

Press Release

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##### The 2021 International Booker Prize longlist announced

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#2021InternationalBooker #FinestFiction

* The 13 longlisted works are translated from 11 languages and originate from 12 countries across four continents
* Translator Megan McDowell appears on the longlist for the fourth time for *The Dangers of Smoking in Bed*, having been both shortlisted and longlisted before. All the other translators are newcomers to the prize
* Can Xue is the only author to have been longlisted before
* The longlist includes a book translated by its author for the first time, by renowned writer Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o

Today, 30 March, the judges of the 2021 International Booker Prize reveal the 13 novels longlisted for the prestigious award which celebrates the finest translated fiction from around the world.

Complementing The Booker Prize for Fiction, the prize is awarded every year for a single book that is translated into English and published in the UK or Ireland. It aims to encourage more publishing and reading of quality works of imagination from all over the world, and to give greater recognition to the role of translators. Both novels and short-story collections are eligible. The contribution of both author and translator is given equal recognition, with the £50,000 prize split evenly between them. Each shortlisted author and translator also receives £1,000, bringing the total value of the prize to £62,000.

This year the judges considered 125 books.

The full 2021 International Booker longlist is:

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Title** | **Author** | **Translator** | **Original language** | **Publisher or Imprint** |
| *I Live in the Slums* | Can Xue | Karen Gernant & Chen Zeping | Chinese | Yale University Press |
| *At Night All Blood is Black* | David Diop | Anna Mocschovakis | French | Pushkin Press |
| *The Pear Field* | Nana Ekvtimishvili | Elizabeth Heighway | Georgian | Peirene Press |
| *The Dangers of Smoking in Bed* | Mariana Enríquez | Megan McDowell | Spanish | Granta Books |
| *When We Cease to Understand the World* | Benjamín Labatut | Adrian Nathan West | Spanish | Pushkin Press |
| *The Perfect Nine: The Epic Gikuyu and Mumbi* | Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o | Translated by the author | Gikuyu | VINTAGE, Harvill Secker |
| *The Employees* | Olga Ravn | Martin Aitken | Danish | Lolli Editions |
| *Summer Brother* | Jaap Robben | David Doherty | Dutch | World Editions |
| *An Inventory of Losses* | Judith Schalansky | Jackie Smith | German | Quercus, MacLehose Press |
| *Minor Detail* | Adania Shibli | Elisabeth Jaquette | Arabic | Fitzcarraldo Editions |
| *In Memory of Memory* | Maria Stepanova | Sasha Dugdale | Russian | Fitzcarraldo Editions |
| *Wretchedness* | Andrzej Tichý | Nichola Smalley | Swedish | And Other Stories |
| *The War of the Poor* | Éric Vuillard | Mark Polizzotti | French | Pan Macmillan, Picador |

The longlist was selected by the 2021 judging panel consisting of: cultural historian and novelist, **Lucy Hughes-Hallett** (chair); journalist and writer, **Aida Edemariam**; Man Booker shortlisted novelist, **Neel Mukherjee**; Professor of the History of Slavery, **Olivette Otele**; and poet, translator and biographer, **George Szirtes**.

**Lucy Hughes-Hallett says:**

‘In a year when we could scarcely leave our own houses, we judges have been crossing continents, transported by our reading. Every book we’ve read is unique. However a theme does emerge – migration, the pain of it, but also the fruitful interconnectedness of the modern world.’

‘Not all writers stay in their native countries. Many do, and write wonderful fiction about their hometowns. But our longlist includes a Czech/Polish author’s vision of a drug-fuelled Swedish underworld, a Dutch author from Chile writing in Spanish about German and Danish scientists, and a Senegalese author writing from France about Africans fighting in a European war.’

‘Authors cross borders, and so do books, refusing to stay put in rigidly separated categories. We’ve read books that were like biographies, like myths, like essays, like meditations, like works of history - each one transformed into a work of fiction by the creative energy of the author’s imagination.’

‘Thanks to those remarkable books, and to their translators, we’ve been freed to explore the world. We hope this prize will inspire many more readers to follow us.’

The shortlist for the prize will be announced on 22 April 2021, and the winner announced on 2 June 2021 in a virtual celebration from Coventry, City of Culture 2021.

**– Ends –**

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Please find images for authors, translators and book jackets [here](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/88fd4ec93bqqnba/AABHDsdmUraFIFgy50uWqqLKa?dl=0).

