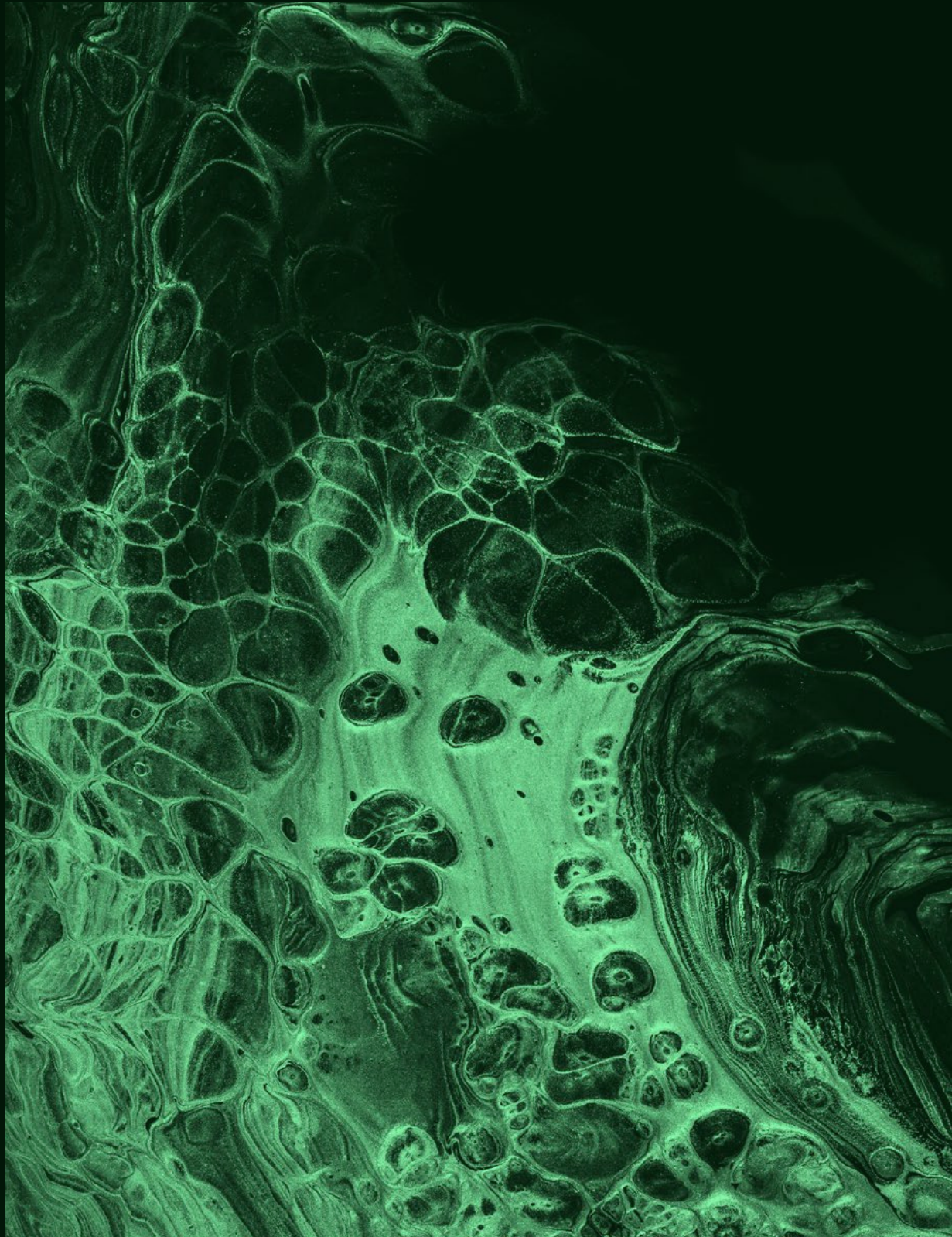


MELBOURNE
FOR LITERATURE

PRIZE
2021



Melbourne
Prize for
Literature
2021



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WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE TRADITIONAL OWNERS OF THE LAND ON WHICH THE MELBOURNE PRIZE TRUST OPERATES, THE PEOPLE OF THE KULIN NATION AND PAY OUR RESPECTS TO THE ELDERS, PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE.

Thank you to our 2021 Partners & Patrons



Government Partners	Major Patron	Melbourne Prize for Literature 2021 Partner	The Writers Prize 2021 Sole Patron	Civic Choice 2021 Partners	Founding and Creative Partner	Media Communications	Print Partners	Trophies
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Founding Partners	Patrons	Event Partner and Finalist Fees	Corporate Partner	Professional Development Award 2021 Partner	Professional Services	Signage & AV	IT Services and Website	Banners
 Building a better working world	Diana Gibson AO BELEURA HOUSE & GARDEN MORNINGTON					 	 	

MESSAGE
EXECUTIVE

FROM

THE
DIRECTOR

MESSAGE
EXECUTIVE

FROM

THE
DIRECTOR

THE MELBOURNE PRIZE CONTINUES ITS OBJECTIVE TO
DEMONSTRATE THE IMPORTANCE OF LITERATURE, MUSIC
AND (URBAN) SCULPTURE IN OUR COMMUNITY AND TO
RECOGNISE AND REWARD TALENT.”

We are pleased to be able to offer the Melbourne Prize for Literature 2021 & Awards during this time of challenge for the community. This has been made possible through the generous ongoing support from our partners.

This catalogue showcases the shortlist for the \$60,000 Melbourne Prize for Literature 2021 and \$15,000 Writer's Prize 2021. The winner of the Professional Development Award 2021 is showcased at melbourneprize.org, along with the winner of the \$3,000 Civic Choice Award 2021 (from November 11). Finalists receive \$1,000, which is generously supported by Fed Square.

We would like to acknowledge the dedication of the 2021 judges Alice Pung, Declan Fry and Michael Williams, who you can read about in this catalogue. Thank you also to all entrants and nominators for their time and effort in submitting this year.

A live online broadcast of the Prize and Award presentations was held at 6pm on November 10th. Thank you to Fed Square, PLAYGROUND and Creative Vision & Audio for supporting this event

Thank you to the literary sector and the many organisations, publications and websites who have generously helped raise awareness of and supported our 2021 program.

The Melbourne Prize for Literature 2021 & Award provides opportunities to Victorian published authors, showcases the abundant literary talent in our community and helps develop the literary sector, especially during these challenging time.

Going into its 18th year, the annual Melbourne Prize continues its objective to demonstrate the importance of literature, music and (urban) sculpture in our community and to demonstrate the importance of recognising and rewarding creative talent.

The Melbourne Prize for Literature 2021 and Awards are made possible through the generous support of our many partners and patrons who can be seen in this catalogue — thank you one and all for your valuable community investment in literature.

We are proud to promote Melbourne as a UNESCO City of Literature and to have the Victorian Government, through Creative Victoria, and the City of Melbourne as Government Partners.

Please enjoy reading the catalogue.

SIMON WARRENDER
**Executive Director and Founder
Melbourne Prize Trust and
annual Melbourne Prize**

Twitter: @MelbournePrize

→ **Facebook**

→ **melbourneprizetrust.org**

CITY OF LITERATURE CITY OF LITERATURE THE NETWORK'S 246 CITIES WORK TOGETHER TOWARDS A COMMON OBJECTIVE: PLACING CREATIVITY AND CULTURAL INDUSTRIES AT THE HEART OF THEIR COLLECTIVE AND INDIVIDUAL CITIES' DEVELOPMENT.

