

ON BABNIK'S WORK

"[The novel Dry Season] brings us to think about one of the most delicate topics of the last decade: considering all western actions and prejudice of destructive determination of the Islamic world, Gabriela Babnik's narrative tackles the important question: which world is more limited by its own determinism, theirs or ours?"

JASNA VOMBEK, Literatura

"Dry Season is a story telling us that when we arrive to a point where we have always longed to be, we only want to return; it is about the eternal conflict between the fantasy of Home and the fantasy of Away."

IVA KOSMOS, Dnevnik

"In Tall Grass is a novel written in a highly metaphorical language, sketching a seemingly stereotypical environment of normal people as a setting of real life dramas."

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"The reader follows the story of Lidija's life, determined by her subjective bias that leads to a surprising although carefully built-up conclusion. In Tall Grass is written in an elaborated style with rich and innovative symbolic and a strong emotional component."

TINA BILBAN, Bukla

"He is from Burkina Faso, she is from Ljubljana, he is dark, her skin is of the color of rice. They meet, they fall in love, he comes to Slovenia and feels cold. The story is told by him, a stranger in town. About the relationship that is complicated because it is a long-distance relationship, because there are comings and goings. That is complicated because it reaches between cultures, between races. But still a story that doesn't break stereotypes but reinforces them. Cotton Skin is the best Slovenian contribution to African literature."

MATEJA HRASTAR, Mladina

JAK

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GABRIELA
BABNIK



Gabriela Babnik

Gabriela Babnik (1979) regularly contributes literature reviews, essays, travelogues, interviews and commentaries for different publications in Slovenia. She received the Stritar Award for her literary criticism in 2013. She holds a Master's Degree in Comparative Literature from the University of Ljubljana with a dissertation on the contemporary Nigerian novel. She writes political comments on African issues for Slovene daily newspaper Delo. She is author of three novels. Her debut novel *Cotton Skin (Koža iz bombaža, 2007)* portrays the meeting of European and African cultures and is one of the most significant Slovene novels dealing with

Africa. The novel won the Best Debut Novel Award in 2007. She adapted the novel for a radio play and was one of three nominees for the Best Adapted Drama Award at the *Prix Italia* in 2011. Her second novel *In the Tall Grass (V visoki travi, 2009)* focuses on the female protagonist from a typical rural Slovene background. It was short listed for the Kresnik Award, the highest national literary award for best novel in 2010. Her third novel *Dry Season (Sušna doba, 2012)* continues the path of introducing interactions and cultural clashes between Europe and Africa. With her third novel, she won the EU Prize for literature in 2013.

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Študentska založba, 2012

Dry Season

Gabriela Babnik's third novel *Dry Season (Sušna doba, 2012)* won the 2013 European Union Prize for Literature. The novel is a record of an unusual love affair. Anna is a sixty-two-year-old designer from Central Europe and Ismael is a twenty-seven-year-old African who was brought up on the street where he was often the victim of abuse. What unites them is the loneliness of their bodies, a tragic childhood and the dry season or Harmattan, during which neither nature nor love is able to flourish. She soon realizes that the emptiness between them is not

really instituted by their skin colour and age difference, but predominantly by her belonging to the Western culture in which she has lost or abandoned all the preordained roles of daughter, wife and mother. Sex does not outstrip the loneliness and repressed secrets from the past surface into a world she sees as much crueler and at the same time more innocent than her own. "Cleverly written as an alternating narrative of both sides in the relationship, the novel is interlaced with magical realism and accurately perceived fragments of African political reality."

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Sušna doba (Dry Season), Študentska založba, 2011



V visoki travi (In the Tall Grass), Študentska založba, 2009



Koža iz bombaža (Cotton Skin), Cankarjeva založba, 2007