**Notes to Editors**

* The International Booker Prize is awarded annually for the best single work of fiction translated into English and published in the UK and Ireland. The £50,000 prize is divided equally between the author and the translator. Each shortlisted author and translator receives £1,000. The 2020 winner was *The Discomfort of Evening* written by Marieke Lucas Rijneveld and translated by Michele Hutchison, which has sold over 50,000 copies of the UK edition and is being translated into 40 languages.
* The Administrator of The International Booker Prize is Fiammetta Rocco – chief culture writer of *The Economist* and *1843*. The Director of The Booker Prize Foundation is Gaby Wood
* Books under consideration are published in translation into English by UK or Irish publishers between 1 May 2020 and 30 April 2021
* The Booker Prize for Fiction was first awarded in 1969 and was called The Man Booker Prize for Fiction when sponsored by Man Group from 2002 - 2018. The winner receives £50,000. The 2020 winner was *Shuggie Bain* by Douglas Stuart. The 2021 Booker Prize panel is chaired by historian Maya Jasanoff and consists of: writer and editor Horatia Harrod; actor Natascha McElhone; twice Booker-shortlisted novelist and professor Chigozie Obioma**;** and writer and former Archbishop Rowan Williams.
* For a full history of both prizes including previous winners, shortlisted authors and judges visit the website: [www.thebookerprizes.com](http://www.thebookerprizes.com)
* The Booker Prize Foundation is a registered charity (no 1090049) established in 2002. It is responsible for the award of The Booker Prize for Fiction and for The International Booker Prize. The trustees of the Booker Prize Foundation are: Mark Damazer (chair) – freelance journalist and former broadcast executive; Nick Barley – director, Edinburgh International Book Festival; Bidisha SK Mamata – writer, critic and broadcaster; Carol Lake – managing director, Philanthropy Executive at JPMorgan Chase; Ben Okri - poet and author; MT Rainey – strategist, agency founder and social entrepreneur; Professor Louise Richardson – vice chancellor of the University of Oxford; Nicki Sheard – digital and social media executive; The Rt Hon. Lord Willetts – writer, former minister and advocate of fairness between the generations.
* The Booker Prize Foundation Advisory Committee, which advises on any changes to the rules and on the selection of the judges, represents all aspects of the book world. Its members are: Nic Bottomley – co-founder, Mr B’s Emporium of Reading Delights; Jamie Byng – publisher, Canongate Books; Jonty Claypole MBE – head of arts, BBC; James Daunt – managing director of Waterstones; Jonathan Douglas CBE – director of the National Literacy Trust; Adam Freudenheim – publisher, Pushkin Press; Daniel Hahn OBE - writer and translator; Peter Kemp – chief fiction reviewer, *The Sunday Times*; Sharmaine Lovegrove – publisher, Dialogue Books; Emma Paterson – agent, Aitken Alexander Associates; Fiammetta Rocco – senior editor and culture correspondent, *The Economist* and *1843* and The International Booker Prize Administrator; Eve Smith – Secretary, Booker Prize Foundation; Boyd Tonkin – writer and critic; Helen Williams – Legal Counsel of Booker Group plc. It is chaired by Gaby Wood - Director, Booker Prize Foundation.
* Crankstart, a charitable foundation, is the exclusive funder of The Booker Prize and The International Booker Prize.
* Four Culture handles PR, comms and event management for the prizes and provides all events and administrative back-up.
* Booker Group is the UK's leading food & drink wholesaler with branches nationwide and a delivery network. It serves over 400,000 catering customers and 100,000 independent retailers.
* The Booker Prize Archive was given on loan in 2003 to Oxford Brookes University, where it now resides.

**2021 International Booker Prize events**

**Edinburgh International Book Festival**

This year’s shortlist will be featured in a series of special events in partnership with Edinburgh International Book Festival. Beginning 29 April, each event will focus on a shortlisted author and translator leading up to the winner announcement on 2 June.

More information to be announced shortly.

**Southbank Centre**

Part of the Southbank Centre’s Inside Out series, the shortlisted authors and translators will take part in a digital event of readings from their books, in both English and the work’s original language.

More information is available on the Southbank Centre’s [website](https://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/).

