

GORDON BURN PRIZE

18 June 2026

Judges for 2027 Gordon Burn Prize announced as entries open

Val McDermid will chair a judging panel comprising journalist and author Lanre Bakare, author Eliza Clark, novelist and screenwriter Nikita Lalwani, and singer and songwriter Paul Smith.

The Gordon Burn Prize celebrates bold and fearless writing and has become one of literature's most sought-after honours for books that often find their readers outside the mainstream.

The prize is now open for submissions until 1 August 2026. Fiction or non-fiction books published in English between 1 December 2025 and 30 November 2026, by authors anywhere in the world, are eligible.

McDermid is one of the UK's most accomplished novelists and has sold over 19 million books to date across the globe. Her work has been translated into more than 40 languages and adapted for screen. This is her second year of chairing the Gordon Burn Prize panel.

New judge Paul Smith says "I always look out for who gets nominated - it's always a really interesting shortlist. I look forward to getting my teeth into the longlist and then discussing the books with Val and the other judges."

The Gordon Burn Prize is run in partnership by New Writing North, Faber, and the Gordon Burn Trust, and is supported by Newcastle University and the Newcastle Centre for the Literary Arts (NCLA). It remembers Gordon Burn, the journalist and author of novels including *Alma Cogan* and *Born Yesterday: The News as a Novel*, and non-fiction including *Happy Like Murderers: The Story of Fred and Rosemary West*.

The 2026 Gordon Burn Prize was won by Maria Reva for *Endling*, published by Virago.

Other recent winners have included Jenni Fagan for *Ootlin* (2025); Kathryn Scanlan for *Kick the Latch* (2023/24) *Aftermath* by Preti Taneja (2022); and *A Little Devil in America: Notes in Praise of Black Performance*, by Hanif Abdurraqib (2021).

The prize will be awarded in March 2027 in Gordon Burn's home city, Newcastle upon Tyne, with support from Newcastle University.

The winner of the Gordon Burn Prize 2026 will receive £10,000 and the opportunity to undertake a writing retreat at Gordon Burn's cottage in Berwickshire.

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For all media requests please contact Jill Read, Director of Communications and Marketing, New Writing North: jillread@newwritingnorth.com

Images

[Gordon Burn Prize 2027 judges' bios and headshots](#)

Notes to Editors

Timeline for the Gordon Burn Prize 2026:

Open for entry: 17 June – 1 August 2026

Longlist announced: December 2026

Shortlist announced: January 2027

Winner announced: March 2027

Enter at: www.gordonburnprize.com

Previous winners of the Gordon Burn Prize:

2026: *Endling* by Maria Reva

2025: *Ootlin*, by Jenni Fagan

2023/24: *Kick the Latch*, by Kathryn Scanlan

2022: *Aftermath*, by Preti Taneja

2021: *A Little Devil in America: Notes in Praise of Black Performance*, by Hanif Abdurraqib

2020: *This Is Not Propaganda*, by Peter Pomerantsev

2019: *For the Good Times*, by David Keenan

2018: *Census*, by Jesse Ball

2017: *The Long Drop*, by Denise Mina

2016: *All That Man Is*, by David Szalay

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

2014: *The Wake*, by Paul Kingsnorth

2013: *Pig Iron*, by Benjamin Myers

Judges

Val McDermid (Chair) is one of the UK's most accomplished and respected novelists, Val McDermid has sold over 19 million books to date across the globe, and her work has been translated into more than 40 languages. She has written five series: cold case detective Karen Pirie was introduced to us in *The Distant Echo* and the 8th book in the series will be published in 2025, with Karen now starring in a major ITV series; clinical psychologist Dr Tony Hill and DCI Carol Jordan lead a gripping eleven book series adapted for television as *Wire in the Blood*, starring Robson Green and Hermione Norris; the Kate Brannigan novels showcase a private detective; journalist Lindsay Gordon is at the heart of another series; and most recently, Val has launched a new series featuring young journalist Allie Burns whose life and experiences we witness at ten year intervals, debuting with *1979-1989*. Val has also published several award-winning standalone novels, books of non-fiction, short story collections and a children's picture book, *My Granny is a Pirate*. Val returned to Karen Pirie with her 2023 hardback, *Past Lying*, which was published in October of that year. 2024 saw the publication of *Queen Macbeth*, her reimagining of the story of Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth, in May. Her new Karen Pirie novel, *Silent Bones*, was published in October 2025.

