

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release



**The Royal Society
of Literature**

40 new Fellows under 40: RSL to welcome new generation of writers

In 2018, a group of 40 authors aged under 40 will be made Fellows of the Royal Society of Literature. Unprecedented in the RSL's 197-year-history, the initiative will honour the achievements of Britain's younger writers, and bring different perspectives into the Society's existing Fellowship of over 500.

For the first time, too, the RSL is inviting recommendations from outside the Society. Publishers, agents, literary and cultural organisations are encouraged to put forward names of writers under 40 for consideration. To be eligible, a writer must have published two works of outstanding literary merit, or equivalent, in any literary form. The recommendations will be assessed by a panel of RSL Fellows chaired by Man Booker Prize longlisted novelist Kamila Shamsie.

'As someone who became an RSL Fellow a couple of years shy of my 40th birthday I know what a boost the Fellowship affords to younger writers. There is nothing quite like being recognised by other writers and asked to join their ranks.

On the other side of the equation, finding a group of younger writers of quality is an exciting part of the growth and renewed vigour of the RSL.'

Kamila Shamsie FRSL, Chair of Panel

Recommendation of new Fellows

We are seeking recommendations for writers, under the age of 40, of diverse literary forms, including writers of drama, fiction, graphic fiction, non-fiction, poetry and screenplays. Those who wish to recommend a writer for Fellowship as part of the 40 Under 40 project should complete the **recommendation form** available from **www.rsliterature.org**

To be considered for Fellowship a writer must:

- have had published in the United Kingdom at least **two substantial works** (or a sufficient body of other work) in the English language considered by the nominating panel and Council to be of outstanding literary merit
- be under the age of 40 at **30 June 2018**
- be a citizen of or resident in United Kingdom at the time of recommendation

Closing date for recommendations is Saturday 30 September 2017

The selected 40 writers will be elected by the RSL Council. The 40 Under 40 Fellows will be announced at a special event in Spring 2018, where they will sign the Society's historic Roll Book with T S Eliot's or Byron's pen.

Press should contact

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Notes to editors

The Royal Society of Literature

Founded in 1820, the RSL is Britain's national charity for the advancement of literature. We **encourage and honour great writers** through our Fellowship and awards and prizes; **engage people in appreciating literature** through our public events, schools outreach programme and biannual magazine, *RSL Review* and **act as a national voice for the value of literature** through a number of new 'Literature Matters' projects, including events, awards and a digital hub. Working towards its bicentenary in 2020, the RSL's 'Literature Matters' programme will explore how, why and to whom literature matters. rsliterature.org

Fellowship of the Royal Society of Literature

Fellowship of the RSL is a unique lifetime literary honour. It has been awarded to great writers since the foundation of the RSL in 1820.

A writer is eligible for Fellowship when they have published at least two works (or a sufficient body of other work) of outstanding literary merit, in any form, and has been nominated confidentially by at least two existing Fellows. Nominations are put to a secret ballot of our governing Council, President and Vice-Presidents.

Fellows of the RSL can nominate writers to be considered for Fellowship, stand for election to the RSL's governing Council, and attend RSL events for free. Fellows also have the opportunity to contribute to the RSL's public events, biannual magazine or literary awards, and help the RSL to develop new activities.

The RSL's custom has been to elect 15 new Fellows a year, maintaining the total Fellowship at around 500. But in 2018, as well as 40 new Fellows under the age of 40, we will be electing 30 new Fellows, as well as Honorary Fellows (those who have made a significant contribution to the advancement of literature other than by their own writing, e.g. publishers).

Working towards its 2020 bicentenary, the RSL is excited to be introducing so many new voices to its Fellowship.

A list of current Fellows is available from:
<https://rsliterature.org/fellows/current-fellows/>