



News

For immediate release

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Penn State announces winner of the 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 “Building Stories,” by Chris Ware and published by Pantheon, has won the Lynd Ward Prize for Graphic Novel of the Year for 2013.

“Ware's astute and precise renderings, composed with a tender yet unblinking clinical eye and fleshed out with pristine and evocative coloring, trace the mundane routines and moments of small crisis that his characters inhabit. In so doing, he produces not a document but a monument, a work whose narrative logic is architectural rather than chronological: a set of lives to be encountered, traversed, and returned to as the rooms and floors of a building might be over the years, still sequentially but not in a limited or decided-upon sequence. Stories, here, are meant not to be told but to be *built*, explored, inhabited—not merely visited but lived in,” observes the award jury.

The Lynd Ward Graphic Novel Prize honors Ward’s 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 Penn State's University 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 in October 2010, by The Library of America in a two-volume boxed set entitled “Lynd Ward: Six Novels in Woodcuts,” the first time this nonprofit publisher included a graphic novelist in its award-winning series.

Sponsored by Penn State's 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. or Canadian citizen or resident. Chris Ware 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 at Penn State to be scheduled later this year.

The jury also awarded two honor books: “Heads or Tails,” by Lilli Carré and published by Fantagraphics Books, and “The Understanding Monster—Book One,” by Theo Ellsworth and published by Secret Acres. Of “Heads or Tails” a juror says, “Each story is exquisitely crafted, demonstrating both a compelling literary style and a rich, engaging design sense that can seem deceptively naïve or childlike on first glance but in context reveals striking sophistication and complexity.” “The Understanding Monster” says a juror, “is an endlessly captivating and rewarding piece of visual and narrative art.”

The selection jury had 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 and students.

The selection jury for the 2013 prize included Chair Adam Haley, Ph.D., lecturer in English, College of the Liberal Arts; Sadie Buckallew, senior majoring in Communication Arts and Sciences, College of the Liberal Arts; Amanda Clossen, learning design librarian, Library Learning Services, University Libraries; Michael Jay Green, M.D., M.S., professor of humanities and medicine, College of Medicine; and J. Jeff Ungar, rare books cataloger, Cataloging and Metadata Services, University Libraries.

For more information about the selection criteria and how to submit books for consideration for the 2014 Lynd Ward Graphic Novel Prize, contact Ellysa Cahoy at ellysa@psu.edu or 814-865-9696 or visit the Pennsylvania Center for the Book website: <http://pabook.libraries.psu.edu/activities/ward/index.html>.

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