

## Shortlist Announced for Major Canadian Jewish Literary Prize



The Koffler Centre of the Arts is proud to announce the shortlist for the **Vine Awards for Canadian Jewish Literature**. Winners will be announced on 29<sup>th</sup> September at an Award Luncheon at the Four Seasons Hotel.

The newly branded prize honours the best Jewish Canadian writing in four categories; fiction, non-fiction, history and young adult/children's literature; each with a prize of \$10,000, and an additional \$10,000 prize for poetry which will be awarded every three years. 91 submissions from 2014 and 2015 were accepted this year. [www.kofflerarts.org/vineawards](http://www.kofflerarts.org/vineawards)

### Fiction:

**Bezmogis, David – *The Betrayers* (Harper Collins)** “Very well-written, incisive, compelling and full of surprises. Crisp, spare, engaging storytelling, confronting us with the desperate interior of lives lived on the edge.” – The Jury

**Kertes, Joseph - *The Afterlife of Stars* (Penguin Books)** “A strong narrative full of dramatic turns and striking events combined with quality writing and a very effective mode of storytelling.” – The Jury

**Michaels, Sean - *Us Conductors* (Random House Canada)** “The opening of this book is fascinating and the imagination of the author boundless.” – The Jury

**Silcoff, Mireille – *Chez L'Arabe* (House of Anansi Press)** “A very fine collection of short stories, with a sense of fragility and impermanence that is striking.” – The Jury

## Non-Fiction:

**Bossin, Bob – *Davy the Punk (The Porcupine’s Quill)*** “Refreshingly unsentimental; a son give us a gloves off and gutsy biographical account of his father through the underbelly of ‘Toronto the good.’” – The Jury

**Celinscak, Mark - *Distance from the Belsen Heap: Allied Forces and the Liberation of a Nazi Concentration Camp (University of Toronto Press)*** “A very well documented study of one of the key events in the history of the Holocaust. Engaging, well researched, and unusually specific in the lenses.” – The Jury

**Levitin, Daniel J. - *The Organized Mind (Penguin Books)*** "A beautifully accessible and in-depth look at the way the mind focuses in our ever-distracted digital age." – The Jury

**Schwarcz, Dr. Joe – *Monkeys, Myths and Molecules (ECW Press)*** "Dr. Schwarcz explores the way everyday science can be misconstrued through the sheer variety of multiple sources available on the internet in this lyrically written work of popular but well researched science writing." – The Jury

## History:

**Chalmers, Beverley – *Birth, Sex and Abuse: Women’s Voices under Nazi Rule (Grosvenor House Publishing)*** “A very strong and thoroughly informed approach to the reality of women living under the Nazi yoke.” – The Jury

**Cohen, Andrew – *Two Days in June: John F. Kennedy and the 48 Hours that Made History (McClelland & Stewart)*** "Cohen effortlessly moves between two pivotal issues of the times - civil rights and nuclear arms - in this accessible look at a key moment in US history." – The Jury

**Rachwal, Maria Noriega - *From Kitchen to Carnegie Hall: Ethel Stark and the Montreal Women’s Symphony Orchestra (Second Story Press)*** “A joyous, uncanny and entertaining narrative of women who trace a path for themselves in a man's world, very well-illustrated and researched.” – The Jury

**Robinson, Ira – *A History of Antisemitism in Canada (Wilfrid Laurier University Press)*** “A praiseworthy effort, we were particularly impressed with the author's ability to distance himself from his subject and to present his conclusions in a dispassionate way.” – The Jury

## Poetry:

**Goodwin, Daniel – *Catullus’s Soldiers (Cormorant Books)*** “Enjoyable, readable, fresh” – The Jury

**Mayne, Seymour – *Cusp Word Sonnets* (Ronald P. Frye and Co.)** “Enjoyable juxtaposing of minimalist images and pithy ideas” – The Jury

**Panofsky, Ruth - *The Collected Poems of Miriam Waddington* (University of Ottawa Press)** “A valuable collection that speaks to the varied range of her work and perception” – The Jury

**Zolf, Rachel – *Janey’s Arcadia* (Coach House Books)** “Truly a feat of writing, typographical composition and emotional outpouring.” – The Jury

### **Children’s/Young Adult:**

**Emil Sher - *Young Man with Camera* (Scholastic Inc.)** “A new creative approach to telling a story to a young audience capturing the voice and angst of a youth amid a myriad of social pressures.” – The Jury

