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Huzama Habayeb Awarded the Naguib Mahfouz Medal for Literature

The American University in Cairo Press announced today the award of the 2017 Naguib Mahfouz Medal for Literature to the Palestinian writer Huzama Habayeb for her novel *Mukhmal* (Velvet).

Presented by Francis Ricciardone, President of the American University in Cairo, the award was decided by the members of the Award Committee: Dr. Tahia Abdel Nasser, Dr. Shereen Abouelnaga, Dr. Mona Tolba, Dr. Humphrey Davies, and Dr. Rasheed El-Enany. The award ceremony at AUC's Oriental Hall on the Tahrir Square Campus was attended by many writers and other distinguished personalities of Egyptian cultural life.

In their citation for the award, the judges described *Mukhmal* as “a new kind of Palestinian novel. It is not about the political cause, the resistance, the dream of return. It is rather about ordinary Palestinians, whose life goes on meanwhile, unnoticed and unrecorded, in the background, while the high dramas of politics occupy center-stage,” and went on to say: “*Velvet* is distinguished by the richness of its language and its empathy with its subject. Together, these produce a finely-textured description of a life lived in hardship but overflowing with sensibility and grace. . . . The protagonist of this novel is the poetic narration, the skillful words, the flowing images, and the measured prose. You read *Velvet* as though you are seeing your beautiful language dance and flutter. . . . Hawwa makes from the texture of velvet a motif colored with several connotations to protect her from falling into the abyss of despair and madness. So velvet becomes a goal, a dream, a means, a vision, a history, and a place to live, dream, and hope. . . . Habayeb is an original voice who brings vividly to life Palestinian camps with extraordinary beauty and lyricism.”

The AUC Press, which established the Naguib Mahfouz Medal for Literature in 1996, has been the primary publisher of Naguib Mahfouz's English-language editions for more than thirty years, and has also been responsible for the publication of some 600 foreign-language editions of the Nobel laureate's works in more than 40 languages around the world since the author won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1988. With some 60 new publications annually and more than 700 titles in print, the AUC Press is recognized as the region's leading English-language publisher.

Nominations and submissions for the **2018 Naguib Mahfouz Medal for Literature** are welcomed at any time until **15 February 2018**. Arabic novels published for the first time in 2016 or 2017, and not yet translated into English, are eligible. For details, see “Naguib Mahfouz Medal for Literature” on aucpress.com.