The Royal Society of Literature (RSL), the voice for the value of literature in the UK, has today unveiled the longlist for the 2021 RSL Ondaatje Prize. An annual prize of £10,000, the RSL Ondaatje Prize is awarded to an outstanding work of fiction, non-fiction or poetry that best evokes the spirit of a place.

Thirteen authors across forms make up this year’s longlist, unanimously chosen by judges Lola, Baroness Young of Hornsey (chair), Helen Mort and Adam Rutherford.

The 2021 RSL Ondaatje Longlist is:

- James Boyce: *Imperial Mud* (Icon Books)
- Michael Crawley: *Out of Thin Air* (Bloomsbury Sport)
- Catherine Fletcher: *The Beauty and the Terror* (Bodily Head)
- Michelle Gallen: *Big Girl, Small Town* (John Murray Publishers)
- Ruth Gilligan: *The Butchers* (Atlantic Books)
- Louise Hare: *This Lovely City* (HQ)
This year the Prize and listed works take on perhaps an even greater significance, given the context of the past 12 months, during which we have remained at home, unable to travel to new places or return to the locations that hold a particular meaning for us.

First awarded in 2004, the premise and broad remit of the Prize is to create unique lists of outstanding works and authors that you would not usually find sitting side by side. Previous recipients of the Prize have included Roger Robinson, Aida Edemariam, Pascale Petit, Francis Spufford, Alan Johnson, Edmund de Waal, Hisham Matar and Louisa Waugh.

The RSL Ondaatje Prize is one of nine annual awards and prizes presented by the RSL which bring the widest possible community of writers and readers together in celebration of the breadth of UK literature. From debut works and unpublished short stories through to the notoriously challenging second novel and outstanding contributions to literature, the RSL’s awards and prizes celebrate the value of the written word in all its forms, whilst supporting emerging and established writers at some of the most challenging moments of their careers. The RSL’s other annual awards and prizes are: Sky Arts RSL Writers Awards, RSL International Writers awards, Encore Award, RSL Christopher Bland Prize, RSL Giles St Aubyn Awards for Non-Fiction, RSL Literature Matters Awards, the V.S. Pritchett Short Story Prize and The Benson Medal.

The 2021 RSL Ondaatje Prize Shortlist will be announced on Tuesday 27 April and the winner will be announced on Tuesday 11 May.

For further information and press enquiries relating to the RSL Ondaatje Prize please contact Kate Hassell at Bread and Butter PR
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Notes to Editors

The Royal Society of Literature (RSL)
Founded in 1820, the RSL acts as a voice for the value of literature, honouring and supporting emerging and established writers whilst creating a bridge between authors and audiences to engage as many people as possible with the breadth of UK literature. https://rsliterature.org/

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. The RSL is grateful to Sir Christopher Ondaatje for founding and sponsoring the Prize.

Past Winners

2020 Roger Robinson A Portable Paradise
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: The Surreal Heart of the New Russia
2015  Justin Marozzi  Baghdad: City of Peace, City of Blood
2014  Alan Johnson  This Boy: A Memoir of Childhood
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