

# Australian Centre Literary Awards 2015

## Judges Report

School of Culture and Communication



### Kate Challis RAKA Award

This award for Indigenous creative artists has been made available through the generosity of Bernard Smith. The 2015 Kate Challis RAKA Award is for an Indigenous poet. Award value: \$20,000.

### Lionel Fogarty for *Mogwie-Idan: Stories of the Land*, 2012

Fogarty's book of poetry stood out to the judges for the sheer power of the poetry from first to last page. This is the poetry of a mature, confident poet, rich and inventive with language and viewpoint. It is a wide-ranging literary intervention into Australian history and culture. The poetry ranges, in hybrid style, across trans-historical themes in assertive, provocative, defiant, satirical and brilliant verse that gives readers the sense that they will come back to the poems time and time again, and there will still be more to decipher and understand. There is highly inventive twisting and tangling of words such as in the line: 'Even bulldogs British the law' condenses colonization into one succinct line. The poems are a radical critique of settlement – 'you', 'he', 'she', 'white explorers' and 'untribal man singing songs' – but are also addressed, perhaps too hopefully, 'to all open-minded people'.

Judges: Ken Gelder (chair), Denise Varney, Elisabeth Heathcote, Don Heathcote, Philip Morrissey.



### Peter Blazey Fellowship

Fellowship to honour the memory of Peter Blazey for a work-in-progress in the non-fiction fields of biography, autobiography and life-writing. Award value: \$15,000 plus residency at the Australian Centre.

### Julia Leigh for *Avalanche*

Julia Leigh's submission to the Blazey Fellowship was an extract from her forthcoming autobiographical work *Avalanche*, a frank, touching and beautifully written account of her experiences with IVF. The extract chronicles her decision to undergo treatment, built around her need for what she calls '*Sweet dark purpose*'. It folds a sophisticated and sometimes clinically detached view of the effects of medical processes on women into an intensely personal narrative to do with loss, hope and longing. The extract is a series of exquisitely constructed scenes that immerse the reader into the choices she makes and the challenges she faces.

Judges: Ken Gelder (chair), Denise Varney, Tim Herbert, Catherine McInnis



### Dinny O'Hearn Fellowship

Fellowship to honour the memory of Dinny O'Hearn for emerging writers of fiction, poetry or drama. Award value: \$5,000 plus residency at the Australian Centre.

### Anupama Pilbrow for *the ravage space*

Anupama submitted a suite of poems titled *ravage space*. The judges agreed that these poems were both compelling and of a remarkably high standard. They spoke to an Australian/South Asian diaspora, to street life and the life of things and people, of relationships, past lives and futures. The poems were formally and linguistically fascinating, mixing English with Hindi and Marathi phrases with the aim – as some excellent accompanying notes put it – of '*reframing pluralism as the cultural norm*'. This is inventive, thoughtful and vibrant work. The judges look forward to the publication of this collection and are certain it will be met with critical acclaim.

Judges: Ken Gelder (chair), Eddie Paterson, Elisabeth Macfarlane.