THE SOCIETY OF AUTHORS
TRANSLATION PRIZES

THURSDAY 1 MARCH 2018
THE KNOWLEDGE CENTRE
BRITISH LIBRARY
LONDON
THE SOCIETY OF AUTHORS
TRANSLATION PRIZES

PROGRAMME

Introduced by Paula Johnson
The Society of Authors

The Saif Ghobash Banipal Prize
for translation from the Arabic

The Goethe-Institut Award for New Translation
for translation from the German

The Schlegel-Tieck Prize
for translation from the German

The Scott Moncrieff Prize
for translation from the French

The Premio Valle Inclán
for translation from the Spanish

The Vondel Prize
for translation from the Dutch

The TA First Translation Prize
for debut translation

Presentation of the Prizes
Reception in the foyer
THE SAIF GHOBASH BANIPAL PRIZE
FOR TRANSLATION FROM THE ARABIC

Winner:
Robin Moger for his translation of
The Book of Safety
by Yasser Abdel Hafez
(Hoopoe Fiction, AUC Press)

‘An alluring translation by Egyptian author and journalist Yasser Abdel Hafez that captures beautifully the moods, paces, rhythms and nuances of the Arabic original and, ruthlessly but lovingly, lures us into the conflicting, conspiratorial, and violent world that it draws.’

The Banipal Judges

Sponsors:
Omar Saif Ghobash, who with his family sponsors the Prize in memory of his late father, is from the United Arab Emirates. Saif Ghobash was a man passionate about Arabic literature as well as international works.

The Banipal Trust for Arab Literature

Judges:
Pete Kalu
Alastair Niven LVO OBE
Professor Wen-chin Ouyang
Salam Sarhan

The £3,000 Saif Ghobash Banipal Prize, first awarded in 2006, is presented annually. The prize was established by Banipal, the magazine of modern Arab literature, and the Banipal Trust for Arab Literature.
Extract from *The Book of Safety* by Yasser Abdel Hafez
Translated by Robin Moger
(Hoopoe Fiction, AUC Press)

‘Even going into the desert with Amgad al-Douqli and his driver, my doubts accompanied me. The Saqqara pyramid was the last thing I could make out. After that, it was all desert with no landmarks to tell one part from the next.’

Robin Moger is a translator of contemporary Arabic prose and poetry, currently living in Cape Town, South Africa. He has translated several Arabic novels into English and was one of the translators for *Writing Revolution: The Voices from Tunis to Damascus* (I B Tauris, 2013) which won the 2013 English PEN Award for outstanding writing in translation. His translations of Yasser Abdellatif’s *The Law of Inheritance* and Iman Mersal’s *How to Mend: Motherhood and its Ghosts* are due to be published later this year.

Yasser Abdel Hafez is an Egyptian novelist and journalist, born in Cairo in 1969. A law graduate from Ain Shams University, Cairo, he began his career as a journalist when he was 18, and has worked on Cairo’s *Akhbar al-Adab* weekly literary journal since its inception. Excerpts from his first novel *On the Occasion of Life*, published in 2005, appeared in *Banipal 25 – New Writing in Egypt*, in Spring 2006. *Kitab al-Aman*, his second work now translated as *The Book of Safety*, this year’s Saif Ghobash Banipal Prize winner, was published in 2013.

The Banipal Trust for Arab Literature was founded in 2004 by the publisher of Banipal magazine. It supports and promotes cultural dialogue between the Arab world and the West, the translation into English and publication of works by contemporary Arab authors, and the production of live literature events with Arab authors in the UK. (banipaltrust.org.uk)
THE GOETHE-INSTITUT AWARD FOR NEW TRANSLATION FOR TRANSLATION FROM THE GERMAN

Winner:
Mandy Wight for her translation from Unterleuten by Juli Zeh (Luchterhand Literaturverlag)

‘Mandy Wight’s submission epitomises the principle that a good translation reads as if it’s not a translation – and it reads with arresting skill and fluency.’ OK

‘An accurate and dynamic rendering of a multi-layered and challenging text.’ AG

‘A very consistent voice, and stylistic coherence.’ EH

Sponsor:
Goethe-Institut

Judges:
Annemarie Goodridge
Eva Hoffman
Oliver Kamm

The Goethe-Institut Award, presented since 2010, is a biennial award of €1,000 for the best translation from a chosen text – this year from Unterleuten by Juli Zeh. The winner is invited to attend the Leipzing Book Fair, which includes a place at the International Translators’ meeting.
Extract from *Unterleuten* by Juli Zeh (Luchterhand Literaturverlag) Translated by Mandy Wight

‘Meiler thought he’d give his son at least twenty moves before taking him out and had to acknowledge at the fifteenth move that he himself was getting into difficulties. They fought in silence.’