**2021 International Booker Prize longlist:**

**Book synopses and biographies**

***I Live in the Slums***

**By Can Xue**

**Translated by Karen Gernant and Chen Zeping from Chinese**

**Published by Yale University Press, London**

**Publisher's synopsis:**

*I Live in the Slums* combines elements of both Chinese materiality—the love of physical things—and Western abstract thinking, inviting readers into an immersive landscape that blends empirical fact and illusion, mixes the physical and spiritual, and probes the space between consciousness and unconsciousness. The stories bring readers to a place that is both readily familiar yet unmappable, highlighting the inherent unreliability in our relationship to the world around us. Delightful, enchanting, and full of mystery and secrets, Can Xue’s newest collection shines a light on the forces that give contours to the visible terrain we acknowledge as reality.

**The judges said:**

‘Who’s speaking? Is it a rat? Or a tree? Or some kind of previously unimagined being? Using cool, concise language, Can Xue takes us into an extraordinary imaginative universe – as bizarre and haunting as anything created by Hieronymous Bosch.’

Can Xue is the pseudonym of the renowned avant‑garde author Deng Xiaohua. Her previous works include *Five Spice Street,* *Vertical Motion, The Last Lover,* *Frontier,* and *Love in the New Millennium.* Can Xue was longlisted for the Man Booker International Prize in 2019.

Karen Gernant was born in Lansing, Michigan, USA, in March 1938. She is professor emerita of Chinese history at Southern Oregon University. Chen Zeping was born in Qingdao, Shanghai in August 1953. She is professor emerita of Chinese linguistics at Fujian Normal University, Fuzhou, China. *I Live in the Slums* is the fifth book by Can Xue translated by Gernant and Zeping. Others are *Blue Light in the Sky* (New Directions, 2006), *Five Spice Street* (Yale U.P., 2009), *Vertical Motion*, and *Frontier* (Open Letter Books, 2011 and 2017). They have collaborated in translating contemporary Chinese fiction for more than 20 years.

***At Night All Blood Is Black***

**By David Diop**

**Translated by Anna Moschovakis from French**

**Published by Pushkin Press**

**Publisher's synopsis:**

*At Night All Blood is Black* captures the tragedy of a young man's mind hurtling towards madness and tells the little-heard story of the Senegalese who fought for France on the Western Front during the First World War.

Alfa Ndiaye and Mademba Diop are two of the many Senegalese *tirailleurs* fighting in the Great War under the French flag. Whenever Captain Armand blows his whistle they climb out of their trenches to attack the blue-eyed enemy. But one day Mademba is mortally wounded, and without his friend, his more-than-brother, Alfa is alone amidst the savagery of the trenches, far from all he knows and holds dear. He throws himself into combat with renewed vigour, but soon begins to scare even his own comrades in arms.

**The judges said:**

‘Horrifying, cruel and continually present in the action it describes, it is partly a personal report from the front in the First World War by a traumatised Senegalese soldier. Like nothing else in terms of tone and power, it is a blinding revelation, an incantatory work of kinship and terror.

David Diop was born in February 1966 in Paris, France, and grew up in Senegal. He now lives in France, where he is a professor of 18th-century literature at the University of Pau. *At Night All Blood is Black*is Diop's second novel. It was shortlisted for 10 major prizes in France and won the Prix Goncourt des Lycéens as well as the Swiss Prix Ahmadou Korouma. It is currently being translated into 13 languages and has already won the Strega European Prize in Italy.

Anna Moschovakis was born in September 1970 in Los Angeles, California, USA. She is a poet, author and translator, whose works include the James Laughlin Award–winning poetry collection *You and Three Others Are Approaching a Lake* and a novel, *Eleanor: or, The Rejection of the Progress of Love*. Her translations from the French include Albert Cossery’s *The Jokers*, Annie Ernaux’s *The Possession*, and *Bresson on Bresson.* She lives in South Kortright, New York.

***The Pear Field***

**By Nana Ekvtimishvili**

**Translated by Elizabeth Heighway from Georgian**

**Published by Peirene Press**

**Publisher's synopsis:**

Lela knows two things: her history teacher must die and she must start a new life beyond the pear field. On the outskirts of Tbilisi, in a newly independent Georgia, is the Residential School for Intellectually Disabled Children – or, as the locals call it, the School for Idiots. Abandoned by their parents, the pupils here receive lessons in violence and neglect. At 18, Lela is old enough to leave, but with nowhere to go she stays and plans, both for her own escape and for the future she hopes to give Irakli, a young boy at the school. When a couple from the USA decide they want to adopt a child, Lela is determined to do everything she can to help Irakli make the most of this chance.

