

STRICTLY EMBARGOED UNTIL 21 NOVEMBER 2014

## STUART PROFFITT IS AWARDED THE LONDON LIBRARY LIFE IN LITERATURE AWARD 2014

SPONSORED BY CHRISTIE'S

The 2014 London Library Life in Literature Award, sponsored by Christie's, has been awarded to Stuart Proffitt, Publishing Director at Penguin Press, in recognition of his extraordinary contribution in the field of publishing.

Launched in 2011, The London Library Life in Literature Award recognizes those who have made an exceptional contribution to literary life and the enjoyment of books. The award builds on a previous version of this prize that was created by the Heywood Hill bookshop and ran from 1995 to 2004. Recipients may be active as writers, editors, agents, publishers or other champions of literature, reading and writing. Previous recipients of the award include Sir John Richardson, Philip Mansel and Patrick Leigh Fermor. The winner is awarded a prize of £10,000.

The award recipient is selected by a panel of experts from the literary world, chosen by The London Library. The choice of winner is ratified by Sir Tom Stoppard, President of The London Library. This year's judging panel was chaired by Adam Freudenheim, Publisher and Managing Director of Pushkin Press, and comprised Artemis Cooper, Philip Hensher, Fiammetta Rocco and Stephen P. Murphy, CEO of Christie's. Additional contributions were made by Hermione Lee.

Stuart Proffitt, 52, began his publishing career when he joined Collins in 1983 as junior assistant to the Publisher of the Trade Division. By 1992 he had himself become Publisher at what had by then developed into HarperCollins. He left HarperCollins in 1998 and became Publishing Director of Penguin Press, a position he has held ever since. Amongst the long list of authors with whom he has worked are Anne Applebaum, Alistair Cooke, Penelope Fitzgerald, Amanda Foreman, John Eliot Gardiner, David Gilmour, Eric Hobsbawm, Alan Judd, Henry Kissinger, Frank Kermode, Robin Lane Fox, Doris Lessing, Diarmaid MacCulloch, Neil MacGregor, Charles Moore, Patrick O'Brian, Chris Patten, Andrew Roberts, Simon Schama, Amartya Sen, and Margaret Thatcher.

To celebrate and reward the best of non-fiction writing published in the UK, with a group of others he founded the Samuel Johnson Prize for Non-fiction, awarded for the first time in 1999. Now in its 16<sup>th</sup> year, it is generally regarded as the non-fiction equivalent of the Man Booker for Fiction.

Stuart Proffitt, learning of the award, commented "I accompanied the first two winners of this Prize, Patrick O'Brian and Penelope Fitzgerald, when it was awarded to them in 1995 and 1996; I joined The London Library 30 years ago, soon after I left university; the first play I ever saw in London was Tom Stoppard's *Jumpers*. So to receive this Prize, in the Library, from Tom's hand and by the generosity of Christie's, is as moving for me as it is unexpected. I greatly admire the two publishers to whom it has previously been awarded, Richard Ollard and John Nicoll, and am incredulous to find myself in their company."

Adam Freudenheim, Publisher of Pushkin Press and Chair of the Life in Literature Judges for 2014 said: 'All the judges agreed that Stuart Proffitt is without a doubt *the* preeminent editor of non-fiction working in the UK today and has been for the last 20 years or more, so it's long overdue that Stuart's role is publicly recognised with The London Library Life in Literature Award. Editors usually – and appropriately – remain behind the scenes, but few have been as important to the nation's cultural life

and dialogue over such a long period as Stuart has, as his many authors can well attest. We can't think of a more worthy recipient for this award and hope it draws some attention both to Stuart's own role as well as to The London Library, an institution of which Stuart has long been a member and supporter.'

Inez T.P.A. Lynn, Librarian at The London Library said: "We are delighted that Stuart Proffitt has received the Life in Literature Award this year. His dedication not just to the craft of writing but to the promotion of writing, through his role in helping to create the Samuel Johnson Prize, makes his name an entirely appropriate one to join the list of other illustrious winners of The London Library Life in Literature Award. By highlighting the work of an Editor, the Judges are also underlining the important role that others can play in helping to turn the thoughts of writers into books that can then be enjoyed by thousands, mirroring the role that we believe The London Library plays in inspiring or informing those thoughts in the first place."

Steven Murphy, Chief Executive Officer of Christie's, said "I'm delighted that Christie's has sponsored The London Library Life in Literature Award. Stuart Proffitt has earned the admiration of the community of letters and is a wonderful recipient of this great institution's award."

The 2014 London Library Life in Literature Award will be presented to Stuart Proffitt on 20 November at a dinner in the Reading Room of The London Library, hosted by its President Sir Tom Stoppard and attended by guests from the literary and cultural sector.

ENDS

**Editor notes:**

**About The London Library Life in Literature Award**

The London Library Life in Literature Award, sponsored by Christie's, recognises those who have made an exceptional contribution to literature and the enjoyment of reading. Previous awardees include: Josephine Hart (posthumously) and Sir Patrick Leigh Fermor (2011), Philip Mansel (2012), and Sir John Richardson (2013). The winner of the award receives a cheque for £10,000 at The London Library's Annual Literary Dinner.

**About The London Library**

The London Library is based in St James's Square in Piccadilly and was founded in 1841 by Thomas Carlyle. It houses a unique humanities-based collection of over one million books ranging from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Members can freely browse and borrow books spanning 2,000 subjects and in over 50 languages on 15 miles of open access shelves. The Library has 7,000 members. Past and present members include Charles Darwin, George Eliot, Virginia Woolf, T.S. Eliot, Bruce Chatwin, Sebastian Faulks, Jeremy Paxman, Antonia Fraser and current president Sir Tom Stoppard. Membership of The London Library is open to all. Annual membership is £475 a year, with a range of institutional and discounted memberships available. The London Library is a registered charity and is entirely self-funded, raising income through membership fees, donations, bequests and fundraising initiatives. [www.londonlibrary.co.uk](http://www.londonlibrary.co.uk)

**About Christie's**

Christie's, the world's leading art business was founded in 1766 by James Christie. Christie's offers around 450 auctions annually in over 80 categories, including all areas of fine and decorative arts, jewellery, photographs, collectibles, wine, and more. It had global auction and private sales in the first half of 2014 that totalled £2.69/\$4.47 billion, making it the highest half year total in Christie's history. Christie's has a global presence with 53 offices in 32 countries and 12 salerooms around the world. More recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in growth markets such as Russia, China, India and the United Arab Emirates, with successful sales and exhibitions in Beijing, Mumbai and Dubai. [www.christies.com](http://www.christies.com)

**Contact**

For general media enquiries about the Award or The London Library:

**Philip Spedding**

Director of Development

The London Library

[Philip.spedding@londonlibrary.co.uk](mailto:Philip.spedding@londonlibrary.co.uk)

**Tel:** 020 7766 4716

**Mobile:** 07970 224472

For general media enquiries about Christie's and their sponsorship of the Award:

**Paddy Feeny**

Head of Communications, UK, EMEA, Russia, India

Christie's

[pfeeny@christies.com](mailto:pfeeny@christies.com)

**Tel:** +44 207 389 2965

**Mobile:** +44 7824 103333