‘Meiler nahm sich vor, seinem Sohn mindestens zwanzig Züge zu geben, bevor er ihn vernichtete, und musste beim fünfzehnten Zug feststellen, dass er selbst in Bedrängnis geriet. Sie kämpften schweigend.’

Mandy Wight was born in Bangor, Wales and brought up in Reading and then York. After living and working as a solicitor in London for ten years, she moved back north to Sheffield in 1986 where she re-trained as a teacher and brought up her family. She now lives in the Hope Valley, Derbyshire. She came to translating through being a linguist and a reader in German and French mostly, as well as English, but had put translation on hold until she left her last teaching post in 2014. She subsequently attended seminars at the Literary Translation Centre at the London Book Fair, and the Translate in the City course, run by the City of London University. She has had translation published online with No Man’s Land and in 2017 attended the Summer School at BCLT. She has written reader’s reports for the magazine *New Books* in German and her blog on books, including German books, is peakreads.wordpress.com.

The Goethe-Institut is the cultural institute of the Federal Republic of Germany, promoting the study of German language globally and encouraging international cultural cooperation. It organises and supports arts programmes, fosters German literature in translation, delivers German language courses, and offers information and training services for teachers of German. The library of the Goethe-Institut London serves as a resource for those interested in contemporary Germany. (goethe.de/uk)
THE SCHLEGGEL-TIECK PRIZE
FOR TRANSLATION FROM THE GERMAN

Winner:
Allan Blunden
for his translation of
Nightmare in Berlin by
Hans Fallada (Scribe)

‘Blunden captures, for his
English-speaking audience,
the unique character of
Fallada’s writing in which a
gentle, ironic tone operates
and functions at odds with
the grim realities of his
stories’ settings.’ JJ

Commended:
Katy Derbyshire
for her translation of
Bricks and Mortar
by Clemens Meyer
(Fitzcarraldo Editions)

‘Meyer’s ventriloquizing
text represents a daunting
task to the translator
seeking to convey it to an
Anglophone readership, and
Derbyshire admirably meets
the challenges it poses,
conveying its energy in a
very impressive way.’ EJ

Sponsor:
Goethe-Institut

Judges:
Dr. Emily Jeremiah
Dr. James Jordan

The Schlegel-Tieck Prize
(£3,000) has been awarded
annually since 1965 and takes
its name from two great poets
of the Romantic period, August
William Schlegel (1767-1845)
and his friend Ludwig Tieck
(1773-1853), also a noted
translator.
Allan Blunden is a British translator who specialises in German literature. He is best known for his translation of Erhard Eppler’s *The Return of the State* which was the runner-up for the 2010 Schlegel-Tieck Prize. He has also translated biographies of Martin Heidegger and Stefan Zweig, and the prison diary of Hans Fallada.

Hans Fallada (1893–1947) was the pen name of German author Rudolf Ditzen, whose books were international bestsellers. He opted to stay in Germany when the Nazis came to power, and eventually had a nervous breakdown when he was put under pressure to write anti-Semitic books. He was confined in a Nazi insane asylum, where he secretly wrote *The Drinker*. Immediately after the war he wrote his last two novels, *Nightmare in Berlin* and *Alone in Berlin*, but he died before either book could be published.

The Goethe-Institut is the cultural institute of the Federal Republic of Germany, promoting the study of German language globally and encouraging international cultural cooperation. It organises and supports arts programmes, fosters German literature in translation, delivers German language courses, and offers information and training services for teachers of German. The library of the Goethe-Institut London serves as a resource for those interested in contemporary Germany. The Schlegel-Tieck Prize is supported by the Goethe-Institut London. (goethe.de/uk)

Extract from *Nightmare in Berlin* by Hans Fallada
Translated by Allan Blunden (Scribe)

‘...if there was anywhere on earth where there was a chance for them to start again, it was right here in Berlin, a city reduced to rubble, burnt out and bled to death.’