**The judges said:**

‘This unsentimental, plain-spoken novel, set in a forgotten orphanage at the edge of a pear field in post-Soviet Georgia, refuses to define its characters, who are mostly children, by their official life-chances. Unpredictable, gripping — it consists almost entirely of action rather than description — and vividly, defiantly alive, *The Pear Field* builds to a powerful evocation of love, loyalty, and the nature of family.’

Nana Ekvtimishvili was born in July 1978 in Tbilisi, Georgia. She is a writer and film director and studied screenwriting and drama at Potsdam-Babelsberg. In 2013, with her partner Simon Groß, she directed the feature film *In Bloom*, which premiered at the 63rd Berlinale, where it won the CICAE Award. It went on to win numerous awards at festivals in Hong Kong, Tokyo, Paris, Los Angeles and Sarajevo, and was also selected as Georgia’s entry for the 2013 Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film. The International Federation of Film Critics said it heralded a ‘rebirth for Georgian cinema’. Her latest film, *My Happy Family*, was released at the Sundance Film Festival in 2017. Published in 2015, *The Pear Field* is Ekvtimishvili’s first novel. It was awarded the Ilia State University prize for the best Georgian novel published in 2014-15; the Saba Literary Prize for best debut; and the Litera Prize, also for the best debut, given by the Writers’ House and the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia. It has already been published in German and Dutch to much critical acclaim.

Elizabeth Heighway was born in April 1973 in Birmingham, UK. She has worked as a translator from Georgian and French since 2010. She has translated a number of contemporary Georgian works, including Aka Morchiladze’s *Journey to Karabakh* and the anthology *Contemporary Georgian Fiction*, both published by Dalkey Archive Press. She lives in Birmingham.

***The Dangers of Smoking in Bed***

**By Mariana Enríquez**

**Translated by Megan McDowell from Spanish**

**Published by Granta Books**

**Publisher's synopsis:**

Written against the backdrop of contemporary Argentina, *The Dangers of Smoking in Bed* is populated by unruly teenagers, crooked witches, homeless ghosts, and hungry women. The stories walk the uneasy line between urban realism and horror, but with a resounding tenderness toward those in pain, in fear and in limbo. As terrifying as they are socially conscious, the stories press into the unspoken - fetish, illness, the female body, the darkness of human history - with bracing urgency. A woman is sexually obsessed with the human heart; a lost, rotting baby crawls out of a backyard and into a bedroom; a pair of teenage girls can't let go of their idol; an entire neighbourhood is cursed to death when it fails to respond correctly to a moral dilemma.

**The judges said:**

‘An extraordinarily intelligent collection of short stories that knowingly uses the tropes of the horror story, the ghost story and even pulp fiction to think about the Argentina’s painful past. In the process, it fashions a ‘Magical Realism Version 2.0’, from a subtly feminist perspective. Smart, political, unputdownable.’

Mariana Enríquez was born in 1973 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. She is a novelist, journalist and short-story writer. As well as *Things we Lost in the Fire* and *The Dangers of Smoking in Bed*, she is the author of a collection of travel writings, a novella and three novels. In 2019 her latest novel, *Our Share of Night*, was awarded the prestigious Premio Herralde de Novela. She is an editor at *Página/12*, a newspaper based in Buenos Aires.

Megan McDowell was born in October 1978 in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, USA. Her translations include books by Alejandro Zambra, Samanta Schweblin, Mariana Enríquez, Lina Meruane and Carlos Fonseca. Her short-story translations have been published in *The New Yorker*, *The Paris Review*, *Tin House*, *McSweeney’s*, *Granta*, *The Atlantic* and *Harper's*, among others. She has won the English PEN award for writing in translation and the Valle-Inclán prize from the Society of Authors, and has been shortlisted or longlisted for the International Booker Prize three times. She has also won a 2020 Award in Literature from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. She lives in Santiago, Chile.

***When We Cease to Understand the World***

**By Benjamín Labatut**

**Translated by Adrian Nathan West from Spanish**

**Published by Pushkin Press**

**Publisher's synopsis:**

Using extraordinary, epoch-defining moments from the history of science, *When We Cease to Understand the World* exists in the territory between fact and fiction, progress and destruction, genius and madness.

