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RSL ONDAATJE PRIZE 2022 LONGLIST ANNOUNCED

The Royal Society of Literature (RSL), the voice for the value of literature in the UK, has today unveiled the longlist for the 2022 RSL Ondaatje Prize. An annual prize of £10,000, the RSL Ondaatje Prize is awarded by the RSL to an outstanding work of fiction, non-fiction or poetry that best evokes the spirit of a place.

Twenty-one authors make up this year's longlist, chosen by judges **Patrice Lawrence**, Chair **Sandeep Parmar** and **Philippe Sands**.

The 2022 RSL Ondaatje Longlist is:

Hester Barron & Claire Langhamer, *Class of '37* (John Blake)

Polly Barton, *Fifty Sounds* (Fifty Sounds)

A.K. Blakemore, *The Manningtree Witches* (Granta)

Kirsty Capes, *Careless* (Orion Fiction)

Sonia Faleiro, *The Good Girls: An Ordinary Killing* (Bloomsbury Circus)

Cal Flynn, *Islands of Abandonment: Life in the Post-Human Landscape* (William Collins)

Sabba Khan, *The Roles We Play* (Myriad Editions)

Jake Morris-Campbell, *Corrigenda for Costafine Town* (Blue Diode Press)

Rebecca Netley, *The Whistling* (Michael Joseph)

Yousif M. Qasmiyeh, *Writing the Camp* (Broken Sleep Books)

Jane Rogoyska, *Surviving Katyn: Stalin's Polish Massacre and the Search for Truth*
(Oneworld)

Leone Ross, *This One Sky Day* (Faber)

Sunjeev Sahota, *China Room* (Harvill Secker)

Sathnam Sanghera, *Empireland* (Viking)

Julian Sayerer, *Iberia* (Fox, Finch & Tepper Ltd)

Anita Sethi, *I Belong Here* (Bloomsbury Wildlife)

Elif Shafak, *The Island of Missing Trees* (Penguin)

Stephanie Sy-Quia, *Amnion* (Granta Poetry)

Joelle Taylor, *C+nto & Othered Poems* (The Westbourne Press)

Lea Ypi, *Free* (Allen Lane)

Sandeep Parmar, Chair of the RSL Ondaatje Prize judging panel for 2022 says: *“From seventeenth-century witch trials in England to a massacre in wartime Poland, the traumatic displacements of a Lebanese refugee camp to the deep scars of Empire on Britain, these, and the other longlisted books, take place to mean both geographical space and the imagined realities of being in the world. Every book teaches us something about how we carry the spirit of place within us across the breach of history through the perils of forgetting.”*

First awarded in 2004, the premise and broad remit of the prize creates unique lists of outstanding works and authors that you would not usually find sitting side by side. Previous recipients of the prize have included **Aida Edemariam, Ruth Gilligan, Alan Johnson, Hisham Matar, Pascale Petit, Roger Robinson, Francis Spufford, Edmund de Waal, and Louisa Waugh.**

The RSL Ondaatje Prize is one of 10 annual awards and prizes presented by the RSL, which bring the widest possible community of writers and readers together in celebration of the breadth of literature today. From debut works and unpublished short stories, through to the notoriously challenging second novel and outstanding contributions to literature, the RSL’s awards and prizes celebrate the value of the written word in all its forms, whilst supporting emerging and established writers at both the beginning and at some of the most challenging moments of their careers. The RSL’s other annual awards and prizes are: **RSL International Writers awards, Companions of Literature, the Encore Award, the RSL Christopher Bland Prize, the RSL Giles St Aubyn Awards for Non-Fiction, the V.S. Pritchett Short Story Prize, the RSL Literature Matters Awards, the Sky Arts RSL Writers Awards and the Benson Medal.**

The 2022 RSL Ondaatje Prize Shortlist will be announced on Wednesday 20 April and the winner will be announced on 4 May at Two Temple Place.

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Notes to Editors

The Royal Society of Literature (RSL)

Founded in 1820, the Royal Society of Literature is the UK’s charity for the advancement of literature. The RSL acts as a voice for the value of literature, engages people in appreciating literature, and encourages and honours writers. <https://rsliterature.org/>

The RSL Ondaatje Prize is an annual award of £10,000 for a distinguished work of fiction, non-fiction or poetry, best evoking the spirit of a place. The RSL is grateful to Sir Christopher Ondaatje for sponsoring the Prize.