Lanre Bakare is arts and culture correspondent for the Guardian, where his work focuses on the intersection of art, race, and culture across multiple disciplines. He was senior correspondent on the Cotton Capital project, which was an exposé on the Guardian's founders' links to transatlantic slavery and was recognised at the Press Awards as a "breathhtakingly honest mea culpa." His debut non-fiction book *We Were There* was published by The Bodley Head. The cultural history of Black Britain during the Thatcher era was chosen as a book of the year for 2025 by GQ, Esquire, and the Observer. He is currently working on his second book - a deep dive into global mixed-race cultures. Lanre was born and grew up in Bradford, West Yorkshire.

Eliza Clark is the author of novels *Boy Parts* and *Penance* and the short story collection *She's Always Hungry*. *Boy Parts* was named Blackwell's Fiction book of the year and was adapted for the stage in 2023. She was named one of Granta's Best of Young British Novelists, shortlisted for the Women's Prize Futures 10 award and listed on Forbes' 30 Under 30 Europe. She also writes for film and television.

Nikita Lalwani was elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature in 2018. She is a novelist and screenwriter whose work has been translated into sixteen languages. She and was one of the writers on the BBC1/Amazon series 'The Outlaws' created by Stephen Merchant and also wrote the screenplay for the film *Picture This* (2025), a romantic comedy that took the no.1 spot worldwide on Amazon prime in 76 countries during the first fortnight of its release. Lalwani is the author of three novels: her first book, *Gifted*, was longlisted for the Man Booker Prize, shortlisted for the Costa First

Novel Award, and won the inaugural Desmond Elliott Prize for Fiction. Lalwani has been a judge for the Rathbones Folio Prize, the RSL Encore Second Novel Prize and The Orwell Prize. She was born in Rajasthan, raised in Cardiff and lives in London.

Paul Smith is best known as the singer for the Newcastle-based art-rock group Maximo Park, who recently celebrated their 20th anniversary in the wake of their eighth studio album, Stream of Life. He has released three acclaimed solo albums and collaborated with the likes of Rachel Unthank, Tricky, and Field Music's Peter Brewis. Crossing over into the literary world, Paul has also hosted the Penguin Books podcast and worked with poets Lavinia Greenlaw and Tom Pickard.

About New Writing North

New Writing North is the literature development agency for the North of England and is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation. It works in partnership with regional and national partners to produce a range of literary activities including flagship projects such as the David Cohen Prize for Literature, the Northern Writers' Awards, Young Writers' City, the Gordon Burn Prize and Durham Book Festival.

www.newwritingnorth.com / @NewWritingNorth

About Newcastle Centre for the Literary Arts

Newcastle Centre for the Literary Arts, based in the School of English Literature, Language and Linguistics at Newcastle University, is a world-class centre of excellence in the field of creative writing, contributing to the cultural life of the North East via readings, projects, teaching, and research.

About Newcastle University

Newcastle University, UK, is a thriving international community of more than 28,000 students from over 130 countries worldwide. As a member of the Russell Group of research-intensive universities in the UK, Newcastle has a world-class reputation for research excellence in the fields of medicine, science and engineering, social sciences, and the humanities. Its academics are sharply focused on responding to the major challenges facing society today. Research and teaching are world-leading in areas as diverse as health, culture, technology, and the environment. Newcastle is committed to providing students with excellent, research-led teaching delivered by dedicated and passionate teachers. Newcastle University is ranked 129th in the QS World Ranking 2025 and joint 157th in the Times Higher Education World University Ranking 2025. Newcastle University is ranked Top 25 in the UK and Top 100 in the world for sustainable development in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2024.

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