

Our Finest



OCKHAM

NEW ZEALAND
BOOK AWARDS

The New Zealand Book Awards Trust is delighted to celebrate the 16 finalists in the 2019 Ockham New Zealand Book Awards and to share the judges' statements about each of them with New Zealand readers through this awards' booklet.

The Trust is grateful to the organisations who share our belief in the value of literature to Aotearoa New Zealand. Creative New Zealand remains our stalwart cornerstone funder, and we hold dear our relationships with Ockham Residential (our naming-rights sponsor) and the Royal Society Te Apārangi. This year we are delighted to welcome two new supporters: Mary and Peter Biggs for the Poetry award and MitoQ for the Best First Book awards. The Acorn Foundation generously endows our Fiction prize in perpetuity, and we are fortunate to partner with the Auckland Writers Festival in showcasing the awards ceremony as the first public event of the festival.

We also owe a great debt of gratitude to this year's judges: convenors Douglas Lloyd Jenkins, Bryan Walpert, Sally Blundell and Angela Wanhalla, and their fellow judges Lucy Hammonds, Bruce Caddy, Airini Beautrais, Karlo Mila, Rachael King, James George, Rebecca Priestley and Karl Chitham. This year's international judge for the Acorn Foundation Fiction Prize is New York-based writer Joseph O'Neill, to whom we are very grateful.

We're thrilled for all the authors whose work has been recognised and honoured, and we invite you to seek out their titles in bookstores and libraries countrywide. To hear the finalists reading from their books, and to find out who the winners of the four Best First Book awards are, please join us at the Ockham New Zealand Book Awards ceremony at Auckland's Aotea Centre on Tuesday 14 May. For booking details see the inside back cover.

#theockhams www.nzbookawards.nz

NEW
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AWARDS
TRUST.

Illustrated Non-Fiction Award

Fight for the Forests: The Pivotal Campaigns that Saved New Zealand's Native Forests

Paul Bensemann
Published by Potton & Burton

In this powerful account of aspects of recent environmental history in Aotearoa New Zealand, the author brings together a wealth of first-hand accounts and stories to provide an important record of the individuals and groups who made commitments to forest conservation and



activism. Historic illustrations and well-chosen archival materials create a sense of context for the reader, while the use of contemporary photography captures the splendour of the natural environment that the book so rightfully celebrates.

Tatau: A History of Sāmoan Tattooing

Sean Mallon with Sébastien Galliot
Published by Te Papa Press

This striking book detailing 3000 years of Sāmoan tattooing immediately invites closer investigation as a result of its integrated approach to design, photography, typography and writing. The ambitious scope of the subject matter and the knowledge of the main

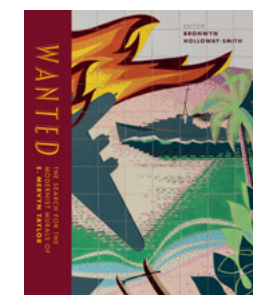


authors results in an important body of new scholarship, while the texts remain clear, accessible and engaging. Invited writers add a range of perspectives and experiences appropriate to the subject and intention of the book.

Wanted: The Search for the Modernist Murals of E. Mervyn Taylor

Bronwyn Holloway-Smith (editor)
Published by Massey University Press

Thoughtfully designed and beautifully presented, the creators of this book about the murals made by artist E Mervyn Taylor in the 1950s and 1960s have paid considerable attention to both content and production values and the result is impressive. The writers are diverse, the text engaging, and with the aid of well chosen illustrations the book delivers texture and



context to a group of important and often-overlooked public art works. It also makes a significant contribution to the broader understanding of artistic and cultural activity in mid-century New Zealand.

Birdstories: A History of the Birds of New Zealand

Geoff Norman
Published by Potton & Burton

This handsomely designed and elegant book offers an expanded history of the birds of Aotearoa New Zealand. The combination of text and illustrations creates a work that is detailed, wide-ranging and informative, illustrating the writer's advanced understanding of his subject.



Birdstories seamlessly brings iconic historical images together with the work of more recent artists and designers to create a volume that presents a real sense of how these birds became a feature of our visual, natural and cultural history, while reinforcing a strong conservation message.

