FRANCIS SPUFFORD ANNOUNCED AS WINNER OF THE 2022 ENCORE AWARD FOR LIGHT PERPETUAL

The Royal Society of Literature (RSL), the voice for the value of literature in the UK, has today announced Francis Spufford as the winner of the 2022 Encore Award for Light Perpetual (Faber & Faber), a tender, endlessly inventive novel that resurrects five children killed in a wartime bomb-blast and asks what kind of a future these working-class youths would have had. The annual Encore Award of £10,000 celebrates outstanding achievements in second novels.

Francis Spufford said: ‘I’m unusually old for a second-time novelist, having taken so long to get up my courage to write fiction – but that makes me all the more grateful, and all the more heartened, for the vote of confidence the Encore Award represents. It’s a beacon for writers of any age who are negotiating the tricky territory that follows a first book. It’s a call to...’
persist, as you discover how rich and how plural the art is in which you're taking your second step.'

This year’s judges, Sian Cain, Nikesh Shukla and Paul Muldoon, said: 'If the defining characteristic of fiction is “making it up,” Francis Spufford’s Light Perpetual is a triumph in the form. Opening with an actual V-2 attack on the New Cross Road branch of Woolworths in 1944 that killed 168 people, Spufford invents five children and imagines their lives as if they did not die that day, telling their alternative histories through the 20th century. This version of "what might have been" affords us memorable and moving insights into what we have come to think of as our own reality. Light Perpetual is a bold and poignant novel, one that encourages the reader to fully comprehend that the lives of others, even people they have not and will never meet, are as vivid and filled with meaning as their own; a remarkable work of empathy. This is an assured second novel from Spufford, who has fast become one of Britain's most exciting fiction writers after his debut Golden Hill. It is a great pleasure to award this novel the Encore, and to wonder at what he might write next.'

Francis Spufford is the author of five highly-praised works of non-fiction. His debut novel Golden Hill won the Costa First Novel Award, the RSL Ondaatje Prize and the Desmond Elliott Prize. Light Perpetual was longlisted for the 2021 Booker Prize. In 2007 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. He teaches writing at Goldsmiths College, University of London, and lives near Cambridge.

The Encore Award was first presented in 1990 to celebrate the achievement of outstanding second novels. The Award fills a niche in the catalogue of literary prizes. The RSL has administrated the award since 1996.

The Encore Award 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 writing in all its forms, whilst supporting emerging and established writers 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 RSL Ondaatje Prize, 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.

For further information and press enquiries relating to the Encore Award, please contact Clair Chamberlain at Bread and Butter PR
clair@breadandbutterpr.uk | 07957 272 534

Notes to Editors

The Royal Society of Literature (RSL)
Founded in 1820, the RSL acts as a voice for the value of literature, honouring and supporting emerging and established writers whilst creating a bridge between authors and audiences to engage as many people as possible with the breadth of UK literature. [https://rsliterature.org/](https://rsliterature.org/)

The Encore Award is an annual award of £10,000 for best second novel of the year and each of the other four books on the shortlist are awarded £500.

The shortlist for the 2022 Encore award also included:

**The High House**, Jessie Greengrass (Swift Press)  
**Maxwell’s Demon**, Steven Hall (Canongate)  
**The Giant Dark**, Sarvat Hasin (Little Brown)  
**Asylum Road**, Olivia Sudjic (Bloomsbury)

Encore Award Past Winners

2021  Caioilinn Hughes *The Wild Laughter*  
2020  Patrick McGuinness *Throw Me to the Wolves*  
2019  Sally Rooney *Normal People*  
2018*  Andrew Michael Hurley *Devil’s Day*  
2017  Ian McGuire *The North Water*  
2015  Sunjeev Sahota *The Year of the Runaways*  
2014  Neel Mukherjee *The Lives of Others*  
2013  Evie Wyld *All the Birds, Singing*  
2012  Ned Beauman *The Teleportation Accident*  
2011  Joe Dunthorne *Wild Abandon*  
2010  Adam Foulds *The Quickening Maze*  
2009  Julia Leigh *Disquiet*  
2007  M.J. Hyland *Carry Me Down*  
2005  Nadeem Aslam *Maps for Lost Lovers*  
2004  Michelle de Kretser *The Hamilton Case*  
2003  Jeremy Gavron *The Book of Israel*  
2002  Ali Smith *Hotel World*  
2001  Anne Enright *What Are You Like?*  
2000*  John Burnside *The Mercy Boys*  
2000  Claire Messud *The Last Life*  
2000  Matt Thorne *Eight Minutes Idle*  
2000  Phil Whitaker *Triangulation*  
1999  Christina Koning *Undiscovered Country*  
1998*  Alan Warner *These Demented Lands*  
1998  Timothy O’Grady *I Could Read the Sky*  
1997  David Flusfeder *Like Plastic*  
1996  A.L. Kennedy *So I Am Glad*  
1995  Dermot Healy *A Goat’s Song*  
1994  Amit Chaudhuri *Afternoon Raag*  
1993  Colm Tóibín *The Heather Blazing*  
1992  Iain Sinclair *Downriver*  
1991  Carey Harrison *Richard’s Feet*  
1990*  Paul Watkins *Calm at Sunset, Calm at Dawn*  
1990  Peter Benson *A Lesser Dependency*