

# Our Finest



OCKHAM



### The New Zealand Book Awards Trust is thrilled to celebrate the 16 finalists in the 2017 Ockham New Zealand Book Awards.

Drawn from an entry field of more than 150 books, and a longlist of 40 titles across the four categories, these books demonstrate the vigour, courage, determination, skill and cultural significance of this country's literature.

The New Zealand Book Awards Trust has many good people and organisations to thank: Creative New Zealand remains our stalwart cornerstone funder, and we treasure our relationship with Ockham, our naming-rights sponsor. The Acorn Foundation has, in an astounding gesture of generosity, endowed our fiction award in perpetuity to a quite remarkable level. We are delighted to be continuing our funder relationship with Book Tokens Ltd and to have a new funding partner in the Royal Society Te Apārangi. And we are fortunate to be partnering with the Auckland Writers Festival in showcasing the awards event as the first public event of the festival.

We also owe a great debt of gratitude to this year's judges: convenors Bronwyn Wylie-Gibb, Linda Tyler, Susanna Andrew and Harry Ricketts, and their fellow judges Jill Rawnsley, Peter Wells, Paul Diamond, Bronwyn Labrum, Tom Brooking, Morgan Godfery, Vivienne Plumb and Steve Toussaint.

We're delighted for all the authors whose work is recognised and honoured here. Do read them!

To hear the finalists reading from their books, please join us at the Ockham New Zealand Book Awards ceremony at the ASB Theatre in Auckland on Tuesday 16 May, as part of the Auckland Writers Festival. The category winners also appear at a special festival event on Friday 19 May.

For details visit [www.writersfestival.co.nz](http://www.writersfestival.co.nz)

### New Zealand Wine: The Land, the Vines, the People

Warren Moran  
Published by Auckland University Press

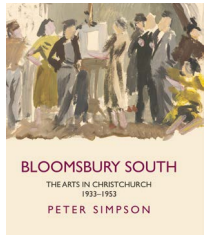
Proving that we do need another book about the extraordinary story of New Zealand wine, this handsome volume provides an absorbing narrative of space and place, as well as of the wines and their makers. Years of wide-ranging research and interaction with vintners is distilled into an engaging account, showing that land and people are as important as the vines. Stunning photographs, both historical and contemporary, and specially commissioned three-dimensional maps, bring winemaking to life in a compelling new way.



### Bloomsbury South: The Arts in Christchurch 1933-1953

Peter Simpson  
Published by Auckland University Press

Weaving a compelling narrative from fragments discovered in manuscripts, letters, diaries and documents, Peter Simpson textures the tapestry of cultural life in Christchurch in the mid-twentieth century. Previously unknown poems, unfamiliar paintings and unseen photographs mined from archives illuminate the depths of relationships in the city of the plains. Vivid, supple prose shapes the personalities of leading lights of the theatrical, literary, artistic and publishing worlds, and persuades the reader of the significance of this brief constellation of characters.



### A History of New Zealand Women

Barbara Brookes  
Published by Bridget Williams Books

Putting women and gender at the centre of our history, this sweeping survey will become the standard account. It combines deep research, an immensely readable narrative and superbly well-integrated images, and it is distinguished by close attention to both Māori and Pākeha women. General changes in each period are combined effortlessly with the particular, local stories of individual women, many not well-known. A wider sense of women's experiences is beautifully conveyed by the many extremely well-captioned artworks, photographs, texts and objects.



### Ann Shelton: Dark Matter

Zara Stanhope and Clare McIntosh (editors)  
Published by Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

More than just a catalogue to accompany the artist's retrospective exhibition, this exquisitely designed compilation brings 15 bodies of work together in one place for the first time. Outstanding scholars provide illuminating insights into key themes in the photographer's work in a clear, readable style. Every aspect of the design of the publication — the slip-cased format, typography and layout — complements the rich and fascinating narratives evoked by the images themselves. This is a book of enduring quality, flawlessly produced.



## Fale Aitu | Spirit House

Tusiata Avia  
Published by *Victoria University Press*

This is an urgent, politicised collection, which finds eloquent ways to dramatise and speak out against horrors, injustices and abuses, both domestic and public. The poems are tough, sensuous, often unnerving. Prose poems, pantoums, short lyrics, list poems, hieratic invocations: the passionate voice holds all these together. We teleport between geographies and cultures, Samoa to Christchurch, Gaza to New York. The world we think we know is constantly made strange, yet disconcertingly familiar; the unfamiliar seems normal, close to home.



## Hera Lindsay Bird

Hera Lindsay Bird  
Published by *Victoria University Press*

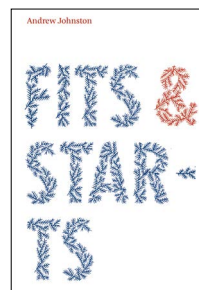
The twisty, aphoristic, wrong-footing poems in this striking debut collection play the deliberately crass off against the deliberately ornate: 'Byron, Whitman, our dog crushed by a garage door / Finger me slowly / In the snowscape of your childhood'. Similes, once a poetic no-no, perform exuberant oxymorons and flamboyant non-sequiturs: 'I write this poem like double-leopard print / Like an antique locket filled with pubic hair'. Bird's poems readjust readers' expectations of what poetry can do, how it might behave.



