



Significant Others

frank r jagoe

Winner of the 2024 Prototype Prize

The world is always speaking to you. Held together by a shared language, all beings are constantly, endlessly chatting away, saying something or other. What this language constitutes may vary, but all matter is alive, and it always has something to say.

Significant Others is not a world of magical realism, but a different means of describing the existing world. It offers an opposition to the reductive logic of Western capitalism which views other-than-humans as only resources for extraction. Other beings feature as metaphors, or omens, but also as fleshly, agential creatures. Often the encounters are erotically charged, using Audre Lorde's definition of the erotic as an intentionality that can permeate all aspects of life.

In one story, the protagonist attempts to figure out how to have sex with a bathroom mirror; in another, a catfish drags itself through Piccadilly Circus tube station with an uncomfortable level of intimacy with all the surfaces they come into contact with; a person births a stone from their rectum; a lump of topaz in someone's brain triggers their depression; a human tries to talk to a limestone cliff using touch; a swan drinks the bathwater of their human lover.

This book is a collection of different fictionalised narratives, but across them they chart, somewhat anachronistically, a journey from total withdrawal to reimmersion in the ebb and flow of living, alongside a growing recognition that isolation is never truly possible. Life insists.

so
many
people
everywhere.



frank r jagoe's work is a reclamation of madness and monstrosity in opposition to the exclusionary category of the human. Often it explores communication with other-than-humans: in recognition that we are in community with each other; in acknowledgement of the personhood of other-than-human beings; and in order to displace a western hierarchy that claims humanity as the highest form of existence. They are particularly drawn to considering how madness and monstrosity are defined in relation to language usage, and in opposition to rationality, coherence, and 'reason'. Highlighting forms of communication beyond words, beyond class-based language, beyond human forms of speech, feels an urgent imperative.

Influenced by medieval lapidary texts, jagoe's most recent focus has been finding kinship with rocks, and trying to think through how we can communicate across vastly different experiences of time. They are also currently trying to make friends with a group of crows in Victoria Park.

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‘*Significant Others* is a fully grown and highly original manuscript. It is a remarkable and beautiful piece of writing which forges a new language of material aesthetics to think and write beyond the human. There is a fluency and elasticity of invention here, resonating with the processes of artistic creation and encounter. Exciting, passionate and surprising.’

– Bhanu Kapil, Tom McCarthy and Elizabeth Price, judges of the 2024 Prototype Prize

ABOUT THE PROTOTYPE PRIZE

The Prototype Prize was established in 2024 to celebrate the work of writers and artists working at the intersections of different literary and artistic forms. It was judged in its inaugural year by Bhanu Kapil, Tom McCarthy and Elizabeth Price, and run by Prototype and Monitor Books, in partnership with frieze magazine, awarding categories for both book-length and short-form works.

frank r jagoe (formerly Rebecca Jagoe) won the book-length category, receiving a prize of £3,000 plus publication by Prototype, while Remi Graves won the short-form category, with a prize of £2,000 plus publication by Monitor Books.

The prize was run in conjunction with an adjacent development programme in partnership with New Writing North, supporting under-represented and emerging writers and artists through a six-month long scheme consisting of monthly seminars with leading practitioners, and editorial development and group feedback sessions,

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ABOUT PROTOTYPE

Founded in 2019, Prototype is a publisher of fiction, poetry, anthologies and inter-disciplinary projects. With an emphasis on producing unique and beautiful books, we are committed to creating new possibilities in publishing and championing the work of both emerging and established voices in contemporary literature.

Recent prose titles include *Fair: The Life-Art of Translation* by Jen Calleja; *The Seers* by Sulaiman Addonia, longlisted for the RSL Ondaatje Prize and Republic of Consciousness Prize; *Prairie, Dresses, Art, Other* by Danielle Dutton, longlisted for the Gordon Burn Prize, and *Lori & Joe* by Amy Arnold, shortlisted for the Goldsmiths Prize. Recent titles from House Sparrow Press, an imprint of Prototype, include a facsimile edition of Derek Jarman’s only poetry collection, *A Finger in the Fishes Mouth*, which has long been unavailable.

Other recent poetry collections include *Silk Work* by Imogen Cassels; *rock flight* by Hasib Hourani, a Poetry Book Society Recommendation and shortlisted for the Seamus Heaney First Collection Poetry Prize; a new edition of Sascha Aurora Akhtar’s *The Grimoire of Grimalkin*, and Bhanu Kapil’s *Incubation: a space for monsters*, in its first UK edition. Previously, we published *Journeys Across Breath*, the first volume of collected poems by Stephen Watts, and Lucy Mercer’s debut collection *Emblem*, which was the Poetry Book Society’s Summer Choice for 2022, and Lavinia Singer’s collection *Artifice*.