

Robert Louis Stevenson Fellowship 2015 – two Edinburgh winners

Edinburgh-based writer Lynsey May (32) and poet and playwright Michael Pedersen (30) have been named by Scottish Book Trust as two of four recipients of a 2015 [Robert Louis Stevenson Fellowship](#), involving a month-long writing residency in France.

Lynsey, who lives in Leith and will attend the residency in June, is a previous Scottish Book Trust New Writer Awardee. She has placed fiction in a variety of journals and publications and has read at a number of literary festivals across the country. During the residency she will work on a new novel set in Leith. Lynsey has lived in and around Edinburgh her whole life, attending university and starting a career in the city.

Commenting on the Fellowship, Lynsey said:

“I couldn’t be more grateful for the wonderful gift of time, space and inspiration the RLS Fellowship offers -and plan to make the most of every minute. I’m particularly looking forward to briefly disengaging with all of the stresses and distractions of everyday life and completely immersing myself in the novel I’m working on.”

Michael, who will attend the residency in November, has published two celebrated chapbooks, and a debut collection *Play with Me with Polygon*. He is a Canongate Future 40, a 2010 Callum McDonald Memorial Award finalist, the John Mather’s Charitable Trust Rising Star of Literature 2014; as well as a budding playwright and lyricist, and co-founder of the Neu! Reekie! collective. During the residency he’ll work towards a second collection of poetry and on sculpting a

feature film script – a collaboration with Scottish Director Robert McKillop.

Commenting on the Fellowship, he said (rather colourfully!):

“I’ve had my lasers set on the RLS Fellowship for a couple of years now but 2015 (for a veritable swarm of reasons) is the paragoning point for it – there’s something more tectonic at play.

“As well as my poetry taking on fresh shapes and forms, I’m exploring a new medium in script writing. Sequel collections and inaugural scripts are both formidable endeavours and what more inspiring a place to tackle such literary behemoths than Grez-sur-Loing. Not only to tackle but to have an arsenal of anointments behind you – those being the RLS Fellowship and its history of lustrous literary and artistic visitants – steam to the engine and then some.

“I was elated to receive the call. There may have been a jump and some sort of rhythmical shimmy that resembled a cumbersome dance-move from decades beyond.”

The Robert Louis Stevenson Fellowship was initiated in 1994 by Franki Fewkes, a Scottish RLS enthusiast, and is supported by Creative Scotland. Intended to give writers a chance to escape the hustle and bustle of their everyday lives to devote time to their writing, it provides residencies for four writers at the Hôtel Chevillon International Arts Centre at Grez-sur-Loing. Travel and accommodation are paid for, and there is a grant of £300 per week to cover living expenses.

Grez-sur-Loing is situated at the edge of the Forest of Fontainebleau, and was chosen because of its connections with Robert Louis Stevenson who first visited in 1875. It was there, at the Hôtel Chevillon, that he met his future wife Fanny Osbourne. Stevenson found both the place, and its community of writers and artists, highly attractive and he returned to Grez-sur-Loing for three successive summers.

Caitrin Armstrong, Head of Writer Development at Scottish Book Trust, said:

“We’re delighted to offer this fantastic opportunity to such talented, engaging writers. These residencies are a great opportunity for writers to spend time on their work without the distractions of everyday life. I look forward to reading the work Lynsey and Michael produce in such inspirational surroundings.”

The two other successful 2015 Fellows are writer, director and translator Alan McKendrick and debut author Malachy Tallack.