Albert Einstein opens a letter sent to him from the Eastern Front during the First World War. Inside, he finds the first exact solution to the equations of general relativity, unaware that it contains a monster that could destroy his life's work. The great mathematician Alexander Grothendieck tunnels so deeply into abstraction that he tries to cut all ties with the world, terrified of the horror his discoveries might cause. Erwin Schrödinger and Werner Heisenberg battle over the soul of physics after creating two equivalent yet opposed versions of quantum mechanics. Their fight will tear the very fabric of reality, revealing a world stranger than they could have ever imagined.

**The judges said:**

‘A Sebaldian book of grippingly narrated stories on science and scientists that cumulatively become a meditation on the history of human destruction. “How did we get here?” it asks, and answers in utterly original and unexpected ways.’

Benjamín Labatut was born in September 1980 in Rotterdam, The Netherlands, and grew up in The Hague, Buenos Aires and Lima. He published two award-winning works of fiction prior to *When We Cease to Understand the World*, which is his first book to be translated into English. Labatut lives with his family in Santiago, Chile.

Adrian Nathan West was born in April 1977 in Chattanooga, Tennessee, USA. He is the author of *The Aesthetics of Degradation* and the forthcoming *Philosophy of a Visit* and translator of more than 20 books from Spanish, Catalan, and German. His essays have appeared in *The Baffler, The New York Review of Books, The Times Literary Supplement,* and many other journals in print and online. He lives in Spain.

***The Perfect Nine: The Epic of Gikuyu and Mumbi***

**By Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o**

**Translated by the author from Gikuyu**

**Published by VINTAGE, Harvill Secker**

**Publisher's synopsis:**

Blending folklore, mythology and allegory, *The Perfect Nine* chronicles the adventures of Gikuyu and Mumbi, and how their brave daughters became the matriarchs of the Gikuyu clans. Gikuyu and Mumbi settled on the peaceful and bounteous foot of Mount Kenya after fleeing war and hunger. When 99 suitors arrive on their land, seeking to marry their famously beautiful daughters, called The Perfect Nine, the parents ask their daughters to choose for themselves, but to choose wisely.

First the young women must embark on a treacherous quest with the suitors, to find a magical cure for their youngest sister, Warigia, who cannot walk. As they journey up the mountain, the number of suitors diminishes and the sisters put their sharp minds and bold hearts to the test, conquering fear, doubt, hunger and many menacing ogres, as they attempt to return home. But it is perhaps Warigia's unexpected adventure that will be most challenging of all.

**The judges said:**

‘Ngũgĩ masterfully sings us through an origin story written in verse. This book is a magisterial and poetic tale about women’s place in a society of Gods. It is also about disability and how expectations shape and determine characters’ spiritual anchoring.’

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'owas born in January 1938 in Kamirithu, Kenya. He is one of the leading writers and scholars at work in the world today. His books include the novels *Petals of Blood*, for which he was imprisoned by the Kenyan government in 1977, *A Grain of Wheat* and *Wizard of the Crow;*the memoirs,*Dreams in a Time of War*, *In the House of the Interpreter*and *Birth of a Dream Weaver;*and the essays, *Decolonizing the Mind*, *Something Torn and New* and *Globalectics.*Recipient of many honours, among them ten honorary doctorates, he is currently Distinguished Professor of English and Comparative Literature at the University of California, Irvine.

***The Employees***

**By Olga Ravn**

**Translated by Martin Aitken from Danish**

**Published by Lolli Editions**

**Publisher's synopsis:**

Structured as a series of witness statements compiled by a workplace commission, *The Employees* follows the crew of the Six-Thousand Ship which consists of those who were born, and those who were made, those who will die, and those who will not. When the ship takes on a number of strange objects from the planet New Discovery, the crew is perplexed to find itself becoming deeply attached to them, and human and humanoid employees alike start aching for the same things: warmth and intimacy, loved ones who have passed, shopping and child-rearing, our shared, far-away Earth, which now only persists in memory.

Gradually, the crew members come to see their work in a new light, and each employee is compelled to ask themselves whether they can carry on as before – and what it means to be truly living. Wracked by all kinds of longing, *The Employees* probes what it means to be human, emotionally and ontologically, while simultaneously delivering an overdue critique of a life governed by work and the logic of productivity.

**The judges said:**

‘This beautiful and moving novel, set in a workplace — a spaceship some time in the future — is by turns loving and cold, funny and deliberately prosaic; capable of building a sense of existential horror one minute then quotidian comfort and private grief the next. In deceptively simple prose, threaded on a fully achieved and ambitiously experimental structure, it asks big questions about sentience and the nature of humanity. And about what happiness might be.’

