

Form in Tension

Thursday 29 – Saturday 31 January 2015
Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin



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Poet and novelist **Lavinia Greenlaw** was born in London and studied Modern Arts, Publishing and Art History. She was an Arts Administrator at the South Bank Centre and for the London Arts Board before becoming a freelance writer. Her published poetry includes the collections *Night Photographs* (1993) which was shortlisted for the Whitbread Poetry Award and Forward Poetry Prize, and *A World Where News Travelled Slowly* (1997). The title poem won the Forward Poetry Prize (Best Single Poem). Her third collection, *Minsk* (2003), was shortlisted for several awards including the 2003 T. S. Eliot Prize. *The Casual Perfect* was published in 2011 by Faber & Faber. Her most recent collection of poetry, *A Double Sorrow: Troilus and Criseyde*, was published in March 2014. Her first novel, *Mary George of Allnorthover*

(2001), set in England in the 1970s, appeared in several countries and won the Prix du Premier Roman Etranger. Her second novel, *An Irresponsible Age*, set in London in the 1990s, was published in 2006. She has also written two non-fiction works, *The Importance of Music to Girls* (2007), a memoir about the place music has played in her own life, and *Questions of Travel: William Morris in Iceland*, published in 2011. Her sound work, *Audio Obscura*, won the 2011 Ted Hughes Award for New Work Poetry. She has written libretti for Richard Ayres' *Peter Pan* and Ian Wilson's operas *Hamelin* and *Minsk*. She has also written song texts including the cycle *Slow passage, low prospect* (2004) composed by Richard Baker. She has been Writer in Residence at the Science Museum and Reader in Residence at the Royal Festival Hall, London. She was Professor of Poetry at the University of East Anglia until 2013 and currently holds a fellowship from the Wellcome Institute. Her work has been broadcast by BBC radio and television, including several radio dramas. She received an Eric Gregory Award in 1990, an Arts Council Writers' Award in 1995 and a three-year NESTA fellowship in 2001.



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Philip Hoare was born in Southampton and is the author of seven works of non-fiction. His first book, *Serious Pleasures: The Life of Stephen Tennant*, about the 1920s aristocratic aesthete, was published in 1990. This was followed by *Noel Coward: A Biography* (1995), and *Wilde's Last Stand: Decadence, Conspiracy, and the First World War* (1997). In 2001 he wrote *Spike Island: The Memory of a Military Hospital*, about Netley military hospital near to where he grew up. *England's Lost Eden: Adventures in a Victorian Utopia*, published in 2005, is a study of 19th-century sects. His book *Leviathan or, The Whale* (2008), which charts his lifelong interest in whales, was awarded the BBC Samuel Johnson Prize in 2009. His most recent book, *The Sea Inside* (2013), was serialised on

BBC Radio 4's "Book of the Week". An experienced broadcaster, he wrote and presented BBC2 film *Arena: The Hunt for Moby-Dick*, and directed three short films on whales for BBC4's *Whale Night*. Together with artist Angela Cockayne he is co-curator of the *Moby Dick Big Read*, an online library of Melville's novel in which each of the 135 chapters is read out aloud by a mixture of well-known and unknown voices, including Tilda Swinton, Stephen Fry, Will Self and Sir David Attenborough. He is Professor of Creative Writing at Southampton University, and Leverhulme Artist-in-Residence at The Marine Institute, Plymouth University, which awarded him an honorary doctorate in 2011.



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Poet **Frances Leviston** was born in Edinburgh and grew up in Sheffield. She studied English at St Hilda's College, Oxford, and has an MA in Writing from Sheffield Hallam University. In 2006 she received an Eric Gregory Award from the Society of Authors. Her first collection, *Public Dream*, was published by Picador in 2007 and was shortlisted for the T. S. Eliot Prize, the Forward Prize for Best First Collection and the Jerwood-Aldeburgh First Collection Prize. Her second collection, *Disinformation*, will be published by Picador in February 2015. Her poetry appeared in publications including *Poetry*, *The London Review of Books*, *The Times*, *The Times Literary Supplement*, *The Guardian*, *Edinburgh Review*, and Granta/British Council's *New Writing*. Frances Leviston

works as a freelance writer and tutor, and has taught on the Poetry MA at the University of East Anglia and at Manchester University.

