



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### TWO AUTHORS AWARDED CHARLES PERKINS CENTRE WRITER IN RESIDENCY

Two high-profile Australian authors have been announced as winners of the [2017 Writer in Residence Fellowship](#) at the University of Sydney's [Charles Perkins Centre](#).

Playwright Alana Valentine and writer Mireille Juchau will each receive \$100,000 and spend a year based at the centre, alongside researchers and clinicians who are looking for integrated solutions to ease the burden of obesity and chronic disease.

Sydney-based Juchau writes novels, short fiction, essays, scripts and reviews. Accolades for her latest novel *The World Without Us* include being shortlisted for the 2016 Stella Prize and last year winning the Victorian Premier's Literary Award. She will use the fellowship to research inherited trauma in epigenetics and the concept of the "doubled body" in pregnancy. This work will underpin a novel exploring contemporary life through the idea of the double.

"Recent work in epigenetics suggests one generation's experiences of trauma might return in the bodies of those not yet born," Juchau said. "This extraordinary and eerie concept raises intriguing questions about how much we control our destinies."

Juchau's exploration of human doubles will include examining [twin studies](#) and findings on the [first 1000 days of life](#).

Valentine is one of Australia's most acclaimed playwrights. Her recent work *Letters to Lindy* draws on letters written to one of Australia's most iconic figures, Lindy Chamberlain-Creighton and another, *Ladies Day*, is nominated for the NSW Premier's Literary Awards in 2017. Several of her works remain on the NSW HSC curriculum.

Using the Greek myth of Cassandra, whose dire warnings were disastrously ignored, Valentine's play will draw on the revelations from visionary scientists about their struggle to have their findings about metabolic syndrome, a collection of health conditions that often occur together and increase the risk of diabetes, stroke and heart disease, heard and believed. Valentine's project

may present an opportunity for scientists themselves to take on theatrical roles. “I’m going to spend a year holding up a mirror to scientists at the Charles Perkins Centre and its satellite hubs and uncovering the psychological impact of the nutrition wars,” she said.

Now in its second year, the Writer in Residence program gives creative writers the opportunity to explore the issues under examination at the Charles Perkins Centre: to ease the burden of obesity and chronic disease in Australia and abroad. Its inaugural winner was Charlotte Wood who is writing a novel responding to the way the elderly are depicted in literature and mainstream culture.

The fellowship was made possible by a generous donation from alumna and Patron Judy Harris, who this year has provided funding for two exceptional candidates.

“Alana and Mireille are two outstanding and acclaimed Australian writers. Both create work which challenges us to closely reflect on, and question, our society,” said Charles Perkins Centre Academic Director Professor Stephen Simpson.

“I’m sure their work here at the centre will offer fresh perspective on some of our biggest health challenges and the way we’re tackling them.”

<http://sydney.edu.au/news-opinion/news/2017/05/17/two-writers-awarded-charles-perkins-centre-writer-in-residency.html>

Images available at:

<https://cloudstor.aarnet.edu.au/plus/index.php/s/OComrh7kAy4DzIE>

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