



Press Release

The Baillie Gifford Prize for Non-Fiction comes to the Brooklyn Book Festival

New York [September 5, 2019] – The Baillie Gifford Prize for Non-Fiction will hold its first U.S. event at the Brooklyn Book Festival on Sunday, September 22.

American-Ukrainian author and Harvard Professor, Serhii Plokyh, who won the Prize in the U.K. in 2018 with *Chernobyl: A History of a Nuclear Catastrophe*, along with American author and filmmaker David France, who won the Prize in 2017 with *How to Survive a Plague*, will discuss their award-winning books and the importance of truth with Toby Mundy, director of the Baillie Gifford Prize.

“Winning the Prize brings with it incredible excitement, media coverage and a sudden rise in popularity,” said Serhii Plokyh. “But the most exhilarating part of the win is the possibility to attend book festivals and meet with your readers. Nothing can compare to that!”

The Baillie Gifford Prize is the most influential non-fiction award in the U.K. Worth £50,000 to the winner, it covers all non-fiction across current affairs, history, politics, science, sport, travel, biography, autobiography and the arts. Authors of any nationality are eligible, provided the book is available in English and published in the U.K.

David France commented on the importance of the Prize reaching new audiences: “The Baillie Gifford Prize is not just a great honor but a powerful imprimatur that lifts books into the canon of notable literature. *How to Survive a Plague* is, among other things, a very personal story. The jury recognized that, and the Prize gave the book the promise of a very long life.”

Founded in 1999, the Prize was formerly known as the Samuel Johnson Prize before Baillie Gifford, an independent investment management partnership and leading supporter of literary events, took over as the lead sponsor in 2016.

Mark Urquhart, Partner at Baillie Gifford said: “Partnering with the Prize was a good fit for us because we already had strong ties with the literary world. We believe non-fiction expands our understanding of the world. It develops our abilities to think creatively and challenges our perspectives. Our strong belief in the power of non-fiction is known throughout the U.K. and we are excited to bring our literary journey to the U.S.”

Baillie Gifford generates its own investment research. The firm understands that the best investment research is driven by a thirst to understand the world around us. In this respect, its sponsorship of the Prize helps it learn from the best in non-fiction writing. The skill of non-fiction authors is their aptitude for pulling together a well-researched, coherent argument from a multitude of sources and for seeing things from a fresh perspective.

“Baillie Gifford’s sponsorship of Britain’s pre-eminent non-fiction book prize has transformed the award,” comments Toby Mundy, Prize Director. “First and foremost, it has given us the confidence and long-term security to plan ahead. This in turn has allowed us to increase the prize money to the winning author and pursue creative new ways to expand the award’s footprint in the U.K. and internationally. One of these is to forge a much-expanded presence at literary festivals, of which Baillie Gifford is also Britain’s leading sponsor.”

The Baillie Gifford Prize event at the Brooklyn Book Festival will take place on Sunday, September 22 at 12.00 p.m. in the Moot Courtroom. Entry to the event is free and spaces are by first-come-first-served. Carolyn Greer, Co-Producer at the festival comments that “the Brooklyn Book Festival is honored and delighted, and especially proud that the Prize’s first American event will be held at the Festival and we can play a part in introducing two recipients of this major Prize to our audience.

The winner of the 2019 Prize is announced in November at a ceremony in London, supported by the Blavatnik Family Foundation. The longlist is announced in September and the shortlist in October.

Baillie Gifford does not influence or control the Prize. It is governed by a Board of Directors, chaired by Sir Peter Bazalgette (Chairman of the British free-to-air television channel, ITV) and administered by Four Culture and Prize Director, Toby Mundy. The longlist, shortlist and winner are selected by a judging panel of industry and literary experts.

