

THE INTERNATIONAL PROVERSE PRIZE  
FOR UNPUBLISHED FICTION, NON-FICTION, OR POETRY  
SUBMITTED IN ENGLISH (MAY BE A TRANSLATION)

A BRIEF HISTORY TO DATE

The establishment of the prize was announced in 2008 at The Proverse Prize Dinner, held in Hong Kong, and entries were received for the first competition in the summer of 2009. As of November 2020, seven women and ten men have won or shared the Prize. They are:

Rebecca Tomasis, Laura Solomon, Gillian Jones, David Diskin, Peter Gregoire,  
Sophronia Liu, Birgit Linder, James McCarthy, Philip Chatting, Celia Classe,  
Lawrence Gray, Gustav Preller, Ivy Ngeow, Feng Chi-chun, D.J. Hamilton,  
J.P. Linstroth, Jack Mayer.

Their work includes 8 novels, one young adult novella, one biography, one family memoir, four poetry collections, one short-story collection, and a collection of poetry and essays.

Considering separately the entries that became finalists, and excluding those that finally became winners of the Proverse Prize, totally about 34 of these works, by a total of 26 authors, from the 2009 to 2019 competitions inclusive have been published by Proverse Hong Kong. (The final results for the 2020 competition have not yet been announced.) The fifteen men and eleven women to date (some of them are repeat entrants, which have been counted once only) are:

Victor E. Apps, John Asome, Nicholas Binge, Rupert Kwan Yun Chan, Sally Dellow,  
Wayne Furlong, Patricia Ginton-Meicholas, Lawrence Gray, Patricia W. Grey, Andrew  
S. Guthrie, Emily Ho, Carolina Ilica, L.W. Illsley, Jupy James, Akin Jeje, Lelawattee  
Manoo-Rahming, Sergio Monteiro, James Norcliffe, Jan Pearson (3 times), Jason S  
Polley, Damon Rose, Hayley Ann Solomon (twice), Laura Solomon (three times),  
Shahilla Shariff, James Tam, Dennis Wong.

Their work includes one detective fiction (by Dennis Wong), one work of historical non-fiction (John Asome), thirteen novels (Nicholas Binge, Lawrence Gray, Patricia W. Grey, Peter Humphreys, Sergio Monteiro, Jan Pearson (4 times), Damon Rose, Laura Solomon (twice), James Tam), two young adult novellas (by Victor D. Apps and Laura Solomon), three memoirs (by Rupert Kwan Yun Chan, Wayne Furlong and Emily Ho), ten poetry collections (Sally Dellow, Patricia Ginton-Meicholas, Andrew S. Guthrie, Henrik Hoeg, Carolina Ilica, Akin Jeje, Lelawattee Manoo-Rahming, James Norcliffe, Jason S Polley, Hayley Ann Solomon, Shahilla Shariff), two short story collections (by Lawrence Gray and Hayley Ann Solomon), a young adult epic (by L.W. Illsley), and an illustrated book for very young children (by Jupy James).

The ratio of all published entries (Winners of the Proverse Prize together with Winners of Supplementary Prizes -- 51 in all) which have been in prose (35.5), versus those which have been works of poetry (15.5) (one is mixed genre, prose and poetry), is approx 2:1.

Most of the published entries have been addressed to adult readers, but four are books for children or young adults.

Most of the entries published, including Proverse Prize winners and Supplementary Prize winners have obtained very favourable advance notices (which we usually include within the text of the published works) as well as post-publication notices in the media and/or online. Most recently, Jan Pearson's *Blue Dragon Spring*, Jack Mayer's *Poems from the Wilderness* and J.P. Linstroth's *Epochal Reckonings* have received favourable advance reviews. Some months ago, Nicholas Binge's *Professor Everywhere* received many favourable post-publication comments and received an early review in the *Sunday Post*. Very recently (December 2020), John Asome's *Coolie Ships of the Chinese Diaspora*, was well reviewed in the *Post Magazine*.

One, Peter Gregoire's *Article 109*, became a Hong Kong best seller. Another, a biography of Sir George Macartney, "The Diplomat of Kashgar: A Very Special Agent", sells steadily, partly because of the subject-matter, but particularly because of the well-accepted speaking engagements of the author, James McCarthy, who is active in seeking these opportunities.

#### WHO HAVE THE ENTRANTS BEEN?

The youngest at the time they signed the entry form has been 24 and the oldest, 91.

