

Aesthetica

Winners Announced for the Aesthetica Creative Writing Award 2016

60 Finalists including Two Winners Published in a Compelling Anthology of Poetry & Short Fiction

Out of thousands of entries, 60 talented writers have been shortlisted for the [Aesthetica Creative Writing Award 2016](#), with a winner in each category of Poetry and Short Fiction. The winning entries by Christina Sanders (Short Fiction) and Ian Dudley (Poetry) have been published along with the 58 finalists' works in the *Aesthetica Creative Writing Annual*.

The Aesthetica Creative Writing Award is an internationally renowned poetry and short fiction competition open to emerging and established writers from around the world. Now in its 10th year, the award is hosted by [Aesthetica Magazine](#), a leading contemporary art and culture publication with a print and digital readership of 311,000 worldwide.

The Award recognises excellence in contemporary writing and provides a platform for literary professionals to showcase their work and reach a wider audience. Each year the finalists and winners are published in the *Aesthetica Creative Writing Annual*, an absorbing compendium that fuses new and critically-acclaimed international writers. Considering a vast range of themes and subject matter, the book reveals many different aspects of life today alongside introductions by **Arifa Akbar**, Journalist, Critic and Columnist and former Literary Editor of *The Independent* and *inewspapers*, and Poet and Professor **Dr Oz Hardwick**.

The Short Fiction category is also judged by a [Reading Panel](#) whose expertise span creative writing, contemporary cultures, publishing and higher education. Members include **Martine Pierquin**, Course Organiser in Creative Writing and Film, Media and Contemporary Cultures at the University of Edinburgh Short Courses; **Stephen Toase**, whose work is published extensively and who is currently working with imove Arts on a project called *Haunt*; **Liz Jones**, teaching Fellow at Aberystwyth University's Theatre, Film and Television Department, and **David Wharton**, Course Director of the Certificate in Creative Writing at the Vaughan Centre for Lifelong Learning, University of Leicester.

This year's competition was fierce, with over 2,500 entries from over 40 countries worldwide, including Australia, Canada, the USA, France, Germany, The Netherlands, Japan, China, Ireland and the UK. 60 finalists from the poetry and short fiction categories, including a winner from each, were selected for publication, featuring recent university graduates alongside established literary professionals in a unique collection of innovative writers at all stages in their career.

Short Fiction Judge Arifa Akbar commends this year's entries as: "absorbing, inventive, some quietly-shocking, others lacing sadness with dark or surreal humour." Christina Sanders' *What Happens At The Edge* stood out as a winner for its beautiful writing and its emotional intensity.

Akbar explains: "The story's subject matter is the loss of a loved one – a constantly recurring theme across this year's submissions – and it is filled with emotional truth. Its tells its widower's story with an originality of form but not at the expense of feeling. It is poetic but not precious. It is about the numbing shock, guilt and helplessness contained in grief but along with it, the continuing lust for all things worldly. It shimmers with life and imagination, even if it is about bereavement."

Poetry Judge Dr Oz Hardwick explains that, for him, it's the first line, the opener, that needs to stand out and grab the reader's attention followed by an ability to intrigue and surprise through rhythmic economically used language. Speaking about Ian Dudley's winning piece *Fish and Chips* he states: "In the first line break of *Fish and Chips*, we bend into a clause that negates the idea set out in the first line, and makes us want to know why – the language is simple but, as throughout the poem, perfectly deployed."

In addition to publication, the winners are awarded £500 prize money and, to kick-start a new writing project, are connected with leading organisations in the industry, including [Redhammer Management](#) and [The Poetry Society](#), to create a supportive network through mentoring sessions and memberships pushing their literary talent further. A selection of books from [Bloodaxe Books](#) and [Vintage](#) are also awarded to each winner along with a subscription to [Granta](#) for all-year-round inspiration.

Cherie Federico, Editor of [Aesthetica Magazine](#), comments: "In publishing the *Annual*, we are presented with a fantastic and unique opportunity to showcase some of the best emerging and established literary talent from across the world. The result is a collection of new writing of outstanding quality, which you can return to time and time again; it will continue to spark your passion for new writing."

The *Aesthetica Creative Writing Annual* will be available to order this December at www.aestheticamagazine.com/shop

The *Aesthetica Creative Writing Award* will open for entries in December 2016. For more information and to submit visit www.aestheticamagazine.com/creativewriting. The deadline for entering is 31 August 2017.

Notes to Editors:

1. The *Aesthetica Creative Writing Award* is hosted by *Aesthetica Magazine*. For more information visit www.aestheticamagazine.com/creativewriting
2. 60 finalists are published in the *Aesthetica Creative Writing Annual*. Hard copies and digital copies can be ordered here: www.aestheticamagazine.com/shop
3. The competition received over 2,500 entries from over 40 countries worldwide
4. Short Fiction Winner: Christina Sanders, *What Happens At The Edge*. Poetry Winner: Ian Dudley, *Fish and Chips*
5. Judges for 2016 included: **Arifa Akbar**, Journalist, Critic and Columnist, and former Literary Editor of *The Independent* and *inewspapers*; Poet and Professor **Dr Oz Hardwick**; and a Reading Panel including: **Martine Pierquin**, Course Organiser in Creative Writing and Film, Media and Contemporary Cultures at the University of Edinburgh Short Courses; **Stephen Toase**, whose work is published extensively and who is currently working with imove Arts on a project called *Haunt*; **Liz Jones**, teaching Fellow at Aberystwyth University's Theatre, Film and Television Department, and **David Wharton**, Course Director of the Certificate in Creative Writing at the Vaughan Centre for Lifelong Learning, University of Leicester.
6. Partners and sponsors include The Poetry Society, Redhammer Management, Granta, Bloodaxe and Vintage. See more: www.aestheticamagazine.com/creative-writing-

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7. The Aesthetica Creative Writing Award opens for entries in December 2016. Poems can be up to 40 lines each, short fiction entries can be up to 2,000 words each. Deadline for submissions is 31 August 2017. For full guidelines and to enter visit www.aestheticamagazine.com/creativewriting

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