

**DARKE**  
2020

THE  
**NICK DARKE**  
AWARD

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Celebrating new plays by great writers

**Submission Information**

# NICK DARKE

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Born and educated in Cornwall, England, the playwright Nick Darke studied acting at Rose Bruford College, Kent before learning his craft at The Victoria Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent. Here Nick performed in over 80 plays and in 1978 wrote his first play, **Never Say Rabbit in a Boat**. Its success led him to give up acting and in the following year he won the George Devine Award.

His work attracted further commissions and everything he wrote for the theatre was produced. This included 24 plays that were staged at The National Theatre, London; The Royal Shakespeare Company, Stratford-upon-Avon; The Bush, London; by Kneehigh Theatre and at The Royal Court, London.

He wrote several radio plays and made documentaries for radio and also successfully wrote for television and film.

He moved back to Cornwall in 1990 and enjoyed the life of his childhood, fishing and wrecking (beachcombing). In 2001 he had a stroke which affected his speech and reading and writing. He and his wife Jane made the film, **The Wrecking Season** about the contacts he made tracing fishing gear back to the east coast of America. (Broadcast by BBC Four in 2005 and 2010)

Nick died of cancer in 2005, aged 56 with his funeral held on the beach. He and Jane filmed the last few months of his life. She made the film **The Art of Catching Lobsters** (BBC Four 2007) about their life together and grief. They have two sons; Jim is a marine scientist, Henry a filmmaker and writer.

For more information about Nick's life and work please visit:  
[falmouth.ac.uk/nickdarkeaward](http://falmouth.ac.uk/nickdarkeaward)

# NICK DARKE

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Extract from the play *'Landmarks'* by Nick Darke about the mechanisation of farming in North West England. Performed at the Lyric Hammersmith in 1979

TOTTY You know what they got now Wilf?  
Combine Harvesters! They do the whole bloody lot in one foul swoop! Thee'll think thee bin the moon and back, see one a them things on the job. I went down Eton Hall, see the Duke's on demo, and my god you should see his damn granary!

*(The description is accompanied by a big gesticulated mime)*

The corn's carried from the field to the barn in a lorry and shot down this, shoot, into a dump. Concrete dump. Bloody enormous, below ground level, y'with me Wilf? From there, it's elevated, up to the dresser. It's dressed, then it goes along a what's it, band conveyor for what, miles, bloody miles, to the drier. Dirty big bin thing Wilf, vast, silo, with holes in for the air get through, and you'd think the grain'd get through these holes, Wilf but it dunna, not one grain gets through those holes, you with me? And e's got a generator there with a motor for the dryin, then it's

cooled down, elevated... no, yes, no, ang on, is there elevator there, no there... yes. There is, it's elevated out the what's it, drier, with me? Passed through a second dresser, along the conveyor, and into the bins. Now these bins Wilf, you with me, they are bloody massive. They take three hundred sacks each. Fifteen ton apiece Wilf! Now, and are you with me so far Wilf, underneath the bins Wilf, each bin, 'as a sloping bottom, and at the bottom of this ere sloping bottom, slopes, like that, and at the bottom is 'ole, with an aluminium what'sit, which comes out to the outside wall! What's say to that then Wilfred? All y'aft do to empty one a these bins Wilf, is pull out the what'sit, and they're so designed as every grain slides out of its own accord....down to the er, what'sit, conveyor belt. On to the elevator, up to the second drier, on three levels see Wilf, silo, drier, bins; dryer. And it stays there then Wilf, till you want bag it. Just pull the what'sit, and out it flows, like water, job done, sweet as a nut. What's say to that then Wilfred?

WILF It'll never catch on.

# THE AWARD

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The Nick Darke Award was set up in 2006 to celebrate the best writing for stage, screen and radio.

The Award is open to all UK and European writers with a prize of £6,000.

The category is stage play.

## The Judges

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### Jeremy Howe

Editor of *The Archers* on BBC Radio 4

### Molly Dineen

BAFTA and Royal Television Society award-winning UK television documentary director, cinematographer and producer

### Gareth Farr

Actor and Bruntwood award-winning writer, whose work has been produced at Manchester Royal Exchange, Birmingham Rep, Liverpool Everyman, York Theatre Royal and Oldham Coliseum

### Roger Michell

Theatre, television and film director whose work includes the films *Notting Hill*, *Changing Lanes* and *Morning Glory*

### Nick Hern

London's leading independent specialist publisher of plays, theatre books and screenplays

The Nick Darke Award was conceived by his wife, the artist and film-maker Jane Darke, with the support of his family. Nick Darke wrote in many forms but earned his living in the world of theatre, screen and radio.

With the opportunity to win £6,000, this competition provides the time to write that financial support facilitates.

Applicants should submit a full stage play script along with a one-page synopsis in PDF format by **Monday 4 May 2020**. The submissions will be read by a group of readers who will produce a longlist for the Longlist Committee. The Longlist Committee will reduce the submissions to a final shortlist of eight for the judges. Announcement of the winner will take place at an Award Ceremony in autumn 2020.

The Nick Darke Award is solely funded by Falmouth University through the Academy of Music and Theatre Arts (AMATA) and the School of Communication. The relationship between Falmouth and the Award recognises Nick Darke's impact across the arts and endeavours to continue his legacy through the promotion of talent.

