

# SOUTHBANK CENTRE

---

**Date:** Tuesday 8 July 2025, 9am

**Contact:** [millie.oconnor@southbankcentre.co.uk](mailto:millie.oconnor@southbankcentre.co.uk) and [louise.gilbert@southbankcentre.co.uk](mailto:louise.gilbert@southbankcentre.co.uk)

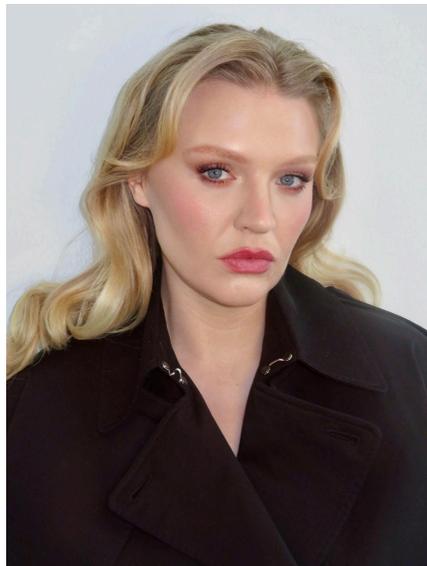
**Images** [HERE](#)

**Event listings** [HERE](#)

**Festival dates:** Tuesday 21 October - Sunday 2 November

## Rebecca Lucy Taylor a.k.a Self Esteem to curate at this year's Southbank Centre's London Literature Festival

The festival also features **Adam Buxton, Alexis Wright, Bora Chung, Charlie Macksey, Chris Kraus, Claire-Louise Bennett, Frank Cottrell-Boyce, Funmi Fetto, Jackie Kay, Jimi Famurewa, Kelly Frost, Lisa Smith, Malala Yousafzai, Michael Rosen, Nikita Gill, Neoprene Genie, Nesrine Malik, Olga Ravn, Pankaj Mishra, Rachael Boast, Reese Witherspoon & Harlan Coben, Róisín Lanigan, Sayaka Murata, Sebastian Faulks, Simon Armitage, Zadie Smith** and more to be announced



(Rebecca Lucy Taylor © Byron London)

Highlights include:

- Mercury Prize-nominated artist **Rebecca Lucy Taylor, a.k.a Self Esteem**, to curate **a day of exclusive events (Sat 1 Nov)**. Rebecca will be joined by **Dolly Alderton** for the launch of her debut book, *A Complicated Woman*, followed by a night of music and poetry alongside multi-disciplinary artists **Tom Rasmussen, Marged, Travis Alabanza, Seraphina Simone**,

**Pam Ayres** and more to be announced. **Free events** will take place across the Southbank Centre's site.

- International women writers come to the fore as the festival celebrates new works from **Sayaka Murata, Chris Kraus, Alexis Wright, Bora Chung** and **Olga Ravn**.
- Launching the best new fiction and non-fiction from key cultural voices including **Sebastian Faulks, Jimi Famurewa, Zadie Smith, Adam Buxton, Malala Yousafzai, Claire-Louise Bennett** and **Reese Witherspoon & Harlan Coben**.
- Families and children can enjoy free and ticketed events throughout the festival: including exclusive events with the children's laureate **Frank Cottrell-Boyce** and a run of **Mog the Forgetful Cat**.
- Poetry dominates the festival on **Saturday 25 October** with new works from Poet Laureate **Simon Armitage, Out-Spoken, Rachael Boast** and the **National Poetry Library** open day.

**Rebecca Lucy Taylor a.k.a Self Esteem, curator at the London Literature Festival, says:** *"I'm honoured to be curating at this year's London Literature Festival. I've never really believed there to be rigid lines between songwriting, art, poetry and prose. I've always longed to be free from genre and labels, not just in my own work, but also in the art I'm drawn to. I want it all because I am greedy, and I'm no longer going to apologise for that. I am so excited to explore this through my involvement with the London Literature Festival, alongside a host of multidisciplinary artists I admire and am inspired by."*

**Mark Ball, Artistic Director of the Southbank Centre, says:** *"The Southbank Centre is a place where culture makers come to congregate, collaborate and create their best work, and we're delighted that Rebecca Lucy Taylor, a.k.a Self Esteem will bring her extraordinary vision to the curation of events at this year's London Literature Festival. A key highlight in the capital's cultural calendar, the London Literature Festival promises something for everyone, bringing unbeatable cultural experiences to audiences with a line-up that spans writers at the forefront of international literature - such as Chris Kraus and Malala Yousafzai - through to events which offer a platform to those at the very start of their careers."*

**Ted Hodgkinson, Head of Literature & Spoken Word at the Southbank Centre, says:** *"I'm thrilled to be collaborating with one of my favourite artists, Rebecca Lucy Taylor, a.k.a Self Esteem. Rebecca is a masterful chronicler of what it is to be a young woman today; with her unmistakably frank and funny lyricism, Rebecca's writing acts as a striking reminder of the galvanising power of great literature. Right across the festival programme we celebrate a range of extraordinary women writers and cultural figures, from Sayaka Murata and Zadie Smith, to Reese Witherspoon launching an exciting new collaboration with Harlan Coben. We're proud to continue our dedication to new and emerging talent, with our long-standing partnership with Creative Future's Writers' Day, the annual Debut London Literature and New Poets Collective showcases, supporting the next generation of writers and creators."*

---

From **Tuesday 21 October - Sunday 2 November**, the Southbank Centre will present the eighteenth edition of the London Literature Festival - the capital's leading literary event. For more than 70 years, the Southbank Centre has operated as an engine of creativity in the heart of London; this year's festival encapsulates this ethos, with a programme that promises unforgettable experiences for everyone.

