

PRESS RELEASE

EMBARGOED UNTIL 09:00 THURSDAY 13 APRIL

GRANTA UNVEILS NEXT GENERATION OF BRITISH NOVELISTS

Once-in-a-decade Best of Young British Novelists list displays striking new directions in British culture

Every ten years since 1983, *Granta* magazine has appointed a panel of judges to select the twenty most significant British novelists under forty. *Granta* 163, to be published on 27 April 2023, will showcase the fifth Best of Young British Novelists list. Like every previous list, it announces a set of extraordinary new talents, with entirely new literary preoccupations. Women dominate the list, which displays an unprecedented diversity of class and region.

Since 1983, the Best of Young British Novelists list has been seen as the barometer of Britain's changing literary landscape. The first list featured such writers as Kazuo Ishiguro, Salman Rushdie, Julian Barnes, Martin Amis and Pat Barker. Subsequent editions have celebrated the work of Zadie Smith, Iain Banks, Nicola Barker, Ben Okri, Jeanette Winterson, Hanif Kureishi, Sarah Waters and Rachel Cusk – among others.

The new list suggests an emerging literary culture that more fully represents British society as a whole. For the first time, it includes authors who normally reside within the UK alongside British citizens. A number of writers explore their own working-class backgrounds. Most conspicuously, the list is no longer centred in London. Dispersed across the UK, and writing often about remote locations, the writers originate from Sydney, Montreal, London, Edinburgh, the Isle of Lewis, North Lanarkshire, Cardiff, Birmingham, Newcastle, Lancashire and New Zealand.

This list showcases the work of writers born in or after 1983, and is the first comprised entirely of millennials (the youngest is twenty-six). Contrary to stereotype, they largely eschew internet culture; writing intricate prose, they prefer grander presentations of self, society and ecology. Themes explored in *Granta* 163 include: capitalism, migration, gang violence, xenophobia, surveillance, deceit, the pandemic, climate change and Ghanaian folklore. Settings include: a football match in Wales, the shadow of the Grenfell Tower, an unnamed island in a remote archipelago.



Writing in a time of anxiety, this diverse generation is strikingly unified in one respect: all are interested in experimental visions of the future. *Granta* 163 showcases a consistent, forward-looking drive – the search for new possibilities, new alternatives, new hope.

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THE GRANTA BEST OF YOUNG BRITISH NOVELISTS 2023



Granta's Best of Young British Novelists 2023 are:

GRAEME ARMSTRONG
JENNIFER ATKINS
SARA BAUME
SARAH BERNSTEIN
NATASHA BROWN
ELEANOR CATTON
ELIZA CLARK
TOM CREWE
LAUREN AIMEE CURTIS
CAMILLA GRUDOVA
ISABELLA HAMMAD
SOPHIE MACKINTOSH
ANNA METCALFE
THOMAS MORRIS
DEREK OWUSU
K PATRICK
YARA RODRIGUES FOWLER
SABA SAMS
OLIVIA SUDJIC
ELEY WILLIAMS

The 2023 judging panel comprised writers [Tash Aw](#), [Rachel Cusk](#), [Brian Dillon](#) and [Helen Oyeyemi](#), chaired by *Granta* editor [Sigrid Rausing](#).

'If this generation has a theme, I would say it's pollution, in the largest sense – both to do with the destruction or degradation of nature and urban environments, but also the taint of connectivity, the pervasive sense of perceiving other minds and bodies as a threat. A diminishment of pleasure. There is no particular sense, to me, of the "woke" moment on this list, but rather a subterranean sense of uncertainty, of creative minds mistrusting not experimentation, exactly, but the anarchic exuberance of experimentation.'

– [Sigrid Rausing](#)

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GRAEME ARMSTRONG is a multi-award winning and bestselling author from Airdrie. His teenage years were spent within Scotland's 'young team' gang culture, an experience that features in much of his writing. He writes in Scots dialect. After reading English as an undergraduate, he completed a Masters in Creative Writing at the University of Stirling and is currently undertaking a PhD at the University of Strathclyde. His debut novel, *The Young Team*, was published in 2020 and became a *Sunday Times* bestseller. It received the Somerset Maugham and Betty Trask Awards and was Scots Book of the Year in 2021.

JENNIFER ATKINS was born in London, where she is currently based. Her fiction has been published by the *White Review* and she has written for the *World of Interiors* magazine. She writes with elegance and detail, her prose keenly observant and emotionally astute. Her debut novel, *The Cellist*, was published in 2022.

