

MEDIA RELEASE | **STRICTLY EMBARGOED UNTIL 7.45PM GMT, TUESDAY 27 MARCH 2018**

2018 SHORTLIST SHOWS INTERNATIONAL BREADTH – AND CONFIRMS THE QUALITY OF BRITISH WRITING

Five novels and three works of non-fiction from the UK, Ireland, Pakistan, China and North America are in contention for the £20,000 Rathbones Folio Prize, which rewards the best work of literature of the year, regardless of form.

Three of today's finest novelists, 2017 Costa Novel award winner **Jon McGregor**, **Mohsin Hamid** and **Hari Kunzru**, were found to be writing at the top of their game by the jury, which is drawn exclusively from the Folio Academy of writers.

They are joined by **Sally Rooney**, one of the most exciting new voices to emerge last year, who has risen meteorically since winning the 2017 Sunday Times/PFD Young Writer of the Year Award, and the celebrated American novelist **Elizabeth Strout**.

Richard Lloyd Parry's definitive book on the 2011 Japanese earthquake and tsunami, **Richard Beard**'s memoir of exceptional power about loss, carrying on, and recovering a brother's life, and **Xiaolu Guo**'s acutely observed account of growing up in China, each, in very different ways, triumphantly affirm the unique role creative non-fiction plays in making sense of our complex world.

Announcing the shortlist, the 2018 judges Kate Summerscale, Nikesh Shukla and Jim Crace said:
"We were startled and delighted that so many valuable and rewarding books could be published in a single year. We read a fantastic array of fiction and non-fiction, poetry and prose, and all eighty titles nominated by the Academy were genuine contenders."



2018 Shortlist

Anything is Possible by Elizabeth Strout (Viking)
Conversations with Friends by Sally Rooney (Faber)
Exit West by Mohsin Hamid (Hamish Hamilton)
Ghosts of the Tsunami by Richard Lloyd Parry (Jonathan Cape)
Once Upon A Time In The East by Xiaolu Guo (Chatto & Windus)
Reservoir 13 by Jon McGregor (4th Estate)
The Day That Went Missing by Richard Beard (Harvill Secker)
White Tears by Hari Kunzru (Hamish Hamilton)

“The eight books we’ve finally chosen are very different from one another, and they’re all wonderful. Overall, the experience has left us optimistic about the current good health and fine spirit of books in the English-writing and English-reading world.”

The world’s largest English language publisher, Penguin Random House, dominates the list with six titles, while independent publisher Faber and the HarperCollins imprint 4th Estate have one title each.

The shortlisted books are now in the running for the overall prize, which will be awarded at a ceremony at the British Library in London on 8 May 2018. They were chosen from a list of 80 works of fiction, non-fiction and poetry, which the Folio Academy deemed to be the best published in the UK in 2017.

Andrew Kidd, Co-founder of the Rathbones Folio Prize, said: *“In what was an especially strong year across all forms, Kate, Nikesh and Jim have arrived at an irresistible shortlist. It reflects the international range that is this prize’s DNA, while also confirming that British fiction and non-fiction is in great shape.”*

Philip Howell, CEO of Rathbones, said: *“The 2018 shortlist for the Rathbones Folio Prize comprises a splendid array of fiction and non-fiction. Its quality underscores our aim to bring a diverse range of outstanding writing to readers’ attention, and is one part of a broader ambition to engage people in the unique power of books to enrich lives. Our congratulations go to the eight shortlisted authors and we look forward to the announcement of a winner on 8 May.”*

Launched in 2013 in a spirited challenge to the Man Booker Prize – when the Booker chair of jury controversially stressed “readability” as a main criteria – the Rathbones Folio Prize is the only literary prize in which all books, fiction and non-fiction, are judged, strictly on merit, by an Academy of writers.

The Man Booker Prizes responded to the challenge almost immediately, widening its remit in 2014 to include any author writing in English and published in the UK. As pressure is mounting for the Booker to reverse its decision – from both publishers and writers – the Rathbones Folio Prize stands by its own answer to what a literary prize should be: confidently borderless, engaged, and unconstrained by form.

The Rathbones Folio Prize is the flagship of the Rathbones Folio Programme, which also includes the Rathbones Folio Mentorships for aspiring young writers and Rathbones Folio Prize Sessions at literary festivals across the UK.

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Notes to Editors

For further information about the Prize, the Prize sponsor, the Rathbones Folio Programme and mentorships please see attached media kit.

