

PRESS RELEASE

LITERARY DISTINCTION RECOGNISED

Two South African writers were recognised for literary distinction, Tuesday 24 November, at an evening event in Hong Kong, attended by a packed international group of well-wishers, book-lovers, and literary enthusiasts.

At the seventh annual international Proverse Prize Award and Book Launch, Founder Dr Verner Bickley, MBE presented school-teacher Celia Claase with a cash prize as one of two Winners of the 2014 Proverse Prize.

Claase's winning entry, *The Layers Between* (a collection of "fantasophical" essays and poems), was launched at the same event.

Gustav Preller, who flew in from South Africa to attend, and Lawrence Gray, Founding President of the Hong Kong Writers' Circle, who each entered a novel, were announced as Finalists in the 2015 Proverse Prize competition.

In his commentary on Claase's book, Gary Cummiskey wrote from Johannesburg: "Celia Claase's debut collection...takes one back to a moment even before the Big Bang to a present where the future is ultimately unknowable yet at the same time as close to us as our own inner layers of skin....Claase recognizes the interrelationship of the physical and metaphysical, the seen and the unseen....She has the ability to cut through the illusions of material gain, security and power....*The Layers Between* is the recognition of 'as above, so below', and the joyous, yet calm, realization that samsara is nirvana and nirvana is samsara."

All entrants were congratulated on their submissions, each a considerable achievement.

Previous now-published Proverse Prize winners have been well noticed, and one – Peter Gregoire's *Article 109* – became a Hong Kong best-seller. It is presently being translated into Japanese.

Two new honorary advisors to the Proverse Prize were announced, Peter Sidorko, University of Hong Kong Librarian and translator Margaret Clarke in Oxford, UK. They join Bahamian poet Marion Bethel; UK linguist & lexicographer David Crystal; Swedish linguist Björn Jernudd; Singapore poet Edwin Thumbo and Czech novelist & poet Olga Walló.

Founded by retired academic Dr Gillian Bickley and her husband, Dr Verner Bickley (Chairman of the English-Speaking Union (Hong Kong)), both writers themselves, the Proverse Prize is offered for an unpublished single-author book-length work of fiction, non-fiction, or poetry. Unusually for a literary prize, entry is open to all, eighteen years and over, with no distinction of nationality, citizenship, or residence.

Although entries for the Prize should be submitted in English, translations into English are warmly encouraged.

HR Manager, Philip Chatting, was the second Winner of the Proverse Prize 2014 for his *The Snow Bridge and Other Stories*. In his talk to the gathering, he emphasised the discipline required to complete a full-length book.

Both books are distributed internationally by the Chinese University of Hong Kong Press (Shatin) and are already available from their website, www.chineseupress.com and other online booksellers.

Those wishing to enter the competition in 2016 should check the website proversepublishing.com or join the Proverse E-Newsletter list by emailing info@proversepublishing.com.

Proverse Hong Kong
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