

GORDON BURN PRIZE

Press release: Embargoed until 09:00 Friday 13 August 2021

Shortlist announced for Gordon Burn Prize 2021

The shortlist for the Gordon Burn Prize 2021 (announced Friday 13 August) reveals the year's most dazzlingly bold and forward-thinking books.

The six-strong shortlist of fiction and non-fiction titles, published between July 2020 and July 2021, was selected by chair of the judges, author Denise Mina; writer and poet Derek Owusu; novelist and short story writer Irenosen Okojie; and literary journalist and editor Sian Cain.

The prize is run in partnership by the Gordon Burn Trust, New Writing North, Faber & Faber and Durham Book Festival, a Durham County Council festival.

The Gordon Burn Prize 2021 shortlist is:

Come Join Our Disease (Faber), Sam Byers

A Ghost in the Throat (Tramp Press), Doireann Ní Ghríofa

A Little Devil in America (Allen Lane), Hanif Abdurraqib

Luckenbooth (William Heinemann), Jenni Fagan

Mrs Death Misses Death (Canongate), Salena Godden

Sea State (HarperCollins), Tabitha Lasley

On selecting the shortlist, Denise Mina, chair of the judges, said: “An unusually high standard this year made it very difficult to narrow down the longlist, but the books here are all extraordinary. It has been a privilege and an unexpected joy to spend so long on this list.”

Irenosen Okojie said: “It's a brilliant shortlist showcasing the range and quality of writing the prize is known for. I've thoroughly enjoyed the judging process.”

Sian Cain said: “Reading for this year's Gordon Burn Prize has been one of the best reading experiences of my life. All of us judges have been consistently blown away

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by the contenders since we began, and we struggled greatly to choose just six from our excellent 12-book longlist. I'd like to recommend that all readers go back to the longlist and pick up all 12, as we admired them all and there are some that only just didn't make the cut. Now for the torturous process of choosing a winner!"

Cllr Amanda Hopgood, Leader of Durham County Council, commissioner of Durham Book Festival, said: "The Gordon Burn Prize recognises authors who dare to break away from the norm and in doing so achieve truly enthralling and inspirational results.

"In County Durham, we are absolutely committed to nurturing creative talent, and this is a key part of our bid to be UK City of Culture 2025. Our campaign strapline is 'Durham – No ordinary county' and the Gordon Burn Prize is testament to that, celebrating some of the most extraordinary and innovative writers of the day.

"I would like to wish the shortlisted authors the very best of luck and I look forward to the winner being announced at Durham Book Festival this autumn."

The Gordon Burn Prize, founded in 2012, remembers the late author of novels including *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*.

Now in its ninth year, the prize seeks to celebrate those who follow in Gordon Burn's footsteps by recognising literature that is fearless in both ambition and execution. The works recognised often make the reader think again, playing with style or genre, pushing boundaries or diverging from the mainstream literary culture.

Peter Pomerantsev won the Gordon Burn Prize in 2020 for *This is Not Propaganda*, his study on the war against reality. Previous winners have included David Keenan's novel *For the Good Times*, set during the height of the Troubles in 1970s Belfast (2019); *Census* (2018), Jesse Ball's fable inspired by his late brother; and Denise Mina's true crime novel *The Long Drop* (2017).

The winner of the Gordon Burn Prize 2021 will be announced at Durham Book Festival on Thursday 14 October 2021.

-- ENDS --

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For all media enquiries, including high-res images and interview requests, please contact Laura Fraine, Senior Marketing and Communications Manager, New Writing North: laurafraine@newwritingnorth.com or 07411 164 837.

NOTES TO EDITORS

The Gordon Burn Prize 2021 longlist was announced on 22 June 2021. The longlist is:

Come Join Our Disease (Faber), Sam Byers

Diary of a Film (Dialogue), Niven Govinden

A Ghost in the Throat (Tramp Press), Doireann Ní Ghríofa

In The End it Was All About Love (Rough Trade Books), Musa Okwonga

Klopp: My Liverpool Romance (Faber), Anthony Quinn

A Little Devil in America (Allen Lane), Hanif Abdurraqib

Luckenbooth (William Heinemann), Jenni Fagan

Mrs Death Misses Death (Canongate), Salena Godden

My Phantoms (Granta), Gwendoline Riley

Open Water (Viking), Caleb Azumah Nelson

A River Called Time (Canongate), Courttia Newland

Sea State (HarperCollins), Tabitha Lasley

Previous winners of the Gordon Burn Prize:

2020 *This Is Not Propaganda*, Peter Pomerantsev

2019 *For the Good Times*, David Keenan

2018 *Census*, Jesse Ball

2017 *The Long Drop*, Denise Mina

2016 *All That Man Is*, David Szalay

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2015 *In Plain Sight: The Life and Lies of Jimmy Savile*, Dan Davies

2014 *The Wake*, Paul Kingsnorth

2013 *Pig Iron*, Benjamin Myers

The 2021 prize is open to works in English published between 1 July 2020 and 1 July 2021 by writers of any nationality.