

# Edinburgh International Book Festival News

## ***EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL BOOK FESTIVAL'S OUTRIDERS TAKE FIVE JOURNEYS ACROSS THE AMERICAS***



Edinburgh International Book Festival organisers have announced details of **Outriders**, an exciting new project where five writers from Scotland will undertake five extraordinary journeys across the Americas. Supported by the Scottish Government's Edinburgh Festivals Expo Fund through Creative Scotland, Outriders explores the idea that in turbulent and shifting times writers can contribute immeasurably to our understanding of the world, revealing untold stories and offering an entirely new perspective on places and events.

Harry Giles, Jenni Fagan (above), Malachy Tallack, Stef Smith and Kevin MacNeil will each travel along predetermined routes in Canada, the USA, Mexico and Argentina respectively, each accompanied by a local writer exploring the idea that two people can share the same experience, yet produce entirely different creative responses. Outriders has been developed with the support of the British Council and audiences can follow each journey through blogs, podcasts and social media activity channelled through the Book Festival website – [www.edbookfest.co.uk](http://www.edbookfest.co.uk) – and on the authors' own social media accounts. All ten writers will appear at the Edinburgh International Book Festival in August to discuss the experiences and insights generated by each journey.

Nick Barley, director of the Edinburgh International Book Festival said: "The Scottish Government's EXPO fund has given the Book Festival extraordinary opportunities to try out new ways of working with writers, and to forge new partnerships. Outriders is one of our most ambitious EXPO initiatives to date. It offers five Scottish writers priceless experiences and material for their writing, and it will give Scottish audiences new perspectives on America at a time of great political change across the continent. But there's more: Outriders will generate long-term Transatlantic partnerships between the writers as well as opportunities to present their work in Canada, the USA, Mexico and Argentina. I can't wait to hear

about each writer's American odyssey, and this project also looks set to have an impact long after the journeys themselves are over."

Culture Secretary Fiona Hyslop said: "Outriders is great opportunity for our writers to explore pertinent and thought-provoking themes as they journey across the two continents. It will be particularly interesting to compare their insights and experiences with those of the local writers accompanying them. We're proud to support this initiative through £100,000 from the Scottish Government's EXPO fund, and look forward to hearing about their series of talks and events at the Edinburgh International Book Festival."



## Malachy Tallack

Harry Giles, a performer and writer from Orkney who is based in Edinburgh, will undertake the first journey across northern Canada looking at minority and regional languages and the cultures that grow around them. Giles is also looking to confront Scotland's legacy as a colonising country, especially the role that Orkney migrants played in the colonisation of Hudson Bay. Giles will be accompanied by Governor General's Award Winning Metis writer Katherena Vermette.

Jenni Fagan is a novelist, poet and screenwriter, and in 2013 was named as one of the Granta Best of Young British Novelists. She will travel across the USA from the Rust Belt to Silicon Valley asking questions on the nature of truth. Fagan will be joined by fiction writer Bonnie Jo Campbell. Malachy Tallack is the author of two books exploring the idea of place. His journey will take him from the north to the south of the USA from North Dakota to Louisiana listening to voices in lost and disenfranchised communities and exploring how a sense of place and belonging is helping to shape change. Tallack will be joined by American novelist and short story writer Jennifer Haigh.

Olivier Award-winning theatre writer Stef Smith will travel through Mexico from the US border in the north to the Guatemala border in the South via three of the country's major cities – Tijuana, Mexico City and Oaxaca. Mexico is a nation with a rich cultural heritage and a vivid history, the bridge between an ancient continent and an adolescent nation. Smith is looking behind the apparently singular narrative of Mexico – one of a population desperate to flee north in search of a better life – and exploring the stories of those who choose to stay. She will be joined by

Gabriela Jauregi, a Mexican poet and the founder of the Sur+ publishing collective.

The final journey will be undertaken by Kevin MacNeil in Argentina. MacNeil, an award-winning author, poet, screenwriter and playwright, will spend time cycling around Buenos Aires on a physical, literary and spiritual homage to Jorge Luis Borges, accompanied by Mariana Enriquez. Borges and his great friend, the acclaimed author Adolfo Bioy Casares were devoted fans of Robert Louis Stevenson and this journey will shed light on the connections between Scotland and Argentina's shared literary heritage. MacNeil will be accompanied by the Argentinian journalist, writer and editor Mariana Enriquez.

Outriders is supported by the Scottish Government's Edinburgh Festivals Expo Fund. Harry Giles departs in mid-April, the other four writers will travel in early May. Details of each journey, and each writer, can be found at [www.edbookfest.co.uk](http://www.edbookfest.co.uk) and each author will be providing updates through blogs, podcasts, videos and social media posts throughout their trips. A special Gala event will be scheduled in the Edinburgh International Book Festival in August, and further details of this, together with all the events in the 2017 Edinburgh International Book Festival Programme, will be announced on **Thursday 8 June 2017**.