

BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE PROVERSE PRIZES

Gillian and Verner Bickley founded the Proverse Prizes because they saw that most literary prizes were restricted in some way. They wanted there to be prizes that everyone could enter. And this is what they created. Anyone (18 years old or more), male or female, published writer or not, is eligible to enter for the Proverse Prizes, irrespective of nationality, residence or citizenship.

The Proverse Prize for an unpublished book-length work of fiction, non-fiction or poetry, submitted in English (may be in translation) was announced in 2008 and is in its thirteenth year of competition.

The Proverse Poetry Prize For Single Poems is in its sixth year of competition.

People from all over the world, as well as in Hong Kong, have entered for the prizes.

Including the books launched on 18 November 2021, 19 have won the Proverse Prize (which includes publication, and a cash prize which can be shared by a maximum of two entries), and 39 have won a publication prize or been published following entry for the Prize. A few hundred have had one or more poems published in the annual Proverse Poetry Prize Anthology.

Writers in Hong Kong and overseas have expressed their appreciation of the Prizes. Prior to the pandemic, writers and poets travelled from Australia, Chile, Estonia, Israel, New Zealand, and the USA to join these events. Some have been sponsored by a Cultural body in their own country; others have financed themselves.

We are most grateful that Hong Kong Arts Development Council has, on a couple of occasions in recent years, offered some support for one or other of the two prizes, seeing them as a contribution to the development and appreciation of literary arts in and of Hong Kong.

THE PROVERSE PRIZE 2020

The Proverse Prize (like the Proverse Poetry Prize) is awarded for unpublished work. On average, it takes a year or more for publishers and author to edit and prepare a winning work for publication. As a result, publication is about a year after entry for the Prize.

Here are the results of the Proverse Prize 2020 competition.

TWO WORKS ARE AWARDED AS WINNERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL PROVERSE PRIZE 2020.

Each writer receives the prize of publication and the two writers share the cash prize.

They are:

- GEORGE WATT of Australia, with his debut novel, *The Finley Confession*
- PAOLA CARONNI, Italian resident of Hong Kong, with her debut poetry collection, *Uncharted Waters*

THREE ENTRIES HAVE BEEN AWARDED AS WINNERS OF PUBLICATION PRIZES.

They are:

- *A Gateway Has Opened* by Liam Blackford (Hong Kong and Australia).
- *Please Stand Back from the Platform Door* by Vishal Nanda (Hong Kong).
- *London Letters Home (1861-1865) of an American Apprentice Preparing for the Far East Tea Trade* by Penelope Pelham West (USA).

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL!

All these titles are available from the Proverse page at the Chinese University of Hong Kong Press website: <https://cup.cuhk.edu.hk/Proversehk>

Individual links follow:

Uncharted Waters

https://cup.cuhk.edu.hk/Proversehk?product_id=4331

<https://cup.cuhk.edu.hk/Proversehk/THEFINLEYCONFESSION>

Please Stand Back From The Platform Door

https://cup.cuhk.edu.hk/Proversehk?product_id=4332

A Gateway Has Opened

https://cup.cuhk.edu.hk/Proversehk?product_id=4330

We are grateful to Hong Kong Arts Development Council for grants made to assist publication of each of the three Hong Kong winning entries.

BRIEF COMMENTS ABOUT THE WINNING WORKS

- Paola Caronni's *Uncharted Waters* has been described by Jennifer Wong, poetry reviewer for the *Asian Review of Books*, as "An intelligent, intimate account of cultural pilgrimage".
- George Watt's debut novel, *The Finley Confession*, has been described by the Australian writer, A.J. Mackinnon, as, "a coming-of-age story of great power and intensity".
- *A Gateway Has Opened* by Liam Blackford. Blackford's poems are described by leading Australian poet and critic, Philip Mead, Emeritus Professor, University of Western Australia, as, "unique explorations of poetic form."
- *Please Stand Back from the Platform Door* by Vishal Nanda. Vishal Nanda's poems have been described as a "tour de force" by Peter Kennedy, Honorary Professor in the English Department at the University of Hong Kong.
- *London Letters Home (1861-1865) of an American Apprentice Preparing for the Far East Tea Trade* by Penelope Pelham West. John Berdell, Professor of Economics, DePaul University, Chicago Illinois, finds that the letters, placed in the editorial context of Penny's work, "provide unrivaled insight into the training of young professionals of this era, and constantly remind us that their success hinged upon courage, flexibility and resilience in the face of rapidly changing commercial fortunes."

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