In 2008, Melbourne joined the UNESCO Creative Cities Network as the first and only City of Literature in Australia and the second of its kind in the world. This designation is managed by the City of Literature Office, a joint initiative of Creative Victoria and City of Melbourne and hosted by the Wheeler Centre

Created in 2004, the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) promotes the cooperation of cities that have identified creativity as a key strategy for sustainable urban development.

The network's 246 cities work together towards a common objective: placing creativity and cultural industries at the heart of their collective and individual cities' development. Melbourne has sister Cities in Literature around the globe, ranging from Edinburgh to Iowa City to Angoulême to local connections in Dunedin—in total, there are currently 38 Cities of Literature.

The network covers seven creative fields: crafts and folk arts, media arts, film, design, gastronomy, literature and music. In Victoria, Geelong is a City of Design, Ballarat a City of Craft and Folk Art and Bendigo a City of Gastronomy.

As Peter Carey said, 'Melbourne has always been a city of literature'—its designation as a UNESCO City of Literature recognises the breadth, depth and vibrancy of its literary culture. Melbourne supports a diverse range of writers, a prosperous publishing industry, a successful culture of independent bookselling, multiple literary organisations, a wide range of events and a healthy culture of reading and engagement.

The Melbourne City of Literature Office, who manage the designation, has delivered a wide range of initiatives including Tramlines, a podcast series written to be listened to on a tram; The Road Less Travelled, a collaborative project to support small festivals; Summer in the City of Literature, a series of commissions by local writers; and a Virtual Writers' Residency program. The City's writers also frequently collaborate with other Cities of Literature, such as Evelyn Araluen's contribution to Utrecht's international chain poem.

The Office will continue to deliver innovative online and in-person programs, connect writers from all Cities of Literature, and engage all aspects of the writing and reading community in celebrating and elevating our City of Literature.

The Elocwean Rainbow—a proposal for an installation in Howey Place, Melbourne by local artist Emma Anna.

The work envisages a homage to E.W. Cole and his legendary Victorian-era Cole's Book Arcade and his work for many years to promote literature and literacy in Melbourne.

Emma's project won the Melbourne Prize for Urban Sculpture's Public Artwork Design Concept Award 2017.

Photo provided by Emma Anna.



**Melbourne
City of
Literature**



Photo credit:
Liam Neal

FED
FOUNDING

EVENT

SQUARE:
PARTNER



Ralph Ralphsmith
CEO, Fed Square

Melbourne has long been recognised as a hub of creativity and culture in Australia, and Fed Square is proud to have been at its heart. Fed Square is dedicated to working with artists, creative bodies and cultural institutions to support works that celebrate Victoria's rich history and heritage and providing a platform to share this with the public. Fed Square is the exhibition and events partner and 'home' of the annual Melbourne Prize. Over the past 16 years, this partnership has made it possible for the public to engage with the abundant talent

presented as part of the Melbourne Prize via a free exhibition held in the Atrium each November, and for artists to gain exposure in this iconic destination. In 2021, Fed Square is raising the profile of the Melbourne Prize and its finalists via its Virtual Square digital platform as well as a live streamed virtual awards event broadcast from The Edge. The Melbourne Prize Trust appreciates Fed Square's generous support from inception of the annual Melbourne Prize, which develops and promotes the abundant creative talent of Victorian creatives.



→ fedsquare.com

PLAYGROUND is proud to be a Founding Partner of the Melbourne Prize Trust
and the creative and design partner of the annual Melbourne Prize.

PLAYGROUND

PLAYGROUND IS A CREATIVE STUDIO WHERE ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE. WE'RE NOT A TYPICAL AGENCY. WE WILL CHALLENGE YOU, WE WILL EXCITE YOU, AND AT TIMES WE MAY EVEN MAKE YOU NERVOUS. BUT THAT'S A GOOD THING. IT MEANS YOU ARE GETTING WHAT YOU NEED. WITH A RELENTLESS DRIVE FOR RESULTS, WE ARE A TEAM OF CREATIVE ENTREPRENEURS WITH EXPERTISE ACROSS BRAND STRATEGY, DESIGN, ADVERTISING COMMUNICATIONS, SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT STRATEGY, DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY & DATA SCIENCE.

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PLAYGROUND®

GOVERNMENT

PARTNERS

The Melbourne Prize for Literature celebrates Melbourne's status as a UNESCO City of Literature and the capital of the creative state.

While literature has always played a strong role in our community, over the last two years we have called on writers more than ever to help us make sense of the times, to entertain, inspire and challenge us, and to transport us to places far beyond our reach.

Congratulations to the eight talented Victorian writers who have been honoured by this year's Melbourne Prize for Literature. On behalf of all Victorians, thank you for the stories, characters and ideas you have gifted us, and for the contribution you make to the creative and cultural life of this state.

The Victorian Government is a proud partner of the Melbourne Prize which each year shines a light on Victoria's brightest creative minds. I thank the Melbourne Prize Trust for presenting the awards and for supporting the careers of local creative talent.

This year's nominees represent our premier storytellers and if you haven't discovered their work, or caught up on their latest endeavours, then look no further than this group to create your summer reading list.

Happy reading!

THE HON DANNY
PEARSON MP
**Minister for
Creative Industries**



GOVERNMENT

PARTNERS

The City of Melbourne has been a proud supporter of the annual Melbourne Prize since 2005.

It is an honour to again celebrate our diverse and vibrant creative city—in particular our local literary community—through this year's prize.

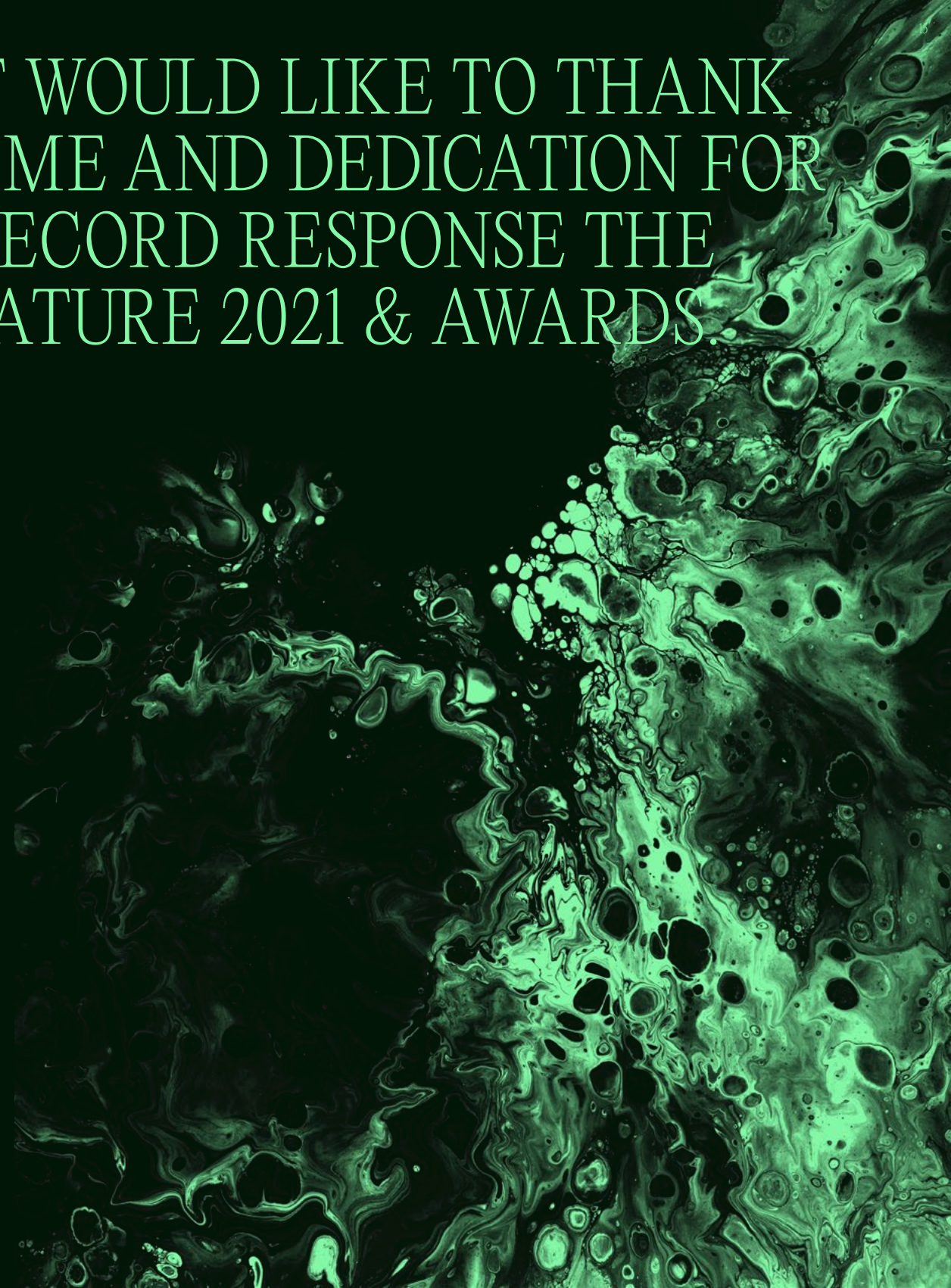
The response in 2021 has been unprecedented, unearthing many meritorious literary contributions and cementing Melbourne's reputation as an undisputed arts capital and proud UNESCO City of Literature. To the many shortlisted writers who enrich our city through storytelling and creative analysis—my thanks and congratulations.