THE SCOTT MONCRIEFF PRIZE
FOR TRANSLATION FROM THE FRENCH

Winners:
Will McMorran and
Thomas Wynn for their
translation of The 120
Days of Sodom by
the Marquis de Sade
(Penguin Classics)

‘The quality of Sade’s mind
is the reason that he is
still worth reading in the
21st century – if you have
the stomach... without
in any way giving in to
hyperbole, this translation is
a 21st century monument,
changing not only the way
in which we view the French
18th century, but providing
a guide to the present and
the future.’ AH

Commended:
Antony Melville
for his translation
of Anicet or the
Panorama by Louis
Aragon (Atlas Press)

‘This early novel by Aragon
is a Dadaist tour de force,
and its appearance at last in
English, in this lively, elegant,
funny, almost ventriloquial
translation, is hugely
welcome.’ IP

Sponsors:
Institut français
du Royaume-Uni
ALCS

Judges:
Professor Andrew Hussey
Dr. Ian Patterson

The Scott-Moncrieff Prize of
£1,000 has been awarded
annually since 1965 and
is named after C.K. Scott
Moncrieff, the celebrated
translator of Proust’s
Remembrance of Things Past.

Committed:
Antony Melville
for his translation
of Anicet or the
Panorama by Louis
Aragon (Atlas Press)

‘This early novel by Aragon
is a Dadaist tour de force,
and its appearance at last in
English, in this lively, elegant,
funny, almost ventriloquial
translation, is hugely
welcome.’ IP
Extract from *The 120 Days of Sodom* by the Marquis de Sade
Translated by Will McMorran and Thomas Wynn (Penguin Classics)

‘I never hesitate in my choices, and as I am always sure to find pleasure in those I make, remorse will never dull their appeal; steadfast in the principles I formed in my tender youth, I always act in accordance with them; they have revealed to me the emptiness and nullity of virtue; I loathe it.’

Translation © Will McMorran and Thomas Wynn, 2016.

**Dr Will McMorran** is a Senior Lecturer in French & Comparative Literature at Queen Mary University of London.

**Dr Thomas Wynn** is a Reader in French at Durham University.

The Marquis de Sade was born in Paris in 1740 and spent 32 years of his life in prison and insane asylums for a host of violent and sexual crimes. He wrote *The 120 Days of Sodom* while incarcerated in the Bastille. He was accepted by a new regime after the French Revolution, but by 1796 was a ruined man. He died in an insane asylum in 1814.

**Institut français du Royaume-Uni**
The French Book Office, a department of the Institut français in London, promotes French literature in the UK by informing publishers, translators and other potential readers of new publications in French as well as translations into English and rights sales. It also supports translation from French into English via its Burgess Programme, and organises public events and festivals in connection with recent French publications and debates.

**The Authors’ Licensing and Collecting Society (ALCS)** is a not-for-profit membership organization for the benefit of all types of writers. Owned by its members, ALCS collects money due for secondary uses of writers’ work. It is designed to support authors and their creativity, ensure they receive fair payment and see their rights are respected. It promotes and teaches the principles of copyright and campaigns for a fair deal. It represents around 90,000 members, and since 1977 has paid over £450 million to writers. (alcs.co.uk)
THE PREMIO VALLE INCLÁN
FOR TRANSLATION FROM THE SPANISH

Winner:
Margaret Jull Costa
for her translation of
On the Edge by Rafael Chirbes (Harvill Secker)

Commended:
Rosalind Harvey
for her translation of
I’ll Sell You a Dog by
Juan Pablo Villalobos
(And Other Stories)

Sponsor:
ALCS

Judges:
Dr. Katie Brown
Professor John King

The Premio Valle Inclán of £2,000 was first awarded in 1997 and is given annually.

‘Chirbes’ kaleidoscopic, polyphonic narration, which moves from one century to another, from one character to another, in the same breath, is a mammoth challenge for a translator, but Margaret Jull Costa makes it seem effortless.’ KB

‘Rosalind Harvey’s translation is pitch perfect in finding equivalences for both the situational comedy and also the many anarchic voices in the narrative. A splendid achievement.’ JK
Extract from On The Edge
by Rafael Chirbes
Translated by Margaret Jull Costa (Harvill Secker)

‘When I returned, I’d been convinced I’d only stay a short time… what was temporary ended up becoming permanent… That’s what usually happens, it happens to a lot of people: they think the situation they’re in is merely temporary and that all they’re doing is living their life, the life they’ve been given or the life they wanted – Olba, until my last breath.’

