

# SOUTHBANK CENTRE

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## Press Release

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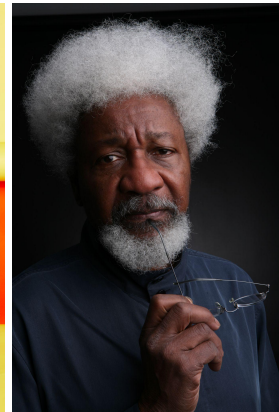
**Images:** Autumn Literature season [HERE](#), London Literature Festival [HERE](#)

**Listings:** [HERE](#)

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## London Literature Festival returns with timely focus on friendship

The Southbank Centre today announces its autumn season, headlined by a global exclusive event with **Sally Rooney** (QEH, 7 Sep) who inspires the theme of friendship for the 2021 London Literature Festival (21 – 31 Oct), returning for the first time since 2019. Following the success of *Inside Out* the programme reaches UK and international audiences with a hybrid programme of virtual and in-person events.



Sally Rooney (credit: Kalpesh Lathigra); *Keep The Receipts* podcast (credit: Matt Monfredi Ltd); Wole Soyinka (credit: Paul Gratty).

Autumn Literature season line-up also announced:

- Global exclusive launches with **Sally Rooney** and **Wole Soyinka**.
- Exclusive appearances from acclaimed novelists including **Lauren Groff**, **Ruth Ozeki**, **Armistead Maupin** and **Helen Oyeyemi**.
- Major memoir launches including **David Harewood** and previously announced **Bernardine Evaristo**.

London Literature Festival 'Conversations with Friends' highlights include:

- Over twenty talks on the theme with speakers including **Ece Temelkuran**, **Anne Applebaum**, **Tracey Thorn** and **Amor Towles** alongside rising stars including **Caleb Azumah Nelson**, **Vanessa Onwuemezi** and **Naomi Ishiguro**.

- **Kate Mosse** leads discussion with **Michael Rosen**, **Romalyn Ante**, **Christie Watson** on friendship and care in the **NHS** in *An Extra Pair of Hands*.
- A global exclusive from celebrated artist **Ai Weiwei** and 12 London exclusives.
- Exclusive performances including premiere of **Mieko Kawakami's** *Heaven* and Jade LB's **Keisha the Sket** featuring **Candice Carty-Williams** and **Aniefok Ekpoudom**.
- Live spoken word and poetry with **Out-Spoken**, **Malika's Poetry Kitchen** and the **Forward Prizes for Poetry**
- Family programme headlined by **Oliver Jeffers** with free family programme yet to be announced.

**Ted Hodgkinson, Head of Literature & Spoken Word, the Southbank Centre**, said: *"This year of all years I wanted us to return to our venues with an irresistible line-up, embodying the very best of live literature anywhere in the world and reflecting the power of the written and spoken word to bring us back together. In response to the isolation we've all endured, London Literature Festival creates space for a timely conversation about contemporary friendship, while our autumn season offers unmissable encounters with the writers and artists shaping our cultural life. Truly an exceptional programme for exceptional times."*

*Building on the success of our streamed Inside Out programme during the pandemic, our new streaming partnership with DICE means our most sought after events continue to be more accessible than ever, while the collective experience of being in the same room as a beloved author or poet remains at the heart of what we do."*

## **FULL PROGRAMME DETAIL**

### **AUTUMN SEASON**

Kicking off the autumn season, critically acclaimed actor and director **David Harewood** discusses his memoir and the real impact of racism on Black mental health with David Olusoga and in partnership with Black Minds Matter (QEH, 2 Sep). As previously announced, Booker-Prize winner **Bernardine Evaristo** reveals how she stayed true to herself, and made history in the process, celebrating her new book *Manifesto on Never Giving Up* in conversation with Afua Hirsch (QEH, 3 Oct).

In a global exclusive, award-winning novelist **Sally Rooney** is in conversation with Emma Dabiri about her much anticipated third novel *Beautiful World, Where are You* (QEH & streamed, 7 Sep). The exclusive event is presented by the Southbank Centre in partnership with London Review Bookshop and is available to a global audience as a live stream. Nobel Prize-winning writer **Wole Soyinka** introduces his new novel *Chronicles from the Land of the Happiest People on Earth* in a fully virtual special event in partnership with Guardian Live (streamed, 28 Sep).

Other highlights include beloved cultural figures including author and LGBTQI+ activist **Armistead Maupin** in conversation with Graham Norton (QEH, 6 Oct) and **Nigella Lawson** returns to launch her new book at the Royal Festival Hall (RFH, 5 Dec). The series also includes exclusive appearances from internationally acclaimed authors including **Ruth Ozeki** in conversation with Erica Wagner about her new novel *The Book of Form and Emptiness* (PUR, 7 Oct), bestselling author and one of Granta's Best Young American Novelists **Lauren Groff** discussing her new novel *Matrix* and the intriguing

historical figure at its heart, with fellow writer Elif Shafak (QEH, 8 Oct) and in a fully virtual event, author **Helen Oyeyemi** discusses her new novel *Peaces* with Merve Emre (streamed, 4 Nov).

