



Black Mountain Institute

News and Events

From Apartheid to Darfur: Africa's Struggle Against Disdain

14 August 2007

The Black Mountain Institute announces the first event in its 2007-2008 Forum on Contemporary Cultures series. Preeminent Nigerian novelists Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Chris Abani, exiled writer Chenjerai Hove of Zimbabwe, and Zambian memoirist Alexandra Fuller join Nobel Laureate and BMI Senior Fellow Wole Soyinka to explore the myriad challenges facing Africa today: Why do despots continue to gain and remain in power? Has the legacy of colonialism permanently impaired pan-African unity? To what extent are Africans themselves responsible for solving the continent's seemingly intractable problems? And how should Western nations be held accountable for the war, famine, and genocide that continue to rage?

The event will be held Tuesday, September 11 at 7 p.m. in the Doc Rando Recital Hall of the Beam Music Center. Call 895-5542 for more information.

About the Panel

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie was born in Nigeria in 1977. Her first novel, *Purple Hibiscus*, won the Commonwealth Writers' Prize and the Hurston/Wright Legacy Award. It was also short-listed for the Orange Prize and the John Llewellyn Rhys Prize. *Half of a Yellow Sun*, her second novel, won the Orange Broadband Prize for Fiction. Her short fiction has appeared in *Granta* and *The Iowa Review*, among other literary journals, and she received an O. Henry Prize in 2003. Adichie was a 2005-2006 Hodder Fellow at Princeton and is presently pursuing graduate work in the African Studies program at Yale. She divides her time between the United States and Nigeria.

Chris Abani was born in Afikpo, Nigeria in 1966 and imprisoned and tortured twice for novels he had written that the Nigerian government regarded as subversive. His fiction includes *The Virgin of Flames*, *GraceLand*, *Masters of the Board*, and the novellas, *Becoming Abigail* and *Song for Night*. His poetry collections are *Hands Washing Water*, *Dog Woman*, *Daphne's Lot*, and *Kalakuta Republic*. He is the recipient of the PEN USA Freedom-to-Write Award, the Prince Claus Award, a Lannan Literary Fellowship, a Cali-

ifornia Book Award, a Hurston/Wright Legacy Award, and the PEN Hemingway Book Prize. Abani teaches creative writing at the University of California, Riverside.

Born in 1954 near Zvishavane, Zimbabwe, **Chenjerai Hove** is the author of four novels: *Bones*, *Shadows*, *Ancestors*, and, in his native Shona, *Masimba Avanhuzi* (*Is This the People's Power?*). He also has written three volumes of poetry, books of essays, and articles as a freelance journalist. Widely regarded as a leading figure of post-colonial Zimbabwean literature, he has been the recipient of honors including a 1987 Zimbabwe Writing Award, a 1989 Noma Award for Publishing in Africa, and a 2001 German-Afrika Award for contributing to freedom of expression through his work as a newspaper columnist. He was a founder and board member of the Zimbabwe Human Rights Association, and from 1984 to 1992 was president of the Zimbabwe Writers Union. A critic of the policies of the Mugabe government, Hove has lived in exile since 2001.

Alexandra Fuller was born in England in 1969 and in 1972 she moved with her family to a farm in Rhodesia. After that country's civil war in 1981, the Fullers moved first to Malawi, then to Zambia. Fuller's first book, *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight: An African Childhood*, was a national bestseller, a New York Times Notable Book of 2002, and a finalist for the Guardian First Book Award and was chosen the BookSense Best Nonfiction Book of the Year 2002. Her follow-up, *Scribbling the Cat: Travels with an African Soldier*, won the Lettre Ulysses Award for the Art of Reportage in 2005. Her articles and book reviews have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times Book Review*, *Vogue*, and *National Geographic*.

Wole Soyinka was the first African to win the Nobel Prize for Literature, in 1986. The author of some 20 plays, seven novels and several collections of poetry, he has also been an outspoken critic of Nigerian despots since the 1960s and mediated between indigenous people and oil companies in the Niger Delta. His latest work, a memoir, is *You Must Set Forth at Dawn*. Formerly the Ghanem Chair in Creative Writing at UNLV, he is now a Senior Fellow with the Black Mountain Institute.
