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RSL ONDAATJE PRIZE 2022 SHORTLIST ANNOUNCED

The Royal Society of Literature (RSL), the voice for the value of literature in the UK, has today unveiled the shortlist 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.

There are six authors on the shortlist, chosen from twenty-one on this year's longlist. Authors were selected by judges **Patrice Lawrence**, Chair **Sandeep Parmar** and **Philippe Sands**.

The 2022 RSL Ondaatje shortlist is:

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

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

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

Sathnam Sanghera, *Empireland* (Viking)

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

Lea Ypi, *Free* (Allen Lane)

A.K. Blakemore said: *"I am absolutely honoured that The Manningtree Witches has been shortlisted for the RSL Ondaatje Prize, one of the most exciting and eclectic awards I know of. I'm so pleased the judges enjoyed my evocation of a liminal little corner of Essex, and congratulate all the other authors."*

Cal Flynn said: *"Expressing a sense of place—or, in the prize's beautiful phrase, 'the spirit of a place'—is an element of writing that I have sweated over and think a great deal about. So I am just over the moon to have been shortlisted for the RSL Ondaatje Prize. I can't thank the judges and the Royal Society of Literature enough."*

Yousif M. Qasmiyeh said *“In the refugee camp, the spirit of the place does not only belong to the camp itself, but also, and always, to places that lie before and after the camp. It is a huge honour for Writing the Camp to be shortlisted for the 2022 RSL Ondaatje Prize and for refugees and their places, wherever they are, to be recognised in their own right.”*

Sathnam Sanghera said *“For me, Empireland is as much of a campaign as a book - an effort to get this country and educators to wake up to its imperial history. And a blue-chip shortlisting like this makes a real difference.”*

Elif Shafak said *“I am utterly thrilled and honoured to be shortlisted for the RSL Ondaatje Prize. A sense of place in literature, as in life, is always much more than a location, a landscape or a setting for a story. Place, for me, is primarily about memory, identity, belonging, migration; it is about being rooted, deracinated and finding new roots. Place is both home and exile.”*

Lea Ypi said *“I am delighted and honoured to be on the shortlist for the RSL Ondaatje Prize. I also very much hope that evoking the spirit of Albania will inspire readers of FREE to visit the country!”*

The 2022 RSL Ondaatje Prize 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 Sayarer, *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)

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 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	<i>The Butchers</i>
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>

Author Biographies

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.