### **SELF-ESTEEM'S CURATION**

At the heart of this year's programme, a specially-curated day of events from the Mercury Prize-nominated musician and songwriter **Rebecca Lucy Taylor, a.k.a Self Esteem** offers an exclusive opportunity to experience her inimitable prowess as a wordsmith. Marking the publication of her debut book, *A Complicated Woman*, Taylor will discuss her lyrics, songwriting and personal

experience in conversation with **Dolly Alderton**. The day concludes with an evening of music and spoken word alongside a host of multi-disciplinary artists including musicians **Tom Rasmussen** and **Seraphina Simone**, electronic artist **Marged**, performance artist **Travis Alabanza** and poet and comedian **Pam Ayres**. Free events will be scheduled to take place throughout the Clore Ballroom on the day (1 Nov).

### **KEY CULTURAL VOICES**

A stage for the best international writing, acclaimed authors will share new works including a UK exclusive event from the award-winning storytellers **Reese Witherspoon** and **Harlan Coben**, who mark the publication of their new thriller *Gone Before Goodbye* (24 Oct). In a London exclusive event, the activist and author **Malala Yousafzai** presents a story of friendship, love and remarkable courage in the form of her unforgettable new memoir *Finding My Way* (2 Nov). *Convenience Store Woman* author, **Sayaka Murata** will discuss her much-anticipated new book set in the new future (22 Oct), and *I Love Dick* author **Chris Kraus** (23 Oct) will share a new novel, a witty journey into a fractured America. Acclaimed British novelists share much-anticipated new works from *Birdsong* writer **Sebastian Faulks** (29 Oct) who celebrates the London exclusive launch of his latest book and **Zadie Smith** (2 Nov) discusses her new collection of essays on subjects ranging from Stormzy to global politics.



(L-R:Zadie Smith © Ben Baily-Smith; Sayaka Murata © Bungeishunju Ltd; Malala Yousafzai © Malin Fezehai and James Iacobelli; Reese Witherspoon & Harlan Coben © Taylor Jewell)

### **EMERGING TALENT**

A home for emerging talent, the festival gives early-career writers the floor as the festival continues its long-standing partnership with the **Creative Future Writers' Award** (25 Oct). The annual **Debut London Literature panel** (Sun 26 Oct) offers a chance to hear from the most exciting debut writers whose works paint vivid portraits of the city, including **Funmi Fetto**, **Lisa Smith**, **Kelly Frost** and **Róisín Lanigan**. The international contemporary writing magazine *Wasafiri* also hosts a two-part event as they celebrate the sixteenth edition of the **Wasafiri New Writing Prize 2025** (30 Oct).

### **POETRY**

The National Poetry Library's annual **Poetry Day** takes over the festival on Saturday 25 October with a series of free events including live poetry readings from **Rachael Boast**, who offers a discussion of disability, deafness, neurodivergence and poetry, and an afternoon with Poet Laureate Simon Armitage. The Poet Laureate returns for an expanded version of the monthly **Out-Spoken** featuring readings from **Simon Armitage**, **Michael Rosen**, **Jackie Kay** and more special guests.

---

Tickets for London Literature Festival go on sale to Southbank Centre Members on Wednesday 9 July and to the general public on Thursday 10 July.

**#ENDS#**

Press images can be found [HERE](#) and event listings [HERE](#)

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

## **Press contacts**

### **MALALA YOUSAFZAI: FINDING MY WAY**

This is a TEG event. For press enquiries please contact [MillerM@unitedtalent.com](mailto:MillerM@unitedtalent.com);  
[Nathan.Stone@tegeurope.com](mailto:Nathan.Stone@tegeurope.com)

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

### **Self-Esteem's biography**

Rebecca Lucy Taylor AKA Self Esteem emerged from cult favourite status to mainstream hero following the huge success of her empowering, truth-telling 2021 single 'I Do This All The Time'. The song features on Self Esteem's wildly acclaimed second album *Prioritise Pleasure*, which received Mercury Prize, BRIT Award, Sky Arts and NME Award nominations, was crowned The Guardian and Sunday Times Culture's Album of the Year, and 'I Do This All The Time' was also named The Guardian's #1 song of 2021.

Her new album *A Complicated Woman* was released earlier this year to another round of rave reviews, and has already garnered Taylor her first Ivor Novello Award. *A Complicated Woman* contains all Taylor's musical thumbprints – complex thought processes unfolding in real time, an effortless knack of exposing the feelings women are required to labour under – but set on a larger, brighter landscape that is nothing short of exhilarating. The album debuted alongside a unique seven-show, five-night live performance at the intimate Duke Of York's Theatre in London. Taylor starred in a regular role in the Sky series *Smothered*, before completing a run playing Sally Bowles in the multiple Olivier Award-winning production of 'Cabaret at the Kit Kat Club' in London's West End, starring alongside Jake Shears (Scissor Sisters).

Her debut book, *A Complicated Woman* will be published on 30 October 2025.

### **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)

### **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)

