

SOUTHBANK CENTRE

Press Release

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Southbank Centre announces Summer Literature & Spoken Word Season with Gillian Anderson, Richard Ayoade, Hari Kunzru & Sally Rooney



L-R: Gillian Anderson © Sasha Gushov; Richard Ayoade © Dean Rodgers; Hari Kunzru © Clayton Cubitt; Sally Rooney © Kalpesh Lathigra.

[PRESS IMAGES](#) and [EVENT LISTINGS](#)

- Major fiction launches from **Matt Haig**, **Elif Shafak** and **Sally Rooney**
- Free events from **European Poetry Festival** showcase international collaboration between poets, while **Out-Spoken** and the National Poetry Library's **Special Edition** series celebrate the diversity and vibrancy of the spoken word scene
- Appearances from familiar names from pop culture, including **Gillian Anderson**, **Richard Ayoade**, *Serial* podcast's **Sarah Koenig**, and **Neneh Cherry**
- Non-fiction launches from **Dr. Federica Amati**, **Richard Flanagan**, **David McWilliams**, **Jess Phillips** and **Carol Vorderman** equip audiences with life-enriching tools for navigating a complex modern world

The Southbank Centre announces an unmissable **Summer 2024 season of Literature and Spoken Word**. The programme brings a diverse array of UK-exclusive launches, non-fiction talks and poetry readings to the stages of the UK's largest multi-arts centre, promising something for everyone.

In an increasingly polarised world and cultural landscape, this season offers salutary encounters with leading writers and thinkers which restore a sense of shared humanity. Whether exploring female desire or friendship in contemporary life, these are writers who capture the complexity of the modern world and give it human scale and meaning.

Featuring an outstanding lineup of internationally acclaimed authors and journalists, the season taps into today's vital and topical issues, ranging from political polarisation to the profound human impact of money. This jam-packed summer features a host of momentous events for the biggest fiction launches, with appearances from **Sally Rooney**, **Richard Ayoade**, **Hari Kunzru** and many more. Elsewhere in the programme, a range of spoken word events celebrate the diversity of the literary landscape, transcending geographic borders for remarkable cross-cultural performances.

Ted Hodgkinson, Head of Literature and Spoken Word at the Southbank Centre, says, "We're thrilled to be presenting many of the most anticipated moments of the summer, with an array of world-class writers sharing new works for the very first time on our stages. The Southbank Centre has always been an engine of creativity and this programme presents a vibrant mix of literary talents, who entertain, thrill and illuminate the evolving complexities of our times. From thought-provoking non-fiction to captivating poetry, the season is a testament to literature's ability to inspire, inform, and spark crucial conversations about our modern world. This is all part of our role and a shared commitment to provide a truly diverse offering for all of our audiences."

UK EXCLUSIVES

Gillian Anderson ([1 Sep](#)), acclaimed actor and star of *Sex Education*, presents *Want*, a groundbreaking volume of anonymous female correspondence about sexual desire, which reveals so much that is

usually left unsaid. Comedian and filmmaker **Richard Ayoade** ([1 Oct](#)) returns to Royal Festival Hall, continuing his quest to rescue the legacy of mid-century auteur “Harauld Hughes” from obscurity. Ayoade dives into the world of his uncannily similar doppelgänger, famed for his work on stage, screen and some of the shortest poems ever written.

FICTION

Renowned author **Hari Kunzru** ([30 May](#)) unveils his new novel, *Blue Ruin*, exploring the tumultuous journey of an artist grappling with past demons and confronting a world transformed. Former head of the FBI and New York Times Bestselling author **James Comey** ([25 Jul](#)) presents his gripping legal thriller, *Westport*, brimming with been-there-done-that authority. **Elif Shafak** ([8 Aug](#)) unveils her captivating new work, *There Are Rivers in the Sky*, a mesmerising tale weaving together the threads of history and human connection along the banks of the River Thames. **Matt Haig** ([30 Aug](#)) discusses his latest novel, a captivating tale of adventure, hope and self-discovery set in Ibiza. **Elizabeth Strout** ([20 Sep](#)) explores the poignant bonds of friendship, as her latest novel, *Tell Me Everything*, uncovers meaning in shared stories and the transformative power of love. The rich tapestry of East and South East Asian literature and culture is celebrated at the closing night of **ESEA Lit Fest** ([22 Sep](#)), featuring readings and conversations from some of the most exciting ESEA literary voices. Global phenomenon **Sally Rooney** ([25 Sep](#)) returns to the Southbank Centre for a major event and accompanying free livestream to explore her latest work, *Intermezzo*: an exquisitely moving story about grief, love and family.

NON-FICTION

Medical scientist **Dr. Federica Amati** ([1 Jun](#)) explains how to make the most healthy decisions at every age, in a compelling discussion combining nutrition, medical science and public health advice. Audiences can experience the mesmerising journey of Booker Prize-winning author **Richard Flanagan's** magnificent memoir, *Question 7*, as he discusses his profound exploration of identity and the interconnectedness of our lives in this exclusive London event ([5 Jun](#)). **David McWilliams** ([11 Sep](#)) unveils his groundbreaking new book, *Money*, delving into the mysteries of money and offering unparalleled insights that promise to transform your understanding of the world's most essential currency. MP **Jess Phillips** ([21 Sep](#)) lifts the lid on the nature of democracy and attitudes towards elections, while audiences can hear **Carol Vorderman** ([21 Sep](#)) discuss her unlikely journey to becoming one of the UK's leading political commentators and how we can use our voices in politically divisive times. The 10th anniversary of investigative journalism podcast *Serial* will be marked with a London exclusive event, hosted by journalist and broadcaster **Sarah Koenig** ([3 Oct](#)), as part of The International Women's Podcast Festival in partnership with Spotify. Reflecting on *Serial's* achievements as the most listened-to of all time and first to win a Peabody award, the evening will reflect on the shifting landscape of podcasting and journalism over the past decade. Beloved music icon **Neneh Cherry** ([6 Oct](#)) shares her deeply personal and powerful memoir, which explores the highs and lows that shaped her as a woman and her legacy as an artist.

POETRY AND SPOKEN WORD

The **National Poetry Library** continues its monthly poetry event series, *Special Edition*: a showcase of the multi-faceted poetry scene, highlighting treasures from the world's largest public collection of modern poetry. **European Poetry Festival** transcends borders and delivers a vibrant cross-lingual performance, as the seventh iteration of the festival showcases the dynamic voices of contemporary Catalan ([19 Jun](#)) and Norwegian ([3 Jul](#)) poets alongside their British counterparts. Poetry's past and electrifying present are highlighted in **A Gavin Selerie Celebration** ([17 Jul](#)) – exploring the literary legacy of the master of the long poem – and **Out-Spoken**, the Southbank Centre's resident monthly fusion of poetry and music, hosted by the incomparable Joelle Taylor.

Tickets go on sale to Southbank Centre's Members on Thursday 4 April, 10am and to the general public on Friday 5 April, 10am / www.southbankcentre.co.uk / 0203 879 9555.

Full event listings [HERE](#).

NOTES TO EDITORS

This press release is available in a range of formats. Please email press@southbankcentre.co.uk

For further information and press tickets please contact: press@southbankcentre.co.uk

Press images are available [here](#) and event listings [here](#)

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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

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



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