

# Michael O'Pray Prize 2023 ...

The Michael O'Pray Prize is an award for new writing on innovation and experimentation in the moving image. The prize is open to all early-career writers based in the UK. Entry is free.

Applicants are invited to send a **short pitch for a new text**, alongside an **example of previous writing**. Three applicants will be selected to write their proposed text. From these, there will be a **£750 prize for the winner**, with **£350 each for two further awardees**.

All three awarded texts will be published by *Art Monthly* and FVU.

**Submission deadline: 3 July 2023 at 12 noon BST.**

Visit [www.fvu.co.uk/projects/michael-opray-prize-2023](http://www.fvu.co.uk/projects/michael-opray-prize-2023) for the winning essays from previous editions of the Award.

## The 2023 Judging Panel

Applications and final texts will be considered by a panel comprising:

**Kondo Heller**, poet, writer, and filmmaker.

**Juliet Jacques**, writer and filmmaker

**Terry Bailey**, Senior Lecturer, Programme Leader, Creative and Professional Writing, University of East London

**Katie Byford**, Projects Manager, Film and Video Umbrella

**Chris McCormack**, Associate Editor, *Art Monthly*

## Awards

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## About the Prize

The Prize is named in memory of the critic, historian and film programmer, **Michael O'Pray**. The guiding presence behind Film and Video Umbrella in its early years (1985-1990), Mike taught at UEL for over two decades, and was a regular contributor to the pages of *Art Monthly*.

Over the course of his long and varied career, Mike was an impassioned and energetic champion of avant-garde cinema, highlighting the continuing influence of key figures from the past, while dynamically promoting contemporary talents in experimental film and video. In his writings, and in the many programmes he curated for Film and Video Umbrella and elsewhere, Mike always endeavoured to make radical, challenging, occasionally esoteric work accessible to a wider public – and it is with this in mind that the award seeks to encourage examples of imaginative, engaging writing that extols and advances this longstanding tradition of experimentation in film and video for a non-specialist audience.

One of the aims of the prize is that the platform it offers helps writers to receive future writing commissions. Previous winners have gone on to contribute new articles for *Art Monthly* and other publications.

## Eligibility

- The Prize is aimed at writers starting out in their careers, having had **no more than four articles about the arts or experimental film published in print or online**. This does not include self-publishing.
- The Michael O'Pray Prize is open to submissions from **writers based anywhere in the UK**. We unfortunately cannot accept applications from those based internationally.
- Submissions must be in **English**, though we welcome applications from writers for whom English is a second or additional language.
- There is **no age limit** for applicants.
- No formal education or qualifications are required to apply to this prize.

We welcome applications on artists' film and moving image artworks from those whose voices and perspectives have historically and continue to be marginalised.

If you have any questions about eligibility please email [admin@fvu.co.uk](mailto:admin@fvu.co.uk). **We will be responding to questions at regular intervals between the 9 May and 26 June.**

## How to Apply

Submissions are processed over email. **Your application must include the following three elements:**

### 1. A previous writing sample (1200 words maximum).

This can be a whole article/text, or an extract, and could be previously published or unpublished. The aim of the prize is to support writers who can enliven and popularise discussion of the experimental spirit in film and video art; therefore, ideally, the sample of writing that you submit would be about artists'



moving image and/or experimental cinema. If you have not previously written about this medium, your sample text could focus on other visual arts media, or assume another form of cultural criticism.

2. **A 300-350 word proposal/pitch for a new text on artists' moving image or experimental cinema.** If you are selected as a finalist, you would go on to write the finished text, to be published by *Art Monthly* and FVU.

The text you are pitching to write, if realised, should be between 1250 – 2000 words. Your proposal could consist of a straightforward review of a forthcoming exhibition, or an existing piece of work; a survey of a wider trend or historical moment in the medium; or it could take a more creative and experimental form.

We strongly recommend reading the [previously awarded texts](#), as well as looking at [writing published with Art Monthly](#) and texts previously published on [FVU's Writing section](#).

