

Saltire Society announce shortlists for book awards

The Saltire Society has just announced the shortlisted titles for the 2022 Scotland's National Book Awards.

There are books in Gaelic and Scots vernacular, on embroidery, OCD, the lost British summer and stories that take readers from Scotland to Tahiti, the Caribbean and 1930s Berlin.

The winners of all six prizes, as well as the Saltire Scottish Book of the Year, The Lifetime Achievement Award, The Ross Roy Medal and three industry awards, will be announced at a ceremony at The Traverse Theatre in Edinburgh which will be held on 8 December 2022.

Scotland's National Book Awards, co-ordinated by the Saltire Society, recognise work in six literary categories (Fiction, Non-Fiction, Research, History, Poetry and First Book) and three publishing categories (Publisher, Emerging Publisher and Cover Design). The winners of the Literary Awards each receive a cash prize of £2,000 and go on to be considered for the top prize of Saltire Scottish Book of the Year, where the prize includes a further £4,000.

Sarah Mason, Director of the Saltire Society, said: "Scotland's National Book Awards celebrate the extraordinary richness in the work of our authors, publishers and designers. The Awards reflect the strength of the literary scene in Scotland today and the 2022 shortlists showcase a wonderful variety and depth of storytelling. Congratulations

to all our shortlisted authors.”

Authors nominated for the 2022 First Book shortlist take readers from a queer 1930’s nightclub to the imagined life of Gauguin’s child bride in Tahiti, from reintroducing wild red kites on a Stirlingshire farm to a condemned high rise flat in Glasgow and a historical mystery in Constantinople and include a debut collection of poetry and a graphic novel as well as fiction and non-fiction titles.

Devika Ponnambalam (*I Am Not Your Eve*) said “I am thrilled to be shortlisted for Scotland’s National Book Awards for my first book! Teha’amana’s story is unique and was, until now, untold. This is the song of the silenced, of the abused, and the colonised. This award nomination will take her story and that of her culture’s to many more readers in the western world.”

Authors Alice Albinia, Mara Menzies, Rachelle Atalla and debut novelist Emme Grae are joined on the Fiction Shortlist by Booker Winner Douglas Stuart and a previous winner of Saltire Book of the Year, James Robertson. Poetry books nominated this year include collections from Hannah Lavery, Claire Askew, Andrés N Ordorica, Maria Sledmere and Gaelic writer Marcas Mac an Tuairneir.

The Research Shortlist celebrates books on topics as wide ranging as the origin of settlement names on the Isle of Lewis, Scottish national identity in the 19th Century and court poetry in late Medieval Scotland. The Non-Fiction Shortlist includes books from artist Alison Watt, former Prime Minister Gordon Brown and journalist Chitra Ramaswamy while the History Shortlist features two books on Scotland’s relationship with the African slave trade by Alex Renton and David Alston and two histories of Scottish Monarchs – Mary Queen of Scots and Mael Coluim III.

Claire Hunter (*Embroidering Her Truth*) said: “I am thrilled to

be shortlisted for a Saltire Award. It is not only a delight to find my book, and my research, appreciated but also a pleasure to know that my exploration of Mary, Queen of Scots' material world has been welcomed as a new and revelatory approach into the Scottish queen's story."

Alastair McKay said: "I'm chuffed that *Alternatives to Valium* has been shortlisted for the Saltire Society's prestigious National Book Awards. Though it is disguised as a punk rock fanzine, the book is an attempt to revisit the idealistic open-mindedness of youth, so it's a great thrill to think that it may have succeeded on some level."

Alison Stevenson from the National Library of Scotland said: "The National Library is pleased to support Scotland's National Book Awards. Because of libraries, books are a free way for people to engage with Scotland's rich cultural heritage, and are no doubt providing great solace and entertainment to people right now. These awards are an important way to celebrate and connect those who write books with those who enjoy them."

In addition to the National Book Awards, the Saltire Society presents three industry awards; Publisher of the Year and Emerging Publisher of the Year which are presented in partnership with Publishing Scotland and Book Cover of the Year which celebrates the enormous talent in Scottish design and the importance of the relationship between the designer, publisher and author. Shortlists for these awards will be announced on 1 December.

The Ross Roy Medal, commemorating the outstanding contribution to Scottish literature made by Professor G. Ross Roy of South Carolina University, is awarded annually to the best PhD thesis submitted on a subject relating to Scottish literature and judged by the University Committee for Scottish Literature.