Autumn welcomes the return of **Out-Spoken** to the Purcell Room, London's premier evening of poetry and live music hosted by Joelle Taylor. The September event features sets by poets Safiya Kamaria Kinshasa, Rebecca Perry and Jack Underwood, plus music from Mychelle, and the S.O.L Collective (30 Sep) while the November line-up includes poetry from alicehiller and Wayne Holloway-Smith, plus music from Simeon Hammond Dallas (25 Nov).

### **LONDON LITERATURE FESTIVAL (21 – 31 Oct)**

Borrowing its theme of friendship from the title of Sally Rooney's debut novel, *Conversations with Friends*, this year's London Literature Festival reunites audiences after a year of isolation in lockdown with a series of talks, performances and debates on the complexities of friendship today.

Acclaimed children's author and poet **Michael Rosen**, award-winning poet and specialist nurse practitioner **Romalyn Ante** and writer and former nurse **Christie Watson** share their experiences of the National Health Service and the friendship formed between carer and patient, in an event chaired by bestselling novelist **Kate Mosse** (PUR, 30 Oct). Novelist **Tahmima Anam** and essayist **Roisin Kiberd** discuss friendship and disconnection in the age of social media, in an event chaired by **Jenny Kleeman** (PUR, 24 Oct). Bestselling writer and singer-songwriter **Tracey Thorn** speaks to Tom Gatti about her experiences of finding female friendship within the male-dominated music industry (PUR, 24 Oct). Rising literary stars **Caleb Azumah Nelson**, **Vanessa Onwuemezi** and **Naomi Ishiguro** reflect on the complexities of contemporary friendships forged in London (PUR, 21 Oct). Groundbreaking psychologist **Robin Dunbar** and writer and social commentator **Musa Okwonga** join forces to discuss the state of contemporary friendship and what it reveals about society as a whole (PUR, 24 Oct). Presenters of **BBC Radio 4's Open Book**, **Elizabeth Day** and **Johny Pitts** take to the Queen Elizabeth Hall stage to record a special programme about how books can foster friendships (QEH, 22 Oct). **Jade LB** discusses her noughties viral coming-of-age story *Keisha the Sket*, along with **Candice Carty-Williams** and **Aniefok Ekpoudom**, who have contributed essays to the print edition (PUR, 29 Oct). Hosts of The Receipts podcast, **Tolani Shoneye**, **Audrey Indome** and **Milena Sanchez** mark the launch of their new book *Keep the Receipts* – a love letter to sisterhood for women (QEH, 30 Oct).

The festival's new streaming partnership with DICE launches with events from award-winning political commentator **Ece Temelkuran** on the importance of friendship in the face of global inequality and climate crisis (streamed, 25 Oct) and from **Anne Applebaum** and **Elif Shafak** on the parting of friends in our polarised political times (streamed, 26 Oct).

### **Global and London exclusives**

This year's London Literature Festival sees a **global exclusive** from the world-famous artist and activist **Ai Weiwei** (RFH, 29 Oct) for a conversation about his widely anticipated memoir, *1000 Years of Joys and Sorrows*. In addition, the festival line-up marks **London exclusives** from **Daisy May Cooper** (RFH, 30 Oct), creator and star of *This Country*, as she marks the launch of her memoir *Don't Laugh, It Will Only Encourage Her*, comedian **Jack Dee** (QEH, 27 Oct) in a hilarious agony uncle session from the online-trained psychotherapist and author of *What's Your Problem?*, and bestselling picture book maker **Oliver Jeffers** (QEH, 31 Oct), who discusses his new picture book, *There's a Ghost in This House*, in an event for all the family. Other London exclusives include **Caleb Azumah**

**Nelson, Naomi Ishiguro** and **Vanessa Onwuemezi** (PUR, 21 Oct); neuroscientist **Anil Seth** (QEH, 21 Oct); writers **Tahmima Anam** and **Roisin Kiberd** (PUR, 24 Oct); **Musa Okwonga** and **Robin Dunbar** (QEH, 24 Oct); singer **Tracey Thorn** (PUR, 24 Oct); bestselling author **Amor Towles** (PUR, 27 Oct) and **Michael Rosen, Romalyn Ante** and **Christie Watson**, chaired by **Kate Mosse** (PUR, 30 Oct).