Past Winners

2021 Ruth Gilligan

The Butchers

2020	Roger Robinson	<i>A Portable Paradise</i>
2019	Aida Edemariam	<i>The Wife's Tale: A Personal History</i>
2018	Pascale Petit	<i>Mama Amazonica</i>
2017	Francis Spufford	<i>Golden Hill</i>
2016	Peter Pomerantsev	<i>Nothing Is True and Everything Is Possible: The Surreal Heart of the New Russia</i>
2015	Justin Marozzi	<i>Baghdad: City of Peace, City of Blood</i>
2014	Alan Johnson	<i>This Boy: A Memoir of Childhood</i>
2013	Philip Hensher	<i>Scenes from Early Life</i>
2012	Rahul Bhattacharya	<i>The Sly Company of People Who Care</i>
2011	Edmund de Waal	<i>The Hare with Amber Eyes</i>
2010	Ian Thomson	<i>The Dead Yard: Tales of Modern Jamaica</i>
2009	Adam Nicolson	<i>Sissinghurst: An Unfinished History</i>
2008	Graham Robb	<i>The Discovery of France</i>
2007	Hisham Matar	<i>In the Country of Men</i>
2006	James Meek	<i>The People's Act of Love</i>
2005	Rory Stewart	<i>The Places In Between</i>
2004	Louisa Waugh	<i>Hearing Birds Fly</i>

Author Biographies

Hester Barron is Senior Lecturer in History at the University of Sussex. She teaches and writes about working-class life, childhood, schooling and education. Her first book, *The 1926 Miners' Lockout*, is a history of the coalfield communities of Durham, where she grew up. She now lives in the South Downs.

Polly Barton is a Japanese literary translator. Her translations include *Where the Wild Ladies Are* by Aoko Matsuda, *There's No Such Thing as an Easy Job* by Kikuko Tsumura, and *Spring Garden* by Tomoka Shibasaki. She won the 2019 Fitzcarraldo Editions Essay Prize for *Fifty Sounds*. She lives in Bristol.

A.K. Blakemore is the author of two full-length collections of poetry: *Humbert Summer* and *Fondue*, which was awarded the 2019 Ledbury Forte Prize for Best Second Collection. She has also translated the work of Sichuanese poet Yu Yoyo (*My Tenantless Body*). Her poetry and prose writing has been widely published and anthologised, appearing in the *The London Review of Books*, *Poetry*, *Poetry Review* and *The White Review*, among others.

Kirsty Capes works in publishing and is an advocate for better representation for care-experienced people in the media. She holds a PhD from Brunel University London; her thesis investigates representations of the care experience in contemporary British fiction, and was completed under the supervision of 2019 Booker prize-winner, Bernardine Evaristo. Her first novel, *Careless*, was longlisted for the Women's Prize 2022. *Love Me, Love Me Not* is her second novel. She lives in Slough with her golden retriever, Doug.

Sonia Faleiro is the author of *Beautiful Thing: Inside the Secret World of Bombay's Dance Bars*, which was named a book of the year by *the Guardian*, *The Observer*, *The Sunday Times*, *Economist* and *Time Out* and a novella, *The Girl*. She is a co-founder of Deca, a cooperative of award-winning writers that created narrative journalism about the world. Her writing and photographs appear in *the New York Times*, *Financial Times*, *Granta*, *1843*, *Harper's Bazaar* and *MIT Technology Review*. She lives in London.

Cal Flynn is an author and journalist from the Highlands of Scotland. Previously she has been a reporter for both The Sunday Times and The Daily Telegraph, and a contributing editor at The Week magazine. Cal holds a MA in Experimental Psychology from Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford. Her first book, *Thicker Than Water*, was a *The Times* book of the year and dealt with the colonisation of Australia and questions of inherited guilt.

Sabba Khan is a visual artist, graphic novelist and architectural designer living in Newham, East London. An extract from *The Roles We Play* was shortlisted by the Myriad First Graphic Novel Competition 2018, and her work supported by Jerwood Arts. She explores what identity, belonging and memory mean for her family in the British Pakistani diaspora.

Claire Langhamer is Director of the Institute of Historical Research, University of London, and a Trustee of the Mass Observation Archive. Her work is about ordinary people's feelings and experiences; her books include *The English in Love*. She grew up in Yorkshire, studied in Lancashire and now lives in Brighton.

Jake Morris-Campbell is from South Shields. *Corrigenda for Costafine Town* is his first collection of poetry. Selected by the BBC as a New Generation Thinker, he regularly appears on Radio 3 programmes. He is an Assistant Lecturer in Creative Writing at Newcastle University and a freelance writer, critic and tutor.

Rebecca Netley grew up as part of an eccentric family in a house full of books and music, and these things have fed her passions. Family and writing remain at the heart of Rebecca's life. She lives in Reading with her husband, sons and an over-enthusiastic dog, who gives her writing tips. *The Whistling* is Rebecca Netley's debut novel.

