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Judges announced for 2024 Commonwealth Short Story Prize

- **Award-winning Ugandan-British writer Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi to chair high-profile international judging panel**

Prize opens for submissions until 1 November 2023

- **Entrants can submit stories in 13 languages for the chance to win international recognition and prize money**

London, UK. Ugandan-British novelist and short story writer Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi will chair an international panel of judges for the 2024 Commonwealth Short Story Prize, the world's most global literary prize. Jennifer was the overall prize winner in 2014, and previous winners include Ingrid Persaud, Kevin Jared Hosein, Kanya D'Almeida, Rémy Ngamije, and Mary Rokonadravu.

Jennifer's fellow judges, drawn from the five regions of the Commonwealth, are South African writer **Keletso Mopai**, (Africa), Singaporean short story writer, screenwriter and novelist **O Thiam Chin**, (Asia), Canadian writer and editor **Shashi Bhat** (Canada/Europe), poet and author **Richard Georges** from the British Virgin Islands (Caribbean) and award-winning Australian Bundjalung writer **Melissa Lucashenko** (Pacific).

Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi said, 'The Commonwealth Short Story Prize brings much of the writing world together to celebrate the short story form. As chair, I can't wait to meet the talent the 2024 prize will unearth. I anticipate a diversity of worlds, a vast range of voices, some crazy tales, and the agony of making a choice. Bring it on.'

Prize now open for entries

The Commonwealth Short Story Prize is accepting entries until 1 November 2023. The competition is administered by the Commonwealth Foundation. It is open to citizens of all Commonwealth countries aged 18 and over and is free to enter. Now in its thirteenth year, the prize is awarded for the best piece of unpublished short fiction (2,000–5,000 words). The five regional winners receive £2,500 and the overall winner receives £5,000.

In addition to English, submissions are accepted in Bengali, Chinese, Creole, French, Greek, Malay, Maltese, Portuguese, Samoan, Swahili, Tamil, and Turkish. Stories that have been translated into English from any language are also accepted and the translator of any story that wins (regional or overall) also receives prize money.

The five regional winning stories are published online by the literary magazine *Granta* and in a special print collection from Paper + Ink. The shortlisted stories are published in the Foundation's online literary magazine *adda*. The prize has a growing reputation for discovering and elevating new talent and offers equal opportunity to unpublished writers to give them recognition alongside more established practitioners. Past winners of the prize have gone on to win other literary competitions as well as secure agents and book deals.

Last year's overall winner, Jamaican Kwame McPherson, had this to say to potential entrants: 'To be recognised for your writing is phenomenal, it is at once exciting and heart stopping. One of the major lessons I have learned as a writer is consistency and perseverance. Thus, never take no for an answer nor be discouraged if what you have written seemingly goes nowhere because, eventually, your writing and you *will* be recognised. You are a winner because you are taking part and you will grow from the experience. The prize is an immense opportunity, so enjoy it and feel empowered and motivated by the journey.'

Those interested in applying can find out more about eligibility, rules, and the submission process at: <https://commonwealthfoundation.com/short-story-prize>

- ENDS -

Notes for editors

About the Commonwealth Foundation | The Commonwealth Foundation is an intergovernmental organisation established by Heads of Government in support of the belief that the Commonwealth is as much an association of peoples as it is of governments. It is the Commonwealth agency for civil society; an organisation dedicated to strengthening people's participation in all aspects of public dialogue, so they can act together and learn from each other to build free, open, and democratic societies. commonwealthfoundation.com

About the Judges:

Judges' photographs and biographies can be found here:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/983zvfho6bjzuzu/AADD43_LFjkKe3M3XJ9K6W9ga?dl=0

Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi, Chair

Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi wrote the *The First Woman* (2020), which in 2021 won the Jhalak Prize, was shortlisted for The Diverse Book Award, the Encore Prize and the James Tait Black Prize, and longlisted for The Aspen Words Literary Prize. Her first novel, *Kintu*, won the Kwani? Manuscript Project in 2013, the Prix Transfuge du meilleur premier roman francais in 2019 and, in the same year, she was shortlisted for Edward Stanford Awards and longlisted for the Prix Médicis. Her collection of short stories, *Manchester Happened*, was shortlisted for The Big Book prize: Harper's Bazaar in 2019 and longlisted for the Edge Hill Prize. Jennifer was the recipient of the prestigious Windham-Campbell Prize in 2018. She was also the overall winner of the Commonwealth Short Story Prize in 2014. She was part of the DAAD Artist-in-Berlin programme in 2022 and currently she is Artist in Residence at STIAS Stellenbosch. She has a PhD from Lancaster University and has taught in several universities in the United Kingdom.

