

NEW WRITING NORTH

Press release: Embargoed until Tuesday 8 March 2022

Judges announced for Gordon Burn Prize 2022

Prize opens for entries until Tuesday 5 April 2022

The sportswriter and columnist Jonathan Liew, broadcaster Stuart Maconie, artist Heather Phillipson and writer Chitra Ramaswamy will join chair of the judges, novelist Denise Mina, to judge the Gordon Burn Prize 2022. The prize is now open for entries until Tuesday 5 April 2022.

The Gordon Burn Prize celebrates its tenth anniversary in 2022. It was launched in 2012 and first awarded in 2013 to remember the Newcastle-born author of novels including *Alma Cogan*, *Fullalove* and *Born Yesterday: The News as a Novel*, and non-fiction including *Happy Like Murderers: The Story of Fred and Rosemary West* and *Best and Edwards: Football, Fame and Oblivion*. The Gordon Burn Prize seeks to celebrate the writing of those whose work follows in his footsteps.

The Gordon Burn Prize is run in partnership by the Gordon Burn Trust, New Writing North, Faber & Faber and Durham Book Festival – a key part of County Durham’s rich cultural offer and its bid to be UK City of Culture 2025. The prize is announced each October at Durham Book Festival, a Durham County Council event produced by New Writing North.

Over the past decade, the prize has grown a reputation for identifying and celebrating brilliant writing that often finds its readers outside the mainstream. The prize covers both fiction and non-fiction, awarding books that are fearless in their ambition and execution, often pushing boundaries, crossing genres or challenging readers’ expectations.

Hanif Abdurraqib won the Gordon Burn Prize in 2021 for his book *A Little Devil in America: Notes in Praise of Black Performance*. The essay collection is a meditation on Black performance in the modern age that reaches back through the lives of musicians, cultural figures, history and his own personal story of love and grief. Sian Cain, one of the Gordon Burn Prize 2021 judges, said of the winning title: ‘*A Little Devil in America* is as uplifting, devastating, informative and profound a work of non-fiction as I can remember reading. If a group of readers was looking for a graceful word on Blackness, on music, on comedy, on dance, on performance, on maleness, on joy, on despair, on beauty, they could all be handed a copy of Abdurraqib’s book and find it.’

Previous winners of the Gordon Burn Prize:

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- Hanif Abdurraqib, *A Little Devil in America: Notes in Praise of Black Performance* (2021)
- Peter Pomerantsev, *This Is Not Propaganda* (2020)
- David Keenan, *For The Good Times* (2019)
- Jesse Ball, *Census* (2018)
- Denise Mina, *The Long Drop* (2017)
- David Szalay, *All That Man Is* (2016)
- Dan Davies, *In Plain Sight: The Life and Lies of Jimmy Savile* (2015)
- Paul Kingsnorth, *The Wake* (2014)
- Benjamin Myers, *Pig Iron* (2013)

The Gordon Burn Prize is now open for entries of published books written in the English language. The winning writer will receive £5,000 and the opportunity to undertake a writing retreat of up to three months at Gordon Burn's cottage in the Scottish borders.

Judges' comments:

Jonathan Liew said: 'This is a hugely prestigious award with a long history of recognising the world's leading writing talents. Personally, I can't wait to begin reading the submissions and irritating my fellow judges with ill-chosen sporting metaphors.'

Stuart Maconie: 'As someone who loves Gordon Burn's work for its dark and unsettling intelligence, I am of course hugely flattered to be asked to judge this prize. But, with any award that bears his name, I am also very much looking forward to reading the books.'

Denise Mina (chair of the judges) said: 'I'm delighted to be serving as chair of the Gordon Burn Prize for my second and final year. This year's panel of judges promises to bring fresh eyes and strong opinions to the exceptional remit of this joyous prize.'

Chitra Ramaswamy said: 'What a privilege to be a judge on such a forward-thinking, open-hearted, broad-minded and ambitious prize as the Gordon Burn. I cannot wait to get reading.'

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For all media enquiries, please contact Laura Fraine at New Writing North
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Notes to Editors:

About Gordon Burn

Gordon Burn was born in Newcastle upon Tyne in 1948 and brought up in a working-class household. He began his career as a journalist, writing for publications including the *Guardian*, *Rolling Stone* and *Esquire*, and becoming renowned as an interviewer and feature writer.

Gordon was the author of four novels: *Alma Cogan* (winner of the Whitbread First Novel Prize), *Fullalove*, *The North of England Home Service* and *Born Yesterday: The News as a Novel*. He was also the author of the non-fiction titles *Somebody's Husband*, *Somebody's Son*, *Pocket Money*, *Happy Like Murderers*, *On the Way to Work* (with Damien Hirst) and *Best and Edwards*. His last book, *Sex & Violence, Death & Silence*, was a collection of his essays on art.

Gordon Burn belonged, and felt himself to belong, to an American tradition born in the High Sixties. A lover of Capote, Mailer and New Journalism, in his career as a writer, Gordon applied the rigour and tenacity of a reporter and journalist to what was often a fictional template.

