



****EMBARGOED UNTIL 09:00 ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 28****

Submissions open for SFF prize for writers of colour

Future Worlds Prize for Fantasy and Science Fiction Writers of Colour is now open for submissions.

The prize, which first ran in 2020 and is founded by bestselling author Ben Aaronovitch, was previously called the Gollancz and Rivers of London BAME SFF Award. As part of the prize's long-term aim of opening science fiction and fantasy publishing to more people, it has been rebranded for its second year and will be working with publishers from across the industry.

The prize is sponsored by Aaronovitch, with additional financial support from *Bridgerton* actor Adjoa Andoh. It is administered by Cityread, a registered literature charity, and project managed by Sarah Shaffi.

Future Worlds Prize for Fantasy and Science Fiction Writers of Colour aims to find new talent writing in the SFF space, from magical realism and space operas to dystopia and more. The winner will receive a prize of £4,000, the runner-up £2,000 and up to six additional shortlisted authors will each receive £800. All shortlisted writers, the runner-up and the winner will also receive mentoring from one of the prize's publishing partners.

The 2020 prize was won by Esmie Jikiemi-Pearson for *The Principle of Moments*, a space-based adventure story. Jikiemi-Pearson has since secured a publishing deal with Gollancz, and her debut novel will be released in 2022.

Future Worlds Prize for Fantasy and Science Fiction Writers of Colour opens for submissions from unpublished writers of colour based in the UK at 09:00 on Wednesday, April 28 2021 and closes at 23:59 GMT on Friday, June 25 2021.

Ben Aaronovitch, founder of the prize and author of the Rivers of London books, said: “It was really great to have been introduced to so many talented people in the initial award; so many brilliant writers of colour, writing such a dazzling variety of incredible stories. My only regret was that we couldn’t have a great big awards ceremony just so I could meet them in person. We’ll have to do something about that.

“I’m extremely excited that this year we’re expanding our reach by working with more UK publishers, agents, bookshops, librarians and anyone else we think can help spread the word and share their expertise with these upcoming writers. I’d always hoped that the award would widen its scope but the speed with which this has happened has been gratifying.

“Last year’s winner, Esmie Jikiemi-Pearson, has got a well-deserved publishing deal, and we are determined to build on that to ensure that the breadth of talent revealed amongst the runners up will make their own impact on the publishing world.

“There’s still a long way to go before UK publishing is the meritocracy it aspires to be but I’m hoping that Future Worlds Prize can be a small step in the right direction.”

Adjoa Andoh said: “As a black actor and award-winning audiobook narrator of sci fi and speculative fiction, it has been my great joy to see more and more authors of colour follow in the mighty footsteps of Octavia Butler, diving into other worlds to reflect on this world, drawing their readers into adventure, danger and mystery to spectacular effect.

“With Future Worlds Prize our hope is to further increase the pool of writers of colour choosing to work in this genre, by encouraging those on the journey to first publication to bring their work to us, to apply for this prize, receive expert support and advice and flourish in their chosen field to the great benefit of all of the readership.”

Sarah Shaffi said: “As a lover of science fiction and fantasy books, I’ve always craved more stories told by a richer variety of voices. I’m excited to see the breadth and depth of work we’ll receive, and I encourage authors of colour writing in this area to not be shy, and to get their novels and short stories in to us.”

The prize is continuing its partnership with Gollancz, and is also this year working with all Hachette’s SFF imprints including Orbit, and Pan Macmillan’s Tor for the first time, with more publishing partners to be announced in due course.

Marcus Gipps, publisher at Gollancz said: “As a founding partner in the inaugural prize, Gollancz was thrilled to be part of such an important and vital initiative. We are excited to work with SFF publishers across the market to continue to break down barriers to access and make this the biggest possible prize with the broadest reach. We look forward to many years of collaboration.”

Anna Jackson, publisher at Orbit, said: “We’re proud to be the UK publisher of some of SFF’s most popular and award-winning writers of colour, but we’re very aware that there’s still a significant need for progress to be made in terms of representation within the genre. That’s why we’re delighted to be able to support this fantastic award which aims to discover and champion more underrepresented voices within SFF.”

Bella Pagan from Tor said: “On behalf of Pan Macmillan and Tor, I am absolutely delighted to be involved in this important and relevant award. I hope this will lead to real opportunities for authors from more diverse backgrounds.”

For submission details and more on the prize, visit <http://www.futureworldsprize.co.uk/>, <https://twitter.com/FutureWorldsPrz>, or <https://www.instagram.com/futureworldsprize/>.

About Ben Aaronovitch

Ben Aaronovitch was a screenwriter for *Doctor Who* and a bookseller at Waterstones. He now writes full time, and every book in his Rivers of London series has been a Sunday Times Top 10 bestseller. He is published in 14 languages and has sold more than 2 million copies around the world. Aaronovitch is also a trustee on the board of Cityread London and is a long-time supporter of Nigeria’s premiere arts and cultural festival, The Aké Festival. He still lives in London, the city he likes to refer to as ‘the capital of the world’.

About Cityread

Cityread is a registered charity that promotes reading for pleasure and supports public libraries. Previous Cityread initiatives include Cityread London, an annual month-long literature festival delivered in partnership with library services in all 32 London boroughs plus Luton, Reading and. Launched in 2012, it ran for eight years and featured books including *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens, *Rivers of London* by Ben Aaronovitch, and *Sofia Khan is Not Obligated* by Ayisha Malik.

Media enquiries: Sarah Shaffi, sarah@futureworldsprize.co.uk