

Media Release

#DublinLitAward

Dublin City Council announces

Gliff by Ali Smith

as winner of the 2026 Dublin Literary Award

Thursday 21st May 2026: Scottish author, Ali Smith has been announced today as winner of the 2026 Dublin Literary Award, sponsored by Dublin City Council, for the novel *Gliff* published by Hamish Hamilton, Penguin Random House.

The Dublin Literary Award is presented annually to promote excellence in world literature.

The Award, now in its 31st year, is the world's largest prize for a single novel published in English. Uniquely, the Award receives its nominations from public libraries around the world and recognises both writers and translators.

Lord Mayor of Dublin and Patron of the Award, Councillor Ray McAdam made the announcement and Deputy Chief Executive of Dublin City Council, Anthony Flynn presented the prize to the winning author at a special ceremony during the International Literature Festival Dublin in Merrion Square Park. Anna Burns, who won the Dublin Literary Award in 2020 delivered a keynote speech to the invited audience.

Lord Mayor of Dublin Councillor Ray McAdam said, "Gliff is a remarkable and deeply powerful work from author Ali Smith. Through the eyes of two young protagonists navigating an increasingly authoritarian society, we are reminded that courage is not always loud, but it is always consequential. Their resilience, their humanity, and their refusal to surrender hope speak to something timeless within us all. At a moment when democracy across the world can too often feel fragile, this novel is a powerful reminder that freedom, dignity and democratic values should never be taken for granted."

Winner Ali Smith stated, "I couldn't be more amazed and delighted that my novel has come to the surface and won the Dublin Literary Award.

This is an award prized among writers, who know that the Dublin Literary Award's formation, its ear and eye for what matters most, and its profoundly literary legacy, all make it the best – an award that dares always to be international and that knows the importance of translation – the beating heart of all writing. It's an award whose nominations all always come from worldwide public libraries and their readers –in other words from the open heart of communal thought and imagination. It's also an award that's built, over its years, its own astonishing library of nominated works by a roster of writers I'm grateful now to find myself among.

What a thrill. What a homecoming for my book, a book very much about who and what makes a home for those who find themselves out in the world looking for exactly that.

I still can't quite believe my luck."

Ali Smith will appear at the International Literature Festival Dublin, for an in-depth conversation about the novel with Belinda McKeon, tomorrow evening (Friday 22nd May) at 6pm in Merrion Square Park (Speranza stage).

To attend in person please use this booking link: [2026 Dublin Literary Award Winner In Conversation](#)

Commenting on the Award, Richard Shakespeare, Chief Executive, Dublin City Council said, "Ali Smith has strong ties with Ireland, and I am delighted that she has won the 2026 Dublin Literary Award. It's heartening that a Hungarian library nominated the winning title, showing how great literature can strike a universal chord".

Nominated by Katona József Library, Hungary, the winning novel was chosen from a shortlist of six novels by writers from Canada, France, United Kingdom and the United States.

The longlist of 69 titles was nominated by 80 libraries from 36 countries.

Copies of the winning title are available to borrow from Dublin City Libraries and from public libraries throughout Ireland, as well as in eBook and eAudiobook format through the free BorrowBox public library app.

Further details about the Award and the winning novel are available on the Award website at www.dublinliteraryaward.ie

Professor Chris Morash of Trinity College Dublin, Chair of the 2026 judging panel commented:

"The finest fiction has always told us not only who we have been as human beings; it has also shown us what we can become, for better, or for worse. Ali Smith's Gliff is fiction at its finest, showing us how the best of what we are survives the stupidity of power in a world that seems intent on stumbling towards authoritarianism."

The full 2026 judging panel featured novelist **Xiaolu Guo**, former Ambassador and author **Daniel Mulhall**, author **Disha Bose**, poet and author **Dike Chukwumerije** and translator **Clara Minstral**.

Watch an [interview/piece to camera](#) with winning author Ali Smith.

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Notes for Editors

About *Gliff*, by Ali Smith

'Once upon a time, not very far from now, two children come home to find a line of wet red paint round the outside of their house . . .'

So begins the freewheeling and urgent new novel from Ali Smith – the story of two young people and a horse called Gliff, on the run from history as it takes a turn for the worse.

Full citation from the 2026 judging panel on *Gliff*

Ali Smith's *Gliff* is a book about two homeless children who befriend a horse. This seemingly modest plot, however, is the basis for a dystopian novel which will seem unsettlingly contemporary to any reader. As we follow two young siblings trying to survive a bewildering new world, there is a hum of destruction in the background. The data collection, surveillance, societal labelling and otherness are all too familiar to present-day. Like with the names of the protagonists, Briar and Rose, Smith is linguistically playful in this book, often humorous. This adds not only to the sense of foreboding but also to the shift and loss of language in this landscape set in our near future. It is a speculative novel, but accessible to all reading tastes. It nudges the reader to reflect on the future of education, environmental destruction, family and human survival.

The Dublin Literary Award

The Dublin Literary Award is presented annually to promote excellence in world literature. It is open to novels written in any language and by authors of any nationality, provided the work has been published in English or in English translation within the time period specified in the rules and conditions for the year. Nominations are submitted by library systems in major cities throughout the world. The Award is sponsored by Dublin City Council.

In 2020, the DUBLIN Literary Award announced a new partnership with [International Literature Festival Dublin](#) (ILFDublin). Both are initiatives of Dublin City Council, and each year in May, the recipient of the Dublin Literary Award is announced during the festival.

The full list of shortlisted novels for the 2026 Award are:

Gliff by Ali Smith (British), published by Hamish Hamilton, Penguin Random House UK.
Nominated by Katona József Könyvtár, Hungary

In Late Summer by Madalena Blažević (Bosnian), translated from the Croatian by Anđelka Raguž, published by Linden Editions. Nominated by University Library of Bern, Switzerland.

Live Fast by Brigitte Giraud (French), translated from the French by Cory Stockwell, published by Ecco/HarperCollins Publishers. Nominated by Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon, France.

Perspectives by Laurent Binet (French), translated from the French by Sam Taylor, published by Harvill, Vintage, Penguin Random House UK. Nominated by Bibliothèques Municipales de Genève, Switzerland.

The Emperor of Gladness by Ocean Vuong (American), published by Jonathan Cape (Vintage, PRH) UK; Penguin Press (US). Nominated by Hartford Public Library, USA.

What I Know About You by Éric Chacour (Canadian), translated from the French by Pablo Strauss, published by Coach House Books; Gallic Books (Pushkin). Nominated by Bibliothèque de Québec and Toronto Public Library, Canada

Recent winners of the award include:

The Adversary by Michael Crummey (2025), *Solenoid* by Mircea Cartarescu, trans. Sean Cotter (2024), *Marzahn, Mon Amour* by Katja Oskamp, trans. Jo Heinrich (2023); *The Art of Losing* by Alice Zeniter, trans. Frank Wynne (2022); *The Lost Children Archive* by Valeria Luiselli (2021); *Milkman* by Anna Burns (2020).

Here is the [full list of previous winners](#) of the Award since 1996, including Irish winners Anna Burns, Colm Tóibín, Kevin Barry, Colum McCann and Mike McCormack.

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