

2018 YOUNG NORFOLK LAUREATE ANNOUNCED

The winners of the Young Norfolk Writing Competition 2018 were announced at a special ceremony at the National Centre for Writing (NCW), Dragon Hall last night.

The six winners, ranging from 11 to 18 years old, were selected by judges from a pool of 350 entries from 44 schools in the region – double the number of entries on the previous year.

They are:

- Sarah Durban, 11, from Avenue Junior School for 'Compass' (prose/graphic story)
- Rosie May, 11, from Langley School for 'A well full of nonsense' (poetry)
- Nicola Mathew, 14, from Springwood High School for 'Phoenix Lights' (prose/graphic story)
- Hannah Richmond, 17, from City of Norwich School for 'Child's Play' (prose/graphic story)
- Ciera Drury, 18, from Dereham Sixth Form College for '100 Years of Silence [Women's Vote]' (poetry/lyrics)
- Alannah Young, 18, Reepham College for 'Standing in the post office queue of Magdalen Street Roy's on a Thursday at 11am' (poetry/lyrics)

As part of their prize, the six winners took part in a workshop with Molly Naylor – scriptwriter, poet, director and theatre-maker.

She said:

'Working with these brilliant, creative young people has been a massive treat.

'Competitions like these allow people to give themselves permission to try something new, challenge themselves and use their voice.'

The 2018 Young Norfolk Laureate was also announced at the ceremony. Ciera Drury will encourage young people across the region to enjoy reading and writing, in and outside of the classroom.

As the Young Norfolk Laureate, Ciera will also receive creative and professional development opportunities from NCW over the coming year. The region's first Young Norfolk Laureate, Joe Webb, will complete his laureateship today by taking the stage at Latitude Festival to perform his poem 'Peripheral Vision', which won the Young Norfolk Writing Competition 2017.

The Young Norfolk Writing Competition is a partnership between the National Centre for Writing, Norfolk County Council and Young Norfolk Arts Festival. The judges were thrilled by the number and calibre of entries from young people across the county.

Lucy Farrant, Director of Young Norfolk Arts, said:

‘I am delighted that Young Norfolk Arts Trust and the National Centre for Writing have worked in partnership to deliver this year’s Young Norfolk Writing Competition. The number and quality of entries is truly impressive and a great example of the breadth and depth of young creative talent in the County. I am so pleased that we can celebrate with everyone involved on 13th July at 6pm at Dragon Hall. ‘

Hannah Garrard, Learning & Participation Manager at the National Centre for Writing, said:

‘The 20 shortlisted entries and six winners took me to foreign countries, the post office, through the annals of history, had me worried for mankind and had me laughing out loud. It’s been an absolute pleasure and privilege to be on the judging panel for this year’s Young Norfolk Writing Competition.’

Robert Rickard, Norfolk County Council Adviser for 14-19 Development said:

‘The quality of entries increases each year, underlining this super, healthy partnership – melding NCW’s growing status and infrastructure, YNAF’s promotional skill, and NCC’s comprehensive relationship with schools and colleges, including all English Departments. We are keen to seek out ALL the best young writers across our large county, and to help, mentor and support them through education and beyond – if they wish – for example, to careers involving writing. The intention is to broaden the age range to all young people, by increasing the number of schools and colleges taking part. We salute our partners and schools for continuing, so resoundingly well, to answer this challenge.’

The winning entries are available to read online at nationalcentreforwriting.org.uk

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Notes to Editors:

1. National Centre for Writing (NCW)

WCN is a literature development organisation based in Norwich, England’s first UNESCO City of Literature. WCN is interested in both the artistic and social impact of creative writing, and works with writers, readers and diverse communities on a wide range of ongoing and one-off projects and

events. Writers' Centre Norwich is currently developing the National Centre for Writing at Dragon Hall to open in 2018 as a major cultural venue for the city. www.writerscentrenorwich.org.uk

2. **Young Norfolk Arts Festival (YNAF)**

Young Norfolk Arts Trust celebrates and nurtures the creativity of young people in Norfolk through the delivery of an exciting programme of year-round opportunities and the delivery of the annual Young Norfolk Arts Festival - a multi-artform spectacle of performance and participation which takes place at the end of the academic year. www.ynaf.org.uk

3. Press enquiries to Steph McKenna, Communications Officer, at steph@nationalcentreforwriting.org.uk / 01603 877177

4. The Young Norfolk Writing Competition is a partnership between the National Centre for Writing, Norfolk County Council and the Young Norfolk Arts Festival.

5. Extracts from winners are as follows:

'100 Years of Silence [Women's Vote]' by Ciera Drury

Why should women have to disguise
& present themselves with a mask,
To be a walking "pop of colour" with a mind kept
Sheltered in the dark?

One hundred years of silence
& a proudly retained composure
Held together with a smile & the promise
Of change creeping ever closer

'A well full of nonsense' by Rosie May

Once upon a time at the bottom of a Well, was the most terrible, grubbiest smell. A smell like foxes, old boxes and pegs, a smell like the most disgusting, reeking old legs, a smell like over-cooked, under-baked eggs.

At the bottom of the well, I am sorry to say, was a dear old friend of mine. He mumbled and groaned, and with a little weak moan, Said: "How many times have I been down here? Nine!"

'Compass' by Sarah Durban

She moved stealthily, weaving through the crowd pressing around her, shoving each other out of the way in their haste to reach the buffet stands first. This was a well-trodden path of Clarisse's. Slipping unnoticed through tight crowds in her quests to find food for her and April.

Perfect. A fresh-bread stand. She smelled it before the bright red-and-white wind shelter was visible between the towering mass of barging bodies. Clarisse snuck around the side until the refill basket was just a few paces from where she stood. The anticipation of theft no longer haunted her, for it had been worn out in the many years of her doing so to survive.

'Phoenix Lights' by Nicola Mathew

My gaze hovers above the blurred horizon; the orbs' light casting an eerie glow across the city as the pollution and toxins hang in the air. The news cameras flash as they gaze at the luminescent triangle levitating along their sky. It does not matter; we won't be here for much longer.

My thoughts are snapped like a brittle twig, as the silence descends upon the courtroom. The people rise, the defence and prosecution alike. The soundless noise stretches for almost eternity.

Until the prosecutor stands and clears his throat, abashedly.

"How do you find the case of the homo sapiens, otherwise known as humanity, my Lord?" he inquires.

I scrutinize each and every one of their faces. Searching for any other possible answer.

"Guilty."

'Child's Play' by Hannah Richmond

The forest was his best bet. He had known that since they had arrived. He had stared into its depths and it had stared back. Now, as his feet battered the grass, he could feel the thrum of the wind in the leaves; an easy, gentle, excitement that trundled through his heart. The treetops flew out into the distance, catching the sunlight in their bewitched fingers: crown after golden crown after golden crown. When his feet first sunk into the rich mud, the aroma – a thick, antique perfume – rose up and hung around his head like a necklace. Delicate, the sunlight dipped into shadow, and he couldn't

stop ("twenty five," cried Jake, "twenty-") but he wanted to, if only to gawp, if only to pretend he could see every mile these sturdy trunks conquered.

'Standing in the post office queue of Magdalen Street Roy's on a Thursday at 11am' by Alannah Young

Another plane of existence // where 11am means nothing and time is marked // not by the ticking of a clock but // the occasional shuffling of foam-soled shoes // the inconsistent flickering of stained-tooth-yellow panel lighting // and one, two, three, six requests to withdraw state pension