

Iconic literary magazine celebrates 60th year with specially curated 'Ambit Day' at the National Centre for Writing

Immediate Release

The literary and arts magazine that has published the work of JG Ballard, William Burroughs and Carol Ann Duffy will this year mark its 60th anniversary. This Saturday 'Ambit Day' will be celebrated at the National Centre for Writing in Norwich, England's first UNESCO City of Literature. This marks the start of a year of celebrations, including events at Tate Modern, the Centre for New and International Writing, Liverpool, and will finish with a celebration at Poetry in Aldeburgh in November.

The magazine was founded by London Paediatrician Dr Martin Bax who in 1959 diagnosed a national mood of 'Angst and Ennui'. His prescription was *Ambit* Magazine – a quarterly collection of poetry, fiction and art – 'sometimes shocking, sometimes comic, sometimes experimental – always compelling'.

Now edited by Martin's relative Briony Bax, and against a similar prevailing national mood, she's decided it's time for a party!

Briony says:

'It's wonderful to kick off *Ambit's* 60th birthday year at the National Centre for Writing. The hub of writers, poets and artists around Norwich will make for such an exciting day which will focus not only on the craft of writing with workshops, but will also provide the opportunity to see an exhibition of all 234 editions of *Ambit*.'

Chris Gribble, Executive Director of the National Centre for Writing says:

“We are really delighted to be hosting the first in a series of nationwide celebrations for Ambit’s 60th anniversary celebrations. Ambit was first publisher of a number of the UK’s most exciting and celebrated poets and the magazine has forged an outstanding reputation in poetry prose and the visual arts.”

The T. S. Eliot Prize winning poet George Szirtes will read as part of Ambit Day. He says:

“It was in Ambit that a work of mine was first noticed. I was just twenty-three. Ambit had a daring post-sixties feel that was almost underground. There was sex and art and a Modernist breeziness more British than American. It was Larkin’s uncle shouting smut. It was beautiful. Martin Bax was legend. I was touching the hem of art’s naughty garment.”

Bloodaxe Poet Helen Ivory, will also read as part of the celebrations at the National Centre for Writing. She says:

“Ambit was the first magazine to publish me - there was a note from Martin Bax to say that Carol Ann Duffy particularly liked one of the poems. This all made me look at myself in a different way - I wasn’t just a student, I was a published writer. Which gave me the confidence to send some poems off to the Society of Authors for the Eric Gregory Awards, when my tutor George Szirtes suggested it. I was awarded an Eric Gregory Award the year after I was published in Ambit, and was taken on by Neil Astley as a Bloodaxe author the year after that. Ambit was right there at the start of my writing career and I will always feel a fondness for the magazine. And it is still as beautiful as ever!”

Ambit Day at the National Centre for Writing kicks off at Dragon Hall, Norwich at 2.30pm on Saturday 26 January. The full programme for the day is as follows –

2.30 – 6.30pm: 60 Years of Ambit. Free exhibition. Delve into the archives

2.30 – 4.30pm: Narrative Poetry in Troubled Times - workshop - Fully booked.

2.30 – 4.30pm: An Introduction to Translating Poetry – workshop - £15/12 – booking essential

5 – 6pm: How to Get Published – panel – free. Booking essential

6.30 – 9pm: Celebrating 60 years of *Ambit* – with readings from Kevin Crossley-Holland, Helen Ivory, George Szirtes and Anthony Thwaite. – free – Booking essential.

For more information and booking details visit: www.nationalcentreforwriting.org.uk

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Notes to Editors:

1. For comment and interviews contact Alice Kent, Communications Director at alice@nationalcentreforwriting.org.uk / 01603 877177
2. The **National Centre for Writing** (NCW) is a place of discovery, exchange, ideas and learning for writers, literary translators and readers. Based in the restored and extended 15th century Dragon Hall in the heart of England's first UNESCO City of Literature, it explores how writing can inspire and change the world we live in. Its year round programme of events, festivals and courses reaches over 14,000 people a year with an additional 110,000 engaged online. Through its learning and participation programme it supports 20,000 young people a year and has a commitment to working with those in the most disadvantaged areas. NCW's patrons include Margaret Atwood, JM Coetzee, Kei Miller and Elif Shafak.
www.nationalcentreforwriting.org.uk
3. **Ambit** is a 96-page quarterly literary and art magazine. It is created in North Norfolk, published in the UK, and read internationally. It's available through subscription, in selected bookshops, and in libraries worldwide. The magazine is put together mainly from unsolicited submissions. You can read more about our guidelines on our submissions page. We look at everything that is sent to us, and give no preference to well-known writers over the newest artistic talents. *AMBIT* is edited by Briony Bax; Poetry Editors: André Naffis-Sahely, assisted by Imogen Cassels; Fiction Editors: Kate Pemberton assisted by Louise Ihringer, Gwendolen MacKeith, Rob Newton and Mike Smith; Art Editors: Olivia Bax, Jean-Philippe Dordolo; Illustration Editor: Mireille Fauchon; Production Editor: Mike Smith.
<http://www.ambitmagazine.co.uk/>