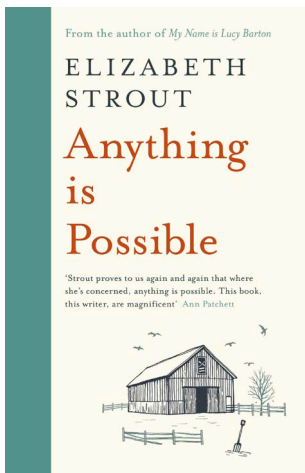
About the Folio Prize Sessions

British Library, Monday 7 May, 11.30-17.15: Join the Rathbones Folio Prize 2018 shortlisted authors, judges, and members of the Rathbones Folio Academy for a day of talks, readings and discussion. Tickets £18 (senior 60+: £16, Student/Unemployed/Under18: £15)
www.bl.uk/events/rathbones-folio-prize-sessions

Bath Festival, Thursday 24 May, 19.00-20.00: Nikesh Shukla in conversation with the winner of the Rathbones Folio Prize. Tickets: £9 (£8)
<https://bathfestivals.org.uk/the-bath-festival/event/rathbones-folio-prize>

Hay Festival, Saturday 26 May, 19:00-20:00: Kate Summerscale in conversation with the winner of the Rathbones Folio Prize.

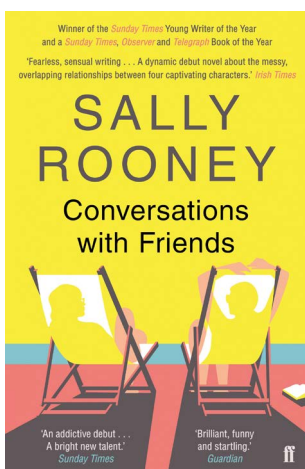
About the 2018 Shortlist



Anything is Possible - Elizabeth Strout (*Viking*)

An unforgettable cast of small-town characters copes with love and loss from the No. 1 New York Times bestselling and Man Booker long-listed author of *My Name is Lucy Barton*. 'A master storyteller. Strout really can write you into a world until you feel you are there with her, in that house, that life... This is her genius' - *The Times*

Elizabeth Strout is the Pulitzer prize-winning author of *Olive Kitteridge*, as well as *The Burgess Boys*, a *New York Times* bestseller, *Abide With Me* and *Amy and Isabelle*, which won the Los Angeles Times Art Seidenbaum Award for First Fiction and the Chicago Tribune Heartland Prize. She has also been a finalist for the PEN/Faulkner Award and the Orange Prize. She lives in New York City and Portland, Maine.



Conversations with Friends - Sally Rooney (*Faber*)

A startling, intimate story of high-risk relationships, youth and love.... Winner of the 2017 Sunday Times / PFD Young Writer of the Year Award. A Sunday Times, Observer and Daily Telegraph book of the year.

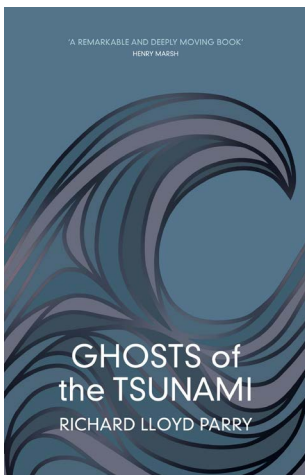
Sally Rooney was born in 1991 in the West of Ireland, and lives in Dublin. She graduated from an MA at Trinity College and was ranked the number one competitive debater at the European Universities Debating Championships in 2013. Her work has appeared in *Granta*, *The White Review*, *The Dublin Review*, *The Stinging Fly*, Kevin Barry's *Stonecutter* and *The Winter Pages* anthology.



Exit West - Mohsin Hamid (*Hamish Hamilton*)

An extraordinary story of love and hope set against the backdrop of the refugee crisis. 'Impressive... *Exit West* confirms Hamid's reputation as a brilliant ventriloquist who is deeply engaged with the most pressing issues of our time' *The Guardian*

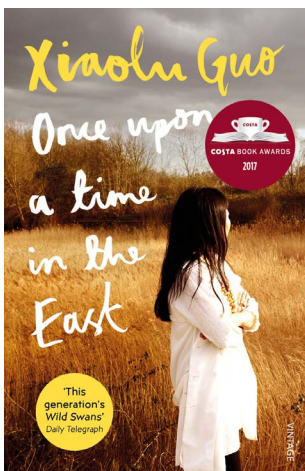
Mohsin Hamid is the author of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize), *Moth Smoke* and *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* as well as the collection of essays *Discontents and its Civilizations*. He writes regularly for *The New York Times*, the *Guardian* and the *New York Review of Books*. Born and mostly raised in Pakistan, he has since lived between Lahore, London and New York.



Ghosts of the Tsunami - Richard Lloyd Parry (*Jonathan Cape*)

The definitive book on the Japanese earthquake and tsunami of 2011, by the critically acclaimed author of *The People Who Eat Darkness*. 'A remarkable and deeply moving book - describing in plain and perfect prose the almost unimaginable devastation and tragedy of the Japanese tsunami.' Henry Marsh

Richard Lloyd Parry Born in 1969 and educated at Oxford, he has been visiting Asia for eighteen years and since 1995 has lived in Tokyo as a foreign correspondent, first for the *Independent* and now as Asia Editor for *The Times*. He has reported from twenty-one countries and several wars, including Iraq, Afghanistan, Indonesia, East Timor, North Korea, Papua New Guinea, Vietnam, Kosovo and Macedonia. His work has also appeared in the *London Review of Books* and the *New York Times Magazine*. He is the author of *In The Time of Madness*, an eyewitness account of the violence that interrupted in Indonesia in the 1990s, and *People Who Eat Darkness: The Fate of Lucie Blackman*.