3. **A CV.**

Please include your **full name** (or the name under which you write), **phone number**, **email address** and the **region in the UK where you are based**. For the first assessment of your application by the panel, your name and other identifiers will be redacted.

CVs should be no more than two sides of A4, at 11pt font or larger and should include details of any previously published articles/texts.

[NB re eligibility: excluding self-publishing, entrants should have had no more than four articles about the arts or experimental film published in print or online.]

Please email these three items to [admin@fvu.co.uk](mailto:admin@fvu.co.uk) before the submission deadline, **12 noon, 3 July 2023**.

## Equal Opportunities Monitoring

We strongly encourage writers who are under-represented within visual arts in the UK to apply, particularly writers with disabilities or long-term health conditions, and artists from low-income, LGBTQIA+ and global majority backgrounds, and those living outside of London.

If you face barriers to making this type of application, please contact [admin@fvu.co.uk](mailto:admin@fvu.co.uk) at least two weeks in advance of the submission deadline to discuss how we might be able to make adjustments to the application requirements, to facilitate your application. We are however not able to extend the submission deadline.

Once you have applied all applicants will be sent a link to an equal opportunities monitoring form. This will be processed separately from your submission and will not affect your eligibility for the opportunity.

You can view the equal opportunities monitoring data from each year of the Michael O'Pray Prize [here](#).

## Privacy

The personal data you give us in submitting to this prize will be used to process your submission for the Michael O'Pray Prize by Film and Video Umbrella and *Art Monthly*, and will be shared with external members of the selection panel, with the exception of the Equal Opportunities Monitoring form, which will be totally anonymous and not impact the outcome of your application. We will only contact you in connection to this submission. Your personal data will be kept by both Film and Video Umbrella and *Art Monthly* for up to 10 years and will only be used by each organisation for their own research, evaluation, reporting and marketing analysis for opportunities. It will not be passed on to anyone else. If you want to be removed from either organisation's database you can email Susanna Chisholm: susanna@fvu.co.uk and Chris McCormack: chris@artmonthly.co.uk. You have the right to contact the Information Commissioner's Office should you wish to complain about how your information has been handled.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### How strict is the four article limit?

#### **What if I have had more than four articles published, but they aren't all about artists' moving image, or experimental film?**

We are predominantly interested to discover new voices in arts criticism, particularly those writing about artists' moving-image work. However, if for example you have had a few more than four articles published, but these are unrelated to film or visual arts, then we would still consider your application.

#### **Does self-publishing count towards my four published article limit?**

Self-publishing on personal websites, blogs, Medium, Substack or other equivalent platform does not count towards the article limit.

#### **What if I have never had an article published before?**

There is no minimum. If you are an unpublished or inexperienced writer, with an ambition to break into the world of arts criticism, then you are exactly who we are looking for.

#### **Does the proposed text need to be about a recent film or exhibition?**

No. It could be about older/more historical work instead.

#### **If we write collaboratively, are we able to apply as a duo, or group?**

Yes. So long as under the authorship of that duo or group you have not had more than four articles published in print or online. If however one or more in the group are already established writers, we may

consider you ineligible, depending on the balance of experienced writers to inexperienced writers in your group.

**Is there any support available for those who face barriers to making this kind of application?**

If you face barriers to making this type of application, please contact [admin@fvu.co.uk](mailto:admin@fvu.co.uk) at least two weeks in advance of the submission deadline to discuss how we might be able to make adjustments to the application requirements, to facilitate your application. We are however not able to extend the submission deadline.

**If my application is successful, and I am one of the three writers invited to realise their proposed text, how long will I get to write the finished article?**

You will be given at least one month to write your text. Edits may then be proposed or requested by *Art Monthly* and FVU before it is published, and there will be a one to two-week period for this editorial process to take place.

**If you haven't seen your question answered here, or need any clarification, please email us at [admin@fvu.co.uk](mailto:admin@fvu.co.uk). We will be responding to questions at regular intervals between the 9 May and 26 June.**