Yousif M. Qasmiyeh was born and educated in Baddawi refugee camp. Yousif is a poet and translator whose doctoral research at the University of Oxford examines containment and the archive in 'refugee writing'. Time, the body, and ruination inform his poetry and prose, which have appeared in journals including *Modern Poetry in Translation*, *Stand*, *Critical Quarterly*, *GeoHumanities*, *Cambridge Literary Review* and *Humanities*. Yousif is the Creative Encounters Editor of the *Migration and Society* journal, and his collection, *Writing the Camp* was The Poetry Book Society's Recommendation for Spring 2021.

Jane Rogoyska is the acclaimed author of *Gerda Taro: Inventing Robert Capa*. She has a particular interest in the turbulent period from the 1930s to the Cold War in Europe. Her research into the Katyń Massacre led to her first novel, *Kozłowski* (long-listed for the Desmond Elliott Prize) and *Still Here: A Polish Odyssey*, which she wrote and presented for BBC Radio 4.

Leone Ross was born in England and grew up in Jamaica. Her first novel, *All the Blood Is Red*, was longlisted for the Orange Prize, and her second, *Orange Laughter*, was chosen as a BBC Radio 4 *Woman's Hour* Watershed Fiction favourite. Her short fiction has been widely anthologised and her first short-story collection, *Come Let Us Sing Anyway*, was nominated for the Edge Hill Short Story Prize, the Jhalak Prize, the Saboteur Awards and the OCM BOCAS Prize. Ross has taught creative writing for twenty years, at University College Dublin, Cardiff University and Roehampton University in London. She is editor of the first Black British anthology of speculative fiction, due out in 2022 with Peepal Tree Press. Prior to writing fiction, Ross worked as a journalist. She lives in London but intends to retire near water.

Sunjeev Sahota is the author of *Ours Are the Streets* and *The Year of the Runaways*, which was shortlisted for the 2015 Man Booker Prize, the International Dylan Thomas Prize and the Sunday Times Young Writer of the Year Award, and won the Encore Award, the European Union Prize for

Literature, and the South Bank Sky Arts Award. He was chosen as one of Granta's Best Young British Novelists in 2013 and elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature in 2018 as part of the 40 Under 40 programme. He lives in Sheffield.

Sathnam Sanghera was born to Punjabi immigrant parents in Wolverhampton in 1976. He entered the education system unable to speak English but went on to graduate from Christ's College, Cambridge with a first-class degree in English Language and Literature. He has been shortlisted for the Costa Book Awards twice, and once for the Baillie Gifford Prize for Non-Fiction. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature.

Julian Sayerer is an inveterate adventurer and previous holder of the world record for circumnavigating the world by bicycle. His works weave politics and human connections into narratives of epic journeys. He is a past fellow of the Royal Literary Fund and a recipient of the Stanford Dolman Book of the Year for *Interstate*, a depiction of an unseen USA.

Anita Sethi was born in Manchester, UK and has been published in anthologies including *Common People* and *The Seasons*. Her writing has appeared in *the Guardian*, *The Observer*, *New Statesman* and *BBC Wildlife*, and broadcasting credits include BBC Radio 4's *Open Book* and *Today programme*, and Sky News.

Elif Shafak is an award-winning British-Turkish novelist whose work has been translated into 55 languages. The author of 19 books, she is a bestselling author in many countries around the world. Her most recent novel, *The Island of Missing Trees*, is longlisted for the Women's Prize for Fiction. She is a Vice-President of the Royal Society of Literature.

Stephanie Sy-Quia was born in 1995 in California and now lives in London. She studied English at Oxford and currently works as a freelance journalist. Her writing has appeared in the *FT Weekend*, the *TLS*, *the Economist*, *The Spectator* and *TANK* magazine, and has twice been shortlisted for the FT Bodley Head Essay prize.

Joelle Taylor is an award-winning poet, playwright and author. A former UK slam champion, she founded SLAMBassadors, the UK's youth slam championships, in 2001 and was its Artistic Director and National Coach until 2018. Taylor is a fellow of the RSA and the host and co-curator of Out-Spoken, the UK's premier poetry and music club, currently resident at the Southbank Centre. Taylor is the author of three poetry collections, including *C+nto & Othered Poems*, which won the T. S. Eliot Prize 2021.

Lea Ypi is Professor of Political Theory at the London School of Economics, and Political Science and Adjunct Professor in Philosophy at the Australian National University. A native of Albania, she has degrees in Philosophy and in Literature from the University of Rome La Sapienza, a PhD from the European University Institute, and was a Post-Doctoral Prize Research Fellow at Nuffield College, Oxford University. Her work has been recognised with several prizes such as the British Academy Prize for Excellence in Political Science and the Leverhulme Prize for Outstanding Research Achievement. She speaks six languages and lives in London. *Free* is her first trade book.