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Mass Center for the Book celebrates 25th Massachusetts Book Awards cycle with launch of two new categories

Northampton, MA—On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Massachusetts Book Awards, the Mass Center for the Book (MCB) is pleased to announce the expansion of the awards program with two new categories—a biannual award for the best graphic novel or memoir from a Massachusetts-based creator and a “Notable Contribution to Publishing” award in recognition of the exceptional output of the state’s publishing community. Submissions will be accepted from September 3 through December 15, 2024.

Best Graphic Novel or Memoir Award

“The time is ripe for this expansion. Graphic novel submissions to the Book Awards have exploded in recent years, readers of all ages are hungry for this work, and the Massachusetts comics community consists of a who’s who of top writers and creators,” Courtney Andree, MCB’s executive director, noted.

For acclaimed cartoonist, author, and BU professor Joel Christian Gill, the creation of the graphic novel award was a logical next step: “An award that honors the work and dedication of cartoonists is an exceptional addition to the already extensive work that the Mass Center for the Book does. To honor comics is an incredible leap, and adds to the growing awareness that comics are a serious medium telling important stories and not just pop culture.” Shelli Paroline, executive director of the Boston Comic Arts Foundation, added, “We are thrilled that this new award from Mass Center for the Book will reflect the pride and the commitment our Massachusetts comics community has for this beautiful storytelling medium.”

MCB invites publishers and authors to submit full-length graphic novels, graphic memoirs, or works of graphic non-fiction. Authors and illustrators must be Massachusetts-based. Works intended for all age-groups (adult, YA/middle grade, and early readers) will be considered, and the winner will receive a $1000 cash prize.

Notable Contribution to Publishing Award

The “Notable Contribution to Publishing” award offers new opportunities to celebrate the excellence and artistry of presses across Massachusetts. As Andree acknowledges, “While the Mass Book Awards program has always excelled at highlighting the work of Massachusetts writers, we now have a chance to shine a light on the exceptional work of publishers that operate in our own backyard. We have an incredible publishing community in this state—running the gamut from art presses to children’s publishing houses, from world-class university presses to vibrant indie publishers.”
Massachusetts publishers and presses are invited to submit up to one title annually that is representative of the high caliber of their work. This new category considers the quality of the book as object—including production standards, design, and printing. (Books may be written by Massachusetts-based or out-of-state authors.) Winning publishers will receive a $500 prize and will be recognized at the annual Massachusetts Book Awards ceremony.

**About the Massachusetts Book Awards**

The Massachusetts Books Awards have been presented each year since 2000. Books written and illustrated by Massachusetts residents are selected for originality, liveliness, and engaging presentation, as well as for the quality of their publication. The awards program recognizes compelling works of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, translated literature, children’s picture books/early readers, and middle-grade/young adult literature. For more information on recent winners and submission guidelines please visit https://www.massbook.org/mass-book-awards.

**About Massachusetts Center for the Book**

Founded in 2000, Massachusetts Center for the Book is the Commonwealth affiliate of the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress. MCB is charged with developing, supporting, and promoting cultural programming to advance the cause of books, reading, and libraries across Massachusetts. MCB runs youth and family literacy programs; operates the Massachusetts Book Awards and the writing initiative, Letters About Literature; represents the Commonwealth at the National Book Festival; and partners with community organizations on literary initiatives and events, big and small, across the Commonwealth.