

Robert Louis Stevenson Fellowships 2011 awarded

Four talented British writers have been awarded the 2011 Robert Louis Stevenson Fellowship.

Based at the Hotel Cheillon International Arts Centre, Grez-sur-Loing, France the Fellowship allows the writers to take time out of their usual environment and day to day routines to embark upon a new literary adventure and to develop their practice by exchanging ideas and experiences with other artists.

The four 2011 Robert Louis Stevenson Fellows are:

✘ Poet Niall Campbell – currently based in Glasgow, Niall is a graduate of St Andrews University's Creative Writing MLitt (2009). Originally from South Uist his work has appeared in, amongst others, Poetry Review, The Red Wheelbarrow, Cyphers and Blackbox Manifold. In 2009 he was shortlisted for New Scottish Writers of the Year and is to be included in an upcoming Salt anthology showcasing the best new voices in the UK. His first pamphlet will be released in 2012 by Happenstance.

Drawing from the works of Douglas Dunn and Paul Muldoon, Niall said; 'I will capitalise on the time given to immerse myself in working towards my first full collection echoing the concept of writing from abroad to a loved one, a theme found in Douglas Dunn's collection, The Donkey's Ears'

Novelist Gwendoline Riley – Gwendoline has published three ✘ novels over the last ten years with Jonathon Cape at Random House: Cold Water (2002) won the Betty Trask Award and was named one of the Guardian's top 5 debut novels of 2002; Joshua Spassky (2007) won the Somerset Maugham award and was short listed for the John Llewellyn Rhys Prize; Sick Notes (2004)

also met with critical and popular acclaim. Her fourth novel *Opposed Positions* will be published in 2012.

Gwendoline will use her time in France making inroads into her fifth novel which explores the collapse of a family over 15 years. On being selected for the fellowship Gwendoline said; 'I'm grateful for the breathing space and uninterrupted writing time the fellowship will afford me.'

✘ Film maker Joern Utkilen – Based in Scotland for the past 15 years, Joern is a multi award winning writer and director with a distinguished background in Film production. A graduate of Edinburgh College of Art and Screen Academy Scotland he has written, directed and presented a number of films at a range of festivals including ARTE and Canal +. His forthcoming film *Asylum* received investment from the Film 4 and Creative Scotland.

Joern will be using the time to work on his project *George Elkin*, a novel that tells the story of a man who wants to be a film director, a fictionalised version of himself, interacting with the real world. On being selected for the fellowship Joern said 'Coming from a screen-writing background, the fellowship will give me the opportunity to take time out and focus solely on a different type of project and writing discipline.'

✘ Novelist J. David Simons – author of *The Liberation of Celia Kahn* (Five Leaves, 2011) and *The Credit Draper* (Two Ravens Press, 2009, republished by Five Leaves 2011). David is based in Glasgow. He intends to use his time in France to work on ideas for a third novel set in Scotland and British-mandate Palestine, completing a trilogy that began with his first novel, *The Credit Draper*.

On being selected as a fellow Simons said 'I believe the Fellowship will allow me to develop my practice by taking me out of my current stale working environment and providing me

with the time, space, setting and support to help create new work'.

The 2011 Fellowship provides the writers with accommodation for up to six weeks in a self-catering studio apartment at the Hotel Chevillon International Arts Centre at Grez-sur-Loing, where Robert Louis Stevenson first met his wife Fanny Osborne. All of the authors were chosen on the basis of the quality of their work and the usefulness of the residency to their creative development.

Dr Gavin Wallace, Portfolio Manager for Literature, Publishing and Language, Creative Scotland, said:

'These four RLS Fellows are excellent appointments and represent a diverse mix of background, genre, specialism, and literary personality. What they will all have in common however is the unique opportunity provided by the RLS Fellowships for writers at all stages of their careers to benefit professionally and artistically from the creative space afforded to them at the Hotel Chevillon, as so many other Scottish writers have done over the past fifteen years.'