

Press Release from Writers' Centre Norwich
For Release 07.04.14

Writers' Centre Norwich and IdeasTap launch a new national writing competition for young fiction writers today – deadline 12th May. ***IdeasTap Inspires: Writers' Centre Norwich Writing Competition*** offers ten talented writers a tailor-made programme of professional development, designed to kick start writing careers. 75 commended writers will also be invited to take part in a regional masterclass, as well receiving support from Writers' Centre Norwich and IdeasTap.

Through this unique competition ten fledgling writers will be offered a series of opportunities to help develop their craft, including six months of mentoring, a masterclass, vital industry advice and a bespoke writing retreat.

Chris Gribble, Chief Executive of Writers' Centre Norwich says:

'Writers' Centre Norwich is really excited to be working with IdeasTap on a very special year long creative and mentoring programme supported by some of the best and most exciting writers at work in the country today. Watched over by the brilliant Ali Smith and talent-spotter and editor extraordinaire Ellah Allfrey, we'll offer opportunities for creative and professional development to IdeasTap members around the country and a special programme for ten of the best to work with writers who know the ins, the outs, the ups and downs of a writer's life.'

Daniel Hahn, Kerry Hudson, Alex Preston and Nicola Upson are confirmed as mentors; providing writing advice, networking opportunities and career guidance. Author, academic and Escalator mentor Michelle Spring will act as the Chair of Mentors.

Booker shortlisted Ali Smith and Ellah Allfrey, OBE are supporting Writers' Centre Norwich Writing Competition: IdeasTap Inspires as patrons. Ellah Allfrey describes Writers' Centre Norwich Writing Competition: IdeasTap Inspires as;

'It's a hard road to getting a book out into the world. Rarely do publishers have the resources to provide the early guidance and support that can make all the difference in a new writer's career. That nurturing of talent is one of the most valuable aspects of the work that Writers' Centre Norwich does. In partnership with Ideas Tap, this new venture will give emerging talents the gift of a guiding hand and a critical eye in the form of an experienced mentor. It's an honour to be involved in a project that acknowledges the fact that culture doesn't 'just happen', we have to work together, to pass on knowledge and craft, in order to create works of lasting value.'

..... **A representative from IdeasTap says...**

To apply, or for more information, writers should visit www.ideastap.com, submit 2000 words of fiction and a 100 word biography. The competition is free to enter.

Writers' Centre Norwich Writing Competition: IdeasTap Inspires is run by Writers' Centre Norwich and national arts charity IdeasTap. This competition is part of IdeasTap Inspires, a free national training programme for young people building careers in the creative industries, and is supported by Arts Council England, via a £250,000 Exceptional Award.

Additional Information

Writers' Centre Norwich is a literature development organisation based in England's first UNESCO City of Literature, Norwich. We are interested in both the artistic and social impact of creative writing, and work with writers, readers and diverse communities on a wide range of ongoing and one-off projects and events. Writers' Centre Norwich is currently developing a National Centre Writing; a world-leading flagship organisation.

www.writerscentrenorwich.org.uk

IdeasTap is an arts charity that supports creative people through opportunities, funding, jobs and career development. Since launching in December 2008, IdeasTap has awarded more than £1.8 million worth of direct funding and accompanying expert mentoring to emerging artists. Its membership currently stands at 135,000+ and its partners include the Barbican, BFI, Magnum Photos, Mother London, The National Theatre, Royal Exchange Theatre and Sky Academy. www.ideastap.com

Patrons

Ali Smith was born in Inverness, Scotland in 1962 and currently lives in Cambridge. Her 2001 novel, *Hotel World* was shortlisted for the Orange and Booker Prizes, and won the Encore Award, the East England Arts Award of the Year and the Scottish Arts Council Book of the Year Award. *The Accidental* (2005) was shortlisted for the Orange and The Booker Prize and won the Whitbread Novel Award. Her publications also include *There But For The* (2011), which won the Hawthornden Prize 2012 and the Creative Scotland /SMIT Best Fiction 2012 Award and *Artful* 2012, a book based on her lectures on European comparative literature delivered in early 2012 at Saint Anne's College, Oxford. Her work has been translated into 30 languages.

Ellah Allfrey is former Deputy Editor of Granta magazine. She worked for five years at Penguin Press before moving to Random House for six years. As Senior Editor, she was responsible for Jonathan Cape's acclaimed list of African writers as well as editing a wide range of authors including Carmen Callil, Bettany Hughes, Antony Quinn and Julian Barnes and commissioning highly praised and award winning writers such as Dinaw Mengestu, Evie Wyld and Laura Fish. Since joining the Board of WCN she has been active in the organisational changes and expansion of the company. A Fellow of the Royal Society of the Arts, Ellah was awarded an OBE in 2011 for services to the publishing industry.

Mentors

Chair of Mentors: Michelle Spring

Daniel Hahn is a writer, editor and translator, with thirty-something books to his name. His translations from Portuguese, Spanish and French include fiction from Europe, Africa and the Americas, and non-fiction by writers ranging from Portuguese Nobel laureate José Saramago to Brazilian footballer Pelé. A former chair of the Translators Association, he is now national programme director of the British Centre for Literary Translation. He is currently writing the new Oxford Companion to Children's Literature. He is @danielhahn02 on Twitter.

Kerry Hudson's debut novel, *Tony Hogan Bought Me an Ice-Cream Float Before He Stole My Ma*, was published in 2012 to a wave of critical acclaim. It won the Scottish First Book of the Year and was shortlisted for the Guardian First Book Award, Green Carnation Prize and Polari First Book Prize, amongst others. Kerry's second novel, *Thirst* will be published by Chatto. She currently divides her writing time, and affections, between Hackney and Hanoi. She is @KerrysWindow on Twitter.

Alex Preston was born in 1979. He lives in London with his wife and two children. His first novel, *This Bleeding City*, was published by Faber and Faber in the UK, and across twelve other territories. His second, *The Revelations*, was shortlisted for the Guardian's Not the Booker Prize. Alex appears regularly on BBC Radio 4 and writes and reviews books for a number of national newspapers. He is @ahmpreston on Twitter.

Nicola Upson was born in Suffolk and read English at Downing College, Cambridge. She was the winner of an Escalator/Arts Council England award in 2006 for her debut novel, *An Expert in Murder*, the first in a series of books to feature Golden Age detective writer, Josephine Tey. In 2008, the novel was published by Faber to wide critical acclaim, and praised by PD James as marking

'the arrival of a new and assured talent'. *An Expert in Murder* has been followed by three more novels: *Angel With Two Faces*; *Two for Sorrow*; and most recently *Fear in the Sunlight* (2012), and the he fifth 'Josephine Tey' novel, *The Death of Lucy Kyte*, will be published by Faber in August 2013.