## Fits & Starts

Andrew Johnston  
Published by *Victoria University Press*

As the marvellously titled opening poem, 'The Otorhinolaryngologist', puts it, these poems 'hunt[] for something / in the hollow spaces // in the voiceless spaces'. These spaces include: found material from ancestry.com, the thoughts of an Afghani, the books of the Old Testament, the myth of Echo, the radio alphabet. The reader is trusted to puzzle, to fit, to start all over again. This hugely impressive, challenging collection is scored through with a broken music that sings in the head.



## This Paper Boat

Gregory Kan  
Published by *Auckland University Press*

This ambitious debut collection is built around slivers of life-narrative, principally drawn from the life of Iris Wilkinson (Robin Hyde) and — with moving laconic restraint — from the lives of the poet's parents, before and after coming to New Zealand. These strands are made to intertwine with, and haunt, each other, not least through the evocation of various Chinese ghosts. The collection aches with bewildered loss, a sense of emotional loose ends and pasts only half-grasped.



## The Wish Child

Catherine Chidgey  
Published by *Victoria University Press*

Catherine Chidgey has taken a big story that we all think we know and told a part of it from a fresh and personal perspective, making its content even more devastating. Her writing really is beautiful — lyrical, compelling and elegant — while the story, set in a dangerous time, catches the reader by surprise with its plumbing of depths and sudden moments of grace, beauty and light. It continually surprises and affirms our humanity.



## Love as a Stranger

Owen Marshall  
Published by *Vintage, Penguin Random House*

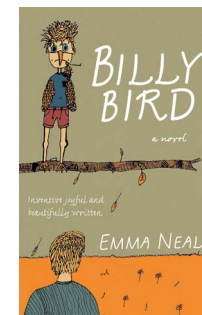
An engaging and unusual exploration of late-middle-aged love. With clear, elegant writing Marshall exposes the various, sometimes incompatible, desires and needs of lover and beloved in a novel that moves, amuses and surprises. He captures the intense joys and pains of love, reminding us that fervent, uncontrollable emotions are not the preserve of teenagers, that love hurts, and that age and experience do not necessarily confer wisdom or clarity.



## Billy Bird

Emma Neale  
Published by *Vintage, Penguin Random House*

Emma Neale's lyrical *Billy Bird* is charming, poignant and funny in almost equal parts. This is a startlingly recognisable tale of three people struggling with living after great loss, trying to hold their small family together as it threatens to splinter apart under the strain of a child who has forsaken problematic and imperfect humanity to become a bird. Firmly grounded in the landscapes and rhythms of Aotearoa New Zealand, this is an apparently quiet story that soars.



## The Name on the Door is Not Mine

C.K. Stead  
Published by *Allen & Unwin*

Sharp and cosmopolitan, C.K. Stead's *The Name on the Door is Not Mine* is a clever, wry and beautifully observed collection. Many of these striking stories, collected from over Stead's long and storied career, and some of them new versions of earlier stories, offer glimpses of a writing life both in Aotearoa New Zealand and abroad, and suggest the work that goes into crafting such a life. These stories are themselves cleverly crafted and honed to seem deceptively simple and effortless.

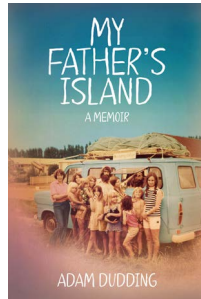


## Royal Society Te Apārangi Award for General Non-Fiction

### My Father's Island

Adam Dudding  
Published by *Victoria University Press*

Adam Dudding's writing is personal, insightful and enthralling. *My Father's Island* brings readers uncomfortably close to memories of joy, tension and mystery — a testament to Dudding's skill as a prose stylist and a storyteller. Yet the book is more than its aesthetics; it's also an important piece of cultural history, with Dudding approaching his subject, his father Robin Dudding, as only a journalist would and could. Yet *My Father's Island* remains, above all, a memoir.



### This Model World: Travels to the Edge of Contemporary Art

Anthony Byrt  
Published by *Auckland University Press*

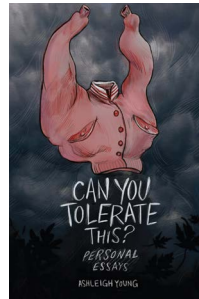
A narrative of people, places and memorable experiences as much as one of paintings, prize-winning installations and glamorous career trajectories, this book is a travelogue connecting names and sites in the history of New Zealand art. It is driven by a constant press of stories and by what artist Shane Cotton calls 'the idea of stories'. Ghosts, disappearances, transitions and different ways of being are pursued and linked to elsewhere in thoughtful, beautiful prose. Working backwards and then forwards, Byrt negotiates the practices of contemporary artists and makes us see the ways in which they contribute to international conversations.



