



# The Arts Foundation Futures Awards

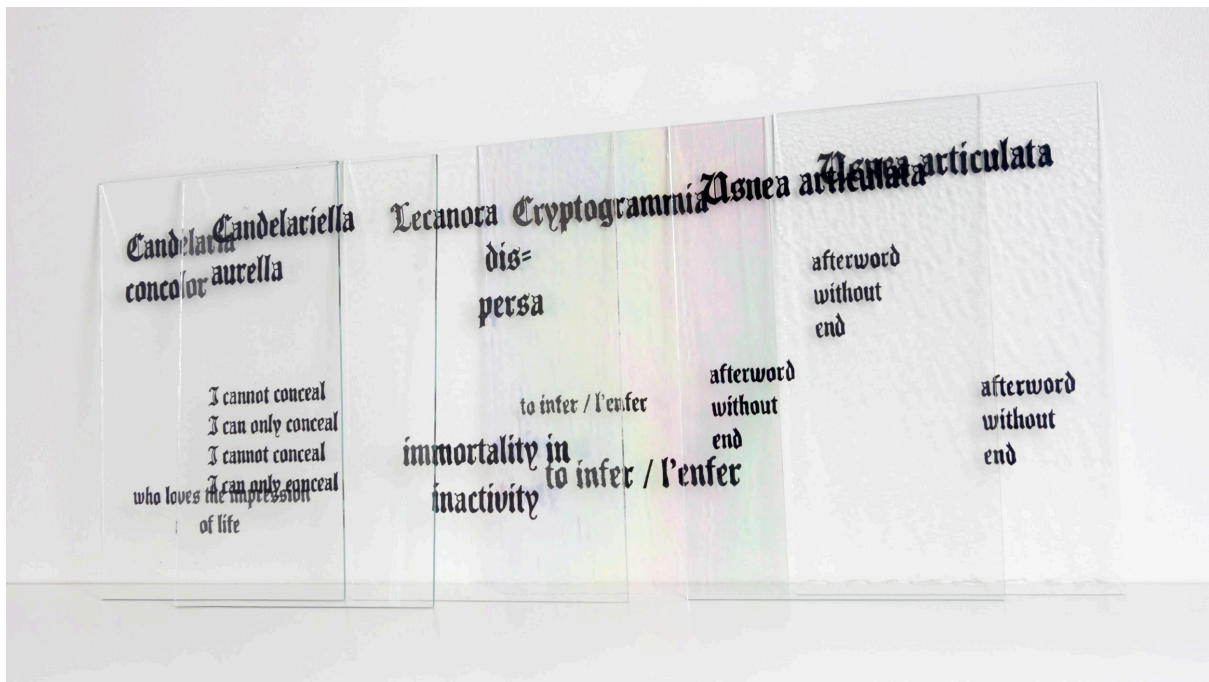
## PRESS RELEASE

7 January 2026

### The Arts Foundation Futures Awards 2026 for Literature Shortlist Artists Announced

The Arts Foundation announces the four Shortlisted Artists of the Arts Foundation Futures Awards 2026 for Literature, one of the UK's leading fellowships for artists.

Fahad Al-Amoudi, Yanita Georgieva, Lucy Mercer, and Camille Ralphs have been shortlisted for the prestigious £20,000 Arts Foundation Futures Award 2026 for Literature.



Lucy Mercer, Glass Poems, 2025

The Literature Award supports inventive independent writers who are pushing the boundaries of the medium of poetry.

The independent Jury members are Intiaz Dharker, Poet; Ted Hodgkinson, Head of Literature and Spoken Word, Southbank Centre; and Raymond Antrobus, Poet & Author, who said:

*“Together, all the shortlisted artists of the Arts Foundation Futures Awards for Literature 2026 represent a powerful and diverse range of contemporary poetic voices across the UK. Fahad Al-Amoudi’s body of work has such a unique and deep understanding of story and storytelling. Yanita Georgieva’s poetry reflects a sharp intelligence and a gift for translation, alongside journalistic insight. Lucy Mercer’s writing is richly researched and historically resonant, and Camille Ralphs has a striking sense of precision, lyrical craft and intellectual depth to her work.”*

