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News

For immediate release

Penn State announces winner of the inaugural Lynd Ward Prize for Graphic Novel of the Year

University Park, PA—Penn State University Libraries and the Pennsylvania Center for the Book are pleased to announce that “Duncan the Wonder Dog” by Adam Hines, published by AdHouse Books, has won the inaugural Lynd Ward Prize for Graphic Novel of the Year.

“Duncan the Wonder Dog” is at once a breath-taking art book, a beautifully rendered comic and a story of the ethics of human relationships with animals. Jurors commented, “I was surprised and astounded at each page: the composition, layout, drawings and writing were so masterfully done, and Hines opens up new possibilities for comics as a creative medium. The content and form of the book are challenging but always rewarding, and the range of compositional techniques are ambitious and innovative. This book presents an experience of reading unlike any I have ever encountered in comics—a visually smart book. The author’s understanding of fine art printmaking, intaglio and lithography, is apparent and his techniques seamlessly recall these traditional forms of printmaking. Each of the 400 pages is a remarkable pastiche of printmaking techniques that are not self conscious nor gimmicky, but purposeful in conveying the sober content of this narrative. Not an easy book—it takes time to absorb the work, but it is time in which to savor the nuances of each page.”

The Lynd Ward Graphic Novel Prize honors Ward’s seminal influence in the development of the graphic novel and celebrates the gift of an extensive collection of Ward’s wood engravings, original book illustrations and other graphic art donated to the Libraries by his daughters Robin Ward Savage and Nanda Weedon Ward. Between 1929 and 1937, Ward published his six groundbreaking wordless novels—“Gods’ Man,” “Madman’s Drum,” “Wild Pilgrimage,” “Prelude to a Million Years,” “Song without Words” and “Vertigo.” The six books were re-issued last October by The Library of America in a two-volume boxed set entitled “Lynd Ward: Six Novels in Woodcuts,” the first time this nonprofit publisher has included a graphic novelist in its award-winning series.

Sponsored by Penn State University Libraries and administered by the Pennsylvania Center for the Book, an affiliate of the Center for the Book at the Library of Congress, the Lynd Ward Graphic Novel Prize is presented annually to the best graphic novel, fiction or non-fiction, published in the previous calendar year by a living U.S. citizen or resident. Adam Hines will receive a cash prize of \$2500, the two-volume set of Ward’s six novels published by The Library of America and a suitable commemorative at a ceremony to be held at Penn State later this year.

The prize jury also awarded an honor book prize to Drew Weing for “Set to Sea,” published by Fantagraphics. In this book, small in size but large in vision, the art of storytelling through pure visual image is at its height. Described by jurors as “a small wonder of visual narrative, the book’s superbly executed single-panel pages combine iconic cartooning and realistic detail to

deliver a quietly moving story that unfolds primarily through image. It epitomizes the whole notion of the graphic novel set forth by Lynd Ward—the illustrations are brilliant and the balance between word and image is spot on. The book encapsulates the power of comics to combine an aesthetic experience with a lovely story with strength and beauty that lies with its simplicity and subtlety.” Weing will accept his honor prize at an event co-sponsored by Penn State and the Pennsylvania Humanities Council at 6 p.m., on May 23, in Foster Auditorium on the Penn State University Park campus.

The selection jury for the prize has representatives from various Penn State academic departments who use the graphic novel in their teaching or research, as well as representatives with graphic novel expertise from among Penn State’s alumni. The selection jury for 2011 included John Meier, an assistant librarian in the Physical and Mathematical Sciences Library; Jarod Rosello, a cartoonist, writer and doctoral student in curriculum and instruction in the College of Education; Jean Sanders, an associate professor of art in the School of Visual Arts; Scott T. Smith, an assistant professor of English and comparative literature in the College of the Liberal Arts; and Jerry Zolten, an associate professor of communication arts and sciences and American studies at Penn State Altoona.

For more information about the selection criteria and how to submit books for consideration for the 2012 Lynd Ward Graphic Novel Prize, contact Steven Herb at 814-863-2141 or visit the Pennsylvania Center for the Book website:
<http://www.pabook.libraries.psu.edu/activities/ward/index.html>.

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