Over time and on average, as shown above, about half have been women and about half have been men; but in individual years there has sometimes been a considerable imbalance between the genders.

Entrants up to now have described themselves as: poets, writers, artists and musicians, businessmen, professionals (such as accountants, chiropractors, economists, engineers, librarians, a clinic nurse, medical doctors, ministers of religion, a real estate developer), teachers (including school-teachers, tutors and university professors, a yoga-teacher, a life-coach and a photographer), students (including undergraduate and Phd students), editors, translators and researchers, journalists, screenwriters, and TV media writers, divers, housewives, military analysts, retired people (including pathologists, professors, botanists, geologists, nature conservationists, registered nurses, solicitors, sea-farers), a dog-walker and a Mrs Hong Kong World.

Some entrants have previously been published, others not. Some have won writing prizes before, some have not. For some, this is the first book they have ever completed and/or the first prize for which they have ever entered.

The seventeen as of December 2020 now-published Proverse Prize winning entries from 2009-2019 inclusive include works by those born in the Peoples' Republic of China, England, Germany, Hong Kong, Malaysia, New Zealand, Scotland, South Africa, the United Arab Emirates and the USA.

For seven of these fourteen writers, English is not their mother-tongue.

As for those who have won supplementary prizes, they include those born in Australia, the Bahamas, Canada, Hong Kong, Kenya, New Zealand, Romania, Singapore, South Africa, the Bahamas, the United Kingdom, Trinidad and Tobago, the USA.

#### TRANSLATIONS INTO ENGLISH

The point is emphasised that, although entries should be SUBMITTED IN ENGLISH, translations into English have always been welcome. Up to 2015 inclusive, only translations into

English of work not yet published in any language were eligible. From 2016 onwards, unpublished **first** translations into English of works already published in their original language have also been eligible to enter.

#### PRACTICAL DETAILS

The practical details for the receipt of Entry forms and fees as well as entered work are subject to ongoing revision in the light of experience. Depending on the time of year, the full details & entry form for the current or previous year's competition are always on the website: [www.proversepublishing.com](http://www.proversepublishing.com). Most recently, the entry period has runs from 7 May until 30 June. Information and entry via the Proverse submissions manager is available from 7 May annually: <<https://proversehongkong.submittable.com/submit>>.

Those considering entering are advised to check the Proverse website [www.proversepublishing.com](http://www.proversepublishing.com) from time to time, or request a subscription to the free Proverse E-Newsletter, published every 4-6 weeks, by emailing the following address: <[info@proversepublishing.com](mailto:info@proversepublishing.com)>. They are also invited to send the information on to any they know who may be interested.

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#### STANDARD OF ENTRIES

We have always been delighted by the work that has been submitted. Its excellence is reaffirmed by the fact that, over time, about seven of those recognised by this competition have received competitive HKADC grants in support of publication. One work by a writer who sadly died before she knew that she had won the prize, won her a posthumous Phd in creative writing from an American University

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**WINNERS OF THE PROVERSE PRIZE  
(Founded 2008)**

*A maximum of two entrants may be awarded the title of “Winner” and share the cash prize.*

1. Rebecca Tomasis, for her novel, “Mishpacha – Family”. (pub. 2010) ISBN: 978-988-19320-1-3
2. Laura Solomon, for her young adult novella, “Instant Messages”. (pub. 2010) ISBN: 978-988-19320-2-0
3. Gillian Jones, for her novel, “A Misted Mirror”. (pub. 2011) ISBN: 978-988-19932-3-6
4. David Diskin, for his novel, “The Village in the Mountains”. (pub. 2012) ISBN: 978-988-19935-9-5
5. Peter Gregoire, for his novel, “Article 109”. (pub. 2012) ISBN: 978-988-8167-33-3
6. Sophronia Liu, for her collection of family sketches, “A Shimmering Sea”. (pub. 2013) ISBN: 978-988-8227-02-0
7. Birgit Linder, for her illustrated poetry collection, “Shadows in Deferment”. (pub. 2013) ISBN: 978-988-8227-17-4.
8. James McCarthy, for his biography, “The Diplomat of Kashgar”. (pub. 2014) ISBN: 978-988-8227-62-4
9. Philip Chatting, for “The Snow Bridge and Other Stories”. (pub. 2015) ISBN: 978-988-8227-82-2
10. Celia Claase, for her combined essay and poetry collection, “The Layers Between”. (pub. 2015) ISBN: 978-988-8228-15-7
11. Lawrence Gray, for his novel, “Adam’s Franchise”. (pub. 2016) ISBN: 978-988-8228-51-5
12. Gustav Preller, for his novel, “Curveball: Life never comes at you straight”. (pub. 2016) ISBN: 978-988-8228-49-2
13. Ivy Ngeow, for her novel, “Cry of the Flying Rhino”. (pub. 2016) ISBN: 978-988-8228-97-3
14. Feng Chi-shun, for his novel, “Three Wishes in Bardo”. (pub. 2018) ) 978-988-8491-41-4
15. D.J. Hamilton, for “The Hummingbird Sometimes Flies Backward” (poetry collection) (pub. 2019) ISBN: 978-988-8491-79-7
16. J.P. Linstroth, “Epochal Reckonings” (pub. 2020) ISBN: 978-988-8491-94-0
17. Jack Mayer, “Poems from the Wilderness” (pub. 2020) ISBN: 978-988-8491-87-2

