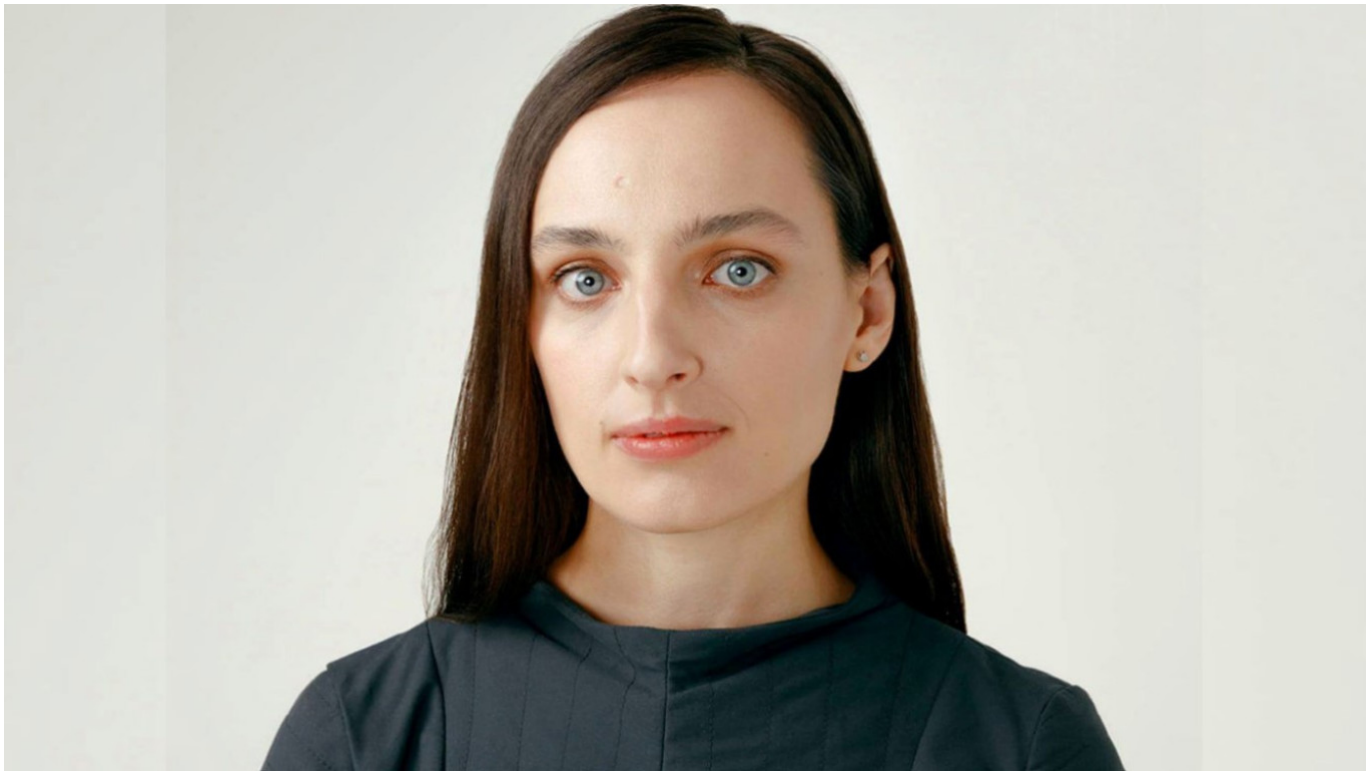
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2024 Pushkin House Book Prize Awarded to Elena Kostyuchenko for 'I Love Russia: Reporting From a Lost Country'

By Michele A. Berdy

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Author Elena Kostyuchenko © **Julia Tatarchenko**

On Friday evening the Pushkin House announced the winner of the 2024 Book Prize: "I Love Russia: Reporting From a Lost Country," written by Elena Kostyuchenko and translated from Russian by Ilona Yazhbin Chavasse and Bela Shayevich.

The announcement was made at the awards ceremony held at Swedenborg House in Bloomsbury, hosted by Andrew Jack, founder of the Prize, and Elena Sudakova, Executive Director of Pushkin House. The prize comes with a £10,000 award.

"I Love Russia" was one of six books shortlisted for the prize on a wide variety of topics. The five other nominated books were: "Russian Style: Performing Gender, Power, and Putinism"

by Julie A. Cassiday; "The Gulag Doctors: Life, Death, and Medicine in Stalin's Labour Camps" by Dan Healey; "High Caucasus: A Mountain Quest in Russia's Haunted Hinterland" by Tom Parfitt: "The Russo-Ukrainian War" by Serhii Plokhy; and "Words and Silences: Nenets Reindeer Herders and Russian Evangelical Missionaries in the Post-Soviet Arctic" by Laur Vallikivi.

Philip Ross Bullock, chair of the judges, said: "This year's shortlist offers a panorama of life in modern Russia and the lands and peoples it has so often sought to dominate. It voices the experiences of a wide and diverse range of individuals and attests to the power of empathy and imagination to produce writing of the very highest quality. The winner brings a fierce emotional perspective on our understanding of Russia's present and recent past. Elena Kostyuchenko's commitment to telling difficult stories is matched by her uncompromising dedication to the people whose lives she has documented."

Kostyuchenko's "I Love Russia" draws on her 17-year career writing long-form articles for Novaya Gazeta, stories from her travels around Russia, particularly to the most remote and poorest regions; and memoirs of her own life — growing up, coming out, buying an apartment, working in a country spiraling towards authoritarianism.

Andrew Jack, founder of the prize, told The Moscow Times, "Elena Kostyuchenko is an extremely well-deserved winner of this year's Pushkin House book prize among a group of exceptional shortlisted authors writing authoritatively on broad range of important issues. Her powerful and courageous reporting on people often neglected and oppressed deserves a broad audience."

The Pushkin House Book Prize was established in 2013 to award and bring greater attention to non-fiction books from and/or about Russia, written or translated into English. The subjects of the shortlisted books do not only focus on life and culture within the borders of the present-day Russian Federation, but also the experience of those whose native lands were affected by the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union.

In recent years the winners included Owen Matthews for "Overreach: The Inside Story of Putin's War Against Ukraine"; Mary E. Sarotte for "Not One Inch: America, Russia, and the Making of Post-Cold War Stalemate"; Archie Brown for "The Human Factor: Gorbachev, Reagan, and Thatcher and the End of the Cold War"; Sergei Medvedev for "The Return of the Russian Leviathan"; and Serhii Plokhy for "Chernobyl."

This year's judges were Philip Ross Bullock, professor of Russian Literature and Music at the University of Oxford; Ruth Maclennan, artist and researcher; Anna Narinskaya author, journalist, curator, and documentary filmmaker; Gulnaz Sharafutdinova, Professor of Russian Politics and Director of the King's Russia Institute at King's College London; and Emma Widdis, Professor of Slavonic Studies at the University of Cambridge.

The Pushkin House Book Prize is supported by Douglas Smith and Stephanie Ellis-Smith, and the Polonsky Foundation.

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