Olga Ravn was born in September 1986 in Copenhagen, Denmark. One of Denmark’s most celebrated contemporary authors, she is also a literary critic and has written for *Politiken* and several other Danish publications. Alongside Johanne Lykke Holm, she runs the feminist performance group and writing school *Hekseskolen*. She lives in Copenhagen.

Martin Aitken was born in August 1961 in Carlisle, UK. He has translated numerous novels from Danish and Norwegian, including works by Karl Ove Knausgaard, Peter Høeg, Ida Jessen, and Kim Leine. He was a finalist at the U.S. National Book Awards 2018 and received the PEN America Translation Prize 2019 for his translation of Hanne Ørstavik’s *Love*. He lives in Sorø, Denmark.

***Summer Brother***

**By Jaap Robben**

**Translated by David Doherty from Dutch**

**Published by World Editions**

**Publisher's synopsis:**

13-year-old Brian lives in a trailer on a forgotten patch of land with his divorced and uncaring father. His older brother Lucien, physically and mentally disabled, has been institutionalised for years. While Lucien’s home is undergoing renovations, he is sent to live with his father and younger brother for the summer. Their detached father leaves Brian to care for Lucien’s special needs. But how do you look after someone when you don’t know what they need? How do you make the right choices when you still have so much to discover?

**The judges said:**

‘A deeply humane novel centred on a disabled man, his heroic younger brother and an unreliable, partly criminal father living on an all but derelict site. The book is generous to all its flawed characters, is beautifully written, and humanises lives of abject poverty on the edge of squalor and disaster.’

Jaap Robben was born in June 1984 in Oosterhout, The Netherlands. He is a poet, playwright, performer, and acclaimed children’s author. *Summer Brother* is his second novel*. You Have Me to Love*, his first novel for adults, won the 2014 Dutch Booksellers Award, the Dioraphte Prize, and the ANV Award for best Dutch debut. Robben was chosen as one of the featured debut authors at the 2018 Brooklyn Book Festival. He lives in Kranenburg, Germany.

**David Doherty was born in June 1965 in London, UK. He** studied English and literary linguistics in the UK before moving to the Netherlands, where he has been translating Dutch texts since 1996. He was commended by the jury of the 2017 Vondel Translation Prize for Marente de Moor’s The Dutch Maiden and Jaap Robben’s You Have Me to Love, and was runner-up in 2019 for his translation of *Monte Carlo* by Peter Terrin.

***An Inventory of Losses***

**By Judith Schalansky**

**Translated by Jackie Smith from German**

**Published by Quercus, MacLehose Press**

**Publisher's synopsis:**

Each of the pieces within *An Inventory of Losses* follows the conventions of a different genre, considering something that is irretrievably lost to the world including: the paradisal pacific island of Tuanaki, the Caspian Tiger, the Villa Sacchetti in Rome, Sappho’s love poems, Greta Garbo’s fading beauty, a painting by Caspar David Friedrich, and the former East Germany’s Palace of the Republic.

**The judges said:**

‘A wholly original work, a meld of W.G. Sebald, Italo Calvino and Claudio Magris, *An Inventory of Losses* is driven by the necessity of understanding ruins as evidences of ourselves. Funny at times, sinister at others, its deep enquiry into what remains and what vanishes bears witness to a personal quest of great subtlety and playful intelligence.’

Judith Schalanskywas born in 1980 in Greifswald in former East Germany. She studied art history and communication design. Her international best-seller, *Atlas of Remote Islands*, won the Stiftung Buchkunst (the Art Book Award) for “the most beautifully designed book of the year”, while her novel, *The Giraffe’s* *Neck,* in an English translation by Shaun Whiteside, won a special commendation of the Schlegel-Tieck Prize for the best translation from German in 2015. Both books have been translated into more than 20 languages. Schalansky works as a freelance writer and book designer in Berlin, where she is also publisher of a prestigious natural history list at Matthes und Seitz.

Jackie Smithwas born in May 1969 in Tavistock, UK. She studied German and French at Selwyn College, Cambridge, and then undertook a post-graduate diploma in translation and interpreting at the University of Bradford. In 2015 she was selected for the *New Books in German* Emerging Translators Programme and in 2017 won the Austrian Cultural Forum London Translation Prize. *An Inventory of Losses* is her first literary translation. She lives in Hereford, UK.

