

# SOUTHBANK CENTRE

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Contact: [press@southbankcentre.co.uk](mailto:press@southbankcentre.co.uk)

## Southbank Centre announces line-up for London Literature Festival 2024, with co-curator British rapper Ghetts

With Deborah Levy, Hanif Kureishi, Jordan Stephens, Lindsey Hilsum, Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock, Rupert Everett, Susanna Clarke, Taffy Brodesser-Akner and more to be announced



L-R: Varaidzo, © Yvonne Shelling; Ghetts, © Seye Isikalu; Hanif Kureishi, © Keir Kureishi

Images: [HERE](#)

Event listings: [HERE](#)

**Wednesday 23 Oct - Sunday 3 Nov**

Highlights include:

- British rapper **Ghetts** co-curates the festival's opening weekend, as the festival celebrates the creative links between London's poetry and music communities
- An exclusive launch of British playwright and author **Hanif Kureishi**'s memoir
- London exclusive events celebrate new work by **Kevin Barry, Rupert Everett, Susanna Clarke**
- **Debut London Literature** presents the London-based novels of four new writers, including **Kalienne Bradley, Hannah Regel, Tom Lamont** and **Varaidzo**
- Boundary-breaking new poetry by American poet **Danez Smith** and contemporary Somali women writers, **Yasmin Mohamed Kahin** and **Asha Lul Mohamud Yusuf**
- Free and ticketed events for families and children running throughout half term include a celebration of David McKee's **Elmer**, an event with illustrator **Sydney Smith** and a children's comedy show from **Russell Kane**
- The **National Poetry Library** marks its 70th anniversary with an event hosted by **Lemn Sissay** and presents the free annual **Poetry Day** on the theme of 'spoken word'

The Southbank Centre is proud to present the London Literature Festival 2024, a celebration of the power of spoken and written word to bring audiences together and illuminate the issues of the present. An engine of creativity in the heart of London, the Southbank Centre offers an inclusive, democratic and expressive place to platform the very best in emerging talent and a stage for internationally-acclaimed writers to launch new works.

From **Wednesday 23 October - Sunday 3 November**, the seventeenth edition of the London Literature Festival continues its long-standing commitment to remaining open and relevant to all with an unbeatable line-up of international and local voices. Following last year's inaugural curatorship, this year London Literature Festival welcomes the award-winning London-born rapper **Ghetts** as co-curator of the festival's opening weekend. Showcasing the vibrant and collaborative relationship between spoken word and music, the critically-acclaimed artist lends his razor-sharp lyricism, humour and wordplay to two nights of music and poetry at the Southbank Centre.

Anticipated new works by renowned writers are platformed with a series of London exclusive events. British playwright and author **Hanif Kureishi** (31 Oct) unveils his memoir *Shattered*, a tender reflection on the incident which left the writer paralysed, with an exclusive launch event and accompanying free live-stream. On the twentieth anniversary of her historical-fantasy novel *Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell*, the novelist **Susanna Clarke** (26 Oct) introduces audiences to the latest story to join this fictional universe, *The Wood at Midwinter*. **Kevin Barry** will narrate a staged, abridged reading of his expansive novel *The Heart in Winter* (2 Nov) accompanied by live theatrical and musical performances.

Placing writers of the future alongside established voices, the festival offers a chance for emerging talent to hone their craft with a host of free events for the public. In partnership with **Creative Future**, the festival welcomes back the **Creative Future Writers' Award Showcase** (26 Oct), a competition for debut writers from underrepresented backgrounds. A chance to quiz authors, publishers and literary professionals on insider knowledge will also be offered by a free **Creative Future Writers' Day** (27 Oct) which includes a host of industry talks and panel events for people at every stage of their writing career.

**Ted Hodgkinson, Head of Literature & Spoken Word at the Southbank Centre, says:** *"I'm thrilled that award-winning rapper and songwriter Ghetts will be headlining London Literature Festival this year with a series of specially curated events drawing us into his distinctive artistic sensibility and delving into the deep connections between the city's music and spoken word scenes. From spotlighting the cultural communities on our doorstep, to an incredible array of world renowned voices, the festival celebrates the power of poetry, plurality and dialogue to spark new thinking. In these turbulent times, the Southbank Centre's London Literature Festival provides an evermore vital space for democratic discussion and we're proud to offer a fantastic programme to inspire and nourish the next generation of creators and storytellers."*

**Ghetts, co-curator of the London Literature Festival's opening weekend, says:** *"It's an honour to co-curate the opening weekend of London Literature Festival and to explore the links between poetry and music with a night of the best in London's creative communities. As a writer and lyricist, literature sits at the heart of what I do, so I'm excited to bring together lovers of spoken and written word to celebrate the incredible power of contemporary literature at the Southbank Centre."*

Event listings are available [HERE](#) with more programming set to be announced in the summer. More programming to be announced.

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## **MUSIC AND LITERATURE**

Following UK dates at Glastonbury Festival and critical acclaim for his latest album *On Purpose, With Purpose*, guest co-curator **Ghetts** (25 Oct) will perform for the first time at the Royal Festival Hall for an exclusive live performance. Bringing together the most exciting names in London's creative scenes, the following evening, ***Ghetts Presents: An Evening of Poetry and Music*** (26 Oct) offers an exclusive evening curated by the artist himself, consisting of performances and discussion on the lyrics and links to be found in poetry and rap. Full line up to be announced.