Keletso Mopai, Judge, Africa Region

Keletso Mopai is a South African writer and geologist. Her award-nominated and acclaimed debut collection of short stories *If You Keep Digging*, a social commentary on Post-Apartheid South Africa, was published in 2019 by Blackbird Books. Her work has been published in several journals internationally including *Internazionale*, *The Johannesburg Review of Books*, *Catapult*, *Portside Review*, *Imbiza Journal*, *Kaleidoscope Magazine*, *Lolwe*, and anthologies such as *Joburg Noir*. She returned to university in 2022 to pursue an MA in creative writing at The University of Cape Town where she wrote a novel-in-stories about a farm murder set in her hometown, *Tzaneen*.

O Thiam Chin, Judge, Asia Region

O Thiam Chin is a short story writer, screenwriter, and novelist from Singapore. His work has been published in *Granta*, *The Cincinnati Review*, *Mānoa*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, *World Literature Today*, *The International Literary Quarterly*, *Asia Literary Review*, *Kyoto Journal*, *The Jakarta Post* and *Quarterly Literary Review Singapore*. Thrice longlisted for the Frank O' Connor International Short Story Award, he is the author of six story-collections, including *Love, Or Something Like Love*, which was shortlisted for the 2014 Singapore Literature Prize. His debut novel, *Now That It's Over*, won the inaugural Epigram Books Fiction Prize in 2015 and the Best Fiction title at the 2017 Singapore Book Awards. His second novel, *Fox Fire Girl*, is currently being adapted into a feature film. He was an honorary fellow of the Iowa International Writing Program in 2010, and a recipient of the Singapore National Arts Council's Young Artist Award in 2012.

Shashi Bhat, Judge, Canada and Europe Region

Shashi Bhat is the author of the forthcoming story collection *Death by a Thousand Cuts* (McClelland & Stewart/Penguin Random House Canada), and the novels *The Most Precious Substance on Earth* (McClelland & Stewart/Grand Central), a finalist for the 2022 Governor General's Award for fiction, and *The Family Took Shape* (Cormorant), a finalist for the Thomas Raddall Atlantic Fiction Award. Her fiction has won the Writers' Trust/McClelland & Stewart Journey Prize and been shortlisted for a National Magazine Award and the RBC Bronwen Wallace Award, and has appeared in publications across North America, including *The Threepenny Review*, *The Missouri Review*, *The Fiddlehead*, *The Malahat Review*, *Best Canadian Stories*, and *The Journey Prize Stories*. Shashi holds an MFA from Johns Hopkins University and a BA from Cornell University. She lives in New Westminster, BC, where she is the editor-in-chief of *EVENT* magazine and teaches creative writing at Douglas College.

Richard Georges, Judge, Caribbean Region

Richard Georges is a writer of essays, fiction, and three collections of poetry. His most recent book, *Epiphaneia* (2019), won the 2020 OCM Bocas Prize for Caribbean Literature, and his first book, *Make Us All Islands* (2017), was shortlisted for the Forward Prize for Best First Collection. Richard is a founding editor of *Moko* magazine, a Fellow of the Stellenbosch Institute of Advanced Study, and the first Poet Laureate of the British Virgin Islands. He works in higher education and lives on Tortola with his wife and children.

Melissa Lucashenko, Judge, Pacific Region

Melissa Lucashenko is a multi-award winning Bundjalung novelist from Brisbane. She is a Walkley Award winner for her non-fiction writing and a founding member of human rights group Sisters Inside.