

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
ATTENTION: BOOKS, ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT EDITORS

The under-told history of the Nazi persecution of gays, the Jewish role in the history of obscenity in America, and a poetic collaboration between two great Canadian talents win 2014 Canadian Jewish Book Awards

TORONTO, May 8, 2014 – A wide range of Jewish themes and subjects – from the Holocaust, trauma and memory, to Yiddish, American Jewish culture and history, and life in the diaspora – are featured in the winners of the **2014 Helen and Stan Vine Canadian Jewish Book Awards**.

This year's jury selected nine titles in the categories of Holocaust, Fiction, Yiddish, Jewish Thought and Culture, Poetry, Scholarship, Biography/Memoir, Youth, and History. The awards will be presented in a public ceremony on **Tuesday, May 27, 8 PM** at the **Bram and Bluma Appel Salon** at the **Toronto Reference Library**. This year's awards will be hosted by former President and Publisher of Penguin Canada, **Cynthia Good**.

Ken Setterington's *Branded by the Pink Triangle*, about the moving and under-told history of the persecution of gays by the Nazis during the Second World War has won in the Holocaust category. Although the most prominent and numerous victims of Hitler's virulent hatred, Jews were not the only victims of the Holocaust. The mentally and physically challenged, Jehovah's Witnesses, the Scinti and Roma, and gays – especially men – were also persecuted by the Nazis and marked for extermination. Through historical documentation and vivid personal stories of survivors, Setterington brings to life the origin of the "pink triangle" – sewn onto the prison uniforms of homosexual men in concentration camps – and since that time a symbol for LGBT rights worldwide.

The Jury praised Setterington for his readable history that provides a redress of this great injustice. *Branded by the Pink Triangle* was also the winner of the 2014 Stonewall Honor Books in Children's and Young Adult Literature. Setterington lives in Toronto.

Josh Lambert's *Unclean Lips: Obscenity, Jews, and American Culture* has won in the Jewish Thought and Culture category. Weaving together case studies and cultural histories, contested texts and trial transcripts, Lambert analyzes the historical and cultural factors that account for the integral role of Jews in the struggles over obscenity and censorship in modern and post-modern America. Canadian-born Josh Lambert is Academic Director of the Yiddish Book Center and Visiting Assistant Professor of English at the University of Massachusetts.

Correspondences, a collaborative book by renowned novelist/poet **Anne Michaels** and acclaimed artist/writer **Bernice Eisenstein** has won the award in the Poetry category. Michaels' vivid and stunningly crafted long poem together with Eisenstein's profound and luminous portraits, accompanied by quotes from great writers and thinkers, comes together in a unique and haunting dialogue that is both mirrored and augmented by the book's unique design. *Correspondences* has also been shortlisted for the 2014 Griffin Poetry Prize, Canada's largest poetry award and one of the largest poetry prizes in the world.

Anne Michaels is the author of two novels and five poetry collections, and has been awarded The Commonwealth Prize, a National Magazine Award, the Trillium Book Award, Orange Prize for Fiction and the Guardian Fiction Prize. Bernice Eisenstein is an artist and author of the critically acclaimed *I Was a Child of Holocaust Survivors* and her illustrations have appeared in a variety of Canadian magazines and periodicals. Both Michaels and Eisenstein are based in Toronto.

The 2014 Canadian Jewish Book Award in Fiction has been awarded to Toronto-based, South African-Canadian writer **Kenneth Bonert** for *The Lion Seeker*. This extraordinarily powerful debut novel on South African Jewry was also the winner of a 2013 National Jewish Book Award, the 2013 Edward Lewis Wallant Award, and was shortlisted for a 2013 Governor General's Award.

Other winners include Toronto-based **Frieda Forman** for *The Exile Book of Yiddish Women Writers* in the Yiddish category. Including texts never before translated into English, Forman's work includes short stories, excerpts from novels and memoirs, and personal essays on Yiddish women living in a changing world.

Albert Kaganovitch's *The Long Life and Swift Death of the Jewish Reschitsa*, a meticulously researched history of the forgotten world of one of the oldest Jewish Communities in Belarus, has won in the Scholarship category. *In the Shadow of the Shtetl* by **Jeffrey Veidlinger**, Joseph Brodsky Collegiate Professor of History and Judaic Studies at the University of Michigan, has won in the History category. Veidlinger's work is an invaluable history and reappraisal of Jewish life in the shtetls of Soviet Ukraine in the mid-20th Century.

