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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Pushkin House Prize Awarded to Owen Matthews for 'Overreach: The Inside Story of Putin's War Against Ukraine'

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Author Owen Matthews **James Hill**

The 2023 Pushkin House Book Prize was awarded on Thursday evening to Owen Matthews for his book "Overreach: The Inside Story of Putin's War Against Ukraine."

Using accounts from current and former Kremlin insiders, testimony of captured Russian soldiers and on-the-ground reporting from Russia and Ukraine, Matthews — a journalist who has been covering Russia and the region for more than a quarter of a century — tracks the sources of the war from its conception and follows the first months of the conflict.

Yekaterina Schulmann, chair of the judges, said: "'Overreach' is an impressive achievement: a work of accessible history, with very vivid writing, depth and historical sweep, which helps explain the context of Russia's current war."

The judges also gave particular praise to Jade McGlynn's "Russia's War" for her original and

deeply researched analysis into the attitudes behind the support for the war by the Russian public.

Elena Sudakova, executive director of Pushkin House, said: "With the Pushkin House Book Prize we aim to present to a broad public books that will stimulate urgently-needed reflection and discussion, supported by scholarly research and evidence contributing to open discourse. 'Overreach' fits that role extremely well."

The award, which carries a monetary prize of £10,000, was announced at a ceremony held in London on Thursday evening.

The judges of this year's award were chairperson **Yekaterina Schulmann**, Bosch Academy Richard von Weizsäcker fellow and political commentator; **Philip Bullock**, professor of Russian Literature and Music at the University of Oxford; **Masha Gessen**, prize-winning author, staff writer for The New Yorker, a professor of writing at Bard College and activist; **Alexander Rodnyansky**, Golden Globe winner and Academy Award-nominated Ukrainian film producer and director; and **Prof. Mary Elise Sarotte**, winner of the 2022 Pushkin House Book Prize and leading expert on foreign policy.

The six books shortlisted for the award represented a wide range of subject matter, time periods and experiences:

- "Muppets in Moscow: The Unexpected Crazy True Story of Making Sesame Street in Russia" by Natasha Lance Rogoff
- "Overreach: The Inside Story of Putin and Russia's War Against Ukraine" by Owen Matthews
- "Russia's War" by Jade McGlynn
- "Places of Tenderness and Heat: The Queer Milieu of Fin-de-Siècle St. Petersburg" by Olga Petri
- "Cigarettes and Soviets: Smoking in the USSR" (NIU Series in Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies) by Tricia Starks
- "Red Leviathan: The Secret History of Soviet Whaling" by Ryan Tucker Jones

The Pushkin House is an independent cultural center founded in 1954 by a group of Russian emigres and British Russophiles. It has always been a non-political organization that has been a venue for events that represent a variety of views about Russia and Russian culture, past, present and future. Today they are "committed to raising important and sometimes uncomfortable questions about Russia's past and present, including issues of decolonization and the ideologically charged legacy of Russian culture today, particularly in light of current events in Ukraine."

The annual Pushkin House Book Prize was founded in 2013 and is made possible by contributions from Douglas Smith and Stephanie Ellis-Smith, and The Polonsky Foundation.

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