

# BETTY TRASK PRIZE AND AWARD WINNERS 2016

EMBARGOED UNTIL 8pm 21 JUNE 2016



The winner of the £10,000 Betty Trask Prize is **ALEX CHRISTOFI** for **GLASS** (Serpent's Tail).

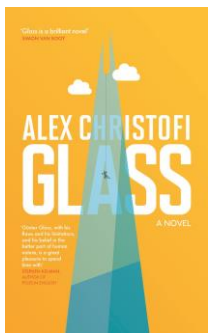
The Betty Trask Award winners are **IRENOSEN OKOJIE** for **BUTTERFLY FISH** (Jacaranda Books Art Music), **NATASHA PULLEY** for **THE WATCHMAKER OF FILIGREE STREET** (Bloomsbury Circus) and **LUCY WOOD** for **WEATHERING** (Bloomsbury), winning £5,000 each.

The Betty Trask Prize and Awards are given to authors under the age of 35 for a first novel of outstanding literary merit.

The Betty Trask Prizes and Awards were presented by John Agard at the Society of Author's Authors' Awards, held at the Army & Navy Club on 21 June.

The judges this year were **Simon Brett**, **Joanne Harris**, and **Michèle Roberts**.

## PRIZE WINNER



**ALEX CHRISTOFI** **GLASS** (Serpent's Tail)

*Pitch-perfect writing; well-drawn and believable characters; social satire with an impressive depth of insight; the narrative skates the narrow path between light and shade, laughter and tears with confidence and authority.* Joanne Harris

**Alex Christofi** was born in Dorset. He studied English at Oxford University and now lives in London working as an editor and writer. His work includes several short theatre projects with the Old Vic, poems and reviews. His 2011 novella *The Impossibility of Crows* was longlisted for the Paris Literary Prize and *Glass* appeared on the 2015 Desmond Elliott Prize longlist. He is currently working on his second novel.

## AWARD WINNERS

**IRENOSEN OKOJIE** **BUTTERFLY FISH** (Jacaranda)

*A stunningly well-written book, juggling different timescales with great skill. Benin itself is vividly imagined in a historical narrative that runs in parallel with the contemporary London one. A wonderful novel.* Simon Brett

**Irenosen Okojie** is a writer, curator and Arts Project Manager who has worked with the RSC and the Southbank Centre. Her writing has appeared in the *Guardian* and her short stories have been published internationally. She was the Prize Advocate for the 2014 SI Leeds Literary Prize.

**NATASHA PULLEY** **THE WATCHMAKER OF FILIGREE STREET** (Bloomsbury Circus)

*A charming, quirky, clever tale, filled with intricate detail, and a plot that feels as deftly-crafted as a precision timepiece.* Joanne Harris

**Natasha Pulley** studied English at Oxford University and Creative Writing at UEA. Having recently returned from Tokyo, she currently lives in Ely. She has previously worked at Waterstones and Cambridge University Press. Her first novel has been featured as a Guardian summer read and a Foyles book of the month.

**LUCY WOOD** **WEATHERING** (Bloomsbury)

*An emotionally mature consideration of generational love, loss and change.* Michèle Roberts

**Lucy Wood** is the author of short story collection *Diving Belles* (Bloomsbury) for which she was a runner-up in the BBC National Short Story Award and also the recipient of a Somerset Maugham Award. She studied creative writing at Exeter University and lives in Devon.

## ABOUT THE PRIZE & AWARDS

Betty Trask left a bequest to the Society of Authors in 1983 to celebrate first novels by young authors (under 35) writing in a traditional or a romantic and non-experimental style.

For further information please contact Paula Johnson on [PJohnson@societyofauthors.org](mailto:PJohnson@societyofauthors.org) / 020 7373 6642. For previous winners please see [www.societyofauthors.org/betty-trask-past-winners](http://www.societyofauthors.org/betty-trask-past-winners)