

# **Book Festival 'Outriders' to set off on four European journeys**

**Today (Wed. 21st Sept) the Edinburgh International Book Festival announced the launch of the third edition of Outriders, an exciting project that will see four Scottish writers join four European writers for four unique and extraordinary journeys across Europe, before coming together at the Book Festival in 2023 to discuss their experiences.**

**Exploring the idea that in turbulent and shifting times writers can significantly enhance our understanding of the world, Outriders is supported through the PlaCE Programme (funded by the Scottish Government, City of Edinburgh Council, and the Edinburgh Festivals, and supported and administered by Creative Scotland) and, as in previous years, it is hoped the project will help reveal hidden histories and offer new perspectives on contemporary events.**





*Ciarán Hodgers & Victoria McNulty*

In 2017 Edinburgh International Book Festival supported ten writers to travel on journeys across the Americas, and in early 2020, Outriders again saw ten writers explore a region of the world – this time in Africa. In this latest iteration of the project, Victoria McNulty, Dean Atta, Mara Menzies, and Cal Flyn will travel along a predetermined route across countries including Poland, Ireland, Greece, Cyprus, Norway, Finland, and Romania, each accompanied by a European writer – Ciarán Hodgers, Kostya Tsolakis, Rawdna Carita Eira and Helene Bukowski respectively.

All eight writers will create a new work in response to their journey and appear at the Book Festival in August 2023 to discuss the experiences and insights generated by their experience.

Glasgow-based performance poet and writer Victoria McNulty

will commence the Outriders project today, Wednesday 21 September, alongside Drogheda-born Irish spoken word poet Ciarán Hodgers, on a journey through Poland and Ireland, exploring the significance of borders in all respects and examining cultures and local communities which have – both historically and in the contemporary – experienced the mass movement of people both in and out of their national boundaries.







*Dean Atta (credit Thomas Sammut) & Kostya Tsolakis*

In January 2023, award-winning author of novel in verse *The*

Black Flamingo, Dean Atta, will embark on a journey with Athens-born Greek poet Kostya Tsolakis through Greece and Cyprus, investigating aspects of their own Cypriot heritage and familial history, as well as connecting with LGBTQ+ communities and exploring the impact of race and queerness on national identity and belonging today.

In April, Orkney-based nonfiction writer Cal Flyn will travel with German novelist of climate-change dystopia Milk Teeth, Helene Bukowski, on an adventure through the Transylvanian wilderness and regional areas bordering with Romania, discovering landscapes that have inspired mythical tales of werewolves and faeries and the complex relationship between humans and the natural world.





*Helene Bukowski & Cal Flynn*

The last two Outriders journeys will take place in Spring 2023. In March, Scottish Kenyan storyteller and writer Mara Menzies will travel with Norwegian and Sámi playwright Rawdna Carita Eira through the Northern regions of Norway and Finland, exploring a wild and remote landscape and the indigenous traditions of story and song that flourish there.



Nick Barley, Director of Edinburgh International Book Festival said: "The Scottish Government's PlaCE fund has given the Book Festival extraordinary opportunities to try out new ways of working with writers. Outriders is one of our most ambitious PlaCE initiatives, offering Scotland's writers unparalleled experiences and material for their writing. At the same time Outriders promises to offer new perspectives on Europe for Scottish audiences at a time of great political and social change across the continent.

"This is the third iteration of Outriders, with previous projects having sent writers first to the American continent, and then across Africa. Those previous projects confirm that Outriders Europe will also generate long-term partnerships between the writers as well as opportunities to present their work across the continent."







*Rawdna Carita Eira & Mara Menzies*

Culture Secretary Angus Robertson said: "Outriders is a great opportunity for Scottish-based writers to explore pertinent

and thought-provoking themes on their various journeys across Europe. The insights and experiences they gain from the local writers accompanying them will be invaluable.

“Edinburgh International Book Festival is supported through the Scottish Government’s PlaCE fund with £46,000 of this funding going towards the Outrider programme. We look forward to hearing more about these incredible journeys in a series of talks and events at next year’s Edinburgh International Book Festival.”

Victoria McNulty, participating author, said: “I’ve had a creative interest in borders, identity, and place for a long time. Being part of a project that has offered the support and creative freedom to work with another writer who I admire, share viewpoints, build connections, and explore at an honest and personal level has been a gift.”