***Minor Detail***

**By Adania Shibli**

**Translated by Elisabeth Jaquette from Arabic**

**Published by Fitzcarraldo Editions**

**Publisher's synopsis:**

*Minor Detail* revolves around a brutal crime committed during the War of 1948. Israeli soldiers rape a young Palestinian woman they find in the Negev desert, killing her and burying her in the sand. Many years later, in the near-present day, a young woman in Ramallah embarks on a journey of discovery into the events surrounding that rape and murder. She becomes fascinated by it to the point of obsession when she reads about it by chance, not only because of its gruesome nature but also because it happened to take place 25 years to the day before she was born. The two sections of the book hover over one another like the maps the unnamed protagonist of the second section takes with her on her journey. The result is a haunting meditation on war, violence and memory, cutting to the heart of the Palestinian experience of dispossession, life under occupation, and the persistent difficulty of piecing together a narrative in the face of ongoing erasure and disempowerment.

**The judges said:**

‘The first part of this devastatingly powerful book gives a laconic account of a shocking crime. In the second, decades later, a woman sets out to comprehend that crime. Set in disputed ground, this austerely beautiful novel focuses on one incident in the Palestine/Israeli conflict and casts light on ethnic conflicts, and ethnic cleansing, everywhere.’

Adania Shibli was born in August 1974 in Palestine. Her first two novels appeared in English with Clockroot Books as Touch, translated by Paula Haydar, and We Are All Equally Far From Love, translated by Paul Starkey. She was awarded the Young Writer’s Award by the A. M. Qattan Foundation in 2002 and 2004. She lives between Berlin, Germany, and Palestine.

Elisabeth Jaquette was born in October 1985 in Santa Monica, California, USA. She is an award-winning translator from the Arabic, whose work includes Basma Abdel Aziz’s The Queue, Rania Mamoun’s Thirteen Months of Sunrise, and Dima Wannous’s The Frightened Ones. She is also executive director of the American Literary Translators Association (ALTA). She lives in Tucson, Arizonia.

***In Memory of Memory***

**By Maria Stepanova**

**Translated by Sasha Dugdale from Russian**

**Published by Fitzcarraldo Editions**

**Publisher's synopsis:**

*In Memory of Memory* tells the story of how a seemingly ordinary Jewish family somehow managed to survive the myriad persecutions and repressions of the last century. Following the death of her aunt, Maria Stepanova builds the story out of faded photographs, old postcards, letters, diaries, and heaps of souvenirs left behind: a withered repository of a century of life in Russia.

In dialogue with writers like Roland Barthes, W. G. Sebald, Susan Sontag and Osip Mandelstam, *In Memory of Memory* is imbued with rare intellectual curiosity and a wonderfully soft-spoken, poetic voice. Dipping into various forms – essay, fiction, memoir, travelogue and historical documents – Stepanova assembles a vast panorama of ideas and personalities and offers an entirely new and bold exploration of cultural and personal memory.

**The judges said:**

‘An unclassifiable, *sui generis* book that begins with what you think is going to be a family history, then opens up, in slow degrees, to allow seemingly the whole world to enter. In its seamless fusion of history, memory, essay, meditation, literary criticism it creates its own indelible form, a new shape in the air. An act of truth-telling like no other.’

Maria Stepanova was born in June 1972 in Moscow, Russia. She is a poet, essayist, journalist and the author of 10 poetry collections and three books of essays. She has received several Russian and international literary awards (including the prestigious Andrey Bely Prize and Joseph Brodsky Fellowship). *In Memory of Memory* won Russia’s Bolshaya Kniga Award in 2018. Her collection of poems, *War and the Beasts and the Animals*, is published by Bloodaxe in Sasha Dugdale’s translation in 2021, and is a Poetry Book Society Translation Choice. Stepanova is the founder and editor-in-chief of the online independent crowd-sourced journal *Colta.ru*, which covers the cultural, social and political reality of contemporary Russia. She lives in Moscow.

Sasha Dugdale was born in February 1974 in Sussex, UK. She is a poet, writer and translator and has published five collections of poems with Carcanet Press, most recently *Deformations* in 2020. She won the Forward Prize for Best Single Poem in 2016 and in 2017 she was awarded a Cholmondeley Prize for Poetry. She is former editor of *Modern Poetry in Translation* and is poet-in-residence at St John’s College, Cambridge (2018-2021). She lives in Cambridge, UK.