It is through opportunities such as these that we will fuel Melbourne's artistic renaissance and pen a promising future.

SALLY CAPP
**Lord Mayor
of Melbourne**



THE MELBOURNE PRIZE TRUST WOULD LIKE TO THANK
THE 2021 JUDGES FOR THEIR TIME AND DEDICATION FOR
JUDGING WHAT HAS BEEN A RECORD RESPONSE THE
MELBOURNE PRIZE FOR LITERATURE 2021 & AWARDS.



DECLAN FRY
Writer
@_declanfry

Born on Wongatha country in Kalgoorlie, Declan Fry has written for The Guardian, Saturday Paper, Overland, Liminal, Australian Book Review, Cordite, Kill Your Darlings, Westerly and elsewhere.

His Meanjin Quarterly essay 'Justice for Elijah or a Spiritual Dialogue With Ziggy Ramo, Dancing' received the Peter Blazey Fellowship. He has been the recipient of a Lord Mayor's Creative Writing Award for memoir and shortlisted for the Judith Wright Poetry Prize. He is a graduate of UWA, where he studied European and Asian literature.

He currently lives on unceded Wurundjeri country with his partner and their cat, Turnip.



ALICE PUNG
Writer

Alice Pung is an Australian writer whose award-winning books include Unpolished Gem, Laurinda and Her Father's Daughter. Her latest book is One Hundred Days.

She is the current Artist in Residence at Janet Clarke Hall, the University of Melbourne.

She also writes for all major publications including The Age, Good Weekend, The Monthly and Saturday Paper.



MICHAEL
WILLIAMS
**Artistic Director,
Sydney Writers
Festival**

Michael Williams is Artistic Director of Sydney Writers' Festival. He spent the preceding decade at the Wheeler Centre for Books, Writing and Ideas in Melbourne; as its founding Head of Programming in 2009, and then as its Director from September 2011.

A regular host and interviewer for literary and ideas events around Australia his background is in publishing and broadcasting. He has hosted two shows on ABC Radio National – Blueprint for Living (2015-2016) and Talkfest (2017-2018) – was a regular on ABC TV's The Book Club, and remains a regular guest on ABC radio and TV.

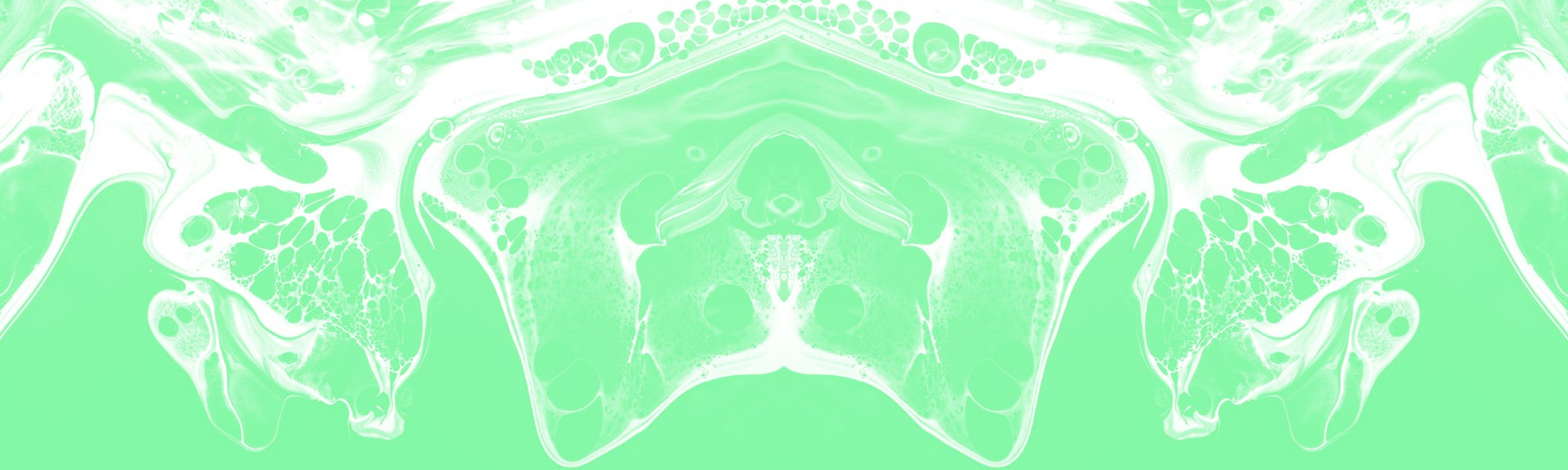
Michael has also worked as a Breakfast presenter for Melbourne's 3RRR, as a member of the Australia Council's Literature Board, in publishing in Australia and New York, and has written extensively for The Guardian, The Age, Sydney Morning Herald and elsewhere. He is currently also host of Guardian Australia's monthly book club. He has been part of the Melbourne Prize's Literature judging panel since 2009.



The writers shortlisted for the Melbourne Prize for Literature 2021 have made an invaluable contribution to Australian literature and to our cultural life. The shortlist for the Writer's Prize 2021 spoke to the times in which we live, adopting a variety of methods and perspectives; each piece stood out for its considered approach to the essay form and the energy of the writing.

The judges congratulate the winner of the new Professional Development Award 2021 and the other two category winners and would like to thank all entrants this year.

Despite the challenging era we are living through, a record response was received across all categories this year.



“THE SHORTLIST FOR THE MELBOURNE PRIZE FOR LITERATURE 2021 HAS MADE AN INVALUABLE CONTRIBUTION TO AUSTRALIAN LITERATURE AND TO OUR CULTURAL LIFE. THE SHORTLIST FOR THE WRITER’S PRIZE 2021 SPOKE TO THE TIMES IN WHICH WE LIVE.”

MELBOURNE PRIZE FOR LITERATURE 2021

\$60,000

Awarded to a Victorian author whose body of published work has made an outstanding contribution to Australian literature and to cultural and intellectual life. The author's work may include all literary genres for example, fiction, non-fiction, essays, plays, screenplays and poetry.

