to oversee the development of the production side of the plays for the Suidoosterfees.

PEN Afrikaans Writer's Residency

It is many a writer's wish to have time to write without interruption. Most writers cannot get away from their daily tasks and often cannot set aside enough time to write. Books remain unwritten and valuable talent is not exploited fully. Therefore, the Jakes Gerwel Foundation and PEN Afrikaans have joined up to provide specifically Afrikaans writers with a month-long writer's residency programme.



The aim of the writer's residency is writers who bring new stories to the Afrikaans literature and who writes about worlds of experience that have not been explored sufficiently. The residency takes place annually for four weeks at Paulet House and all costs (travel, accommodation, meals) are covered by the Jakes Gerwel Foundation.

The first group, which was housed in 2019, included the following popular writers: Ronelda S Kamfer, Nathan Trantaal, Kirby van der Merwe, Jeremy Vearey as well as two upcoming writers: Ryan Pedro and Lynthia Julius. We are pleased that four of these writers, namely Ronelda S Kamfer, Nathan Trantaal, Lynthia Julius and Jeremy Vearey, could publish new books on which they worked during their stay in Paulet House.



Flemish Dialogue Programme

Professor Jakes Gerwel completed his doctoral studies in literature and philosophy at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel in Belgium. This is the context within which the Jakes Gerwel Foundation takes hands with Passa Porta, an international house of literature based in Brussels, to offer the Flemish Dialogue Programme. This joint programme entails an annual invitation to Flemish writers to apply for a writer's residency of three weeks in South Africa. The Foundation then invites South African writers to join the Flemish writers during this same period. The Foundation aims to bring together writers from different backgrounds to bring about a cross-pollination of ideas and to enrich the literatures here and abroad. This is the first time that such a partnership has been concluded between a house of literature in Belgium and a South African organisation.

The Jakes Gerwel Foundation has thus had the pleasure of welcoming international writers at Paulet House, for the first time, during 2019. These writers were Miriam Van Hee and Rachida Lamrabet while the Afrikaans writer Chase Rhys and the playwright and language activist Denver Breda shared the house with them.



Miriam Van hee made her debut in 1978 with her collection of poems Het karige maal for which she has also received the Literature Prize of the Province of East Flanders. Her poetry has already been translated into ten other languages and her tenth collection of poems has been award the Ultima Award for Literature in 2017.

Rachida Lamrabet is a Flemish writer with Moroccan roots. Until quite recently she practised as a lawyer at the Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism. Her first novel Vrouwland has been published in 2007 and has been awarded the lemish Debut Prize.





Chase Rhys is the first writer to win the Adam and Rosalie Small Prize. He received this prize for his play Kinnes that explores the lives of a group of young people on the Cape Flats. This work has also been adapted by Rhys into a novella for which he has also received various literary nominations and prizes.



Denver Breda is an undaunted language and cultural activist as well as a zealous writer. He lobbies enthusiastically for the rebirth of the Khoesan languages as well as for the continued existence of Afrikaans in its various dialects. Breda has already published various works, such as, Stories wat kort is and his play Rokkie.

Opening of Paulet House

Paulet Huis – of which the restoration was completed by the end of February 2019 – was opened with fanfare on Saturday 14 September as writers house. This historical building has been donated by Mrs Phoebé Gerwel, the widow of Prof. Gerwel, to the Jakes Gerwel Foundation to be used to the benefit of writers. This building has been erected in 1825 by Charles Somerset for his second wife, Lady Mary Poulett.

The festivities started with accordion music by Niël Rademan, after which guests were welcomed by Prof. Brian Figaji, chairperson of the Jakes Gerwel Foundation. Bonisile Manxoweni, Mayor of the Blue Crane Municipality, then spoke about the significance of such a writers' house for the town. Dr Annari van der Merwe, one of the trustees of the Foundation, spoke about her friendship of many years with Jakes Gerwel and how his house looked like before. Hein Gerwel, the son of Jakes Gerwel, shared memories of his father with the guests and spoke about the greater meaning of family.

The evening's proceedings were interspersed with music by, among others, Terry Fortune, a close friend of Phoebé Gerwel. He paid tribute to her as a philanthropist who lives with open hands for the arts. One of the highlights of the programme was the combined performance of the Soweto String Quartet and three local, very talented learners Junior Yantola, Lisikhanya Gcocini and Cindy Ngwalangwala.