An Ode to Salonika: The Ladino Verses of Bouena Sarfatty by Jerusalem-based **Renée Levine Melammed** has won in the Biography/Memoir category. Melammed's work sketches the life and demise of the Sephardi Jewish community that once flourished in Salonika, Greece through *coplas*, the Ladino poems telling the history of this once vibrant world. Melammed is Professor of Jewish History at the Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem and winner of two National Jewish Book Awards. *An Ode to Salonika* is her third book.

Winnipeg-based children's writer **Carol Matas** has won the Youth category for *Dear Canada: Pieces of the Past: The Holocaust Diary of Rose Rabinowitz, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1948*, a coming-of-age story about life in Winnipeg, Manitoba, after the Holocaust.

This year's distinguished Jury is comprised of writers, academics, editors and experts in the literary field, and includes **Barbara Berson (chair), Adam Fuerstenberg, Judith Ghert, Alain Goldschläger, Sara R. Horowitz, Carla Lancit, Michael Posner, Judy Stoffman, and Edward Trapunski.**

The Awards ceremony takes place in Toronto on **Tuesday, May 27, 2014 at 8 PM** at the **Bram & Bluma Appel Salon at the Toronto Reference Library, 789 Yonge Street**. The Helen and Stan Vine Canadian Jewish Book Awards is part of the **Toronto Jewish Literary Festival**.

Winning authors will be available for a book-signing after the ceremony. The award-winning titles will also be available for purchase.

Jury citations, full details on the event and the winners are available at kofflerarts.org

Interviews with Jury Chair Barbara Berson and/or any of the winning authors can be arranged through the Koffler Centre of the Arts. Media contact information is below.

The 2014 winners are:

HOLOCAUST

Branded by the Pink Triangle, Ken Setterington (Second Story Press)

FICTION

The Lion Seeker, Kenneth Bonert (Knopf Canada)

YIDDISH

The Exile Book of Yiddish Women Writers, Frieda Forman (Exile Editions)

JEWISH THOUGHT AND CULTURE

Unclean Lips: Obscenity, Jews, and American Culture, Josh Lambert (New York University Press)

POETRY

Correspondences, Anne Michaels, Poetry, and Bernice Eisenstein, Portraits (McClelland and Stewart)

SCHOLARSHIP

The Long Life and Swift Death of the Jewish Reschitsa, Albert Kaganovitch (The University of Wisconsin Press)

BIOGRAPHY/MEMOIR

An Ode to Salonika: The Ladino Verses of Bouena Sarfatty, Renée Levine Melammed (Indiana University Press)

YOUTH

Dear Canada: Pieces of the Past: The Holocaust Diary of Rose Rabinowitz, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1948, Carol Matas (Scholastic)

HISTORY

In the Shadow of the Shtetl, Jeffrey Veidlinger (Indiana University Press)

About the Koffler Centre of the Arts

The Koffler Centre of the Arts is a multidisciplinary arts organization and independent not-for-profit whose Jewish roots serve as a springboard for ideas. The Koffler engages a contemporary dialogue through the arts that has local, national and international resonance.

The Koffler programs around the City of Toronto at several locations. Koffler Gallery exhibitions and related programs and the Koffler's administrative offices are based at Artscape Youngplace, in the vibrant downtown West Queen West art and design district. Koffler visual art and ceramic classes for all ages are held at the Prosserman JCC on Sherman Campus. Koffler multidisciplinary programs take place across the GTA at various venues.

Koffler Centre of the Arts acknowledges the support of the **Koffler Foundation**, **UJA Federation of Greater Toronto**, Cultural Season Sponsor **CIBC Wood Gundy**, the **Ontario Trillium Foundation**, the **Ontario Arts Council** through the Community and Multidisciplinary Arts Organizations Program, Artscape, our patrons and members.

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**For further information, interview requests
and high resolution images, contact:**

Tony Hewer, Director of Marketing & Communications

Koffler Centre of the Arts | Koffler Gallery

180 Shaw Street, Suite 104-105, Toronto M6J 2W5

647.925.0643 x224

E-mail thewer@kofflerarts.org