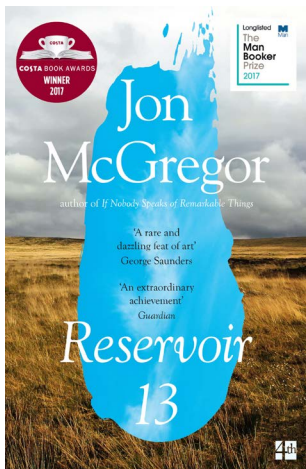


Once Upon A Time In The East: A Story of Growing Up - Xiaolu Guo (*Chatto & Windus*)

Winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award. A story of modern China and East to West from Granta Best Young British Novelist and Orange-shortlisted Xiaolu Guo, author of *I am China*. 'This generation's *Wild Swans*' *Daily Telegraph*

Xiaolu Guo was born in south China. She studied film at the Beijing Film Academy and published six books in China before she moved to London in 2002. The English translation of *Village of Stone* was shortlisted for the *Independent Foreign Fiction Prize* and nominated for the *International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award*. Her first novel written in English, *A Concise Chinese-English Dictionary for Lovers* was shortlisted for the *Orange Prize for Fiction*, and *20 Fragments of a Ravenous Youth*, published in 2008, was longlisted for the *Man Asian Literary Prize*. Her most recent novel,

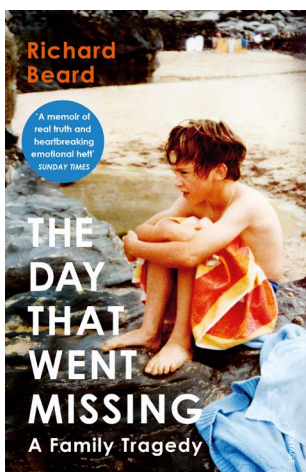
I Am China, was longlisted for the Baileys Prize for Fiction. In 2013 she was named as one of Granta's Best of Young British Novelists, an accolade awarded only once every decade. Xiaolu has also directed several award-winning films including *She*, *A Chinese* and a documentary about London, *Late at Night*. She lives in London and Berlin.



Reservoir 13 - Jon McGregor (*4th Estate*)

A beautifully crafted story of many lives haunted by one family's loss... Winner of The 2017 Costa Novel Award. A Guardian, Financial Times, Times Literary Supplement and Daily Telegraph Book of the Year. 'A rare and dazzling feat of art' George Saunders

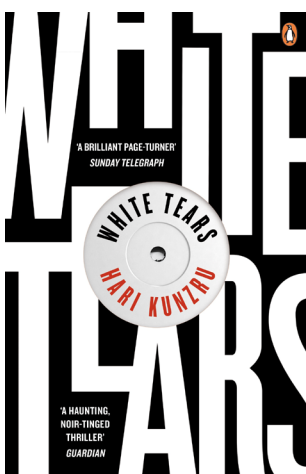
Jon McGregor is the author of four novels and a story collection. He is the winner of the IMPAC Dublin Literature Prize, Betty Trask Prize, and Somerset Maugham Award, and has twice been longlisted for the Man Booker Prize. He is Professor of Creative Writing at the University of Nottingham, where he edits *The Letters Page*, a literary journal in letters. He was born in Bermuda in 1976, grew up in Norfolk, and now lives in Nottingham.



The Day That Went Missing - Richard Beard (*Harvill Secker*)

A memoir of exceptional power and universal relevance – about loss, carrying on, and recovering a brother's life and death.

Richard Beard is the author of *Acts of the Assassins* which was shortlisted for the Goldsmiths Prize and most recently, *The Day That Went Missing*. In the twenty years since his first book he has published critically acclaimed novels and narrative non-fiction, including *Becoming Drusilla*, the story of how a friendship between two men was changed by a gender transition. He was formerly director of the National Academy of Writing in London, and is now a visiting professor at the University of Tokyo and has a Creative Writing Fellowship at the University of East Anglia.



White Tears - Hari Kunzru (*Hamish Hamilton*)

White Tears is a nail-biting ride through the terrifying spectre of America's past. It's about black lives and white privilege and the music that runs through the country's veins like blood. 'A disorientating odyssey through decades of American history...Kunzru has always been an assured and intellectually gifted novelist, but I am not sure he has ever before displaying such emotional heft...White Tears is a brave book' *Daily Telegraph*

Hari Kunzru is the author of the novels *The Impressionist*, *Transmission*, *My Revolutions* and *Gods Without Men*, and the story collection *Noise*. He lives in New York.