**The Prize is supported by Major Partner,
The Vera Moore Foundation.**



WRITER'S PRIZE 2021

\$15,000

Awarded to a Victorian writer and author of an essay of 10,000 words maximum, which has outstanding originality, literary merit and creative freshness.

**The Award is supported by its sole patron
The Robert Salzer Foundation**



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AWARD 2021

\$20,000

Awarded to a Victorian published author to fund a project/s, travel or other proposal that will assist them to pursue their writing career.

PLEASE NOTE —there are no finalists in the category—visit melbourneprize.org for the winner.

**The Award is supported by the
Melbourne Prize Trust**



CIVIC CHOICE AWARD 2021

\$3,000

Awarded to a finalist in the Melbourne Prize for Literature 2021 and Writer's Prize 2021 with the highest number of public votes.

The winner is published at melbourneprize.org on November 11.

**Supported by Readings and
Hardie Grant Books**



MELBOURNE PRIZE FOR LITERATURE FINALISTS 2021

JORDIE ALBISTON

Publisher: Puncher & Wattmann

- **Aus Poet Audio**
- **Wikipedia**
- **Jordie's YouTube video**

Jordie Albiston has published fourteen poetry collections and a handbook on poetic form. Two of her books have been treated for music-theatre, both enjoying seasons at the Sydney Opera House. Albiston's poetry has been recognised by prizes including the Mary Gilmore Award, the NSW Premier's Prize and the Patrick White Literary Award. She has worked under Fellowships at both the State Library of Victoria and the National Library (Canberra).

Albiston works within formal boundaries: traditional, experimental, or self-imposed. She seeks the musical cadence while endeavouring to exact a mathematical sense of existence. She lives in Melbourne.

→ **Career overview**

As a poet, I am interested in functional form. I also enjoy patterns. Since my earliest work, I have consciously explored a systemic poetry: a poetry fundamentally conceived to distort language in order to permit the disclosure and expression of other patterns, other principles of order. Over the last few years I have found myself face to face with the plain origin of all ordering principles—mathematics—and the key to my writing since then is the application of solid mathematical formulae to poetic language, and the strange and beautiful energy that may be released at the interface between these two very different codes.

Complementing my interest in the poetry + mathematics conversation is an ongoing preoccupation with the sonnet. The sonnet has beguiled me throughout my career, and

has recently seen me attempting to develop a syllabic, unmetered, 15-line version of the form. My latest collection, *Fifteeners*, is the first result of this endeavour, and I hope that—over time—I may provide a meaningful contribution to the genre.

A third area of interest for me is documentary poetry, that is, poetry utilising archival materials and, if possible, a witness of place. Subjects whose stories I have repurposed under the pressure of poetic form include the early women of Botany Bay, Jean Lee (the last woman hanged in Victoria), Ethel Overend (my paternal great great grandmother), Victorian WWI soldiers, and Frank Hurley (Antarctic adventurer and explorer).

See the list of poetry on page 38



MELBOURNE PRIZE FOR LITERATURE FINALISTS 2021

MAXINE BENEBA CLARKE

Publisher: Hachette Australia

- Twitter @slamup**
- Instagram @maxinebeneba**
- **Facebook**
- **Maxine's YouTube video**

Maxine Beneba Clarke is an Australian writer of Afro-Caribbean descent, and author of ten published books for children and adults, including the memoir *The Hate Race*, the Indie and ABIA award-winning short fiction collection *Foreign Soil*, the poetry collection *Carrying The World*, which won the 2017 Victorian Premier's Literary Award for Poetry, and several acclaimed children's picture books including *The Boston Globe/Horn Prize Winning The Patchwork Bike*. She is the editor of *Best Australian Stories 2017*, and the 2019 anthology *Growing Up African in Australia*. She recently adapted her memoir *The Hate Race* in collaboration with Melbourne's Malthouse Theatre and Sydney's Griffin Theatre.

→ **Career overview**

I started out performing my work in Melbourne's spoken word scene, before moving on to publish several poetry collections with small press publisher Picaro Press. In 2013, the manuscript for my first fiction book *Foreign Soil* unexpectedly won the Victorian Premier's Award for an Unpublished Manuscript, and was published in 2014. My memoir *The Hate Race* was published in 2016, along with my first children's picture book *The Patchwork Bike*, illustrated by Van T Rudd.

My work is largely concerned with the stories of African diaspora people, and those marginalised by society at large. Broadly speaking, I am interested in expanding what constitutes 'Australian literature', and helping ensure Australian shelves reflect the diversity of the Australian public.

I have had the honour of editing of *Growing Up African in Australia*, a non-fiction anthology of African diaspora Australian voices. My short fiction collection *Foreign Soil* has been on the VCE syllabus for Literature for the past four years, to be joined on the English syllabus my memoir *The Hate Race* in 2022.

My work has included visiting classrooms across Victoria, to speak to VCE and other students about my work, and literature in general. Recently I have adapted *The Hate Race* for the Australian stage, and I am in the process of adapting my short fiction collection *Foreign Soil* for television, with Melbourne production company Film Camp.

See the list of titles on page 38



CHRISTOS TSIOLKAS

**Publisher: Jane Palfreyman,
Allen & Unwin**

→ **Christos' YouTube video**

Christos Tsiolkas is a playwright, essayist and screenwriter, and the author of seven novels, including *Loaded*, which was made into the feature film *Head-On*; *The Jesus Man* and *Dead Europe*, which won the 2006 Age Fiction Prize and the 2006 Melbourne Best Writing Award, as well as being made into a feature film. His fourth novel, the international bestseller *The Slap*, won Overall Best Book in the Commonwealth Writers' Prize 2009, was shortlisted for the 2009 Miles Franklin Literary Award, longlisted for the 2010 Man Booker Prize and won the Australian Literary Society Gold, as well as the 2009 Australian Booksellers Association and Australian Book Industry Awards Books of the Year.

Christos's fifth novel *Barracuda* was shortlisted for the ALS Gold Medal and the inaugural Voss Literary Prize. *The Slap* and *Barracuda* were both adapted into celebrated television series, where Christos served as Executive Producer and script consultant. Christos's acclaimed collection of short stories, *Merciless Gods*, was published in 2014 and his critical literary study *On Patrick White* came out in 2018. His sixth novel, *Damascus*, was published in 2019 and won the 2019 Victorian Premier's Literary Award for Fiction. 7 ½, his most recent novel, will be published by Allen & Unwin in November 2021.

→ **Career overview**

Christos' reviews and critical essays have appeared in *The Monthly*, *Cinema Papers*, *Rolling Stone*, *RePublica*, *The Age*, *The Australian*, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Guardian*, *Arena*, *Juice*, *Island*, *Overland*, *Meanjin*, *Australian Foreign Affairs*, *Senses*

of Cinema. He has been a film reviewer for *The Saturday Paper* since 2014, and a co-host of *Superfluity* on community radio station 3RRR since 2011.

In 2015 he became an ambassador for Outer Urban Projects since 2015, a theatre company working with young writers and performers in the northern and north-western suburbs of Melbourne. Christos has also been a patron for Writers Victoria since 2017.

Since 2013, he has been a Cultural Ambassador for the Asylum Seekers Resource Centre. His novels have been translated in over 22 languages and his work has been adapted for film, television and for the stage.

Christos lives in Melbourne with his partner, Wayne van der Stelt.

See the list of titles on page 38



Photo credit John Tsiavis

PI O

**Publisher: Giramondo and
Collective Effort Press**

→ **Pi's YouTube video**

Π.Ο. is a "famous poet". After 41 years as a draughtsman he is now retired.