SARA BAUME is the author of three novels, *Spill*, *Simmer Falter Wither*, *A Line Made by Walking* and *Seven Steeples*, and one book of non-fiction, *Handiwork*. Baume's lyrical prose is finely tuned to subtleties of rhythm and cadence. Born in the United Kingdom, she now lives and works on the south coast of Ireland, where she balances writing with her work as a visual artist.

SARAH BERNSTEIN is from Montreal, Quebec and lives in the Northwest Highlands. She is the author of *Study for Obedient*, *The Coming Bad Days*, and *Now Comes the Lightning*. Her writing has been called 'the new millennium's answer to modernism'.

NATASHA BROWN is a British novelist. Her debut novel *Assembly* was shortlisted for several awards including the Rathbones Folio Prize, the Goldsmiths Prize and the Orwell Prize for Fiction. It has been translated into seventeen languages.

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ELEANOR CATTON is the author of *The Luminaries*, winner of the 2013 Man Booker Prize, *The Rehearsal* and *Birnam Wood*. As a screenwriter, she adapted *The Luminaries* for television, and Jane Austen's *Emma* for feature film. Her ambitious novels combine plot with wit and psychological insight, probing the mechanics of society's failures and triumphs. Born in Canada and raised in New Zealand, she now lives in Cambridge.

ELIZA CLARK was born in Newcastle Upon Tyne and now lives in London. Her first novel *Boy Parts* was written after Clark received a place on New Writing North's Young Writers' Talent Fund and was published by Influx Press in 2020. Her second novel, *Penance*, will be published in July 2023, followed by short story collection *She's Always Hungry*. Her writing embraces the socially unacceptable, and wryly explores themes of gender, power and violence.

TOM CREWE was born in Middlesbrough in 1989. He has a PhD in nineteenth century British history from the University of Cambridge. Since 2015 he has been an editor at the *London Review of Books*, to which he has contributed more than thirty essays on politics, art, history and fiction. *The New Life*, his first novel, was published in January. The book deftly recreates Victorian England in a stylish and richly-textured exploration of sex and social mores.

LAUREN AIMEE CURTIS was born in Sydney in 1988. She is the author of *Dolores* – shortlisted for the Readings Prize, the UTS Glenda Adams Award and chosen as a *New Statesman* 'Book of the Year'. Her writing is melodic, intense and knowing, and is marked by a passion for the peculiar.

CAMILLA GRUDOVA is the author of *The Doll's Alphabet* and *Children of Paradise*. Her anarchic and often inexplicable short stories recall the distorted fairy tale landscapes of Leonora Carrington, Angela Carter and Barbara Comyns, and her novel unfolds in a similarly surreal vein. She lives in Edinburgh.

ISABELLA HAMMAD is the author of *The Parisian* and *Enter Ghost*. She was awarded the Plimpton Prize

for Fiction, the Sue Kaufman Prize from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Palestine Book Award and a Betty Trask Award. She has received fellowships from MacDowell, the Rockefeller Foundation and the Lannan Foundation. Invested in the rhythms of history and politics, her writing is erudite, searching and full of feeling.

SOPHIE MACKINTOSH was born in South Wales in 1988, and is currently based in London. She is the author of novels *The Water Cure*, *Blue Ticket*, and *Cursed Bread*, and her work has been published by the *New York Times*, *Granta*, the *Stinging Fly* and others. *The Water Cure* was long listed for the 2018 Man Booker Prize. Her richly imaginative prose often follows the contours of fables and myths.

ANNA METCALFE is a writer and lecturer in Creative Writing at the University of Birmingham. Her story collection *Blind Water Pass* was published in 2016. *Chrysalis*, publishing in May 2023, is her first novel. Metcalfe's writing traffics in suggestion and allusion, and is concerned with ideas of reinvention, identity and obligation.

THOMAS MORRIS was born and raised in Caerphilly, South Wales. His debut story collection *We Don't Know What We're Doing* won Wales Book of the Year, The Rhys Davies Trust Fiction Award and a Somerset Maugham Prize. His stories have been broadcast on BBC Radio 4 and published and anthologised in *Zoetrope*; *Best European Fiction*; and *The Penguin Book of the Contemporary British Short Story*. His second book of stories, *Open Up*, will be published in August 2023. His writing is careful, controlled and observant, capturing the essence of how people, communities and families coalesce.