Playwright, novelist and poet **Deborah Levy** was born in South Africa and studied theatre at Darlington College of Arts. Formerly director and writer for MANACT Theatre Company, Cardiff, her plays include *Pax* (1984), *Heresies: Eva and Moses* (1985), written for the Royal Shakespeare Company, *Clam* (1985), *The B File* (1993) and *Honey Baby* (1995). She is also the author of a libretto adapted from Federico Garcia Lorca's play *Blood Wedding*. Deborah has written five



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novels: *Beautiful Mutants* (1989), *Swallowing Geography* (1993, reissued 2014), *The Unloved* (1994), *Billy and the Girl* (1996) and *Swimming Home, And Other Stories* (2011) which was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize. Her collection of short stories, *Ophelia and the Great Idea*, was published in 1989. A further short story collection *Black Vodka (& Other Stories)* (2012), was short listed for the Frank O'Connor Award and the BBC International Short Story Award. Her long form essay, *Things I Don't Want To Know*, was published in 2013. For BBC Radio 4 she wrote two dramatisations of Freud's most famous case studies, *Dora* and *The Wolfman*. She has lectured at the Freud Museum, Goethe Institute, Serpentine Gallery, Tate Modern, The Henry Moore Foundation, The Royal Academy School. She was Fellow in Creative Arts at Trinity

College, Cambridge from 1989 to 1991. She is currently Visiting Professor in Writing at Falmouth University. *Swimming Home (Heim schwimmen)* and *Black Vodka* were published by Wagenbach in Germany who will also publish her essay *Things I Don't Want to Know* in May 2015.



Helen Oyeyemi wrote her first novel *The Icarus Girl* while still at school studying for her A levels at Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School. While studying Social and Political Sciences at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, two of her plays, *Juniper's Whitening* and *Victimese* were performed by fellow students to critical acclaim and subsequently published by Methuan. In 2007 Bloomsbury published Oyeyemi's second novel, *The Opposite House*, which is inspired by Cuban mythology. In 2009 Oyeyemi was recognised as one of the women on Venus Zine's "25 under 25" list. Her third novel, *White is for Witching*, described as having "roots in Henry James and Edgar Allan Poe" was published by Picador in May 2009. It was a 2009 Shirley Jackson

finalist and won a 2010 Somerset Maugham Award. A fourth novel, *Mr Fox*, was published by Picador in June 2011. Her most recent novel, *Boy, Snow, Bird*, was published in March 2014. In 2013 she was included in the Granta Best of Young British Novelists list.



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Will Self was born in London where he began writing fiction and worked as a cartoonist for the *New Statesman* and *City Limits*. Nominated in 1993 as one of *Granta* magazine's 20 "Best of Young British Novelists 2", his fiction includes six short story collections: *The Quantity Theory of Insanity* (1991), winner of the Geoffrey Faber Memorial Prize, *Grey Area* (1994), *Tough, Tough Toys for Tough, Tough Boys* (1998), *Dr Mukti and Other Tales of Woe* (2003) and *Liver* (2008) and *The Undivided Self* (2010). He is also the author of the novels: *My Idea of Fun* (1993), *Great Apes* (1997), *How the Dead Live* (2000), *Dorian* (2002), a retelling of Oscar Wilde's classic tale, *The Book of Dave* (2006) and *The Butt* (2008). His

non-fiction includes *Perfidious Man* (2000), with photographs by David Gamble, and *Sore Sites* (2000), a collection of writings about architecture. In addition, he has published two collections of journalism, *Junk Mail* (1995), and *Feeding Frenzy* (2001). A book of non-fiction *Psychogeography*, was published in 2007 and followed by a second collection, *Psycho Too* (2009). His novel *The Butt* (2008) which won the 2008 Bollinger Everyman Wodehouse Prize was followed by *Walking to Hollywood*, a mixture of fact, fancy, memoir and invention. His novel *Umbrella* (2012) was shortlisted for the 2012 Man Booker Prize for Fiction. His latest novel *Shark* was published in 2014. Will Self is a regular broadcaster on television and radio and contributor to numerous newspapers and magazines.