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Hollie & Jeanette Winterson at the 2015 Awards

NEWS RELEASE

"I never sit down to write a poem, most of my time as a writer is taking up organising gigs and travel and administrative aspects of workshops. If I get an idea in my head, I take a piece of paper and write."

Hollie McNish

HOLLIE MCNISH RECEIVES THE ARTS FOUNDATION AWARD 2015 FOR SPOKEN WORD



Last night Hollie McNish took to the stage at Notting Hills' 20th Century Theatre to collect one of six £10,000 cheques from Guest of Honour author Jeanette Winterson.

Hollie's writing career started when she was 7 when she started writing a diary in poems. Fast forward to 2009 when she became the UK Slam Poetry Champion and subsequently travelled to France to perform in the World Slam. Since then she has had her first collection *Papers* published by Greenwich Exchange and two of her YouTube videos went viral allowing her to forge a career in poetry full-time. Producing material for online viewing is a huge part of her work. "I didn't attend theatres as a child and most of my audience don't seem to either" she says. Her award winning audio release 'Push Kick' was much heralded, describing her own journey, as she quotes "through the beauty, brilliance and bollocks of having a baby." Hollie toured this show to over thirty UK venues ranging from teenage mother groups to village schools and larger poetry venues. In 2014 she produced 'Versus', a new double album of her writing and embarked on her first national solo tour to promote it including, in some cities, youth poetry organisations as the support act.

'Hollie lands a huge visceral punch onstage. You don't get time to wonder about what you like about her as you're swept along by the authenticity of the performance.' Don Paterson, poet and judge for the award.

The runners-up for the award were **Rob Auton**, **Jemima Foxtrot**, **Sabrina Mahfouz** and **Ross Sutherland** who all received £1,000. They were shortlisted from a longlist of nominated UK-based poets. The judges were **Neneh Cherry**, **Don Paterson** and **Mark Grist**.

The Award

The Arts Foundation £10,000 award is not a commission but to be used to pay for living and working expenses, allowing the artist, who must show a track record in the art form, breathing space in order to further their practice. The Arts Foundation, was founded by an anonymous donation in 1993 and has since given over £1.6m to support artists from all walks of the arts. Previous poets who have won won AF awards include **Alice Oswald** (1996), **Katrina Porteous** (2003) and **Tim Turnbull** (2006). Fellowships in Choral Conducting, Art in the Elements, Video & Digital for Performance, Materials Innovation and Arts Producers were also announced on the night.

For more information

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