



Ute Lischke, Professor
Department of English and Film Studies
519-884-0710 ext. 3607 or ulischke@wlu.ca

Kevin Crowley, Director, Communications & Public Affairs
Wilfrid Laurier University
519-884-0710 ext. 3070 or kcrowley@wlu.ca

AUG. 28, 2012 | 114-12

Shortlist announced for the 2012 Edna Staebler Award for Creative Non-Fiction

WATERLOO – Three books have been shortlisted for the 2012 Edna Staebler Award for Creative Non-Fiction. The \$10,000 award, administered by Wilfrid Laurier University, encourages and recognizes Canadian writers for a first or second work of creative non-fiction that includes a Canadian locale and/or significance.

Award juror and Laurier professor Ute Lischke said this year's submissions were "extremely rich and varied."

"Creative non-fiction, which is literary in form rather than purely journalistic, is becoming a very popular genre," she said. "The jurors worked extremely hard, and in the end had to make a tough decision."

The books on the 2011 shortlist are:

Joshua Knelman for *Hot Art: Chasing Thieves and Detectives through the Secret World of Stolen Art* (Douglas and McIntyre, 2011)

In *Hot Art*, Knelman takes what seems like a rarefied topic—art theft—and produces an engrossing narrative that is as riveting as any best-selling mystery novel, except that all of it is true. Even readers who aren't mourning the loss of the family Monet will be drawn into Knelman's deeply researched portrait of calculating art thieves and the handful of dedicated investigators who track them around the globe, often for years at a time. It is a fast-paced story that reveals how art theft is not the work of bored aristocratic millionaires, as Hollywood might have us believe, but rather the work of organized crime syndicates who implicate the often priceless paintings and sculptures in money laundering and drug trafficking. *Hot Art* is a hugely satisfying, real-life detective story that will surprise and intrigue the reader to the very last page.

Robyn Michele Levy for *Most of Me: Surviving My Medical Meltdown* (Greystone Books, 2012)

In her debut memoir, Levy delicately balances her account of her devastating symptoms and medical conditions with imagination and humour. Diagnosed with Parkinson's at age 43, then with breast cancer eight months later, Levy's memoir chronicles her symptoms and the progression of her illness. With irreverent humour, Levy describes how she manages her conditions through the maze of health professionals, eventually taking control of her life with the help of her family, friends and neighbours. Her writing is the process through which she eventually re-affirms her life and is a testament to the healing power of humour.

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Andrew Westoll for *The Chimps of Fauna Sanctuary. A Canadian Story of Resilience and Recovery* (Harper Collins, 2011)

Westoll's account of the two months he spent as a volunteer at a Canadian sanctuary for traumatized and abused chimpanzees rescued from research labs describes an experience that is often harrowing and always rewarding. The story of daily life with the chimps is woven together with brief historical commentary about human interaction with chimpanzees, from the 17th century when they were objects of myth and superstition to their study by primatologist Jane Goodall. Westoll draws us into the chimphouse to meet the thirteen personalities that are the chimps of Fauna Sanctuary and the extraordinary people who care for them. He also points to practical and powerful ways to protect these magnificent creatures for the future, perhaps the most important feature of this compelling work.

The winner of the Edna Staebler Award for Creative Non-Fiction will be announced Sept. 19, 2012. The award will be presented at a dinner and reading Nov. 13 in Waterloo and Nov. 14 in Brantford.

About the Edna Staebler Award for Creative Non-Fiction

Established and endowed by writer and literary journalist Edna Staebler, the Edna Staebler Award for Creative Non-Fiction is administered by Wilfrid Laurier University, the only university in Canada to bestow a nationally recognized literary award. Staebler, who died in 2006, was an award-winning journalist and a member of the Order of Canada. Designed to encourage new Canadian talent, the award is open to authors who have published a first or second book with a Canadian locale and/or significance. Winning books are distinguished by first-hand research, well-crafted interpretive writing and a creative use of language or approach to the subject matter. The list of previous winners includes authors such as Linden MacIntyre, Wayson Choy and Elizabeth Hay. The award is celebrating its 21st anniversary this year.

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