

PRESS RELEASE

UWA Publishing

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THE DOROTHY HEWETT AWARD 2021:
UWA PUBLISHING ANNOUNCES THIS YEAR'S
WINNERS

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UWA Publishing, in partnership with The Copyright Agency Cultural Fund, is proud to be announcing the winners of the 2021 Dorothy Hewett Award for an Unpublished Manuscript.

The judging panel has selected the following two works as this year's joint winners:

Hopeless Kingdom by Kgshak Akec

Strangest Places by Joshua Kemp

This is the first time the Award has selected two winners. Both will receive a publishing contract and manuscript development with UWA Publishing, and the \$10,000 prize money will be split between the two authors.

This year, the Award received over 350 submissions from all over Australia. The judges noted the exceptional talent displayed in both manuscripts and the range they represent within Australian literary fiction.

Both books will be released in 2022.

More information on the award, the shortlistees and the judges can be found on the UWA Publishing website.

The 2020 Award winner was Karen Wyld's debut novel, *Where the Fruit Falls*, which was released last October. The inaugural winner, *Extinctions* by Josephine Wilson, went on to win the Miles Franklin Literary Award in 2017.

UWA Publishing thanks the Copyright Agency for its ongoing support for the Dorothy Hewett Award and congratulates the winners on this achievement.



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JUDGES' COMMENTS

Hopeless Kingdom by Kgshak Akec

Akec's coming of age story is a powerful and timely exploration of belonging, race, gender and migration that follows a family from Sudan to Geelong via Cairo and Sydney. Akec contrasts the lives of the mothers, daughters, sisters, grandmothers and cousins in this family through form and language, conjuring a powerful refraction of the experiences of African Australian women. Her storytelling is deeply personal, as well as relatable and insightful. Akec is an exciting new voice in the Australian writing scene.

Kgshak is a writer, a poet, and a lover of words.

From the moment she learned how to write in English at the age of six, Kgshak has been writing out the stories that live inside her mind.

Fascinated by human experience, the untold words and unsung songs of the day-to-day, as an early-career writer, Kgshak finds herself drawn to stories that transport and are grounded in truth. Her deep love of stories and world-building is existential.

"To fall into the pages of a book and emerge into an entirely new world is more than just escapism, it's magic. To write is not only my passion, it's also my power."

Hopeless Kingdom is her first manuscript but only the earliest work in her long line of stories.

Strangest Places by Joshua Kemp

Joshua Kemp's *Strangest Places* is a taut modern Western Australian western. Moral complexity and personal failure haunt its spare landscapes. Kemp's book is a frontier novel that captures the problematic quality of settler Australia. It shares some of the lyrical power and gothic splendour of Cormac McCarthy's border trilogy. But it also seems, in its eye for detail and ear for vernacular Australian speech, firmly in the tradition of Randolph Stow and Tim Winton.

Joshua Kemp is an author of Australian Gothic fiction. His short stories have appeared in journals such as *Kill Your Darlings*, *Overland*, *Seizure*, *Tincture* and *Breach*. Last year, he was shortlisted for the Kill Your Darlings Unpublished Manuscript Award and was longlisted for the Fogarty Literary Award the year before that. He is currently doing his PhD at Edith Cowan University in Bunbury.



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