

Poetry in McGregor returns with theme 'Garden of the Beloved'

The ninth annual Poetry in McGregor Festival will take place from 19 to 21 November, with 86 participating poets, 18 poetry reading events, three open mic sessions, 15 poets launching their books and the announcement of the winners of the poetry writing competition.



Set in the beautiful village of McGregor, this unique event brings together poets and poetry lovers from all over the country for a feast of the written word.

2021 theme: Garden of the Beloved

This year's festival will be featuring just over 80 poets performing in group events. Lara Kirsten, Malika Ndlovu, Danie Marais, Churchil Naudé, Susan Woodward, Diana Ferrus, Christine Coates, Justin Fox, Patricia Schonstein, Dimakatso Sedite, Lynthia Julius, Nondwe Mpuma, Jacques Coetzee and John Maytham, among other well-known as well as new, young poets, will be presenting their poetry at a handful of charming venues over the course of the weekend.

Some of the highlights on the programme include poems on this year's theme 'Garden of the Beloved', poets from the Dryad Press Living Poets Series in conversation with Michèle Betty, the new body of work from the Karavan Press Poets, Vier Seisoene in die Tuin van die Beminde with Mary Oliver, The Poetry in McGregor 2020 Anthology Launch, various book launches, open mic sessions and *Ons Klyntji Unite*, a multilingual zine celebrating poetry from all over Africa.

Local talent will also be showcased in 'Seeing beyond Words', a video of McGregor youth poets by Mark Chipps and Conny Mater.

New format

Poetry in McGregor festival coordinator, Jane de Sousa, says that it is a new format to group poets together.

“Less venues are easier to manage in terms of the strict covid-regulations that we will adhere to. We still wanted to invite as many poets as possible to participate and were thrilled that they were enthusiastic about sharing the stage. The programme offers an exciting mingling of hearts and minds. In the past, the sharing of poetry at this popular annual gathering has already created a wonderful sense of togetherness. Now, in this new format, it will feel both comfortable and supportive.”

Billy Kennedy, owner of Temenos Retreat and founder of the Poetry in McGregor Festival, says that he is frequently overwhelmed by the support and enthusiasm that everyone involved brings to this very special event every year.

“What perhaps touches me most about our festival, is not just the great success it has been over past years (in 2019 we had over 100 poets participating), but also its warmth and intimate atmosphere. It feels as if each year we welcome back family. And what a marvellous family it is! Talented, generous, mutually supportive, spontaneous and above all, passionate about their art.

“For this reason, The Garden of the Beloved was our chosen theme for 2021. Besides celebrating the beautiful environment in which we meet, we are also celebrating the richness of one’s relationships and the deep awareness of one’s outer and inner life.”



Open Book Festival returns with a podcast series this November

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Ashley Dowds, MC and participating poet at this year's Poetry Festival has been part of this special annual event for many years. He says that it is well worth it for anyone to attend the weekend event: “By journeying to a place where poetry is held up to the light for a few days; the *act* of doing that has the intention of engaging with life, distilled into reflective shards that you take home with you, waiting to discover how they fit together. They may not immediately, but they create an arc across

so many deep levels of imagination and truth, that the journey becomes a pilgrimage.”

For the full programme, tickets and more information visit: www.poetryinmcgregor.co.za.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>