He grew up in Fitzroy, and now lives in Darebin. He has published many books the latest being "Big Numbers"—New & selected poems, "Fitzroy—the Biography", and "Heide" (which won the Judith Wright Calanthe Award in 2020, and was shortlisted for the Prime Minister's Literary Award for Poetry in the same year).

He currently edits the poetry magazine "Unusual Work", was a founding member of the Poets Union, and performance poetry in Australia. He has also edited an anthology of performance poetry "Off The Record" (1985) with Penguin Books, and "Missing Forms" an anthology of visual poet. He has represented Australia in America, Colombia, Germany, and Thailand.

→ **Career overview**

He pioneered post World War II migrant poetry in particular dialect writing, and the exposing of the underbelly of Australia's treatment of migrants ostensibly through two radio national documentary broadcasts in 1980 on the Migrant Riots out at Bonegilla near Albury / Wodonga in 1952, and 1962. He pioneered and fostered worker's poetry and writing through the editing of the magazine "925", and tours of shop floors, factories, and offices principally in Melbourne and Sydney, liaising through various Unions, and with the establishment of the Poets Union in 1978.

Pioneered and fostered the practice of visual and sound poetry in Australia ostensibly through various magazines "Fitzrot", "925",

"Unusual Work", "Born To Concrete", and the anthology "Missing Forms". Pioneered the establishment of mathematical poetry, through presentations, performances, and lectures and the publication of *The Number Poems*. Pioneered the establishment of performance and oral poetry in Australia, on TV, radio, and the editing of the anthology "Off The Record". His strengths have come from the fact that he is firmly rooted in the soil—namely my suburb Fitzroy, and that he doesn't subscribe to mystical notions of creative powers, but see it and experience it as enforced labour, with next to no remuneration.

See the list of titles on page 38



WRITER'S 2021

PRIZE FINALISTS

VIVIAN BLAXELL

Publisher: Jane Palfreyman,
Allen & Unwin

Twitter @VivianBlaxell

→ **Facebook**

→ **Vivian's YouTube video**

Vivian Blaxell grew up in Wagga Wagga. She is a former street kid, teenage sex worker, and mental health nurse. She has held lectureships and professorial positions in Japanese history and political philosophy at universities in the United States, Australia, Japan, Turkey, and China. Vivian is a trans pioneer and elder. She was one of the first women to undergo medical transition within Australia, and one of the first to speak publicly about it in the language of social justice.

Working with Roberta Perkins and others, Vivian co-founded the Australian Transsexual Association in 1981 and then co-founded Tiresias House, Australia's first shelter and resource centre for and by trans people, now The Gender Centre in Sydney. Vivian has written and published short stories, scholarly essays, personal essays, and reportage in a variety of publications. Most recent is 'The Disappointments' which appeared in Overland in February 2021, and which, along with 'Nuclear Cats' and other essays, is intended as part of a large autobiographical project structured as *dérive* of the mind.

→ **About the essay: Nuclear Cats**

There are no nuclear cats in 'Nuclear Cats' except perhaps when you step into the night at a village near Fukushima and espy glowing phantoms, which is where 'Nuclear Cats' began. In 2011, I published a long essay concerning the effects on people of the March 11th Tohoku earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear meltdown in Japan.

As the 10th anniversary of the catastrophe approached, I wanted to commemorate the innumerable animals abandoned and perished in 2011. I read an interview with a man (now dead of radiation-related disease) who had been evacuated from Fukushima. From his evacuation camp many kilometres distant, he said he could hear the sick and abandoned animals of

Fukushima calling and begging for help, so he broke the law and returned to his radioactive home to care for them.

How did he know what they were saying? His ventriloquy of animal speech reminded me of my own problems with understanding what people who are not trans say to me and with conveying what I mean to those same people. Me: what does he mean? I don't know. Them: what is she saying? Oh, I know, she is saying, she wants to be a woman. Not really.

Instances of ventriloquy revealed patterns of unequal power relations between human beings and animals and, in parallel ways, between unmarked human subjects and marked human subjects. The essay builds on this insight via a sequence of stories, observations, and theorised accounts to traverse a range of places at which animals are marked subjects for human management and violence and where subaltern human beings are marked subjects for human control but may also participate in the control of, and violence meted out to, animals.

See the list of titles on page 38



WRITER'S 2021

PRIZE FINALISTS

ELOISE VICTORIA GRILLS

Publisher: Affirm Press

Instagram: @grillzoid

Twitter: @grillzoid

→ **eloisegrills.com**

→ **Eloise's YouTube video**

Eloise Grills is an award-winning essayist, comics artist, poet and critic living on Djarra country. She is currently working on her debut collection of illustrated essays, *big beautiful female theory*, to be published by Affirm Press in 2022.

→ **About the essay: The Fat Bitch in Art**

The Fat Bitch in Art is an essay with thigh-high ambitions and ass-ertions that just won't quit. It started in the same way as many of my works: as a joke, that grew and grew beyond all reason and practicality. It began as an analysis of depictions of fat femmes in art, which grew to an analysis of the racialised history of these depictions, and then swelled to a proposal for a Museum of Fat Bitches' Art and a treatise on feminine desire and art making. Over interminable, dreary lockdowns, I wondered how I might create a museum of the mind for the reader to experience. What I ended up with is (I hope) an imaginative, absurd and carnivalesque experience; a dreamspace of sumptuous bodies and art to which every fat bitch in the world is invited.

See the list of titles on page 38



OUYANG YU

- **Blog**
- **Ouyang's YouTube video**

Ouyang Yu came to Australia in mid-April 1991 and has since published 135 books of poetry, fiction, non-fiction, literary translation and criticism in English and Chinese languages, including his award-winning novels, *The Eastern Slope Chronicle* (2002) and *The English Class* (2010), his collection of poetry, *Songs of the Last Chinese Poet* (1997), and his poetry book, *Terminally Poetic* (2020), that won the Judith Wright Calanthe Award for a Poetry Book in the 2021 Queensland Literary Awards.

His work is published by The Ginninderra Press, Transit Lounge Publishing and the Wakefield Press, among others.

→ **About the essay: The Case for China or a Self-obituary**

The essay is a longish article of 9050 words that addresses a simple case, the case for China, written in the form of a self-obituary, by someone who assumes he is living a posthumous life.

The rest is findable across the length and breadth of the article itself when made available in the flesh. Any other way of presenting it would be to diminish the purpose.

The above is my first draft so you can see I didn't particularly like to elaborate on what's in the article. Below is my attempt, this morning, to add to what is required of a 200-word piece, as thoughts emerged.

As I can't stop revising and criticizing myself, having done five drafts of this short piece, I'd like to give it another go, hopefully



my last. As one finds it increasingly difficult to speak one's mind these days, one allows death to give one voice; one makes one's point through self-censorship. Ultimately, the artist's task, if ever there is one, is to maintain his silence in the written words, or make his silence sound, the way it's meant to sound.

See the list of titles on page 38

OUYANG

DAVID SORNIG

Publisher: Scribe Publications

- Instagram: @davidsornig**
- Twitter: @davidsornig**
- **davidsornig.com**
- **David's YouTube video**

David Sornig's two books are *Blue Lake: finding Dudley Flats and the West Melbourne Swamp* (2018), a historical, biographical and personal excursion through the former wetlands and Great Depression-era shanty town of West Melbourne, and *Spiel* (2009), a novel about an architect in Berlin trying to escape the sins of his inherited past. In 2015 he was a State Library of Victoria Creative Fellow and a finalist in the Melbourne Prize for Literature Writer's Prize. In 2019 *Blue Lake* won a Judges' Special Prize in the Victorian Community History Awards and was adapted for Radio National's History Listen.