Through dialogue, the award-winning poet Antjie Krog and the equally well-known poet Ronelda S Kamfer drew the attention to the significance of a writers' house such as Paulet House and how it can contribute to promoting literature. Kamfer then read an article by Jakes Gerwel in which he pleaded for a place for Afrikaans in post-apartheid South Africa. Krog recited some of Gerwel's favourite poems by NP van Wyk Louw. The two poets created a very moving remembrance of Jakes Gerwel.

Basil Appollis, theatre maker and actor, was the master of ceremonies and made sure that there were some lighter moments. It was an evening of laughter and goose bumps and it will probably remain in the guests' memories for a long time.

Suidoosterfees

During the Suidoosterfees of 25 April to 1 May 2019, a discourse series was presented at the Artscape in Cape Town. The series kicked off on 25 April by looking at the theme of seamlessness in the arts. Kabous Meiring was in conversation with Saartjie Botha, well-known playwright and executive director of the Toyota US Woordfees, as well as with Basil Appollis, Mercy Kannemeyer and Cintaine Schutte. Burning questions that link up with this theme are: What is the nature of the performing arts in post-apartheid South Africa? Do the arts really speak to a diverse and representative audience and is there really a transformed society visible in the arts?







In the next discussion on 26 April, the philosopher Wilhelm Verwoerd and the writer of Sorry, not sorry Haji Mohamed Dawjee discussed the influence of our history on who and what we are and they also looked at how comfortable we feel with various tansgendered identities.

Two discussions on 27 and 28 April put Afrikaans under the microscope. The Afrikaans Language Council (ATR) looked at what prevents young people from celebrating and nurturing Afrikaans. Many young people whose home language is Afrikaans feel more at home in English than in Afrikaans. This question was discussed by Samuel Minnaar, Esra Plaatjies and Carla Barnard with radio and television personality Tracey Lange as discussant.

In conjunction with this question, the degree of inclusivity in Afrikaans has been explored by asking about the role of the coloured community in writing up Afrikaans and in extending the language to more than a white language. Anastasia de Vries, writer and academic, language activist Willa Boezak and Prof. Wannie Carstens, linguist and co-writer of Die storie van Afrikaans: uit Europa en van Afrika, discussed these issues with Prof. Michael le Cordeur, Head of the Department of Curriculum Studies at the Faculty of Education of the Stellenbosch University.



The discourse series was complemented with book discussions. Amanda Botha, journalist, and writer, for example, interviewed Pieter-Dirk Uys about his memoires. In the discussion about writing about the Cape Flats, Heindrich Wyngaard spoke to Chase Rhys, Sylvia Walker and Charles Abrahams about the prepresetations of life on the Cape Flats in their own texts. Fatima and Gadija Sydow, writers of the book Kaap, Kerrie en Koesisters, then spoke to food fundi Anel Potgieter about their Cape dishes.

Archive

With this project the Jakes Gerwel Foundation would like to gather as many documents by and on the late Prof. Gerwel in one collection. This will make it easier for researchers and other stakeholders to access documents, whether they will be consulting them at Paulet House where the physical archive will be housed or online via the Foundation's website. This project has been launched in January 2020 with the experienced and respected archivist André Landman at the helm.

Songwriting Project

At the beginning of 2020, the Jakes Gerwel Foundation and the Suidoosterfees have initiated a mentorship programme for upcoming lyricists and songwriters who create original songs in Afrikaans, English or isiXhosa. This programme thus extends the existing Talent Search Competition of the Suidoosterfees aiming to find raw drama, song and dance talent in the Western Cape every year.





For this mentorship programme the Foundation and the Suidoosterfees are looking specifically for young artists who write new hit songs. Five promising young lyricists were selected by a panel of independent experts: Breyten Treurnicht, Brumelda Bell, Naaim Briesies, Nico Klopper and Gabriël Plaatjies.

Frazer Barry, well-known musician, writer, and lead singer of the group Tribal Echo, will act as mentor. Barry's popularity is rapidly growing in the Netherlands where he performed, for example, at the Festival voor het Afrikaans. He also created the soundtrack of the much talked about theatre piece Krotoa: Eva van de Kaap.



Not only will the upcoming artists receive guidance in creating and revising their lyrics, but they will also can collaborate with Barry on a production that will debut in 2021 at the Suidoosterfees. Diverse aspects of the entertainment industry, such as how to start out a career in music, how to record an album, how to network and how to find a niche in the market, will be addressed during the residency period.

DONORS & PARTNERSHIPS

Die Jakes Gerwel Foundation wishes to thank the following organisations for their contributions that made our projects possible during 2019:

Donors



Partnerships



"To survive, you must tell stories."

Umberto Eco