Copyright © Rafael Chirbes, 2013.
Translation © Margaret Jull Costa, 2016.

Margaret Jull Costa has been a literary translator for over thirty years. She has been commended for the Premio Valle Inclán five times, and won the prize three times, twice for translations of novels by Javier Marías. She won the 2017 Best Translated Book Award for her co-translation with Robin Patterson of the Brazilian novelist Lúcio Cardoso’s Chronicle of the Murdered House. A Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, she has been awarded an OBE for services to literature, and in 2015 she was given an Honorary Doctorate by the University of Leeds.

Rafael Chirbes (1949–2015) wrote nine novels and received the National Prize for Literature and the Critics Prize for On the Edge. ABC named him ‘the best writer of the twenty-first century in Spain’.

The Authors’ Licensing and Collecting Society (ALCS) is a not-for-profit membership organization for the benefit of all types of writers. Owned by its members, ALCS collects money due for secondary uses of writers’ work. It is designed to support authors and their creativity, ensure they receive fair payment and see their rights are respected. It promotes and teaches the principles of copyright and campaigns for a fair deal. It represents around 90,000 members, and since 1977 has paid over £450 million to writers. (alcs.co.uk)
THE VONDEL PRIZE
FOR TRANSLATION FROM THE DUTCH

Winner: David McKay for his translation of War and Turpentine by Stefan Hertmans (Harvill Secker)

‘David McKay’s sensitive and meticulous translation of Stefan Hertmans’ ‘War and Turpentine’, based on his grandfather’s notebooks, has brought to life the atmosphere and speech of Belgium’s lost generation with great precision.’ DG

Commended: David Doherty for his translations of The Dutch Maiden by Marente de Moor and You Have Me To Love by Jaap Robben (World Editions)

‘David Doherty has shown how versatile he is as a translator with two very different books: Jaap Robben’s deeply disturbing coming-of-age novel and Marente de Moor’s ice-cold period novel about a young woman fencer, set in pre-war Germany.’ DG

Sponsors: The Dutch Foundation for Literature Flanders Literature

Judges: Jane Draycott Donald Gardner Laura Watkinson

Named after the most prominent Dutch poet and playwright of the 17th century, Joost van den Vondel, the biennial award of €5,000 was first awarded in 1996.
The Dutch Foundation for Literature promotes interest in Dutch-language literature abroad. It maintains contacts with a large number of international publishers, and has a stand at major international book fairs in Frankfurt, London, Bologna and Beijing. Foreign publishers wishing to publish translations of Dutch or Friesian literature may apply for a subsidy towards the translation costs. (letterenfonds.nl/en)

Flanders Literature, an autonomous governmental institution, encompasses all branches of the literary sector in Flanders (the northern Dutch-speaking part of Belgium). The principal instruments of its foreign policy are information and documentation, translation and production grants, and refund of travel expenses. (flandersliterature.be)

David McKay was born in the United States and has lived in The Hague since 1997. He is a translator of both fiction and non-fiction, especially in the field of the visual arts, and academic work. Together with translator Ina Rilke he recently put the finishing touches to an English translation of Max Havelaar or the coffee auctions of the Dutch trading company by Multatuli, which will be published in 2018 by NYRB Classics in New York. He is now working on a translation of the novel De bekeerlinge by Stefan Hertmans.

Stefan Hertmans is the prizewinning author of many literary works, including poetry, novels, essays, plays, short stories and a handbook on the history of art. He has taught at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Ghent, at the Sorbonne, the Universities of Vienna, Berlin and Mexico City, at The Library of Congress in Washington, and University College London.

Extract from War and Turpentine by Stefan Hertmans
Translated by David McKay (Harvill Secker)

‘Places are not just space, they are also time. I look at the city differently now that I carry his memories with me. My thoughts go on circling Kouter… associated with Sunday mornings… and the old-fashioned band music performed in the perfectly restored bandstand.’