→ **About the essay: Thirteen Men at the Sack of Troy**

'Thirteen Men at the Sack of Troy' examines a compelling 1939 photograph of a gang of labourers driving a road through the grasslands and muddy waterways of western Melbourne – from an explosives factory on the suburban fringe to a jetty on the waters of Naarm.

Like the warriors of the Iliad, the men in the photograph are both passively subject to the material, political and economic forces of their age, but are also soldiers, actively doing the bidding of those same forces. They are complicit with consolidating the industrial conquest of the estates of the Kurung Jang Balluk clan of the Woiwurrung and the Yalukit Willam clan of the Boonwurrung, and are giving shape to a landscape upon which the endemic, wasteful consequences of modernity's limitless reach will become writ large.

In the essay, I recount my journey along the same road, attentive to the burdens of my own culpability, wondering how it might be possible to break free from the terrible gravity of force, and perhaps finding an answer in an unexpected, but deeply sorrowful moment of grace.

See the list of titles on page 38



The annual
Melbourne
Prize and
Awards
Alumni
2005–2020

2020

Beth Arnold
Mikala Dwyer
Emily Floyd
Nicholas Mangan
Kathy Temin
Field Theory

**Rural & Regional
Development
Award 2020**

Laura Woodward

**Professional
Development
Award 2020**

Isadora Vaughan

**Civic Choice
Award 2020**
Field Theory

2019

**Melbourne Prize
for Music**
Deborah Cheetham
AO

**Distinguished
Musicians
Fellowship 2019**
Erkki Veltheim

**Development
Award 2019**
Mojo Juju

**Beleura Emerging
Composers Award
2019**
Andrea Keller

**Civic Choice
Award 2019**
Kaiit Waup

2018

**Melbourne Prize
for Literature**
Alison Lester

**Best Writing
Award**
Maria Tumarkin

**Readings
Residency Award**
Jamie Marina Lau

**Civic Choice
Award**
Louise Milligan

2017

**Melbourne Prize
for Sculpture**
Daniel von Sturmer

**Rural & Regional
Development
Award**
Fayen d'Evie

**Public Artwork
Design Concept
Award**
Emma Anna

**Professional
Development
Award**
Bridie Lunney

**Civic Choice
Award**
Sarah crowEST

2016

**Melbourne Prize
for Music**
Kutchá Edwards

**Outstanding
Musicians Award**
Scott Tinkler

**Beleura Award for
Composition**
Kate Neal

2015

**Melbourne Prize
for Literature
Professor**
Christopher
Wallace–Crabbe AM

**Best Writing
Award**
Andrea Goldsmith

Writers Prize
Kate Ryan

**Civic Choice
Award**
Robbyn Annear

2014

**Melbourne
Prize for Urban
Sculpture**
Geoff Robinson

**Professional
Development
Award**
Kay Abude

**Civic Choice
Award**
Kay Abude

**Rural & Regional
Development
Award**
Aleks Danko

2013

**Melbourne Prize
for Music**
Brett Dean

**Outstanding
Musicians
Award**
Stephen
Magnusson

**Development
Award**
Kate Kelsey–Sugg

**Civic Choice
Award**
Mick Harvey

2012

**Melbourne Prize
for Literature**
Alex Miller

**Best Writing
Award**
Craig Sherborne

**Civic Choice
Award**
Tony Birch

2011

**Melbourne
Prize for Urban
Sculpture**
Bianca Hester

**Professional
Development
Award**
Isaac Greener &
Lucas Maddock

**Civic Choice
Award**
Isaac Greener &
Lucas Maddock

2010

**Melbourne Prize
for Music**
David Jones

**Outstanding
Musicians
Award**
Ben Northey

**Development
Award**
Natalie Bartsch

2009

**Melbourne Prize
for Literature**
Gerald Murnane

**Best Writing
Award**
Nam Le

**Civic Choice
Award**
Amra Pajalic

2008

**Melbourne
Prize for Urban
Sculpture**
Alexander Knox

**Professional
Development
Award**
Tom Nicholson

**Vic Urban
Award**
Louise Paramor

**Civic Choice
Award**
Elaine Miles

2007

**Melbourne Prize
for Music**
Paul Grabowsky

**Outstanding
Musicians
Award**
Genevieve Lacey

**Development
Award**
Julian Langdon

2006

**Melbourne Prize
for Literature**
Helen Garner

**Best Writing
Award**
Christos Tsiolkas

**Civic Choice
Award**
Henry von Doussa

2005

**Melbourne
Prize for Urban
Sculpture**
Open Spatial
Workshop

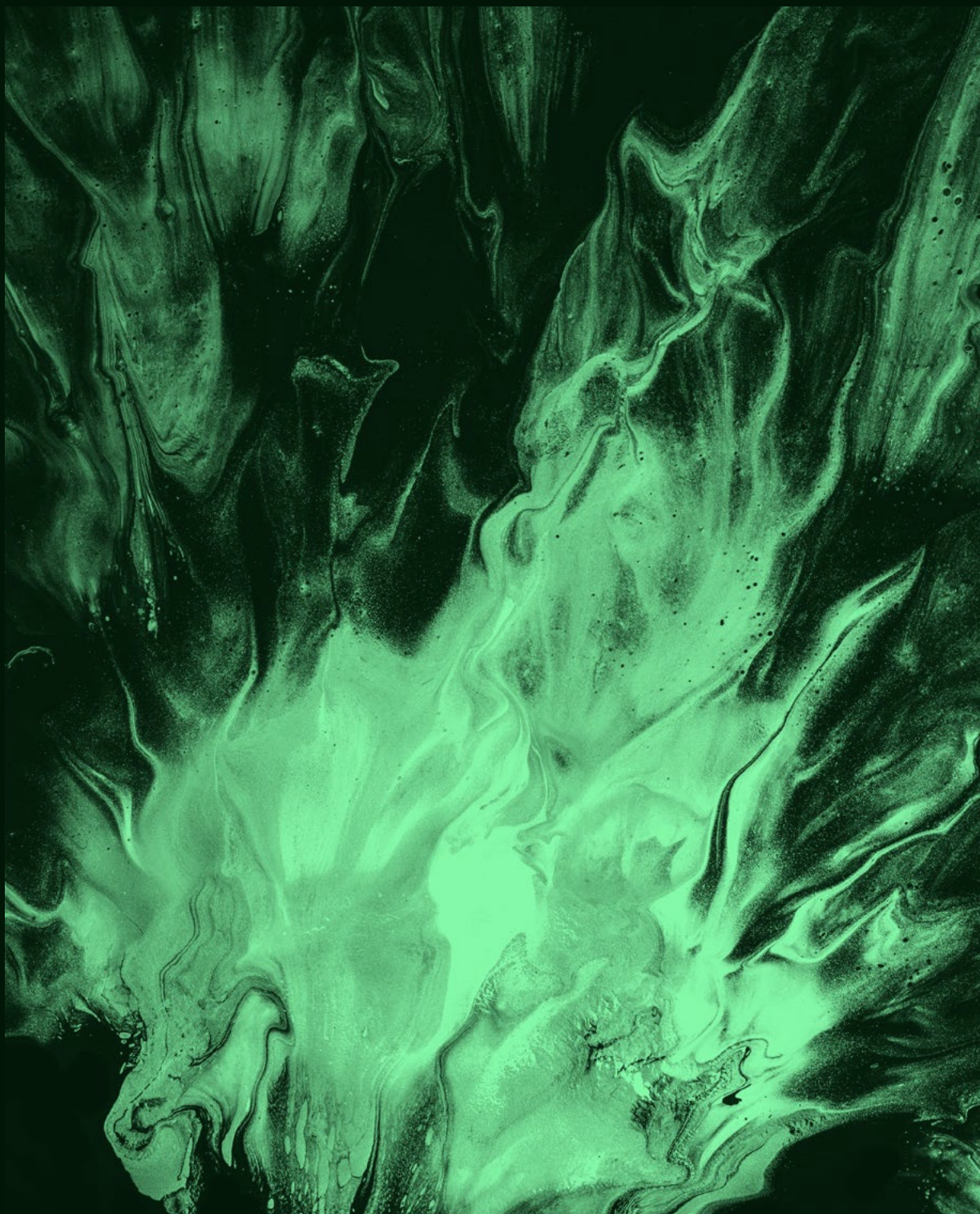
**Professional
Development
Award**
Karen Abernethy

**Civic Choice
Award**
Matthew de Moiser



THANK

YOU



THANK

During another year where the creative sectors have been significantly impacted by the pandemic, the ongoing and generous support of our partners and patrons has made it possible to offer the Melbourne Prize for Literature 2021 and Awards, including the Federation Square live broadcast. Many partners and patrons have been with the Prize since its inception in 2004.