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For further information please contact:

Malcolm Borthwick, Baillie Gifford: +44 (0)131 275 2788, +44 (0)7734 387 224,

malcolm.borthwick@bailliegifford.com

Prosek Partners: PRO-BG@prosek.com

www.bailliegifford.com

Notes to editors:

- The Baillie Gifford Prize for Non-Fiction, known from 1999 to 2015 as the Samuel Johnson Prize for Non-Fiction, is open to books in the areas of current affairs, history, politics, science, sport, travel, biography, autobiography and the arts. Books published in English by writers of any nationality are eligible for the 2019 Prize, provided they were published in the U.K. between November 1, 2018 and October 31, 2019.
- **Baillie Gifford** employs 1,186 people and has assets under management and advice of \$264 billion as at June 30, 2019. An independent investment partnership founded in 1908, it is headquartered in Edinburgh where most of its staff live and work. As part of its corporate sponsorship program the firm supports a number of initiatives in the arts, academia and local community. In the literary world, Baillie Gifford sponsors a number of literary festivals, including its principal sponsorship of Hay Festival and Cheltenham Literature Festival and its headline sponsorship of Borders Book Festival, Henley Literary Festival and the Edinburgh International Book Festival (with which it has been involved for over 15 years).
- The Prize was first awarded in 1999, with prize value of £30,000. It is now worth £50,000 to the winning author, and £1,000 to each of the shortlisted authors.
- Previous winners are: *Stalingrad* by Antony Beevor (1999), *Berlioz: Servitude and Greatness* by David Cairns (2000), *The Third Reich: A New History* by Michael Burleigh (2001), *Peacemakers: The Paris Peace Conference of 1919* by Margaret Macmillan (2002), *Pushkin: A biography* by T.J. Binyon (2003), *Stasiland* by Anna Funder (2004), *Like a Fiery Elephant* by Jonathan Coe (2005), *1599: A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare* by James Shapiro (2006), *Imperial Life in the Emerald City* by Rajiv Chandrasekaran (2007), *The Suspicions of Mr Whicher* by Kate Summerscale (2008), *Leviathan or The Whale* by Philip Hoare (2009), *Nothing to Envy: Real Lives in North Korea* by Barbara Demick (2010), *Mao’s Great Famine* by Frank Dikötter (2011), *Into the Silence: The Great War, Mallory and the conquest of Everest*

by Wade Davis (2012), *The Pike*, by Lucy Hughes-Hallett (2013), *H is for Hawk* by Helen Macdonald (2014), *Neurotribes: The Legacy of Autism and How to Think Smarter About People Who Think Differently* by Steve Silberman (2015), *East West Street* (2016) by Philippe Sands, *How to Survive A Plague* by David France (2017) and *Chernobyl: History of a Tragedy* by Serhii Plokhly (2018).

- **The Blavatnik Family Foundation** is a private, self-funded charitable foundation, established by Len Blavatnik who is a global philanthropist committed to advancing science, higher education, good government and the arts through meaningful involvement and charitable giving. A dual American and British citizen, he was knighted in 2017 for his service to philanthropy. In 2013, he was appointed Chevalier of the French Legion d'Honneur for his support of education. Over the past decade, the Foundation has contributed more than \$700 million to over 250 charitable institutions worldwide.
- The Baillie Gifford Prize for Non-Fiction is owned by The Samuel Johnson Prize Ltd, a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee. It is governed by a Board of Directors and administered by Four Culture. The Board comprises Sir Peter Bazalgette, Chair (Chairman, ITV) Toby Mundy (Prize Director), Sir Antony Beevor (historian and author), Caroline Daniel (Partner at Brunswick), Peter Florence CBE (Director of the Hay Festivals), Dotti Irving (Chief Executive, Four Culture), Rosamund McCarthy (Partner, Bates, Wells, Braithwaite), Peter Straus CBE (literary agent, Rogers, Coleridge and White), Martin Taylor (Financial Stability Committee, Bank of England) and Robert Yates (Assistant Editor, The Observer).

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One International Finance Centre, 1 Harbour View Street, Central, Hong Kong. Telephone +852 3756 5700.

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