[falmouth.ac.uk/nick-darke-award](http://falmouth.ac.uk/nick-darke-award)

## Contact information

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[nickdarkeaward@falmouth.ac.uk](mailto:nickdarkeaward@falmouth.ac.uk)  
[falmouth.ac.uk/nick-darke-award](http://falmouth.ac.uk/nick-darke-award)

@FalmouthUni  
#NickDarkeAward

# FALMOUTH UNIVERSITY

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Established in 1902, Falmouth University has grown from School of Art to become a digital creative hub, with an expanding network of partners in the UK and overseas. It's through innovation and enterprise that Falmouth University is helping to grow the Cornish economy, expanding the region as a centre for the Creative Industries and working with high growth businesses in key economic growth areas.

The University has a portfolio of ground-breaking, industry-facing courses that are designed to help students get great jobs across the creative sector, from Acting, Writing and Fine Art, to Games, Textile Design and Business.

The Award is funded by Falmouth University's Academy of Music and Theatre Arts (AMATA) and the School of Communication. An international venue, AMATA provides an intensive and connected environment for the study and practice of the performing arts. The School of Communication gives tomorrow's storytellers the insights, skills and confidence to succeed across an exciting range of professions.

**[falmouth.ac.uk](http://falmouth.ac.uk)**

## **Falmouth University's Academic Departments**

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Academy of Music and Theatre Arts  
Falmouth School of Art  
Fashion & Textiles Institute  
Games Academy  
Institute of Photography  
School of Architecture, Design & Interiors  
School of Communication  
School of Entrepreneurship  
School of Film & Television

## **The Nick Darke Archive**

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Falmouth University is delighted to hold the professional archive of Nick Darke, following the generous donation of papers from his family. The Collection contains a broad range of preparatory work and scripts for his 30 plays, along with publicity, promotional material, photographs and correspondence. Nick's work for television, film and radio is also well represented. Inspiring, humbling, humorous, and at times deeply moving, the records document Nick's interest in environmental issues, music, Cornish history and culture, as well as his recovery from a stroke in 2001. Nick's wife, Jane, continues to be involved with both the management of the Collection and its use.

The Collection is complemented by other holdings relating to performance activity in Cornwall, including the archives of Wildworks and Kneehigh theatre companies, the latter whom Nick wrote for on many occasions.

The Nick Darke Archive is accessible to staff, students and members of the public alike, by on the Penryn Campus. We enthusiastically welcome enquiries from applicants to the Nick Darke Award keen to learn more about his craft.

For more information or to arrange access please contact us:

Tel: +44 (0)1326 255738  
Email: [archives@fxplus.ac.uk](mailto:archives@fxplus.ac.uk)  
[@FXArchives](http://library.fxplus.ac.uk/archives)

# SUBMISSION INFORMATION

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## 1 Eligibility

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- 1.1 The application must be made in English.
- 1.2 The competition is open to all UK and European writers aged 16 and over.
- 1.3 The writer must be the sole original author. The competition is not open to collaborations.
- 1.4 We do not accept submissions of scripts that have previously been produced or won other competitions.
- 1.5 We do not accept submissions of scripts previously entered into the Nick Darke Award.

## 2 Criteria

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- 2.1 Stage play.

## 3 Submission procedure

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- 3.1 Please submit a full stage play script (minimum of 45 minutes in length, no maximum) and a one page synopsis about the play in PDF format to: [nickdarkeaward@falmouth.ac.uk](mailto:nickdarkeaward@falmouth.ac.uk)
- 3.3 All submissions should be entered anonymously, do not include a name, address or email on the script. Please provide contact details in the email with your submission.
- 3.4 Confirmation of receipt of entry will be sent by email.
- 3.5 Late or incomplete entries will not be considered.
- 3.6 The deadline for submissions is **17:00 (BST) Monday 4 May 2020.**

## 4 Judging procedure

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- 4.1 Your work will be considered by a selection of readers who will compile a longlist for the Longlist Committee. The Longlist Committee will reduce the submissions to a final shortlist of eight for the judges.
- 4.2 Shortlisted applicants will be notified by **Friday 11 September 2020**. The shortlist will be announced on: [falmouth.ac.uk/nick-darke-award](http://falmouth.ac.uk/nick-darke-award) at which time the scripts will no longer be anonymous and writers' names will be released.
- 4.3 Unsuccessful applicants will not be notified. Please assume your work has not been shortlisted if you haven't heard from us by Friday 11 September 2020.
- 4.4 The Nick Darke Award cannot enter into any correspondence regarding a submission nor can it offer any editorial notes or guidance. The shortlist and winner of the Award will be published on [falmouth.ac.uk/nick-darke-award](http://falmouth.ac.uk/nick-darke-award).
- 4.4 The judges will select one winner from the eight shortlisted writers.
- 4.5 The winner will be announced at an award ceremony in autumn 2020.

## 5 The Winner

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- 5.1 The winning entrant will receive £6,000.

## 6 The small print

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- 6.1 The copyright for the piece remains solely with the author. However the Nick Darke Award and Falmouth University must be credited on all subsequent publicity material.
- 6.2 The winning writer must make themselves and their winning piece available for all publicity purposes within reason. This may include a performance or reading of the work during the Award Ceremony.