### **PRIZES AND READINGS**

London Literature Festival again plays host to the **Forward Prizes for Poetry** (QEH, 24 Oct), a presentation of the UK and Ireland's most coveted poetry prizes. **Essential: Creative Future Writers' Award 2021** (L5FR, 27 Oct) invites audiences to hear readings by the shortlisted authors at an event hosted by Dorothy Koomson. This year, the writers were given the theme of 'essential'. **The Polari Prize**, the UK's only dedicated book prize for LGBTQ+ literature, returns to the Royal Festival Hall. Now in its eleventh year, the prize is awarded by the Southbank Centre's resident literary salon, Polari, and marks the accomplishments of debut and non-debut works from LGBTQ+ writers across all genres (L5FR, 30 Oct). To close London Literature Festival, the **2021 Booker Prize Shortlist Readings** (RFH, 31 Oct) take to the stage as the authors shortlisted for this year's prize are celebrated in an evening of readings and conversation.

Tickets for Autumn and London Literature Festival go on sale to Members on Tuesday 13 July and on general sale Wednesday 14 July, with the exception of *Keep The Receipts* which goes on sale at a later date.

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### **Keeping audiences safe on site**

As we welcome visitors back, our number one priority is the safety, health and wellbeing of visitors and staff, so we have introduced a number of measures to help everyone feel confident. We will continue to review and manage any risks and respond to any changes in government guidance. Full details of our Covid-secure measures can be found on the Southbank Centre website [here](#).

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# ENDS #

Please find all Listings information [HERE](#)

For further press information please contact:  
[press@southbankcentre.co.uk](mailto:press@southbankcentre.co.uk)

**Join the Conversation:**  
@southbankcentre @litsouthbank  
#LondonLitFest

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[southbankcentre.co.uk](http://southbankcentre.co.uk)

**About the Southbank Centre**

The Southbank Centre is the UK's largest arts centre occupying a prominent riverside location that sits in the midst of London's most vibrant cultural quarter on the South Bank of the Thames. We exist to present great cultural experiences that bring people together and we achieve this by providing the space for artists to create and present their best work and by creating a place where as many people as possible can come together to experience bold, unusual and eye-opening work. We want to take people out of the everyday, every day. The site has an extraordinary creative and architectural history stretching back to the 1951 Festival of Britain. The Southbank Centre is made up of the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room and Hayward Gallery as well as being home to the National Poetry Library and the Arts Council Collection. It is also home to four Resident Orchestras (London Philharmonic Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra, London Sinfonietta and Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment) and four Associate Orchestras (Aurora Orchestra, BBC Concert Orchestra, Chineke! Orchestra and National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain).

### **The Southbank Centre Venues**

RFH – Royal Festival Hall

QEH – Queen Elizabeth Hall

PUR – Purcell Room

HG – Hayward Gallery

L5FR – Level 5 Function Room

CBR – The Clore Ballroom at Royal Festival Hall

### **About DICE**

Founded in London in 2014, DICE has transformed how fans discover and buy tickets to live events and livestreams all over the world.

From A\$AP Rocky to BICEP, Nick Cave to Primavera Sound Festival, from the up-and-coming to the world's biggest acts, we work with major artists, leading promoters and renowned venues worldwide. In addition to a respected music offering, DICE also offers fans an array of global arts, culture and lifestyle events.

The app is highly personalised for each fan with a 'Discover' feature that recommends upcoming gigs and events just for them. Mobile-first, the app stops scalpers and protects fans.

DICE is live in the U.K., U.S., France, Italy, Spain, India and Australia - and accessible to fans globally through its livestream offering.

### **About the Southbank Centre's *Summer Reunion***

From 19 May – 30 August, the Southbank Centre presents *Summer Reunion*, a four-month season of art, culture and entertainment providing opportunities for people to reconnect and reunite across the site following the venue's year-long closure. On 30 April the popular weekly street food market returns, alongside riverside pop-ups; the Hayward Gallery welcomes visitors back on 19 May for two major exhibitions with social-distancing in place in line with government guidance; the Royal Festival Hall reopens on 28 May alongside the National Poetry Library; and the Queen Elizabeth Hall and Purcell Room reopen later this summer. 15 consecutive weekends of free programming on the Riverside Stage Terrace platform diverse, home-grown talent, while free public art and poetry from the likes of Samson Kambalu, Ilke Gers and Linton Kwesi Johnson bring the outside spaces to life, alongside the popular Queen Elizabeth Hall Roof Garden. The reopening of the Southbank Centre and *Summer Reunion* programme is made possible thanks to the repayable loan from the government's Culture Recovery Fund.

### **Southbank Centre Re-opening**

**Hayward Gallery:** 19 May 2021

**Royal Festival Hall:** 28 May 2021

**National Poetry Library:** 28 May 2021

**Queen Elizabeth Hall:** August 2021

**Purcell Room:** September 2021

Opening times for venues can be found on the [Southbank Centre website](#).



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