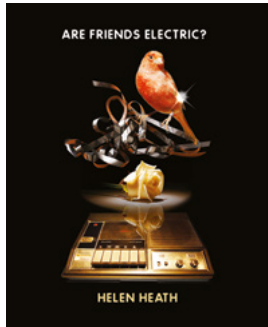
Judges: Douglas Lloyd Jenkins, Lucy Hammonds, Bruce Caddy

Mary and Peter Biggs Award for Poetry

Are Friends Electric?

Helen Heath
Published by Victoria University Press

Helen Heath's collection, by turns thoughtful and moving, asks how the material world, including technology, might mediate — or replace — human relationships. The experimental first half uses found poems to engage how artifacts — sex dolls, buildings — become objects of human passion. The elegiac second half offers a touching speculative narrative: a woman embeds her deceased partner's personality into software to avoid letting go. The question Heath suggests is perhaps less whether friends are electric and more whether they can, or should be.



There's No Place Like the Internet in Springtime

Erik Kennedy
Published by Victoria University Press

Erik Kennedy's frequently playful book offers intellectual and aesthetic surprises, not least of which in the way it moves beyond its ironic mode to at times vulnerable meditations on politics, family, relationships and the self.



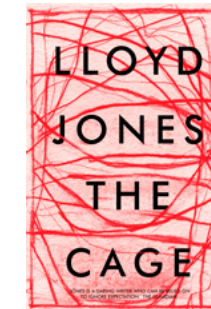
The collection is notable for experiments in structure and prosody, weaving the contemporary, per the collection's title, with updated nods to received forms such as the sonnet and rhyme. Kennedy's frequently light tonal touch belies the difficulty of the linguistic manoeuvres it deftly performs.

Acorn Foundation Fiction Prize

The Cage

Lloyd Jones
Published by Penguin Random House

Lloyd Jones has delivered a dark but clear-eyed parable of who and what we become when supposedly decent societies master the art of 'othering'. The narrator's intense specificity in detailing the two captive strangers' processes and behaviours, without any seeming emotional context, allows the book to become quietly horrific, the banality of its evil played out as studious observation. It is a courageous book in its insistence upon not directly engaging with its seeming lack of humanity. But the cumulative effect is that its chilling images and their implications do just that.



The New Ships

Kate Duignan
Published by Victoria University Press

The New Ships moves deftly back and forth in time and place as Peter Collie, his life eroding after the loss of his wife, tries to make sense of the past and find a way forward. With ageing parents, a flailing relationship with his son, and a past tragedy, the strata of life and family are excavated and entwined with ideas of art and literature to produce an intriguing and elegantly written novel with a wide cast of memorable characters and not a word out of place.



The Facts

Therese Lloyd
Published by Victoria University Press

Therese Lloyd's *The Facts* combines ekphrasis, literary influence and the personal poem. At times darkly humorous and at others intensely uncomfortable, these poems explore a contemporary approach to the confessional lyric, interrogating emotional experience while maintaining self-awareness and a willingness to look outwards. One engaging thread in the collection is its investigation of the role of art and spirituality in relation to individual trauma and the process of healing.



Pōūkahangatus

Tayi Tibble
Published by Victoria University Press

Tayi Tibble's first collection brings us fresh, bold poems that saunter and shimmy with an unsettling self-assurance through a range of uncomfortable and familiar tropes. Her words are vital on the page: skewing and renewing the dusky maiden as millennial sex kitten. Her kūpenga snares scenes that an Aotearoa audience will recognise as our own awkward, unequal, power dynamic. Her lyrical kaupapa draws us in to peer at a two-way mirror that is playful, brutal, seductive and disquieting.



This Mortal Boy

Fiona Kidman
Published by Vintage, Penguin Random House

Spare, unsentimental and unforgettable, *This Mortal Boy* is a masterful recreation of the events leading up to the real-life hanging of "jukebox killer" Albert Lawrence (Paddy) Black at Mount Eden prison in 1955. With seemingly effortless proficiency, Kidman creates an intensely human and believable story as she positions Paddy, newly arrived from Ireland, within the moral panic of post-war New Zealand, the restless vulnerability of Auckland's teen culture and the damning preconceptions of the legal profession, all leading to the appalling inevitability of his death.