**Sanders, Shelly - *Rachel’s Hope* (Second Story Press)** “A poignantly realistic portrayal of a young Jewish woman’s struggle towards independence in early 20th C San Francisco, trying to embrace the new world while grappling with her ties to tradition.” – The Jury

**Wiseman, Eva - *The World Outside* (Tundra Books)** "A nuanced portrait of a young Jewish girl growing up within the Lubavitch community of Brooklyn that successfully takes us into her life and the tensions she experiences between her insular world and the wider world around her." – The Jury

**Wishinsky, Frieda, illustrations by Willow Dawson - *Avis Dolphin* (House of Anansi Press)** "A powerful illustrated story of one child's experience on the Lusitania. Frieda Wishinsky and illustrator Willow Dawson use text and image to create a dense account of a harrowing journey." – The Jury

### **The Jury:**

"Despite an incredibly strong list of over two years of submissions in multiple categories, we were honoured to select twenty titles that reflect the rich and diverse traditions of narrative both about and from the Jewish community. It was an absolute pleasure to see the diversity of stories explored - from YA accounts of coming of age and bullying to in-depth historical studies and poignant works of fiction." – Devyani Saltzman

**Pierre Anctil** is a member of the Royal Society of Canada and a full professor at the department of history of the University of Ottawa, where he teaches contemporary Canadian history and Canadian Jewish history. He has written extensively on the history of the Jewish community of Montréal and on the current debates on cultural pluralism in Québec. He is the author of several books, including the biography of Montréal Yiddish poet Jacob-Isaac Segal, and is the translator of several significant Yiddish works into French. His latest publication is *Les Juifs de Québec, 400 ans d’histoire* (Presses de l’Université du Québec, 2015).

**Devyani Saltzman** is a Canadian writer, curator and journalist. She is the author of *Shooting Water* and is the Director of Literary Arts at the Banff Centre as well as the Founding Curator, Literary Programming, at Luminato, Toronto's Festival of Arts and Creativity and North America's largest multi-arts festival. Her work has appeared in *The Globe and Mail*, *National Post*, *The Atlantic* and *Tehelka*, India's weekly of arts and investigative journalism. She sits on the advisory committee for Project Bookmark Canada and has been a juror for the National Magazine Awards, Canada Council for the Arts, Ontario Arts Council and The Hilary Weston Writers' Trust Prize for Nonfiction.

**Laurence Siegel's** practice in the arts has spanned a varied career over the past four decades as an independent television producer, a performing artist manager and for 20 years, a dramatic arts teacher with the Toronto District School Board. Through much of his career he was a committed traditional photographer and currently pursues a film-based black and white darkroom practice through Gallery 44 Centre for Contemporary Photography. He spends much of his time now creating contemporary dance films and documentaries.

The **Vine Awards for Canadian Jewish Literature** is made possible by a generous donation by the Lillian and Norman Glowinsky Family Foundation to support Canadian Jewish literature, a tradition they established with the original awards in 2004, and building on the founding of the Canadian Jewish Book Awards in 1988 by Adam Fuerstenberg.

"I was impressed with the incredible writing on Jewish-related subjects coming from the Canadian literary community, and it was important to me that these authors, both Jewish and non-Jewish, were recognized and that their books were celebrated and widely read throughout Canada. I am a passionate reader and have many favourite authors both Canadian and international. I have high regard for Elie Wiesel and Isaac Bachevis Singer, international Jewish writers who have brought their times to life. Of Canadian writers, I love everything that the amazing Mordecai Richler has written and, from the newer generation of Canadian authors, I enjoy the work of David Bezmozgis, a past Canadian Jewish Book Award winner. It is my sincere hope that the new Vine Awards for Canadian Jewish Literature will encourage writers and readers alike to celebrate Canadian Jewish literature – and in so doing – honour my parent's love of the arts, of community, and of their adopted country Canada."–

**Lillian Glowinsky**

The **Koffler Centre of the Arts** is a Jewish cultural organization that presents a cross-disciplinary, contemporary arts program encouraging inquiry and exploration, and promotes an inter-cultural dialogue that engages our Jewish identity with diverse perspectives and global voices. Koffler Centre of the Arts acknowledges the support of the Koffler Family Foundation, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, Cultural Season Sponsor CIBC Wood Gundy, the Ontario Arts Council through the Community and Multidisciplinary Arts Organizations Program, *The National Post* (Media Partner for the Vine Awards), and our patrons and donors.