## **NEW VOICES**

Kicking off the festival with a night of **Debut London Literature** (23 Oct), the festival welcomes an exciting lineup of future writers who are launching their careers with tales of the city including **Kaliane Bradley, Hannah Regel, Tom Lamont** and **Varaidzo**, in conversation with **Barry Pierce**. Visiting the UK for the first time, two trailblazing Somali women writers, **Yasmin Mohamed Kahin** and **Asha Lul Mohamud Yufu** (25 Oct) will premier the first English translation of their breakthrough collections.

## **EXCLUSIVES & NEW BOOKS**

In conversation with Kevin Maher, the author and actor **Rupert Everett** (26 Oct) marks the release of his first book of stories *The American No*, a collection of seven tales of love and loss, drama and glamour, spliced with industry anecdotes and more. A journey into the heart of American suburbia, the latest novel by **Taffy Brodesser-Akner** (30 Oct) will be a jumping off point for a discussion around the mainstays of Jewish Life in the United States. Accompanied by music and poetry, **Robert Macfarlane** (26 Oct) will launch his new children's book, *The World to Come*, along with a host of special guests. Writer and performer **Jordan Stephens** (23 Oct) returns to the Southbank Centre to present his new book *Avoidance, Drugs, Heartbreak and Dogs* - a personal take on the writer's experiences with ADHD.

## **BOUNDARY-BREAKING POETRY**

The Forward Prize-winning American poet **Danez Smith** headlines a special edition of resident music and poetry event **Out-Spoken: October** (24 Oct) hosted by the TS Eliot prize-winner, **Joelle Taylor**. Smith also returns to the Southbank Centre to present their searing new collection, *Bluff* (26 Oct). Over four decades reporting on international conflict, Channel 4 News International Editor **Lindsey Hilsum** (26 Oct) has taken solace in poetry; returning to some of her favourite poems, Hilsum recalls memories from her experiences of conflicts from Palestine to Rwanda and beyond. Hosted by **Lemn Sissay** OBE, the **NPL Presents: The People's Favourite Poets** (26 Oct) sees the culmination of the **National Poetry Library's** 70th birthday celebrations. This event brings together new poets who were invited to create 70-word poems with members of the **New Poets Collective** for an unmissable evening of performance. The library's annual **Poetry Day** (26 Oct) takes over the Queen Elizabeth Hall, offering workshops, live performances and a chance to delve into the poetry archives.

## **FREE FAMILY EVENTS**

**A Line Art** take to the Clore Ballroom for **Alphabet Soup** (30 Oct); a free, interactive installation celebrating the language of food for children between the ages of 5-11 years. The National Poetry Library celebrates **NPL Poetry Day!** (26 Oct) offering readings and a chance to view the hidden gems within the largest public collection of modern poetry in the world. A special edition of **Rug Rhymes**, a song and rhyme session for under 5s, takes place in the Clore Ballroom.

## **TICKETED FAMILY EVENTS**

In partnership with **The Children's Bookshow**, author and illustrator **Sydney Smith** (25 Oct) presents an immersive experience with a chance to watch Sydney paints live on stage. Pet-obsessed comedian **Russell Kane** (30 Oct) presents a children's comedy show *Pet Selector!*, and Tall Stories presents a musical adaptation of David McKee's much-loved **The Elmer Adventure** (3 Nov).

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Tickets for London Literature Festival go on sale to Southbank Centre Members on Thursday 11 July and to the general public on Friday 12 July. **#ENDS#**

This press release is available in a range of formats. Please email [press@southbankcentre.co.uk](mailto:press@southbankcentre.co.uk)

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**NOTES TO EDITORS**

**About the Southbank Centre's National Poetry Library**

The Southbank Centre's National Poetry Library is the largest public collection of modern poetry in the world and is housed at the Southbank Centre in London. Founded by the Arts Council in 1953 and opened by poets T.S. Eliot and Herbert Read, the library contains over 200,000 items spanning from 1912 to the present day, extensive resources for poets, academics, schools and families. Hosting exhibitions and events, as well as offering an extensive catalogue and ebook service accessible online, the library is free to use [www.nationalpoetrylibrary.org.uk](http://www.nationalpoetrylibrary.org.uk)

**About the Southbank Centre**

The Southbank Centre is the UK's largest multi-arts centre and engages the most diverse audiences of any performing arts organisation in the UK. Our biggest venue, the Royal Festival Hall (2,700 seats) is the lasting legacy of the 1951 Festival of Britain and the ambition and values of that project – that arts, ideas, innovation and culture can heal communities and should be available and accessible to everyone – are still our guiding principles today.

The Southbank Centre is uniquely able to offer a wide-ranging, inclusive and world-class artistic programme spanning contemporary visual arts, music, dance, performance, literature, comedy and spoken word across the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room, the Hayward Gallery and our free spaces. We are also home to the National Poetry Library, the National Academy for Social Prescribing (NASP) and six resident orchestras (Aurora Orchestra, Chineke! Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, London Sinfonietta, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and Philharmonia Orchestra). [www.southbankcentre.co.uk](http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk)



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