RSL Ondaatje Prize 2020: The Longlist

The £10,000 RSL Ondaatje Prize is awarded annually to a book of the highest literary merit – fiction, non-fiction or poetry – which best evokes the spirit of a place.

This year’s judges are Peter Frankopan (Chair), Pascale Petit and Evie Wyld.

Jay Bernard
Jane Clarke
Laura Cumming
Tishani Doshi
Lucy Ellmann
Luan Goldie
Adam Higginbotham
Kathleen Jamie
Robert Macfarlane
Tim Mackintosh-Smith
Philip Marsden
Robert Minhinnick
Anita Mir
Max Porter
Roger Robinson
Elif Shafak
Anna Sherman
Jumoke Verissimo

Surge
When the Tree Falls
On Chapel Sands
Small Days and Nights
Ducks, Newburyport
Nightingale Point
Midnight in Chernobyl
Surfacing
Underland
Arabs: A 3,000-Year History of Peoples, Tribes, and Empires
The Summer Isles
Nia
The Inside City
Lanny
A Portable Paradise
10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World
The Bells of Old Tokyo: Travels in Japanese Time
A Small Silence

(Chatto & Windus)
(Bloodaxe Books)
(Chatto & Windus)
(Bloomsbury Circus)
(Galley Beggar Press)
(HQ Fiction)
(Bantam Press)
(Sort of Books)
(Hamish Hamilton)
(Yale University Press London)
(Granta Books)
(Seren)
(Unbound Digital)
(Faber & Faber)
(Peepal Tree Press)
(Viking)
(Picador)
(Cassava Republic)

The shortlist will be announced on Monday 20 April and the winner on Monday 4 May.
The RSL Ondaatje Prize is an annual award of £10,000 for a distinguished work of fiction, non-fiction or poetry, best evoking the spirit of a place. We are grateful to Sir Christopher Ondaatje for sponsoring the Prize.

200 years young in 2020, the Royal Society of Literature is Britain’s charity for the advancement of literature. In addition to the RSL Ondaatje Prize, the RSL runs the RSL Christopher Bland Prize for best debut from a writer over 50, the Encore Award for best second novel of the year, the V. S. Pritchett Short Story Prize, RSL Literature Matters Awards and the RSL Giles St Aubyn Awards for Non-Fiction, as well as regular events, young people’s outreach and research into literature in the UK today.

RSL Ondaatje Prize winners

2019  Aida Edemariam  The Wife’s Tale: A Personal History
2018  Pascale Petit    Mama Amazonica
2017  Francis Spufford Golden Hill
2016  Peter Pomerantsev Nothing Is True and Everything Is Possible
2015  Justin Marozzi  Baghdad: City of Peace, City of Blood
2014  Alan Johnson    This Boy
2013  Philip Hensher  Scenes from Early Life
2012  Rahul Bhattacharya The Sly Company of People Who Care
2011  Edmund de Waal   The Hare with Amber Eyes
2010  Ian Thomson    The Dead Yard: Tales of Modern Jamaica
2009  Adam Nicolson  Sissinghurst: An Unfinished History
2008  Graham Robb    The Discovery of France
2007  Hisham Matar     In the Country of Men
2006  James Meek    The People’s Act of Love
2005  Rory Stewart   The Places In Between
2004  Louisa Waugh    Hearing Birds Fly

Press wanting more information on the Prize should contact:

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