

# The Samuel Johnson Prize for Non-Fiction goes from strength to strength

- Toby Mundy appointed the first Director of the Samuel Johnson Prize for Non-Fiction
- Blavatnik Family Foundation to sponsor 2015 winner announcement and dinner
- Caroline Daniel, editor of *FT Weekend*, to join prize Steering Committee
  - Changes to prize submission dates

The Steering Committee of the Samuel Johnson Prize for Non-Fiction, the UK's leading prize for non-fiction books, is pleased to announce that it has appointed its first Prize Director. Toby Mundy, founder of Atlantic Books and TMA Limited, and long-term member of the prize Steering Committee, will take on the role with immediate effect.

Toby Mundy founded Atlantic Books in 2000, and was CEO until his departure in 2014 to found literary agency TMA Limited. As Director, Mundy will act as the year-round spokesperson for the prize and will help to expand the prize's reputation, profile and reach among writers, publishers, booksellers, literary agents, the media and the public.

Stuart Proffitt, chair of the Prize Steering Committee, comments: 'In recent years the Samuel Johnson Prize has gone from

strength to strength and with these changes we can build on its success. Toby's appointment is one of a number of important changes we are making to carry the prize forward.'

Toby Mundy adds: 'The Samuel Johnson Prize is the pre-eminent award for general non-fiction in the UK and, increasingly, around the English-speaking world, and I am honoured to be its first executive director.'

'Now in its seventeenth year, the Samuel Johnson Prize celebrates knowledge and ideas, aspiration and storytelling to express the important idea that non-fiction expands our understanding of the world, a mission that seems more important than ever.'

'Non-fiction books are the only medium humans have for creating thick descriptions of the world. The best non-fiction is not a parade of facts, it provides the reader with an extraordinary and enriching experience.'

'Yet the eco-system that supports quality non-fiction is under pressure as book prices fail to keep pace with inflation, author earnings fall and publishers worry increasingly about the up-front cost of making quality non-fiction books. These books need the on-going support of media, booksellers, publishers, and of the Samuel Johnson Prize if they are to continue to flourish.'

The committee is also delighted to announce that this year's winner announcement and dinner in November will be with the generous support of the Blavatnik Family Foundation, whose principal is the US philanthropist Len Blavatnik.

In other changes, *FT Weekend* editor Caroline Daniel has joined the Prize Steering Committee.

The submission dates for this year's prize will also change to accommodate the timelines and deadlines of the publishing calendar. To be eligible for the 2015 prize, books must be published between 1 November 2014 and 31 October 2015.

The winner of the prize in 2014 was *H is for Hawk*, by Helen Macdonald (Jonathan Cape). The book was acclaimed in both the UK and the US, and has spent 18 weeks on the *Sunday Times* bestseller list and has just entered *New York Times* bestseller list. The book has since gone on to win the 2014 Costa Book of the Year. Helen will speak at the Hay Festival on 30 May at the annual Samuel Johnson Prize lecture.

Submissions for this year's prize will open in spring 2015 when the 2015 judges will also be announced.

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