

PRESS RELEASE

UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL APRIL 29 2023, 8:30 pm



Baharan Baniahmadi wins the 2023 Blue Metropolis/Conseil des arts de Montréal New Contribution Prize for *Prophetess*

Publication – under embargo until Saturday April 29, 8:30 pm

We are pleased to announce that Baharan Baniahmadi is the winner of the 2023 Blue Metropolis / Conseil des arts de Montréal New Contribution Prize for her novel *Prophetess* (Véhicule Press).

The subject is tragic: in Tehran, a seven-year-old girl, Sarah, has to deal with her memories after witnessing the murder of her sister Setayesh. The novel finds its mark, as the jury's comments show: "A moving, ambitious, and subtle novel about traumatic memory and its impact on the development of identity and voice. The story moves virtuously through heavily mined terrain, as if dancing lightly on a sharp blade, without ever becoming moralistic or didactic." The novel "draws its strength from its imaginative aspect: the narrative construction, the misunderstandings, the playful duplication, and the literary yet humorous style that gradually reveals itself."

Originally from Iran, Baharan Baniahmadi lives in Montreal. She studied theatre at the Art University of Tehran, has worked with many international directors, and published a play and a memoir in Iran. *Prophetess*, written in English, is her first novel.

Congratulations to the winner, as well as to the second- and third-place finalists, respectively:

- Mali Navia, *La Banalité d'un tir* (Leméac Éditeur); and
- Eli Tareq El Bechelany-Lynch, *The Good Arabs* (Metonymy Press).

The Blue Metropolis / Conseil des arts de Montréal New Contributions Award comes with a CAN \$ 5,000 purse.

Baharan Baniahmadi will receive her prize during the 25th edition of the Blue Metropolis International Literary Festival, on Saturday, April 29, 2023, at 8 pm, at Hotel 10 (10 Sherbrooke Street West), Saint-Laurent Room, just before the presentation of the Blue Metropolis Grand Prize. The following day, Sunday, April 30, 2023, at 4 pm, at Hotel 10, Salle Jardin, a public on-stage conversation will be held between two recent 2022 New Contribution Prize winners, 2022 recipient Tawhida Tanya Evanson and Baharan Baniahmadi.

The 2023 jury members are novelist Ghayas Hachem, artist and dramaturge Marilou Craft, and poet and translator Katia Grubisic. Nine entries from various backgrounds were submitted.

The Blue Metropolis/Conseil des arts de Montréal New Contribution Prize is now in its eighth year. Awarded jointly by the Blue Metropolis Foundation and the Conseil des arts de Montréal, the prize draws attention to new literary voices from immigrant backgrounds—writers whose work enriches our literature and for whom Montreal is home. “In addition to supporting the festival since its inception over 20 years ago, the Conseil des arts de Montréal is particularly proud to be associated once again with the New Contribution Prize,” says Conseil des arts de Montréal Executive Director Nathalie Maillé. “Blue Metropolis foregrounds indigeneity, multilingualism, and thought-provoking social issues.” Over the years, the prize has recognized the work of Ghayas Hachem (2016), Xue Yiwei (2017), Alina Dumitrescu (2018), Yara El-Ghadban (2019), William Ging Wee Dere (2020), Nicholas Dawson (2021), and Tawhida Tanya Evanson (2022).

ABOUT THE CONSEIL DES ARTS DE MONTRÉAL

The Conseil des arts de Montréal is a dynamic partner that nurtures professional artistic creation in Montreal by identifying, supporting, and recognizing artistic excellence in creation, production, and presentation. The Conseil des arts de Montréal fosters openness, discovery, and daring at the heart of Montreal’s artistic landscape and since its founding in 1956 has developed concrete initiatives to shape our city—“Montréal, Cultural Metropolis.”

BLUE METROPOLIS AT A GLANCE

The Blue Metropolis Foundation presents an annual international literary festival and offers a range of activities throughout the year as well as educational and social programs in classrooms, libraries, and online, using writing and reading as therapeutic tools, to encourage students to stay in school, and to combat poverty and exclusion.

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MERCI AUX PARTENAIRES MAJEURS DE LA FONDATION METROPOLIS BLEU QUI SOUTIENNENT LE FESTIVAL 2023
ET NOS PROGRAMMES ÉDUCATIFS ET SOCIAUX 2022-2023
THANKS TO BLUE METROPOLIS FOUNDATION'S MAJOR PARTNERS WHO SUPPORT THE 2023 FESTIVAL
AND OUR 2022-2023 EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL PROGRAMS