Thank you to the many entrants this year and finalists, whose interest in the prize is greatly appreciated - it has been a record year.

The Melbourne Prize Trust would like to thank the Victoria Government, through Creative Victoria, and the City of Melbourne, as our Government Partners, for their ongoing and generous support.

The 2021 judges include three esteemed arts sector professionals: Alice Pung, Writer, Declan Fry, Writer and Michael Williams, Artistic Director Sydney Writers Festival.

Founding Partners Ernst & Young, Minter Ellison and Committee for Melbourne played an integral role in establishing the project since inception in 2004.

The brand identity and awards broadcast for the 2021 Melbourne Prize, including the catalogue, is the creative work of leading Melbourne-based design studio PLAYGROUND under the direction of Creative Director Adit Wardhana along with Designer Alex Darbyshire and Studio Manager Kim Hankin. Playground is lead by Sally Dobell CEO.

Our Events Partner, Federation Square, enables the Melbourne Prize to have its 'home' in one of the highest profile public spaces in Australia and generously supported the live broadcast of the awards event, which has been undertaken by AV partner Creative Vision & Audio—thank you.

The Trust greatly appreciates the ongoing support of Corporate Partner Sofitel Luxury Hotels.

The Melbourne Prize for Literature 2021 & Awards program would not be possible without the support of major patron, The Vera Moore Foundation, whose is the sole partner of the Melbourne Prize for Literature 2021.

The \$20,000 Professional Development Award 2021 is supported by the new Melbourne Prize Trust. The Writer's Prize 2021 is generously provided by The

YOU

Robert Salzer Foundation. Hardie Grant Books and Readings are partners in the Civic Choice Award 2021.

Our patrons are acknowledged for their generous donations this year. These include major patron The Vera Moore Foundation, Diana Gibson AO and The Tallis Foundation.

There are a number of organisations that provide valued professional services to the annual Melbourne Prize, for which the Trust is thankful for their generous and ongoing partnership. Royce provides strategic media and communications advice, along with Grant Thornton who undertake the annual audit of the Trust and its activities. Rothfield Print Management, Ellikon and Spicers Paper are generous supporters of the Trust's print requirements.

Thank you to Evan Evans for supporting our digital printing, Lee Wong of The Mighty Wonton for our website management and Rod Birrell for web hosting. The Trust would like to thank Fundere Fine Art Foundry for crafting the unique presentation trophies for the awards and for fabricating the miniatures of The Magic Pudding sculpture (located at the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne).

Thank you to the Board of the Melbourne Prize Trust including Dr Janine Kirk AM (Chairman), Pamela Warrender OAM, Professor Andrea Hull AO, Anthony Poynton, Clive Scott, Simon Warrender and Gerald Dalbosco.

The Trust would like to thank the many organisations supporting the literary sector in Victoria, who support this year has been invaluable. The many sector journals, peak bodies, commercial organisation and websites made it possible to promote the prize during the entry period. Thank you to Meanjin for publishing the shortlisted essays in the Writer's Prize 2021.

The Trust is fortunate to have the support of a number of people whose contribution this year is greatly appreciated. These include Melbourne Prize Social Media Manager Sarah Kempson, Susan Owens managing Twitter and the volunteers who assist the organisation.

The Trust would like to thank the public for their support of our social media campaigns and for their interest in this year's program



The annual Melbourne Prize is the most valuable prize of its kind in Australia and runs in a three-year cycle, which includes the Melbourne Prize for Urban Sculpture, the Melbourne Prize for Literature and the Melbourne Prize for Music.

Since its inception the annual Melbourne Prize has made available approximately \$1.8 million in prizes and awards, plus artist residencies, overseas travel, equipment grants and an annual public exhibition at Federation Square to Victorian writers, sculptors and musicians.

The Prize celebrates artistic excellence under the unique banner of Melbourne. With its focus on Victorian artists, the Prize provides our local creative talent with significant financial, professional development and exhibition opportunities.

The major event of the annual Melbourne Prize is the free two-week public exhibition of finalists' work and the prize announcement held each November at Federation Square.

The annual Melbourne Prize is supported by the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria, the City of Melbourne and our partners and patrons.

→ Visit melbourneprize.org



Founded by Simon Warrender and launched in 2004, the Melbourne Prize Trust is established to recognise and reward talent, excellence and inspire creative development. The Trust achieves this aim by running the annual Melbourne Prize, which is funded by a collaboration of partners and patrons. The Melbourne Prize Trust was founded by Simon Warrender developed as an initiative of the Committee for Melbourne.

This year's identity is developed and managed by PLAYGROUND—Sally Dobell CEO. The design is by Adit Wardhana.

A full list of partners and patrons can be found in the front of this catalogue and at melbourneprize.org.

Thank you to the Committee of Melbourne for providing the office for the Trust.

The origins of the Melbourne Prize Trust date back to *The Magic Pudding* sculpture commission and children's garden precinct at the Royal Botanic Garden Melbourne. The Melbourne Prize Trust is a Deductible Gift Recipient and Income Tax Exempt Charity.

→ Visit melbourneprizetrust.org

FINALISTS’ TITLES

MELBOURNE PRIZE FOR LITERATURE 2021 FINALISTS

→ JORDIE ALBISTON

POETRY

Frank: Hurley in Antarctica (forthcoming)
Selected Poems (forthcoming, Puncher & Wattmann: 2022)
Book (artist's book, Life Before Man/Gazebo Press: 2021)
Fifteeners (Puncher & Wattmann: 2021)
element: the atomic weight & radius of love (Puncher & Wattmann: 2019)
warlines (Hybrid Publishers: 2018)
The Cyprus Poems (chapbook, Picaro Poets: 2018)
Euclid’s dog: 100 algorithmic poems (Gloria SMH: 2017)
Jack & Mollie (& Her) (UQP: 2016)
XIII Poems (Rabbit Poets Series #1, Rabbit Poetry Press: 2013)
the Book of Ethel (Puncher & Wattmann: 2013)
kindness (artist's book, Red Rag Press: 2013)
the sonnet according to ‘m’ (John Leonard Press: 2009)
Vertigo: a cantata (John Leonard Press: 2007)
The Fall (White Crane Press: 2004)
My Secret Life (chapbook, Picaro Press: 2002)
The Hanging of Jean Lee (Black Pepper Press: 1998, reprinted 2004, 2013)
Botany Bay Document (Black Pepper Press: 1996, reprinted 2003, 2013)
Nervous Arcs (Spinifex Press: 1995)