**WINNERS OF SUPPLEMENTARY PRIZES**

1. Akin Jeje, for “Smoked Pearl: Poems of Hong Kong and Beyond” (pub. 2010)
2. Jason S Polley, for his poetry collection, “refrain” (pub. 2010)
3. Rupert Kwan Yun Chan, for his autobiography, “Chocolate’s Brown Study in the Bag” (pub. 2011)
4. Emily Ho, for her “Memoirs of an Ice-Cream Lady” (pub. 2011)
5. Lelawattee Manoo-Rahming, for “Immortelle and Bhandaraa Poems” (pub. 2011)
6. L.W. Illsley, for his young adult epic poem, “Astra and Sebastian” (pub. 2011)
7. Sally Dellow, for her poetry collection, “Wonder, Lust & Itchy Feet” (pub. 2011)
8. Laura Solomon, for her novel, “Hilary and David” (pub. 2011)
9. Jason S Polley, for “cemetery miss you” (pub. 2011)
10. Patricia W. Grey, for her novel, “Death has a Thousand Doors” (pub. 2011)
11. Dennis Wong, for his novel, “Revenge From Beyond” (pub. 2011)
12. Victor E. Apps, for his young adult novella, “The Perilous Passage of Princess Petunia Peasant” (pub. 2012)
13. Shahilla Shariff, for her poetry collection, “Life-Lines” (pub. 2012)
14. James Norcliffe, for his poetry collection, “Shadow Play” (pub. 2012)
15. Patricia Ginton-Meicholas, for her poetry collection, “Chasing Light” (pub. 2013)
16. James Tam, for his novel, “Man’s Last Song” (pub. 2013)
17. Lawrence Gray, for his collection of short stories, “Odds and Sods” (pub. 2013)
18. Laura Solomon, for her young adult novella, “University Days” (pub. 2014)
19. Jupy James, for her picture book, “Hazel Brown: A Very Special Vet” (pub. 2014)
20. Jan Pearson, for her novel, “Red Bird Summer” (pub. 2014)
21. Andrew Guthrie, for his poetry collection, “Alphabet” (pub. 2015)
22. Jan Pearson, for her novel, “Tiger Autumn” (pub. 2015)
23. Henrik Hoeg, for his poetry collection, “Irreverent Poems for Pretentious People” (pub. 2016)
24. Jan Pearson, for her novel, “Black Tortoise Winter” (pub 2016)
25. Hayley Ann Solomon, for her poetry collection, “Celestial Promise” (2017)
26. Damon Rose, for his novel, “The Handover Murders” (2018)
27. Hayley Ann Solomon, for, “Under the shade of the Feijoa Trees and other stories” (pub. 2018)
28. Wayne Furlong, for his memoirs, “Buddha is a Punk Skater” (pub. 2018)
29. Sergio Monteiro, for his novel, “Enoch’s Muse” (pub. 2018)

30. Carolina Ilica, for her poetry collection, “Violet” (translation from Romanian) (pub. 2019)
31. Peter Humphreys, for his novel, “Hong Kong Rocks” (pub. 2019)
32. Nicolas Binge, for his novel, “Professor Everywhere” (pub. 2020)
33. Jan Pearson, for her novel, “Blue Dragon Spring” (pub. 2020)
34. John Asome, for “Coolie Ships of the Chinese Diaspora (1846-1874)” (pub. 2020)

**FINALIST PUBLISHED**

Sheng-Wei Wang, for her alternative history, “The Last Journey of the San Bao Eunuch, Admiral Zheng He” (pub. 2019)