Jury member Imtiaz Dharker added:

*“It’s been such a joy to join the jury of the Arts Foundation Futures Awards for Literature 2026. All the shortlisted poets have such strong and distinctive voices that captured our attention. Their collective work is beautifully diverse and feels fully realised and powerfully directed. As a jury, we are thrilled to celebrate such high-quality thinking and creativity across the UK.”*

Fahad Al-Amoudi

Fahad Al-Amoudi is a writer and editor. His work is published in POETRY, The Poetry Review, Wasafiri, The London Magazine, and Mizna. He is the winner of the White Review Poet’s Prize 2022 and has been shortlisted for the Brunel International African Poets Prize 2022. Fahad is an alumnus of the Obsidian Foundation and a graduate of the Writing Squad. His debut pamphlet, *when the flies come* (ignitionpress, 2023), was selected as a Poetry Book Society Winter Choice 2023 and was shortlisted for the Michael Marks Award.

Yanita Georgieva

Yanita Georgieva is a Bulgarian poet, facilitator, and journalist. She was raised in Lebanon and now lives in London. Her debut pamphlet, *Small Undetectable Thefts*, was published by Broken Sleep Books and received the 2024 Eric Gregory Award. She is the recipient of an Out-Spoken Prize and has been shortlisted for awards including the Ivan Juritz Prize, the Aesthetica Creative Writing Award, the Free Verse Prize, and the Cúirt New Writing Prize. Yanita’s practice spans page and video poetry, collaborative performance, and erasure poetry. Her work has appeared in international literary magazines including The London Magazine, Poetry London, Poetry Wales, and Waxwing. She is an alumna of the Southbank New Poets Collective and the London Library Emerging Writers Programme, and she leads the international poetry collective *Dreamboat*.

Lucy Mercer

Lucy Mercer is a poet and writer based in London. Her debut poetry collection, *Emblem* (Prototype, 2022), was a Poetry Book Society Choice and a book of the year in Frieze, The New Statesman and The White Review. She is currently writing *Afterlife*, a nonfiction essay on wax and mortality, which was awarded the 2024 Fitzcarraldo Editions/Mahler & LeWitt Studios Essay Prize and is forthcoming with Fitzcarraldo Editions. Lucy’s work often explores

the relation of text to image through creative practice, research and curation. She makes poems as visual works, most recently exhibited at the group show *The Hands That Shut The Sun* at Hollybush Gardens. She is co-curating a forthcoming exhibition based on *Afterlife* with curator and writer Lou Stoppard. She is co-editor of *Too Little / Too Hard*, a collection of essays from some of the most exciting contemporary writers about literature, work, time and value, which will be published by Peninsula Press in June 2026. The collection draws on the publication project of the same name, which was awarded a Literature Matters Award by the Royal Society of Literature.

### Camille Ralphs

Camille Ralphs is a poet, critic and editor. Her first collection of poems, *After You Were, I Am*, was published by Faber in the UK (2024) and McSweeney's in the US (2025), where she recently completed a three-week reading tour. The UK edition was a Book of the Year in the Guardian and the Telegraph and on BBC Radio 4's Poetry Extra, and was positively received by the London Review of Books, The Poetry Review and the Irish Times, among other magazines and periodicals. The US edition was included in Artforum's Best Books of 2025 and has been longlisted for the National Book Critics Circle 2025 Poetry Award. She is working on a spoken word album; in early 2026, she will contribute to a radio show about John Dee and read at *Poetry and the British Museum – A New Era*, for which she has been commissioned to write a new poem. Camille is Poetry Editor at the Times Literary Supplement, where she is currently preparing an anthology of essays for TLS Books/HarperCollins, and she teaches at the University of Oxford.

