

MEDIA RELEASE | IMMEDIATE RELEASE, THURSDAY, 24 SEPTEMBER 2020

ROGER ROBINSON, SINÉAD GLEESON AND JON MCGREGOR TO JUDGE 2021 RATHBONES FOLIO PRIZE

*Raymond Antrobus, Vahni Capildeo, Paul Farley and Rachel Long confirmed as mentors
for the 2021 Rathbones Folio Mentorship programme*



Roger Robinson



Sinéad Gleeson



Jon McGregor

The T.S. Eliot Prize-winning poet Roger Robinson, the Irish writer, editor and broadcaster Sinéad Gleeson and novelist and short story writer Jon McGregor have been announced as judges for the 2021 Rathbones Folio Prize.

The £30,000 Prize – known as the “writers’ prize” – rewards the best work of literature of the year, regardless of form. It is the only award governed by an international academy of distinguished writers and critics, ensuring a unique quality and consistency in the nomination and judging process.

Completing a stand-out line-up for its new cycle, the prize today also announced a new group of mentors for the Rathbones Folio Mentorship programme. The scheme pairs four outstanding students from disadvantaged backgrounds with four mentors, who are members of The Folio Academy, for one-to-one creative writing tutoring over the course of a year. For 2021, they are:

- **Raymond Antrobus**, winner of the 2019 Rathbones Folio Prize and the Sunday Times / University of Warwick Young Writer of the Year among other prizes, for his debut collection *The Perseverance*,
- **Vahni Capildeo**, winner of the 2016 Forward Prize for Best Collection for *Measures of Expatriation*, which was shortlisted for the T.S. Eliot Prize the same year,



Raymond Antrobus



Vahni Capildeo



Paul Farley



Rachel Long

- The multi award-winning poet and non-fiction writer **Paul Farley**, who chaired the judges of this year's Rathbones Folio Prize, and
- Leader of the Octavia Poetry Collective for Women of Colour, **Rachel Long**, author of the widely acclaimed *My Darling from the Lions*, shortlisted for the 2020 Forward Prize for Best First Collection.

The Rathbones Folio Mentorships programme was launched in 2018 in partnership with First Story. There is no equivalent mentorship scheme in the UK that offers young writers such sustained one-to-one attention.

In March this year, the Mexican novelist and essayist **Valeria Luisella** was awarded the 2020 Rathbones Folio Prize for her a fiercely imaginative autobiographical work of fiction *Lost Children Archive* (4th Estate). The virtual awards ceremony, taking place days after the country went into Covid-19 lockdown, was the year's first awards ceremony to be delivered fully digitally.

The 2021 shortlist will be announced in February, and the prize ceremony and events — in a physical/digital hybrid form — will take place in March.

The 2021 winner will join previous winners **Valeria Luiselli** (2020), **Raymond Antrobus** (2019), **Richard Lloyd Parry** (2018), **Hisham Matar** (2017), **Akhil Sharma** (2015) and **George Saunders** (2014).

Join the conversation via: rathbonesfolioprize.com | [@RathbonesFolio](https://twitter.com/RathbonesFolio)

Notes to Editors

About the judges:

Roger Robinson, chair won the T.S. Eliot Prize in 2019 and RSL Ondaatje Prize in 2020 and is currently on the shortlist for the Derek Walcott Prize for Poetry. He has performed all over the world and was chosen by Decibel as one of 50 writers who have influenced the Black-British writing canon. His latest collection 'A Portable Paradise' was a 'New Statesman' Book of the Year. As well as leading workshops and touring extensively with the British Council he is lead vocalist and lyricist for King Midas Sound and has recorded solo albums.

Sinead Gleeson was shortlisted for the Rathbones Folio Prize 2020 with *Constellations: Reflections from Life* which won the Non-Fiction Book of the Year at the Irish Book Awards and the 2020 Dalkey Literary Award. Her short stories have appeared in a number of collections and she is the editor of four anthologies of short stories, most recently published *The Art of the Glimpse: 100 Irish Short Stories*. She is now working on a novel.

Jon McGregor is the author of four novels and a story collection. He has been longlisted for the Booker prize three times and his books have won a Betty Trask Prize, a Somerset Maugham Award and the International Dublin Literary Award. He was named 2002 Sunday Times Young Writer of the Year in 2002 and in 2010, received an honorary doctorate from the University of Nottingham. His new book, *Lean Fall Stand*, will be published in 2021.