The Lifetime Achievement Award is for individuals who have made and are making a lasting impact and are imbedded in the literary culture of Scotland. Nominees must be either born in Scotland, are currently living in Scotland or working in or for Scotland.

The Scottish National Book Awards have been awarded by the Saltire Society since 1937 and in 2022 are supported by The National Library of Scotland and the Scottish Historical Review Trust. All entrants must be born in Scotland, live in Scotland or their books must be about Scotland.

The winners of each category will receive a bespoke Award created by Inverness-based artist Simon Baker of Evergreen Studios. Winners of all the Awards will be announced at the Traverse Theatre in Edinburgh on the evening of 8 December attended by the judges, shortlisted authors and publishers. T

he ceremony will be live-streamed and tickets to watch online are available from 15 November on www.saltiresociety.org.uk.

THE SHORTLISTS

Fiction Award – Shortlist

Be Guid Tae Yer Mammy by Emma Grae (Published by Unbound)

Blood and Gold by Mara Menzies (Published by Birlinn Ltd)

Cwen by Alice Albinia (Published by Serpents Tail)

News of the Dead by James Robertson (Published by Hamish Hamilton, Penguin Randomhouse UK)

The Pharmacist by Rachelle Atalia (Published by Hodder & Stoughton)

Young Mungo by Douglas Stuart (Published by Pan MacMillan/Picador)

Non Fiction Award – Shortlist

Alison Watt: A Portrait without Likeness by Alison Watt
(Published by National Galleries of Scotland)

Alternatives to Valium by Alastair McKay (Published by Birlinn Ltd)

Homelands by Chitra Ramaswamy (Published by Canongate Books)

One Body by Catherine Simpson (Published by Saraband)

The Eternal Season: A Journey Through Our Changing British Summer by Stephen Rutt (Published by Elliott & Thompson)

Seven Ways to Change the World by Gordon Brown (Published by Simon & Schuster UK)

History Award – Shortlist

Blood Legacy by Alex Renton (Published by Canongate Books)

Mael Coluim III, Canmore by Neil McGuigan (Published by Birlinn Ltd)

R. B. Cunninghame Graham and Scotland: Party, Prose, and Political Aesthetic by Lachlan Gow Munro (Published by Edinburgh University Press)

Slaves and Highlanders: Silenced Histories of Scotland and the Caribbean by David Alston (Published by Edinburgh University Press)

Embroidering Her Truth by Clare Hunter (Published by Hodder & Stoughton – Sceptre)

Putting the Tea in Britain by Les Wilson (Published by Birlinn Ltd)

Research Award – Shortlist

A Long and Tangled Saga by Bob Chambers (Published by Acair Books)

Ainmean Tuineachaidh Leòdhais /The Settlement Names of Lewis by Richard A V Cox (Published by Clann Tuirc)

Craftworkers in Nineteenth Century Scotland: Making and Adapting in an Industrial Age by Stana Nenadic (Published by Edinburgh University Press)

Recovering Scottish History: John Hill Burton and Scottish National Identity in the Nineteenth Century by Craig Beveridge (Published by Edinburgh University Press)

Surveying the Anthropocene: Environment and Photography Now Edited by Patrician Macdonald (Published by Studies in Photography)

Scripting the Nation: Court Poetry and the Authority of History in Late Medieval Scotland by Katherine H Terrell (Published by The Ohio State University Press)

Poetry Award – Shortlist

At Least This I Know by Andrés N Ordorica (Published by 404 Ink)

Blood Salt Spring by Hannah Lavery (Published by Birlinn Ltd)

How to Burn a Woman by Claire Askew (Published by Bloodaxe Books)

Polaris by Marcas Mac an Tuairneir (Published by Leamington Books)

The Luna Erratum by Maria Sledmere (Published by Dostoyevsky Wannabe)

First Book Award – Shortlist

A Sky Full of Kites by Tom Bowser (Published by Birlinn Ltd)

I Am Not Your Eve by Devika Ponnambalam (Published by Bluemoose Books)

In: The Graphic Novel by Will McPhail (Published by Hodder & Stoughton – Sceptre)

Limbo by Georgi Gill (Published by Blue Diode Press)

The Second Sight of Zachary Cloudesley by Sean Lusk (Published by Doubleday/Transworld)

The Voids by Ryan O'Connor (Published by Scribe Publications)

Lifetime Achievement Award

The Award was open to online public nominations from May until 15 August. The Awardee will be decided by a panel of individuals from the literary community. Previous winners: Alasdair Gray (2019) and Douglas Dunn (2021).