A literary polymath, Gordon Burn wrote about subjects as seemingly disparate as serial killers, celebrity, sport and art, often blurring the line between fact and fiction. He carved out a unique place for himself in contemporary British writing, often responding to real, spectacular, sometimes appalling events.

An art expert, Gordon counted many writers and artists amongst his friends, while remaining deeply suspicious of the establishment which made access difficult to those from backgrounds like his own.

The prize founded in Gordon's name aims to recognise brilliant writing that often finds its readers outside the mainstream and acknowledge the extent of his influence on subsequent generations of writers.

Prize eligibility

The Gordon Burn Prize seeks to reward a published title (fiction or non-fiction) written in the English language, which in the opinion of the judges most successfully represents the spirit and sensibility of Gordon's literary methods: novels which dare to enter history and interrogate the past; writers of non-fiction brave enough to

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recast characters and historical events to create a new and vivid reality. Literature that challenges perceived notions of genre and makes us think again about just what it is that we are reading. The prize is open to work written in World English by writers of any nationality. The prize is open to books published between 1 July 2021 and 1 July 2022. Publishers are permitted to submit up to eight titles per imprint. Works of translation, books for children and poetry are not eligible for the prize.

Full entry guidelines are available on the Gordon Burn Prize website www.gordonburnprize.com

Judges' biographies

Jonathan Liew is a sportswriter for the *Guardian* and a columnist for the *New Statesman*, who was awarded the 2021 Sports Journalists' Association prize for Sportswriter of the Year.

Stuart Maconie is a TV and radio presenter, journalist, columnist and author. He is on BBC Radio 6 Music (with Mark Radcliffe) every weekend morning between 8 and 10 a.m. and hosts *The Freak Zone* on Sunday nights. His bestselling books include the smash hit *Pies and Prejudice: In Search of The North*, *The Long Road From Jarrow*, *The People's Songs* and the recent *The Nanny State Made Me*, which came out in the first week of lockdown in 2020.

Denise Mina is the author of the Garnethill Trilogy (1998) Paddy Meehan novels and the Alex Morrow series. Standalones include *Sanctum* (*Deception* in the US), *Conviction*, *The Less Dead* and *The Long Drop*. Plays include *Ida Tamson*, *A Drunk Woman Looks at the Thistle* (an hourlong performance poem), *Meet Me* and an adaptation of Brecht's *Mr Puntilla and His Man Matti* for a co-production between the Traverse, Citizens and Dot Theatre company of Istanbul. An improvised comedy series *Group* pilot premiered on BBC Scotland in 2020. Comics include a year-long run on *Hellblazer*, an original graphic novel *A Sickness in the Family* and an adaptation of Stieg Larsson's Millennium Trilogy.

Literary prizes include the CWA Dagger for best first novel, CWA Dagger for short story of the year, which she won twice, the Theakston's Old Peculiar Award in two consecutive years and the 2017 Gordon Burn and Mcllvanney Prizes for *The Long Drop* and *The Less Dead*. *Conviction* was a joint winner of the Mcllvanney Prize 2019, a *New York Times* bestseller and a Reese Witherspoon Book Club pick. She has been shortlisted for the Edgar, the CWA Historical Dagger and short story dagger. In 2020 *The Less Dead* was shortlisted for the Costa Novel of the Year.

She has served as a judge for the CWA, the Womens' Prize for Fiction and the David Cohen Prize. She has written for the *New York Times*, *La Liberation*, the *Guardian* and the *Herald*, and is a regular contributor on radio and television.

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Heather Phillipson's audacious and wide-ranging practice spans video, sculpture, installation, music, poetry and online projects. She describes her works as 'quantum thought experiments'. Recent solo exhibitions include Tate Britain, London (2021–22), the Fourth Plinth commission, Trafalgar Square (2020–22), *Almost Gone*, an audio collage for BBC Radio 3 (2020), a major exhibition at BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead (2018), and a vast commission for Art on the Underground's flagship site at Gloucester Road underground station (2018). Phillipson received the Film London Jarman Award in 2016 and the European Short Film Festival selection from the International Film Festival Rotterdam in 2018. She is also an award-winning poet, was named a Next Generation Poet in 2014 and has published three volumes of poetry.

Chitra Ramaswamy is a journalist and author. Her first book, *Expecting: The Inner Life of Pregnancy*, published by Saraband in April 2016, won the Saltire First Book of the Year Award and was shortlisted for the Polari Prize. Her second book, *Homelands: The History of a Friendship*, will be published by Canongate in April 2022. She has contributed essays to *Antlers of Water*, *Nasty Women*, *The Freedom Papers*, *The Bible* and *Message from the Skies*. She writes for the *Guardian*, is the restaurant critic for *The Times* (Scottish edition) and broadcasts for BBC radio. She lives in Edinburgh with her partner, two young children and rescue dog.