

# American Academy of Arts and Letters

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ARTS AND LETTERS ANNOUNCES

#### 2011 LITERATURE AWARD WINNERS

and

#### THE INAUGURAL JOHN UPDIKE AWARD

New York, March 22, 2011 – The American Academy of Arts and Letters announced today the names of 19 writers who will receive its 2011 awards in literature. The awards will be presented in New York in May at the Academy's annual Ceremonial. The John Updike award of \$20,000, established by Mrs. John Updike in memory of her husband, is to be given biennially to a writer in mid-career who has demonstrated consistent excellence. The literature prizes, totaling \$185,000 honor both established and emerging writers of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. The Academy's 250 members nominate candidates, and a rotating committee of writers selects winners. This year's committee members were Paula Fox, Philip Levine, Romulus Linney, Alison Lurie, and Joy Williams.

#### Arts and Letters Awards in Literature

Eight Arts and Letters Awards in Literature honor exceptional accomplishment in any genre. This year, the awards of \$7500 each will be presented to

**MARK DOTY · ALICE FULTON · JOHN KOETHE · COLUM McCANN**  
**SUZAN-LORI PARKS · ALEX ROSS · LESLIE MARMON SILKO · JOSEPH STROUD**

#### Award of Merit Medal for Drama

\$10,000 and a medal to an outstanding playwright.

**JOHN PATRICK SHANLEY**

#### Benjamin H. Danks Award

\$20,000 to recognize a talented young writer.

**KAREN RUSSELL**

#### E. M. Forster Award

\$20,000 to a young writer from the United Kingdom or Ireland for a stay in the United States. Award jury: Anita Desai, Margaret Drabble, Paul Muldoon

**RACHEL SEIFFERT**

#### Sue Kaufman Prize for First Fiction

\$5000 for the best work of first fiction (novel or short stories) published in 2010.

**BRANDO SKYHORSE**  
for *The Madonnas of Echo Park*

#### Addison M. Metcalf Award

\$10,000 to a young writer of fiction, nonfiction, drama, or poetry.

**MATTHEA HARVEY**

#### Arthur Rense Poetry Prize

Triennial award of \$20,000 to an exceptional poet.

**DAVID WAGONER**

**Rome Fellowships in Literature**

A one-year residency (2011–2012) at the American Academy in Rome.

**MATT DONOVAN**  
**SUZANNE RIVECCA**

**Rosenthal Family Foundation Award**

\$10,000 to a young writer of considerable literary talent for a work published in 2010.

**MONIQUE TRUONG**  
for *Bitter in the Mouth*

**John Updike Award**

A biennial award of \$20,000 to a writer in mid-career who has demonstrated consistent excellence.

**TOM SLEIGH**

**Harold D. Vursell Memorial Award**

\$10,000 to a writer whose work merits recognition for the quality of its prose style.

**THOMAS MALLON**

The American Academy of Arts and Letters was established in 1898 to “foster, assist, and sustain an interest in literature, music, and the fine arts.” Election to the Academy is considered the highest formal recognition of artistic merit in this country. Founding members include William Merritt Chase, Kenyon Cox, Daniel Chester French, Childe Hassam, Henry James, Theodore Roosevelt, Elihu Vedder, and Woodrow Wilson. The Academy is currently comprised of 250 of America’s leading voices in the fields of Art, Architecture, Literature, and Music. The Academy presents exhibitions of art, architecture, and manuscripts, and readings and performances of new musicals. It is located in three landmark buildings designed by McKim, Mead & White, Cass Gilbert, and Charles Pratt Huntington, on Audubon Terrace at 155 Street and Broadway, New York City.