***Wretchedness***

**By Andrzej Tichý**

**Translated by Nichola Smalley from Swedish**

**Published by And Other Stories**

**Publisher's synopsis:**

From sprawling housing projects to underground clubs and squat parties, *Wretchedness* is a blistering trip through the underbelly of Europe’s cities. Powered by a furious, unpredictable beat, this is a paean to brotherhood, to those who didn’t make it however hard they fought, and a visceral indictment of the poverty which took them.

**The judges said:**

‘This formally inventive book invites us to examine how beauty, violence and humour can coexist in the most unlikely, most musical of ways. This is a journey into the tortuous lanes of marginality, poverty and hope.’

Andrzej Tichý was born in December 1978 in Prague to a Polish mother and a Czech father. The author of five novels, a short-story collection and a wide range of nonfiction and criticism, Tichý is widely recognised as one of the most important novelists of his generation. His latest novel *Wretchedness* is a post-political foray into modern-day Swedish society. It was shortlisted for the August Prize 2016, Sweden’s most prestigious literary prize. He has lived in Sweden since 1981.

Nichola Smalley was born in February 1989 in the UK. A translator and lover of Swedish and Norwegian literature, Smalley is also publicist at And Other Stories and an escaped academic – in 2014 she finished her PhD exploring the use of contemporary urban vernaculars in Swedish and UK rap and literature at UCL. Her translations range from *Jogo Bonito* by Henrik Brandão Jönsson (Yellow Jersey Press), a Swedish book about Brazilian football, to the latest novel by Norwegian superstar Jostein Gaarder, *An Unreliable Man* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson). She lives in London, UK.

***The War of the Poor***

**By Éric Vuillard**

**Translated by Mark Polizzotti from French**

**Published by Pan Macmillan, Picador**

**Publisher's synopsis:**

The history of inequality is a long and terrible one. And it’s not over yet. Short, sharp and devastating, *The War of the Poor* tells the story of a brutal episode from history, not as well-known as tales of other popular uprisings, but one that deserves to be told. The Protestant Reformation of the 16th century takes on the powerful and the privileged. But quickly it becomes more about the bourgeoisie. Peasants, the poor living in towns, who are still being promised that equality will be granted to them in heaven, begin to ask themselves: and why not equality now, here on earth? There follows a furious struggle. Out of this chaos steps Thomas Müntzer, a complex and controversial figure. Sifting through history, Éric Vuillard extracts the story of one man whose terrible and novelesque life casts light on the times in which he lived – a moment when Europe was in flux. Inspired by the recent *gilets jaunes* protests in France: a populist, grassroots protest movement - led by workers - for economic justice. While *The War of the Poor* is about 16th-century Europe, this short polemic has a lot to say about inequality now.

**The judges said:**

‘From the very first paragraph of this blazing piece of historical fiction Vuillard has the reader transfixed.  Set at a time when religious differences sent nations to war and individuals to the pyre, Vuillard’s account of the life of a  largely forgotten visionary  is both a dazzling piece of historical re-imagining and a revolutionary sermon, a furious denunciation of inequality.’

Éric Vuillard was born in May 1968 in Lyon, France. He is a writer and filmmaker who has written nine award-winning books, including *Conquistadors* (winner of the 2010 Prix Ignatius J. Reilly), and *La bataille d’Occident* and *Congo* (both of which received the 2012 Prix Franz-Hessel and the 2013 Prix Valery-Larbaud). He won the 2017 Prix Goncourt, France’s most prestigious literary prize, for *L’ordre du jour*. He lives in Rennes, France.

Mark Polizzotti was born in July 1957 in New York, USA. He has translated more than 50 books from the French, including works by Gustave Flaubert, Patrick Modiano, Marguerite Duras, André Breton, and Raymond Roussel. His translation of Éric Vuillard’s *The Order of the Day*was a finalist for the French-American Foundation Translation Award. A Chevalier of the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres and the recipient of a 2016 American Academy of Arts & Letters Award for Literature, he is the author of 11 books, including *Revolution of the Mind: The Life of* *André Breton*, which was a finalist for the PEN/Martha Albrand Award for Best Nonfiction; *Luis Buñuel’s Los* *Olvidados*; *Bob Dylan: Highway 61 Revisited*; and *Sympathy* *for the Traitor: A Translation Manifesto*. He directs the publications programme at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and lives in Brooklyn.

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