

GORDON BURN PRIZE

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Shortlist announced for Gordon Burn Prize 2019

The shortlist has been announced for the seventh annual Gordon Burn Prize.

Ten years on from the death of writer Gordon Burn, whose work includes *Happy Like Murderers*, *Alma Cogan*, and *Born Yesterday: The News as a Novel*, the prize founded in his name has become one of the most highly anticipated on the literary landscape.

The Gordon Burn Prize highlights and rewards work that is fearless and uncompromising in its ambition and execution, often pushing boundaries or challenging readers' expectations.

Founded in 2012 by a partnership of New Writing North, Durham Book Festival, the Gordon Burn Trust and Faber & Faber, the Gordon Burn Prize has rewarded six titles to date, including *Census* by Jesse Ball (2018), *The Long Drop* by Denise Mina (2017) and *All That Man Is* by David Szalay (2016).

The prize is open to both fiction and non-fiction titles by authors resident in the United Kingdom, Ireland and the United States of America. From New York's vogue ball community to the Troubles in Northern Ireland, the shortlisted titles often revisit familiar landscapes through a different lens.

The 2019 judges, author A.A. Dhand, artist Gary Hume, journalist and broadcaster Miranda Sawyer, and musician Rachel Unthank, selected the shortlist and will announce the winner on 10 October.

The shortlist for the Gordon Burn Prize 2019 is:

For the Good Times, David Keenan (Faber)

Girl, Woman, Other, Bernadine Evaristo (Hamish Hamilton)

Heads of the Colored People, Nafissa Thompson-Spires (Chatto & Windus)

Lanny, Max Porter (Faber)

The Silence of the Girls, Pat Barker (Penguin)

This Brutal House, Niven Govinden (Dialogue)

On selecting the shortlist, author A.A. Dhand said: 'It was a pleasure to read twelve really strong books in order to reach our shortlist of six and within it we

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have such a broad depth of narratives, from historical fiction dating back to the Trojan War to the very here and now and what it means to be British in a time of huge uncertainty. There are individual and community voices here, which not only deserve to be heard, but moreover need to be heard. I look forward to working with the other judges in order to select a much deserving winner.'

The Gordon Burn Prize 2019 will take place at Durham Book Festival, a Durham County Council festival, on Thursday 10 October. The winner will receive £5000 and the chance to spend a month's retreat at Gordon Burn's cottage in the Scottish Borders. Tickets will be on sale from the Durham Book Festival website from Friday 9 August.

Over the next twelve months, Faber will re-issue all of Gordon Burn's books with newly commissioned introductions. The first two of these, *Alma Cogan* and *Somebody's Husband, Somebody's Son*, introduced by Adelle Stripe (shortlisted author) and Denise Mina (winner of the Gordon Burn Prize 2017) respectively, are out now.

-- ENDS --

For all media enquiries, including high res images and interview requests, please contact Laura Fraine, Senior Marketing and Communications Manager, New Writing North laurafraine@newwritingnorth.com 0191 204 8850

NOTES TO EDITORS

The longlist (announced on 21 May 2019) for the Gordon Burn Prize 2019:

Chamber Music: Enter the Wu-Tang Clan (in 36 Pieces), Will Ashon (Granta)

For the Good Times, David Keenan (Faber)

Ghost Wall, Sarah Moss (Granta)

Girl, Woman, Other, Bernadine Evaristo (Hamish Hamilton)

Heads of the Colored People, Nafissa Thompson-Spires (Chatto)

Heart Berries, Terese Marie Mailhot (Bloomsbury)

Lanny, Max Porter (Faber)

Lowborn, Kerry Hudson (Vintage)

Sweet Home, Wendy Erskine (Stinging Fly)

The Silence of the Girls, Pat Barker (Hamish Hamilton)

The Vogue, Eoin McNamee (Faber)

This Brutal House, Niven Govinden (Dialogue)

Previous winners of the Gordon Burn Prize

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2018 *Census*, Jesse Ball

2017 *The Long Drop*, Denise Mina

2016 *All That Man Is*, David Szalay

2015 *In Plain Sight: The Life and Lies of Jimmy Savile*, Dan Davies

2014 *The Wake*, Paul Kingsnorth

2013 *Pig Iron*, Benjamin Myers

Author biographies

David Keenan grew up in Airdrie in the late 1970s and early 1980s. He is the author of *England's Hidden Reverse* and a senior critic at *The Wire*. His debut novel, *This Is Memorial Device*, was shortlisted for the Gordon Burn and Collyer Bristow Prizes and was a Book of the Month for Waterstones, Rough Trade and *Caught by the River*.

Bernardine Evaristo is the Anglo-Nigerian award-winning author of seven books of fiction and verse fiction that explore aspects of the African diaspora: past, present, real, imagined. Her writing also spans short fiction, reviews, essays, drama and writing for BBC radio. She is Professor of Creative Writing at Brunel University London and Vice Chair of the Royal Society of Literature. As a literary activist for inclusion, Bernardine Evaristo has founded several successful initiatives including Theatre of Black Women (1982–86), Spread the Word writer development agency (1995–present); The Complete Works mentoring scheme for poets of colour (2007–17) and the Brunel International African Poetry Prize (2012 – ongoing).

Nafissa Thompson-Spires earned a PhD in English from Vanderbilt University and a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing from the University of Illinois. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *The White Review*, the *Los Angeles Review of Books Quarterly*, *StoryQuarterly*, *Lunch Ticket* and *The Feminist Wire*, among other publications. She is a 2016 participant of the Callaloo Creative Writing Workshop, a 2017 Tin House workshop, and a 2017 Sewanee Writers Conference Stanley Elkin Scholar. Born in San Diego, California, she now lives in Illinois with her husband.

Max Porter's first novel, *Grief Is the Thing with Feathers*, won the *Sunday Times/Peters, Fraser + Dunlop Young Writer of the Year*, the International Dylan Thomas Prize, the Europese Literatuurprijs and the BAMB Readers' Award, and was shortlisted for the *Guardian* First Book Award and the Goldsmiths Prize. It has been translated into twenty-seven languages. Max lives in Bath with his family.

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Pat Barker was born in Yorkshire and began her literary career in her forties, when she took a short writing course taught by Angela Carter. Encouraged by Carter to continue writing and exploring the lives of working-class women, she sent her fiction out to publishers. Thirty-five years later, she has published fifteen novels, including her masterful *Regeneration Trilogy*, been made a CBE for services to literature and won awards including the *Guardian* Fiction Prize and the UK's highest literary honour, the Booker Prize. She lives in Durham and her latest novel is *The Silence of the Girls*.

Niven Govinden is the author of four previous novels, most recently *All the Days and Nights*, which was longlisted for the Folio Prize and shortlisted for the Green Carnation Prize. His second novel *Graffiti My Soul* is about to go into film production. His third novel *Black Bread White Beer* won the 2013 Fiction Uncovered Prize. He was a judge for the 2017 4th Estate/Guardian BAME Prize.