The Encore Award 2020
The Shortlist

£10,000 for the best second novel of the year
and introducing £500 prizes for the four shortlisted authors in the Award’s 30th year
recognising the challenges and achievements of second novels

The 2020 judges are RSL Fellows
Edmund Gordon, Nikita Lalwani and Eley Williams

David Keenan
For the Good Times (Faber & Faber)

Patrick McGuinness
Throw Me to the Wolves (Jonathan Cape)

Billy O’Callaghan
My Coney Island Baby (Jonathan Cape)

Shiromi Pinto
Plastic Emotions (Influx Press)

Luiza Sauma
Everything You Ever Wanted (Viking)

The winner will be announced on Thursday 25 June 2020

For more information, contact Annette Brook, Communications Manager
annette.brook@rsliterature.org | rsliterature.org
Notes to editors

David Keenan, For the Good Times (Faber & Faber)

‘For the Good Times collars the reader and takes them on a headlong, giddy dash. This is the past written as spirited and brutal conjuration: incendiary, intimate, absurdist and disquieting story-telling by a master of his craft.’ – Eley Williams

David Keenan was born in Glasgow and grew up in Airdrie, in the west of Scotland. His first novel This Is Memorial Device won the Collyer Bristow/London Magazine Award for Debut Fiction 2018 and was shortlisted for the Gordon Burn Prize. For The Good Times won the Gordon Burn Prize in 2019.

Patrick McGuinness, Throw Me to the Wolves (Jonathan Cape)

‘McGuinness is deeply concerned with power, and how it might be unmasked - he takes the inequalities of contemporary Britain and visits them through a series of fractured lenses in this book. A beautifully rendered thriller, full of virtuosic prose.’ – Nikita Lalwani

Patrick McGuinness is a novelist, poet, academic and translator. His first novel The Last Hundred Days was longlisted for the Man Booker Prize, shortlisted for the Costa First Novel Award and won the Writers’ Guild Award for Fiction and the Wales Book of the Year. His memoir about growing up in post-industrial Belgium, Other People’s Countries, won the Duff Cooper Prize. He lives in Caernarfon and works in Oxford.

Billy O’Callaghan, My Coney Island Baby (Jonathan Cape)

‘A wise, tender, and exquisitely tuned novel about the end of a love affair in middle age. O’Callaghan’s style is rich and sonorous, and he surveys his characters’ ageing bodies and dwindling horizons with a dauntless eye, yet with such compassion that the final effect is to enhance their dignity.’ – Edmund Gordon

Billy O’Callaghan was born in Cork, and alongside his two novels is the author of three short story collections including The Things We Lose, The Things We Leave Behind (New Island Books), which won a 2013 Bord Gáis Energy Irish Book Award and was selected as Cork’s One City, One Book for 2017. Billy is twice a recipient of the Arts Council of Ireland’s Bursary Award for Literature.
The Encore Award was first presented in 1990 to celebrate the achievement of outstanding second novels. Previous winners include Sally Rooney, Andrew Michael Hurley, Lisa McInerney, Sunjeev Sahota, Neel Mukherjee, Evie Wyld, Adam Foulds, MJ Hyland, Nadeem Aslam, Ali Smith, Anne Enright, John Burnside, A.L. Kennedy, Amit Chaudhuri, Colm Tóibín and Iain Sinclair.

Shiromi Pinto, Plastic Emotions (Influx Press)

‘Pinto navigates the politics of desire and genius with skilful understanding, in this elegant imagining of lost feminist icon, Minnette de Silva, the first Sri Lankan architect. The dance between fiction and reality is a noble one, and the map that emerges of architecture as a discipline is fascinating to behold.’ – Nikita Lalwani

Shiromi Pinto was born in London and raised in Montreal, she has written short fiction for BBC Radio 4, the Victoria & Albert Museum and opendemocracy.net. Her first novel, Trussed, was reviewed as ‘audacious’ (The Independent), ‘brilliant’ (Diva) and ‘so cool that it hurts’ (The Times). She has previously worked for Amnesty International and now freelances for writingeditingwords.com.

Luiza Sauma, Everything You Ever Wanted (Viking)

‘At once a commentary on the hollowness of London life in the late 2010s and a hymn to its routine consolations, Everything You Ever Wanted speaks with uncanny eloquence to our current isolation. Knitting together strands of realism, satire, science fiction and allegory, and moving deftly between comedy and pathos, it is a work of thrilling imaginative boldness.’ – Edmund Gordon

Luiza Sauma is the author of two novels, Everything You Ever Wanted and Flesh and Bone and Water – both published by Viking. She was born in Rio de Janeiro and raised mostly in London, where she still lives. After university she was an arts journalist at the Independent on Sunday for several years. She has also written for The Guardian, The Telegraph, the i, Five Dials and others.

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The Royal Society of Literature, founded in 1820, is the UK’s charity for the advancement of literature. In addition to the Encore Award, the RSL administers the RSL Ondaatje Prize for writing that best evokes the spirit of a place, the RSL Christopher Bland Prize for debut novelists and popular non-fiction writers over the age of 50, the RSL Giles St Aubyn Awards for first-commissioned works of non-fiction and the V.S. Pritchett Short Story Prize.