### Can You Tolerate This?

Ashleigh Young  
Published by *Victoria University Press*

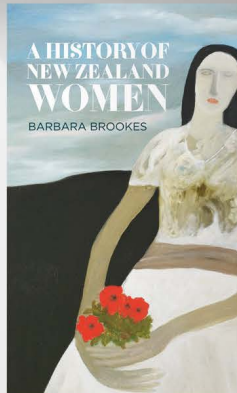
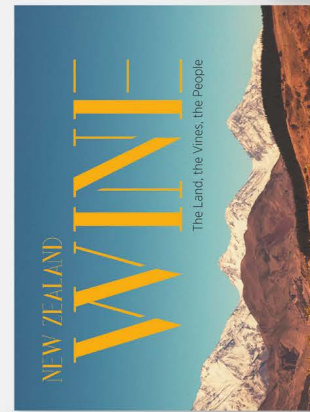
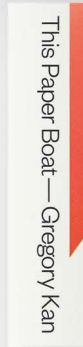
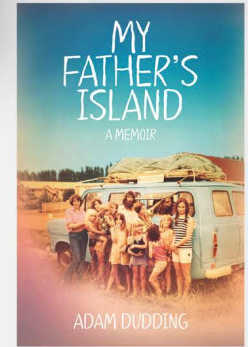
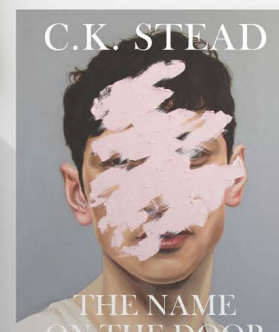
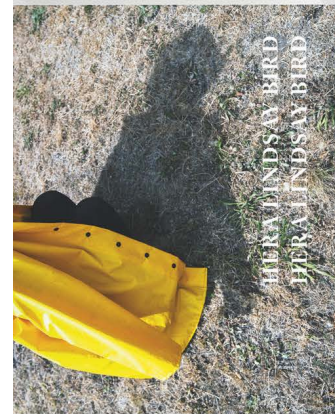
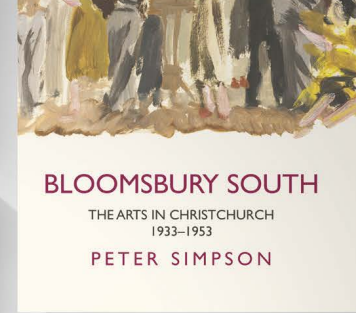
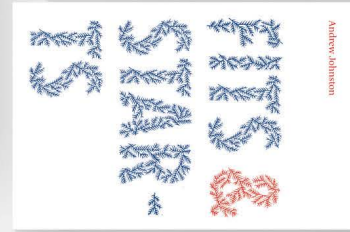
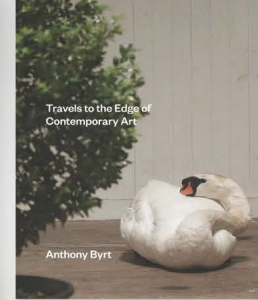
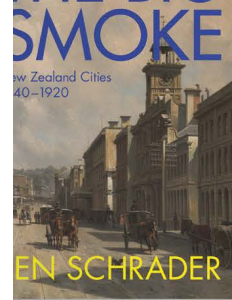
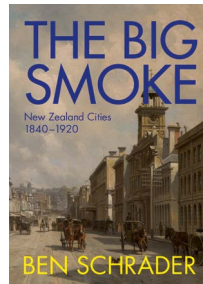
Ashleigh Young – poet, editor and author – is a pioneer, and *Can You Tolerate This?* carves out a new space in New Zealand writing. It takes readers from Young's inner life to the imagined lives of others, from places real to places where you're not quite sure, from one moment in time to moments where time stops. Young is bringing the personal essay to New Zealand, and she does so with humour, humility and stylish prose. The rhetorical question in the title can have only one answer – a resounding yes.



### The Big Smoke: New Zealand Cities, 1840–1920

Ben Schrader  
Published by *Bridget Williams Books*

The first-ever long-range overview of our cities' evolution, this book captures the restless shaping and moulding that defines who we are as a nation and how we came to be. Ben Schrader's ideas are original and myth-busting, and he makes us see our cities afresh with a kind of double vision, the past and the present colliding. Given that 86 per cent of New Zealand's population lives in cities, this research and reflection is a timely and important contribution to our social, cultural and environmental history.



# Let Them Choose Our Finest

Booksellers NZ tokens and gift cards — financially secured — are available at stores nationwide and online and are redeemable at more than 200 bookshops.



# O C K H A M

NEW ZEALAND			
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*“This is our second of what will hopefully be many, many years of association with the Ockham New Zealand Book Awards. Writing is the embodiment of independent thinking and creativity, which are at the core of our vision for the Ockham Foundation. New Zealand writers play an essential role in shaping and expressing our voice, and we feel immensely privileged to be part of supporting their endeavours through this event.”*

*- Mark Todd, Co-founder of Ockham Residential.*

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