Specimen.
The Babel Review of Translations.

To Speak Europe in Different Languages.
Hybrid and collective writing competition

To Speak Europe in Different Languages

European history is made of constant flows of people, crossings, fragmentations, the digging of trenches as well as of tunnels. Most of what's European is a mix resulting from such exchanges. Yet, nativism and identity-driven polarisations are on the rise.

Compared to ethnic, religious or class-related divides, language seems to be less controversial. People claim to belong to one language, when in reality many are exposed to local or oral dimensions as well as, in migrations, to language as revival or survival. In many cases, the relationship with the mother tongue is ambiguous.

It is therefore intriguing to consider the lack of clear-cut divisions between languages, and to explore hybridisation as opposed to purity, nativity or hierarchy: hybridisation between languages, between written and oral forms, between genres, between the norm and the exception. The language of Europe is translation, and hybrid are its dialects.

Hybrid and collective writing competition

Specimen. The Babel Review of Translations, in collaboration with the Asmara-Addis Literary Festival (In Exile), and thanks to the support of the European Cultural Foundation, launches To Speak Europe in Different Languages. Hybrid and collective writing competition.

This prize aims at recognising the wounds and wonders of language, in order to endorse and enhance the border-crossing, category-defying qualities of our contemporary world.

To Speak Europe in Different Languages. Hybrid and collective writing competition prompts every speaker to be part of a linguistic minority: we'll do this by inviting people to feel entitled to their linguistic localism or personal idiolect, and at the same time to connect with those who live very different lives and yet might share similar doubts and gifts.

Only the multiplication of minorities can form a true majority.

Key info

The prize is officially launched on Thursday 27 February 2020 during the second edition of the Asmara-Addis Literary Festival (In Exile).

Closing date for entry: June 1, 2020.

The award ceremony will take place in September 2020, at Babel, Festival of literature and translation, Bellinzona, Switzerland.

The winner will receive 2,000 Euros.

The winner will be invited to the award ceremony at the Babel Festival.

The shortlisted texts will be published on www.specimen.press, translated into several new languages.

The texts must be submitted in digital form to: info@specimen.press.

Eligibility	1) The submitted texts can be written in any language, but must be accompanied by a translation into one of the Focus languages: Amharic, Arabic, English, Somali, Tigrinya. The shortlisted texts will be read and judged both in the original and the translation. The Focus languages are chosen in order to subvert and eradicate the dominance of one language or form over another. Some of the Focus languages will change each year.

2) The submitted texts must have a Europe-related theme, or be set in Europe.

3) The submitted texts must satisfy at least one of these hybridisations:

- linguistic hybridisation: it can be of any shape or form, involving a mix of languages, registers or dialects;

- human hybridisation: the texts must be written in collective ways, either people working on the text together, or involving fieldwork, interviews, archival material, etc., in order to touch upon multiple strata of society and elements of reality. The way such experiences and procedures become language and are expressed in written form is paramount;

- genre hybridisation: the texts can be prose or poetry, essay or narrative, but they all should, in fact, be more than one of these things alone, in order to overcome clear-cut literary definitions and question the categories related to writing as well as to reading.

4) The submitted texts can be published or unpublished; each person can submit one text only.

5) The submitted text must be accompanied by a short description (300 words max) of how the texts meet the required guidelines on hybridisation.

6) The word limit is 2,000 words.

Judging panel	The prize is run by Eritrean-Ethiopian-British novelist, Sulaiman Addonia, founder of the nomadic Asmara-Addis Literary Festival (In Exile).

The judging panel for the inaugural prize will be composed of five writers who embody, in different ways, the prize's ethos.

The jury's verdict is final and unobjectionable.

About the founders	Specimen. The Babel Review of Translations is a multilingual web-magazine that publishes fiction, non-fiction, frictions and poetry, and especially their combinations and mixtures, in the original language and in an ever-growing number of translations into other languages and alphabets. Enjoying the ebb and flow of different alphabets, Specimen aims to bring the typographical care of the written page to the internet, and to respect the slower pace that this care requires. The magazine employs the outreach of the world-wide web to contrast blanket globalization, explore the world's diversities, and nurture the continuous exchanges between languages, places and voices.

The Asmara-Addis Literary Festival (In Exile), founded by Eritrean-Ethiopian-British author, Sulaiman Addonia, is a vagabond international literary festival with pan-African roots, which was launched in 2019 in Brussels. It aims to be an international home for ideas that migrate freely and boldly in borderless literary landscapes, and one that reflects and celebrates our societies not as censored but as they exist in reality, with all their diversity, trouble and beauty.

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