**Embargoed until 08:00 on Monday 14September**

**Smriti Halls revealed as latest BookTrust Writer in Residence**



**14 September 2020,** Today, the critically acclaimed children’s author Smriti Halls takes up her post as the latest Writer in Residence at [BookTrust](http://www.booktrust.org.uk), the UK’s largest children’s reading charity.

Smriti takes the reins from New York Times bestselling writer and illustrator of picture books Ed Vere. Award-winning writer Smriti has had her work published in more than 30 languages worldwide. Her books include the U.S. #1 bestseller*I Love You Night and Day* as well as *I’m Sticking with You, Elephant in My Kitchen,* *Rain Before Rainbows* and *The Little Island.*

Witha cast ofcharacters as varied as mischievous monsters and disgruntled geese, Smriti explores themes of relationship and identity; the personal and the political; how it feels to be in your own skin — and in someone else’s. Her books, often fast-paced and funny or lyrical and tender, are always full of hope and heart and speak to the child in all of us. Smriti also creates bold board books to engage the very smallest readers, young fiction for newly independent readers and beautiful, highly illustrated non-fiction for older readers including the award-winning *The Ways of the Wolf*.

The BookTrust Writer/Illustrator in Residence project has been running since March 2009 and has featured several authors and illustrators including Cressida Cowell, Sita Brahmachari, Patrick Ness, Polly Dunbar, Bali Rai, Matt Haig, Laura Dockrill, Chris Riddell, Sarah McIntyre, Philip Ardagh, Taran Matharu, Nadia Shireen, Candy Gourlay, Phil Earle and Ed Vere. The residency encourages each writer or illustrator to explore topics that they are passionate about, with past residents exploring themes such as the power of stories, diversity in children’s literature and the importance of libraries.

**Talking about her residency, Smriti said: “**I am honoured and excited to be joining BookTrust as Writer in Residence from Sept 2020-March 2021. I have long admired the essential work that BookTrust does to get books into the hands of children, to engage parents, teachers and carers in fostering young readers and to effect positive change in the book world. It is a tremendous privilege to be asked to take up this role.”

Smriti speaks passionately about the transformative power of books and stories, saying they help to “build bridges, rebuild hearts and give readers the emotional language to negotiate the trickiest situations, bringing hope and change in the world.” In her new role, Smriti will be challenging children and adults to read aloud, read together and to find new and exciting ways of engaging with books, stories and poems to bring them to life - helping BookTrust to inspire a new generation of children to find *their* books for life. In particular, Smriti will concentrate on using books to help children navigate tricky times and new experiences, whether that’s transitioning back to school after lockdown, solving friendship difficulties, getting to know a new sibling or thinking about some of the challenges that face our world.

**Diana Gerald, CEO, BookTrust said:** “We’re delighted to be welcoming Smriti as our next Writer in Residence. It’s been a challenging year for families, especially as they navigate this strange new world, so having Smriti help us bring books to life in new and fun ways that offer inspiration and hope is so very exciting.”

**ENDS**

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**Notes to Editors**

**BookTrust** is dedicated to getting children reading because we know that children who read are happier, healthier, more empathetic and more creative. Their early language development is supported and they also do better at school.

We are the UK’s largest children’s reading charity; each year we reach 3.9 million children across the UK with books, resources and support to help develop a love of reading, because we know that reading can transform lives.

We work with a variety of partners to get children excited about books, rhymes and stories, because if reading is fun, children will want to do it. Our books are delivered via health, library, schools and early years practitioners, and are supported with guidance, advice and resources to encourage the reading habit. booktrust.org.uk

**Smriti Halls** is an award-winning, critically acclaimed children’s author, published in more than 30 languages worldwide. Her books include U.S. #1 bestseller*I Love You Night and Day, I’m Sticking with You, Elephant in My Kitchen, Don’t Call me Sweet and The Little Island.* Smriti also creates bold board books to engage the very smallest readers, young fiction for newly independent readers and beautiful, highly illustrated non-fiction for older readers including the award winning *The Ways of the Wolf*.

*The Little Island* is currently shortlisted for the 2020 Little Rebels Award and the 2020 Teach Primary Awards, while *I’m Sticking With You* was the Independent Bookshops Children’s Book of the Month for August 2020. Her forthcoming picture book *Rain Before Rainbows* (illustrated by David Litchfield) has been made available ahead of publication in partnership with Save the Children as a free e-book to support their work with families most affected by the coronavirus pandemic. Smriti lives in London and is also published as Smriti Prasadam-Halls. [www.smriti.co.uk/](http://www.smriti.co.uk/) or follow her on social media: Twitter @SmritiPH and Instagram @smriti\_halls\_author