

The Nordic Africa Institute's Guest Writers Grant for 2010

The Nordic Africa Institute received an unprecedented 42 applications for the Guest Writer's Grant 2010. The applications came from all regions of Africa, as well as some from the diaspora in Europe and North America. Eight were from francophone writers, the rest were anglophone. This overwhelming response has made the work of the selection committee inspiring and challenging. A great number of deserving writers have applied. The Nordic Africa Institute would like to thank all applicants for contributing to the success of the Grant.

After much deliberation, the committee arrived at the following top ranking:

1. Brian James (Sierra Leone)
2. Chris Mlalazi (Zimbabwe)
3. John Eppel (Zimbabwe)
4. Bill Kouélany (Congo-Brazzaville)

Besides the literary quality of the submissions, important criteria for this decision have been 1) the ambition to give the Guest Writer's Grant a fair regional distribution across Africa (previous guest writers have come from Ghana, South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya) and 2) an assessment of how much the individual writer might benefit from the Guest Writer's Grant.

The committee's main arguments in favour of Brian James were that he is a skilful, up-and-coming story-teller with an acute sense of observation and a capacity for creating memorable images of terrifying as well as humorous events.

The selection committee consisted of the following persons: Stefan Helgesson (chair), Mai Palmberg, Kirsten Holst Petersen, Ashleigh Harris and Véronique Simon (special reader of francophone submissions).