The Arts Foundation has a long history of supporting literature and poetry practice, and Mary Jane Edwards, Director of The Arts Foundation, says:

*“The four shortlisted poets demonstrate exceptional promise and originality at a pivotal early stage in their careers. Each brings a distinctive voice and a rigorous approach to language, form, and meaning, contributing to a vibrant and evolving landscape of contemporary poetry. By recognising and supporting these poets now, we seek to provide space for creative risk-taking and sustained development, affirming our commitment to nurturing outstanding literary talent and the vital role poetry plays in shaping cultural conversation.”*

Jury Member Ted Hodgkinson added:

*“It has been a real pleasure to be part of the Arts Foundation Futures Awards with my fellow jurors. Fahad Al-Amoudi’s work has an exceptional range and assurance, a bold, playful engagement with cultural heritage. Yanita Georgieva’s poetry is funny, subversive, and boundary-pushing, rich with cultural resonance and full of surprises. Lucy Mercer’s confident interplay of image and text marked her as a compelling voice among a strong field of poets working in this way, while Camille Ralphs’ virtuosity and emotional depth weave together striking visual elements and lyrical precision, with real brilliance. All the shortlisted poets have truly unique voices and a real command of the art form, and are marshalling their poems*

*very purposefully. We are hugely excited to follow their respective creative paths and, no doubt, future successes.”*

The winning Fellow, receiving £20,000, will be revealed at an Award Ceremony on 2 February 2026, with all Shortlisted Artists awarded £1,000 towards their artistic practice.

You can explore the Shortlisted Artists' work on the [Arts Foundation website](#) and watch the award announcements via [Instagram Live](#) on 2 February 2026.

The Literature Award is supported by The Adrian Brinkerhoff Poetry Fund of the Sidney E. Frank Foundation.

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## Press Pack & Images

The Literature Shortlist Press Pack and Images can be viewed [here](#).

The Arts Foundation Futures Awards 2026 Press Pack can be viewed [here](#).

## Media Enquiries

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## Notes to Editors

### About The Arts Foundation

The Arts Foundation is a registered charity that supports individual artists and creatives in the UK with unconditional financial fellowships through the Arts Foundation Futures Awards.

Since 1993, the Arts Foundation has awarded over £2 million to the most promising artists in the UK at a pivotal moment in their careers to enable them to concentrate on their creative development, experiment, and realise their artistic potential.

The annual Arts Foundation Futures Awards provide five transformative £20,000 Fellowships, with all Shortlisted Artists receiving £1,000 towards the development of their practice.

The vital contribution of the Arts Foundation Futures Awards to the arts in the UK is demonstrated by its past Fellows, many of whom are regarded as contemporary pioneers and have gone on to become leaders in their respective art forms, including: Wayne McGregor (1994), Alice Oswald (1996), Sarah Kane (1998), Asif Kapadia (2001), Ali Smith (2001), Rufus Norris (2002), Carol Morley (2003), Lynette Yiadom-Boakye (2006), and more recently, Simon Fujiwara (2009), Sam Lee (2011), Alice Birch (2014), Hollie McNish (2015), Evan Ifekoya (2017), Holly Hendry (2019), Onyeka Igwe (2020), Klein (2020), and Bethany Williams (2020).

The Arts Foundation Futures Awards 2026 are generously supported in partnership with The David Collins Foundation, The Adrian Brinkerhoff Poetry Fund of the Sidney E. Frank Foundation, and The Yoma Sasburg Estate.

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### **About The Adrian Brinkerhoff Poetry Fund of the Sidney E. Frank Foundation**

[The Sidney E. Frank Foundation](https://www.sidneyefrankfoundation.org/) seeks to improve the lives of students, families, and the community through opportunities in art, theater, poetry, music, education, environmental conservation, and medical research and care. [The Adrian Brinkerhoff Poetry Fund](https://www.adrianbrinkerhoffpoetry.org/) supports organizations that advance understanding and love of poetry and literature around the world, in collaboration with the [Adrian Brinkerhoff Poetry Foundation](https://www.adrianbrinkerhoffpoetry.org/). The Adrian Brinkerhoff Foundation aims to expand access to poetry and educational poetry materials, gathering outstanding poems from across places, eras, and traditions for audiences worldwide to enjoy.

[www.brinkerhoffpoetry.org](http://www.brinkerhoffpoetry.org)

