

25 March 2011 *For immediate release*

Kaite O'Reilly wins Ted Hughes Award for New Work in Poetry with *The Persians*



"Poetry crosses time, the old play becomes the new poetry. Here's the truth of language colliding with the clichés of politics and the advertisement of war. This verse play is entertainment, challenge and a lie detector."

– Judges of the Ted Hughes Award

Judges Gillian Clarke, Stephen Raw and Jeanette Winterson have awarded the 2010 Ted Hughes Award for New Work in Poetry to Kaite O'Reilly for her extraordinary retelling of Aeschylus' play, *The Persians*.

Now in its second year, the Ted Hughes Award for New Work in Poetry is awarded annually to recognise excellence in poetry. It is one of the only awards to acknowledge the wide range of work being produced by poets – not just in books, but beyond.

***The Persians* is a beautifully poetic version of Aeschylus' tragic play, retold by Kaite O'Reilly.** Her masterly retelling of this 2500 year old story focuses on how war destroys people's identity. Her use of language is contemporary but never loses any of the historical context.

O'Reilly's work has been performed nationally and internationally. She was recently awarded an Unlimited Commission to develop *The 'd' Monologues* as part of the Cultural Olympiad, celebrations for the London Olympic Games 2012.

The £5,000 prize is donated by Carol Ann Duffy, funded from the annual honorarium the Poet Laureate traditionally receives from HM The Queen.

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For further information

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O'Reilly was presented with her prize of £5,000 by Carol Ann Duffy at an award ceremony at the Savile Club on Thursday 24 March 2011, alongside the winner of the National Poetry Competition.

– ENDS –

For further information about The Ted Hughes Award for New Work in Poetry, please contact Lisa Roberts on 020 7420 9895 or email: marketing@poetrysociety.org.uk

High quality images of Kaite O'Reilly receiving her prize at the award ceremony are available

Notes to Editors:

- **Award-winning playwright Kaite O'Reilly's version of Aeschylus's *The Persians*** was produced by the National Theatre Wales as a site specific performance at Cilieni Village in August 2010. It was directed by Mike Pearson with a stellar Welsh cast that included Sian Thomas, Paul Rhys, Richard Harrington, Richard Lynch, Richard Huw Morgan, John Rowley, Gerald Tyler and Rhys Rusbatch.

• Ted Hughes Award judges



Gillian Clarke was recently awarded the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry for her latest collection, *A Recipe for Water* (Carcanet), and in recognition of her distinguished contribution to poetry. She has been the National Poet for Wales since 2008, she is President of Ty Newydd and tutor of the M.Phil in Creative Writing at the University of Glamorgan. Other recent publications include her prose collection, *At the Source*.



Stephen Raw is a self-employed artist and designer. He also produces 'bespoke' lettering for publishers, architects and design groups throughout Europe. A recent commission was to design the Memorial to the Royal Ballet Founders now set in the floor of Westminster Abbey close by Poet's Corner. He has exhibited widely.



Jeanette Winterson OBE is the author of nine novels for adults, including *Oranges are Not the Only Fruit*, *The PowerBook*, *Sexing the Cherry*, *Lighthousekeeping*, and *The Stone Gods*. Her books for children include *Tanglewreck* and *The Battle of the Sun*. She is also a regular contributor to *The Times*. Her work is published worldwide.

• Ted Hughes Award Shortlist

Martin Figura <i>Whistle</i>	Kaite O'Reilly <i>The Persians</i>	Christopher Reid <i>Song of Lunch</i>	David Swann <i>The Privilege of Rain</i>	Katharine Towers <i>The Floating Man</i>
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- **The Poetry Society** was founded in 1909 to promote a "more general recognition and appreciation of poetry". Since then, it has grown into one of Britain's most dynamic arts organisations, representing British poetry both nationally and internationally. Today it has nearly 4,000 members worldwide and publishes the leading poetry magazine, *Poetry Review*. With innovative education and commissioning programmes and a packed calendar of performances, readings and competitions, the Poetry Society champions poetry for all ages.

- **Poetry Society awards and competitions:** In addition to the Ted Hughes Award for New Work in Poetry, the Poetry Society runs the National Poetry Competition, one of the world's longest-running and most prestigious prizes for an individual poem. Amongst its many awards the Poetry Society also organises the Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award for poets aged 11-17, the performance poetry championship, SLAMBassadors UK and the Corneliu M Popescu Prize, for poetry translated from a European language into English.

- **Recommendations for the Ted Hughes Award for New Work in Poetry:** Members of the Poetry Society and Poetry Book Society were invited to recommend a living UK poet, working in any form, who has made the most exciting contribution to poetry in 2010. Recommendations were then forwarded to the judges.

- The winner of the inaugural Ted Hughes Award 2009 was Alice Oswald for her collection *Weeds and Wild Flowers*.

- The logo for the Ted Hughes Award was designed by David Carroll of David Carroll & Co (www.davidcarrollandco.com) and uses the iconic image of Crow by Leonard Baskin. The image was used originally on the cover of *Crow: From the Life and Songs of the Crow* (Faber & Faber, 1970) and is reproduced by kind permission of Lisa Baskin and the Estate of Leonard Baskin, © Estate of Leonard Baskin.

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