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SEATTLE ARTS & LECTURES NAMES IJEOMA OLUO AND JACK STRAW CULTURAL CENTER AS 8TH ANNUAL PROWDA LITERARY CHAMPIONS

Seattle, WA—March 25, 2021: [Seattle Arts & Lectures](#) (SAL) announced today the winners of the eighth annual [Prowda Literary Champion Awards](#): Ijeoma Oluo, for her work on the [Seattle Artist Relief Fund](#), and Jack Straw Cultural Center.

[The Prowda Literary Champion Award](#) is named for Sherry Prowda, SAL's founder and first Executive Director. It was created to honor Prowda's vision of a future in which imaginative acts such as reading, writing, and creative thinking are indispensable to a curious, engaged, democratic society. Each year, the award celebrates the individuals and organizations that make Seattle an outstanding place for writers and readers.

The 2021 Prowda Award Selection Committee was comprised of local literary luminaries: Paul Constant, co-founder of *The Seattle Review of Books*; Mary Ann Gwinn, former *Seattle Times* book editor; Claudia Castro Luna, Washington State Poet Laureate and author of *Killing Marías*; Jennie Shortridge, local bestselling author of *Love Water Memory* and co-founder of Seattle7Writers; and Rick Simonson of Elliott Bay Book Company.

The awardees are honored on the [SAL website](#) and social media platforms with a video that shares why their work matters.

About the Winners:

[Ijeoma Oluo](#) is a writer, activist, and the *New York Times* best-selling

author of *So You Want to Talk About Race* (2018) and *Mediocre: The Dangerous Legacy of White Male America* (2020). Oluo is also a founder of [Seattle Artist Relief Fund](#), a fund that is dedicated to supporting BIPOC artists in the Seattle area during the coronavirus pandemic by providing relief funds. Just this week, Oluo announced that she is set to write and publish a third book titled *Be a Revolution*.

Paul Constant wrote of Ijeoma Oluo:

“Most writers aren't leaders. Writers generally stand outside of and apart from society, offering essential context and analysis that helps us better understand ourselves. They're not at the front of pack, leading by example—they're researching history, or imagining exciting new ways to live, or refining their understanding of our day-to-day lives. With her two bestselling books about race in America, Ijeoma Oluo has explained our society to us in language that is both clear and precise. But when COVID-19 devastated Seattle's arts community, Oluo leapt into action, establishing a fund to financially support Seattle's artists of color. Any writer could have pointed out the inequities in the system, but Oluo worked to do something about it, tirelessly working for the Seattle Artists Relief Fund to get money into the pockets of the BIPOC artists, writers, and performers who needed it most. She is a writer who lives her words, and a writer whose words call us to action—a leader of our community.”

[Jack Straw Cultural Center](#) is the Northwest's only non-profit multidisciplinary audio arts center. A community-based resource since 1962, Jack Straw provides a production facility that is unlike any other in the region for local artists who work creatively with sound. Jack Straw Cultural Center exists to foster the communication of arts, ideas, and information to diverse audiences through audio media, providing creation and production opportunities in audio media, including radio, theater, film, video, music, and literature.

Jack Straw focuses on annual artist residencies through the Artist Support Program, the Writers Program, and the Gallery Residency Program; art and technology education for all ages; arts and heritage partnerships; and radio and podcast production. The Jack Straw Foundation was founded in 1962 by a group of educators, artists, and journalists with the goal of starting a non-commercial radio stations whose main purpose was to be a forum for the discussion and presentation of science, arts, and public

affairs programs. The radio station was sold in 1984, and the Foundation continued to produce and present innovative and neglected sonic arts. Joan Rabinowitz is the Executive Director.

Paul Constant wrote of Joan and Jack Straw:

“What Joan Rabinowitz has built with Jack Straw is a remarkable resource for Seattle. She has helped generations of Seattle's writers find their voices, giving them the confidence and skills to speak their words aloud—to inspire, educate, and entertain audiences in new ways. Seattle is an internationally recognized city of literature in part because we have such a strong tradition of readings and performances—because the words that our writers choose to share don't restrain themselves to the page. At a time when podcasts and oral storytelling has achieved new prominence around the globe, Seattle's literary community is decades ahead of the curve thanks to Jack Straw—and Joan Rabinowitz's singular vision.”

For more information on the The Prowda Literary Champion Awards and this year's winners, visit [SAL's website](#).

About Seattle Arts & Lectures: Founded in 1987, Seattle Arts & Lectures champions the literary arts by engaging and inspiring readers and writers of all generations in the Puget Sound region. SAL's programs include the Literary Arts Series, Poetry Series, Women You Need to Know (WYNK), Journalism Series, SAL Presents, Hinge, Local Voices, Summer Book Bingo, the Youth Poet Laureate (YPL) program, and Writers in the Schools (WITS). For more information about SAL, visit [lectures.org](#).

Photos available upon request.

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