About the mentors:

Raymond Antrobus was named the Sunday Times/University of Warwick Young Writer of the Year in 2019 and his debut collection *The Perseverance* won the Rathbones Folio Prize. He was also the recipient of the Ted Hughes Award, a Somerset Maugham Award. Born in Hackney in 1986, Antrobus still lives in London, where he works as a writer and teacher. He has led workshops in D/deaf schools across the country, as well as in prisons; and a local school in Hackney has recently named a new building after him.

Vahni Capildeo was born in Trinidad and is now resident in the UK, earned a PhD at Oxford University, studying translation theory and Old Norse, and then completed a research fellowship at Girton College, Cambridge University. Their anthology *Measures of Expatriation* won the 2016 Forward Prize for Best Collection and was shortlisted for the T.S. Eliot Prize. Their poetry collection also includes *No Traveller Returns* (2003), *Undraining Sea* (2009), *Dark and Unaccustomed Words* (2012), *Utter* (2013), and *Venus as a Bear* (2018) which was the Poetry Book Society Summer Choice 2018. Vahni has worked at the Oxford English Dictionary, for Commonwealth Writers, in academia and as a volunteer for the Oxfam Head Office; Oxford Rape Crisis. They have also held the Judith E. Wilson Poetry Fellowship and the Harper-Wood Studentship at Cambridge, and a Douglas Caster Cultural Fellowship at the University of Leeds.

Paul Farley was born in Liverpool and studied at the Chelsea School of Art. He has published four collections of poetry, and also written non-fiction books, including *Edgelands* (with Michael Symons Roberts), as well as editing a selection of John Clare's poetry. A Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and a frequent broadcaster, he has received numerous awards, including Sunday Times Young Writer of the Year, the Whitbread Poetry Award and the E.M. Forster Award from the American Academy of Arts & Letters. He was the chair of the judges for the Rathbones Folio Prize 2020.

Rachel Long is a poet and leader of Octavia – Poetry Collective for Women of Colour, which is housed at Southbank Centre, London. She was shortlisted for Young Poet Laureate for London in 2014, and awarded the prestigious Jerwood/Arvon Mentorship 2015, through which she was mentored by poet Caroline Bird. Her debut poetry collection *My Darling from the Lions* was shortlisted for the Forward Prize for Best First Collection.

About the Rathbones Folio Prize:

The Folio Prize was established in 2013 as the first major English language book prize open to writers from around the world. It is the only prize in which all the books considered for the prize are selected and judged by an academy of peers. When new sponsors, Rathbone Investment Management, came on board the prize was expanded to include all works of literature, regardless of form. Previous winners were George Saunders in 2014, Akhil Sharma in 2015, Hisham Matar in 2017, Richard Lloyd-Parry in 2018, Raymond Antrobus in 2019 and Valeria Luiselli in 2020.

About The Folio Academy:

The Folio Academy is a community of 300+ writers who represent excellence in literature. Academicians include: Margaret Atwood, Carol Ann Duffy, Ian McEwan, Salman Rushdie, Zadie Smith and Sir Tom Stoppard. Between them, Academicians have won thousands of literary awards, including 16 Man Booker Prizes. Academicians may be called upon to comment on literature matters in the media, to appear at festivals and public events, and may volunteer to mentor young writers in association with the charity First Story, which runs 320 residencies in secondary schools serving low-income communities.

About The Literature/Folio Prize Foundation:

The Literature/Folio Prize Foundation is a registered charity committed to bringing the most outstanding works of English language literature to public attention through the awarding of the Prize and other initiatives. Overseen by its trustees, the Foundation seeks to engage readers and writers throughout the English-speaking world in cultural debate and in the celebration and sustainment of the art of literature, which it believes has the capacity to enrich and change people's lives.

Rathbones

Look forward

About Rathbone Investment Management:

Rathbone Investment Management is one of the UK's leading providers of high-quality discretionary investment management services. It manages over £49.4 billion* of funds for individuals, charities and trustees, and is part of Rathbone Brothers Plc, an independently owned company with a listing on the London Stock Exchange. Investment management services are offered in Aberdeen, Birmingham, Bristol, Cambridge, Chichester, Edinburgh, Exeter, Glasgow, Kendal, Liverpool, London, Lymington, Newcastle and Winchester. Offshore investment management services are offered by subsidiary Rathbone Investment Management International in Jersey.

**As at 30 June 2020, includes funds managed by Rathbone Unit Trust Management*