CHILDREN’S POETRY

Esmé d’Arc Adds Up to More than Zero (Little Steps: 2021)
Barkwoofgrrrr! (Little Barrow Press: 2019)
Sukie’s Suitcase (Little Barrow Press: 2018)

EDITOR

The Weekly Poem: 52 exercises in closed & open forms (Puncher & Wattmann: 2014)
Prayers of a Secular World (with Kevin Brophy, Inkerman & Blunt: 2013)

→ MAXINE BENEBA CLARKE

TITLES

Gil Scott-Heron is on Parole (2009)
Nothing Here Needs Fixing (2013)
Foreign Soil (2014)
The Hate Race (2016)
Carrying The World (2016)
The Patchwork Bike (2016)
ed. Best Australian Stories 2017 (2017)
Wide Big World (2018)
The Saturday Portraits (2019)
Fashionista (2019)
ed. Growing Up African in Australia (ed)
Meet Taj at the Lighthouse (2020)
When We Say Black Lives Matter (2020)
How Decent Folk Behave (2021)
The Hate Race—stage adaptation (2021)

→ CHRISTOS TSIOLKAS

TITLES

Loaded (1995, Random House, Aust.)
Jump Cuts (with Sasha Soldatow) (1996, Random House, Aust.)
The Jesus Man (1999, Random House, Aust.)
The Devil’s Playground (2003, Currency Press, Aust)
Monograph on the Australian film for the Australian Screen Classics Series
Dead Europe (2005, Random House, Aust.)
“On the Concept of Tolerance”, in Tolerance, Prejudice and Fear: Sydney

PEN 3 Writers Project (2008, Allen & Unwin)
The Slap (2008, Allen & Unwin Aust.)
Barracuda (2013, published by Allen & Unwin Aust.)
Merciless Gods (2014, Allen & Unwin Aust., short story collection)
On Patrick White (2018, Black Inc., a monograph on Nobel Prize Winner, Patrick White)
Damascus (2019, Allen & Unwin Aust.)
7 ½, 2021 (Allen & Unwin Aust.)

→ PLO

TITLES

Fitzroy Brothel
Street Singe
Panash
The Fuck Poems
The Fitzroy Poems
Big Numbers
The Number Poems
24 Hours
Fitzroy; the biography
Heide

WRITER’S PRIZE 2021 FINALISTS

→ VIVIAN BLAXELL

ESSAYS AND FICTION

2021. **“The Disappointments” Overland.**
2012. **“Wheat” The Imaginary Family Project.** A Red Dirt Chronicles project, Ada, OK.
2011. **“A Personal Encounter: Sorrow, History and Catastrophe in Japan after the Tsunami and Nuclear Meltdown.”** Truthout, 12 September, 2011.

SCHOLARLY

2020. **“Seized Hearts: ‘Soft’ Japanese Counterinsurgency Before 1945 and Its Persistent Legacies in Postwar Malaya, South Vietnam and Beyond.”** The Asia-Pacific Journal, Japan Focus. March 15, Vol. 18. Issue 6. No. 2.
2014. **“Yellow Blood: Hepatitis C and the Modernist Settlement in Japan.”** The Asia Pacific Journal, Vol. 12, Issue 18, No. 1, May 5.
2010. **“Preparing Okinawa for Reversion to Japan: The Okinawa International Ocean Exposition of 1975, the US Military and the Construction State,”** The Asia-Pacific Journal, 29- 2-10, July 19, 2010.
2009. **“Designs of Power: The “Japanization” of Urban and Rural Space in Colonial Hokkaidō,”** The Asia-Pacific Journal, Vol. 35-2-09, August 31, 2009. Reprinted in Eiko Maruko Siniawer, editor. Environmental History. Japan Focus Course Reader, No. 2, 2012.
2008. **“Worldliness in Orhan Pamuk’s Istanbul Memories of a City.”** Urbana, Vol. IX, Spring, With Verena Laschinger.
2008. **“New Syonan and Asianism in Japanese-era Singapore.”** Japan Focus. January 23.

→ ELOISE VICTORIA GRILLS

TITLES

Dog Park, co-authored with Radha O’Meara (2021)
If you’re sexy and you know it slap your hams. (Subbed In, 2019)
Sexy Female Murderesses (Glom Press, 2018)

FINALISTS’ TITLES

→ OUYANG YU

FICTION

The Eastern Slope Chronicle (Brandl & Schlesinger, 2002) [Winner of the Festival Award for Innovation in Writing at the 2004 Adelaide Bank Festival of Arts]
The English Class (Transit Lounge, 2010) [Winner of NSW Premier’s Award, the Community Relations Award, and shortlisted for the Christina Stead Fiction Award, Queensland Premier’s Award, Western Australia Premier’s Award, 2011, and a finalist for the Melbourne Prize in 2012]
Loose: a wild history (Wakefield Press, 2011)
Diary of a Naked Official (Transit Lounge, 2014)
Billy Sing (Transit Lounge, 2017)
West of the River (single-copy edition, Otherland Publishing, early 2020)
Spring Waters: Li Yu, the Emperor of Poetry (single-copy edition, Otherland Publishing, early 2020)

NON-FICTION

Representations of Australia and the Australians in the Chinese and Hong Kongese Media: 1985-1995 (CSAAR, University of Queensland, 1998)
Bias: Offensively Chinese/Australian. (Melbourne: Otherland Publishing, 2007)
On the Smell of an Oily Rag: speaking English, thinking Chinese and living Australian (Wakefield Press, 2007).
Chinese in Australian Fiction: 1888-1988 (Cambria Press, USA, 2008)
Beyond the Yellow Pale: Essays and Criticism (Otherland Publishing, 2010)
Small Says: Words, Stories and Mini-Meditations (single-copy edition, Otherland Publishing, early 2020)

POETRY

Moon over Melbourne and Other Poems (first published by Papyrus Publishing, 1995, new UK edition by Shearsman Books, London, 2005)
Songs of the Last Chinese Poet (Wild Peony Press, 1997) [Short-listed for the NSW Premier’s Literary Award, 1998]
Two Hearts, Two Tongues and Rain-coloured Eyes (Wild Peony Press, 2002)
Foreign Matter (Otherland Publishing, hand-made in 2003, winner of the Fast Books Prize for best self-published poetry in Australia, 2003)
New and Selected Poems by Ouyang Yu (Salt Publishing, UK, 2004)
Listening To (Vagabond Press, 2006)
The Kingsbury Tales: a novel (Brandl & Schlesinger, 2008)
Reality Dreams (Picaro Press, 2008)
White and Yu (PressPress, 2010)
Soul Diary, published as part of Triptych Poets (Blemish Books, 2011)
The Kingsbury Tales: A Complete Collection (Otherland Publishing, 2012)
Bilingual Love: Poems from 1975 to 2008 (Picaro Press, 2012)
What Can Poetry Do About This and Other Poems (Picaro Press, 2012)
Fainting with Freedom (Five Islands Press, 2015)
Flag of Permanent Defeat (Puncher & Wattmann, 2019)
Terminally Poetic (a collection of poetry, published by Ginninderra Press, South Australia, in July,2020, which won the Judith Wright Calanthe Award for a Poetry Book in the 2021 Queensland Literary Awards)
Living After Death: A Collection of Prose Poems (MPU, Melbourne, 1 August, 2020)

Ouyang Yuhas published a current total of 137 titles, including 70 titles in Chinese, 65 titles published in English, 38 books of translation in Chinese and 35 books of translation in English.

→ DAVID SORNIG

TITLES

Blue Lake: finding Dudley Flats and the West Melbourne Swamp (Scribe, 2018)
Spiel (UWA Publishing, 2009)



Melbourne
Prize for
Literature
2021

melbourneprize.org