All This by Chance

Vincent O'Sullivan
Published by Victoria University Press

All This by Chance is a remarkably immersive three-generational family saga revealing the persistence of a wartime past on our personal histories and the undeniability of traumatic memory. In rich, often intense prose Vincent O'Sullivan weaves the dramatic tension of his story through time and place, from a German concentration camp and post-war London to Italy, Greece, Africa and New Zealand, all the while holding his characters to the unbreakable thread that binds them to the impossible demands of the Holocaust.



Royal Society Te Apārangi Award for General Non-Fiction

Hudson & Halls: The Food of Love

Joanne Drayton
Published by Otago University Press

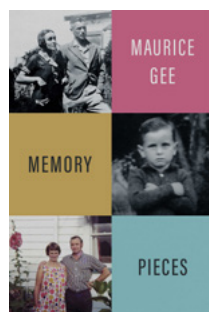
This deeply moving and often surprising story is a delight to read. Set against the backdrop of the onscreen double-act many of us will remember, *Hudson & Halls* conveys the humour, enduring love and drama of this couple's public and personal relationship. Joanne Drayton's fresh approach to storytelling highlights significant social and political moments over four decades and three countries, while the story and the book design celebrate some of the kitsch flamboyance of the pair and the period.



Memory Pieces

Maurice Gee
Published by Victoria University Press

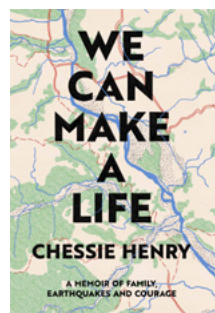
A fresh and evocative take on the memoir from Maurice Gee, one of New Zealand's favourite fiction writers. Three years after the publication of a comprehensive biography, he offers his own *Memory Pieces*, a compelling three-part memoir exploring his parents' relationship, his own childhood, and his Swedish-born wife Margaretha's childhood. This well-crafted and often riveting story is told with warmth and generosity, and presented in a beautifully produced book.



We Can Make a Life

Chessie Henry
Published by Victoria University Press

Beautifully written and highly engaging, *We Can Make a Life* is the story of a remarkable family and their life in the South Island. Told with warmth and curiosity by an exciting new writer with a fresh and compelling voice, Chessie Henry's powerful memoir explores her childhood, family dynamics, mental health, and the impact of the Christchurch and Kaikoura earthquakes on her family. The assuredness of the writing is complemented by the attractiveness of the book.



With Them Through Hell: New Zealand Medical Services in the First World War

Anna Rogers
Published by Massey University Press

In this exquisitely produced book, Anna Rogers introduces us to the little-known story of New Zealand's medical services during the Great War. Ambitious in scope, and engagingly written, all dimensions of the medical effort are covered, as are the significant challenges the doctors, nurses, stretcher-bearers, ambulance drivers and pharmacists faced in treating the traumatic impacts of war on the bodies and minds of soldiers. A remarkable history told with skill, compassion and empathy.



AUCKLAND WRITERS FESTIVAL

THE HOME OF NEW ZEALAND WRITING

OPENS WITH
OCKHAM NEW ZEALAND BOOK AWARDS
TUESDAY 14 MAY

CLOSES WITH
HONOURED NEW ZEALAND WRITER
SUNDAY 19 MAY

JOIN US FOR
SIX DAYS OF GOOD TIMES AND GREAT IDEAS
WITH THE WORLD'S BEST WRITERS AND THINKERS
TICKETS ON SALE 15 MARCH

Judges: Angela Wanhalla, Rebecca Priestley, Karl Chitham

WRITERSFESTIVAL.CO.NZ



LIKE STORIES, OUR BUILDINGS ARE CRAFTED.

Good buildings—like great books—are crafted with imagination, hard work and verve. Our Hypatia building features striking Māori motifs on its outer walls, a collaboration between our executive director of architecture Tania Wong and artist Reuben Kirkwood of Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki. It's strong, it's elegant, it's original; like our nation's finest authors, it makes you think. We're proud to be the principal sponsor of the Ockham New Zealand Book Awards; we're honoured to support the writers who help us to dream.

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