



PEN/VIDA count announced to monitor gender disparity in the literary arts worldwide

26 September 2018 - PEN International and [VIDA: Women in Literary Arts](#) announced today a new collaboration, the PEN VIDA Count, to monitor gender disparities in literature through PEN Centres across the globe. The VIDA count highlights imbalances in publishing by collecting data across genre, book reviews and journalistic by-lines, offering a gender-based assessment of the publishing world.

'This is a very special moment for furthering women's representation in literature, in a way that can bring about real change and equality. When we do not hear the voices and stories of women, it is not only women who suffer, but society. I am proud of this collaboration and hope that very soon we will see the impact of this work in every page we turn.' – said Jennifer Clement, President of PEN International.

The VIDA count, carried out annually in the United States since 2010 has already affected change in the publishing industry by using concrete data to demonstrate the huge gap in representation between men and women in the literary world. The PEN/VIDA count will build on PEN's own advocacy work through its [Women Writers Committee](#), which was established in 1991, as well as the recently launched [Women's Manifesto](#) that aims to protect free expression for women by combating and eliminating the silencing of women worldwide.

Using the VIDA methodology, PEN Centres will start to provide a global perspective on gender disparity in the literary arts; including the way it can affect the life of a writer through review and exposure, access to publishing circles and contracts, the size of advances, and other ways that women writers are set apart.

'VIDA is very proud to partner with PEN International to support women writers worldwide through this initiative. While we recognize there is no singular formula for affecting change, as the barriers to access that women writers face worldwide vary greatly, we believe this work will initiate and foster important conversations and, over time, pave the way for opportunities for women writers in many countries. We congratulate and thank the PEN Centres willing to undertake this project, and are eager to see what each Count will reveal.' - **Sara Iacovelli, VIDA Count Director**

Note to editors:

PEN International promotes literature and freedom of expression and is governed by the PEN Charter and the principles it embodies: unhampered transmission of thought within each nation and between all nations. Founded in London in 1921, PEN International – PEN's Secretariat – connects an international community of writers. It is a forum where writers meet freely to discuss their work; it is also a voice speaking out for writers silenced in their own countries. Through Centres in over 100 countries, PEN operates on five continents. PEN International is a non-political organisation which holds Special Consultative Status at the UN and Associate Status at UNESCO. PEN International is a registered charity in England and Wales with registration number 1117088

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