DEREK OWUSU is a writer and poet. He is the editor of *SAFE: On Black British Men Reclaiming Space*, and the author of *That Reminds Me* – which was awarded the 2020 Desmond Elliot Prize – and *Losing the Plot*. Associative, experimental and deeply poetic, Owusu's writing has a delicate edge, lending a lyrical veneer to his poignant fictionalisations of British Ghanaian culture.

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JUDGES

K PATRICK is a writer based on the Isle of Lewis. In 2021 they were shortlisted for both the *White Review* Poetry and Short Story Prize, and in 2020 were runner-up in the Ivan Juritz Prize and the Laura Kinsella Fellowship. Their debut novel, *MRS S*, will be published June 2023. Relayed in bodily, impressionistic brushstrokes, Patrick's novel speaks to their sensibilities as a poet: the writing is sensory and tactile, leaning toward intimation and gesture to convey the protagonist's longing and want.

YARA RODRIGUES FOWLER grew up in South London. She is the author of two novels, *Stubborn Archivist* and *there are more things*. *Stubborn Archivist* was longlisted for the Dylan Thomas Prize 2019, the Desmond Eliot Prize 2019 and the Sunday Times Young Writer of the Year Award 2019; *there are more things* received the Society of Authors' John C Lawrence Award 2018 and was shortlisted for the Eccles Centre and Hay Festival Writer's Award 2020 (both as a work in progress) and shortlisted for the the Orwell Prize for Political Fiction 2022. Her writing displays a commitment to both politics and craft. With each project, Fowler strains against tradition, testing the boundaries of how fiction might be used as a tool for change.

SABA SAMS is a writer based in London. *Send Nudes*, her debut collection of short stories, was published in 2022 and was longlisted for the Edge Hill Prize. Her fiction and non-fiction has appeared in *Granta*, the *Stinging Fly* and the *White Review*, among others. Her writing is acerbic, empathetic and sharply attuned to the specific shames and pleasures of feminine experience.

OLIVIA SUDJIC is the author of *Sympathy*, which was a finalist for the Salerno European Book Award and the Collyer Bristow Prize, and *Exposure*, a non-fiction work named an *Irish Times*, *Evening Standard* and *White Review* Book of the Year for 2018. Her second novel, *Asylum Road*, was published in 2021 and shortlisted for the Encore Award and the Gordon Bowker Volcano Prize. Her writing is carefully controlled, evoking the anxieties and pleasures of modern living.

ELEY WILLIAMS works at Royal Holloway, University of London. Alongside her novel and collection of short

fiction, her writing is published in journals and anthologies including *Modern Queer Poets*, *The Penguin Book of the Contemporary British Short Story*, and *Liberating the Canon*, with stories and serialised fiction also recently commissioned by BBC Radio 4. She is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. Her work displays a roving intelligence, and delights in lexicography and the world of words.

JUDGES

TASH AW is the author of four novels, including *The Harmony Silk Factory* and *Five Star Billionaire*, both longlisted for the Man Booker Prize. His most recent books are the memoir *The Face: Strangers on a Pier* and the novel *We, the Survivors*. He lives in Paris and is a regular contributor to *Granta*.

RACHEL CUSK was included in *Granta's* Best of Young British Novelists issue in 2003. She is the author of the Outline Trilogy, the memoirs *A Life's Work* and *Aftermath*, and numerous other works of fiction and non-fiction. Her most recent publication is *Second Place*, which was longlisted for the Booker Prize.

BRIAN DILLON is a critic, teacher and editor. His work has appeared in *Granta*, the *Guardian*, the *London Review of Books*, the *New York Times*, the *New Yorker* and the *New York Review of Books*. He is the author of more than ten books; his most recent is *Affinities*. He is director of the creative writing programme at Queen Mary University of London.

HELEN OYEYEMI was selected as one of *Granta's* Best of Young British Novelists in 2013. She is the author of seven novels and a short story collection, *What Is Not Yours Is Not Yours*, which won the PEN Open Book Award. She was a judge of the 2018 International Booker Prize and the 2023 Goldsmiths Prize.

SIGRID RAUSING is editor and publisher of *Granta* magazine and publisher of Granta Books. She is the author of *History, Memory and Identity in Post-Soviet Estonia* and the memoirs *Everything is Wonderful* and *Mayhem*.

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Granta is working in partnership with the British Council to bring the Best of Young British Novelists 2023 to international audiences across the globe.