Copyright © Stefan Hertmans, 2013.
Translation © David McKay, 2016.
THE TA FIRST TRANSLATION PRIZE
FOR DEBUT TRANSLATION

Winner:
Bela Shayevich for
her translation of
Second-hand Time
by Svetlana Alexievich,
and edited by
Jacques Testard
(Fitzcarraldo Editions)

‘Bela Shayevich’s translation
is a work of extraordinary,
sustained virtuosity, meeting
the challenges of this huge
polyvocal text energetically
and fearlessly like Alexievich
herself, she deploys such
great skill and sensitivity to
ensure that all the voices
are properly heard.’

The TA First Translation
Prize Judges

Sponsors:
Daniel Hahn
British Council

Judges:
Daniel Hahn
Rosalind Harvey
Bill Swainson

The TA First Translation Prize,
newly established in 2017, is an
annual £2,000 prize for a debut
literary translation into English
published in the UK. The prize
is shared between the translator
and the book’s editor.
Bela Shayevich is a Soviet-American artist and translator. She studied Comparative Literature at Emory University and received a Masters in Russian translation from Columbia University.

Jacques Testard is the founder and editor of Fitzcarraldo Editions. Testard was previously commissioning editor at Notting Hill Editions and co-founded arts and literature journal the White Review.

Svetlana Alexievich was born in Ukraine in 1948 and has spent most of her life in the Soviet Union and present-day Belarus, with prolonged periods of exile in Western Europe. Starting out as a journalist, she developed her own non-fiction genre, bringing together a chorus of voices describing specific historical moments. Her works include The Unwomanly Face of War (1985), Zinky Boys (1990), Chernobyl Prayer (1997) and Second-hand Time (2013). She was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2015.

The British Council is the UK’s international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. They work with over 100 countries in the fields of arts and culture, English language, education and civil society. Last year they reached over 65 million people directly and 731 million people overall including online, broadcasts and publications. They make a positive contribution to the countries they work with – changing lives by creating opportunities, building connections and engendering trust. (britishcouncil.org)

Daniel Hahn is a writer, editor and translator. He founded the TA First Translation Prize in 2017 with his share of the winnings from the International Dublin Literary Award.

Extract from Second-hand Time by Svetlana Alexievich
Translated by Bela Shayevich (Fitzcarraldo Editions)

‘My father would say that he personally started believing in communism after Gagarin was sent into space. We’re the first! We can do anything!’

Copyright © Svetlana Alexievich, 2013.
Translation © Bela Shayevich, 2016.
Arts Council England champions, develops and invests in artistic and cultural experiences that enrich people’s lives. It supports a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries – from theatre to digital art, reading to dance, music to literature and crafts to collections. Arts Council England invests money from government and The National Lottery in arts and culture across England.

The Times Literary Supplement is the pre-eminent English-language journal of literature and ideas. It has a long commitment to the art of translation and to the review of foreign books. That commitment is as strong today in the era of these most valuable and welcome awards, as it was in the days when it promoted the work of Pavese and Pasternak, Borges and Musil.

The British Library, a Grade I listed building, is the national library of the United Kingdom and the second largest library in the world by number of items catalogued.

The auditorium at the Knowledge Centre, British Library accommodates up to 255 delegates, with facilities for simultaneous translation, film, sound and video presentation, combined with a full team of onsite technical expertise.
The Society of Authors promotes and supports ten translation prizes, seven of which are presented tonight. We are the UK trade union for all types of writers, illustrators and literary translators, and have been advising individuals and speaking out for the profession for more than a century. We administer many other prizes, including the Authors’ Awards, the Women’s Prize, the Sunday Times EFG Short Story Award and the Sunday Times PFD Young Writer of the Year Award. We also offer grants for works in progress (societyofauthors.org/Grants).

The Society of Authors’ Translation Prizes 2018
(to be presented in 2019)

The Saif Ghobash Banipal Prize (deadline for entry 31.3.18)
The Bernard Shaw Prize
The John Florio Prize
The Schlegel-Tieck Prize
The Scott Moncrieff Prize
The TA First Translation Prize (deadline to be confirmed)
The Premio Valle Inclán

For further information on the Translation Prizes:
Visit societyofauthors.org/Prizes/Translation-Prizes
Email prizes@societyofauthors.org
Tel 020 7373 6642
‘A subscription to the Society is the greatest investment any writer can make.’ Philip Pullman