

# SOUTHBANK CENTRE

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## Press Release

**Date:** Monday 4 November 2019, 9.30am

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**Press Images** [HERE](#) **Event Listings** [HERE](#)

## Southbank Centre announces its Spring 2020 Literature Season featuring Isabel Allende, Roddy Doyle, Jackie Kay, Marian Keyes, Eimear McBride and David Wallace-Wells

Also announced: **Mona Arshi, Simon Armitage, Guppi Bola, Sam 'Junior' Bromfield, Seán Hewitt, L.Kiew, Yetunde Kehinde, Dara McNulty, Ian McMillan, Robin Robertson, Anna Selby, Yomi Şode, Joelle Taylor, Anna Taylor, Zing Tsjeng, Jack Underwood, Jude Yawson** plus a supporting programme of public talks around Hayward Gallery's major exhibition for Spring 2020, ***Among The Trees***.



Marian Keyes © deanchalkley2015; Yetunde Kehinde; David Wallace-Wells © mike@mikemcgregor.com

Southbank Centre today announces its Spring 2020 literature season featuring a packed programme of more than 30 events taking place from January to April 2020 across its 17-acre site (Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room, National Poetry Library, Hayward Gallery and foyer spaces).

The Spring season encompasses exclusive in-conversation events with award-winning UK and international authors, specially-commissioned live readings, panel discussions, new creative writing and poetry courses, exhibitions and prizes. The Spring season also presents a supporting programme of public talks around Hayward Gallery's major new exhibition ***Among The Trees*** (4 March – 17 May 2020), timed to coincide with the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, which brings together artworks that reflect on our multifaceted relationships with trees, forests and nature.

Southbank Centre also continues its commitment to present the best in spoken word and poetry with events and exhibitions curated by its **National Poetry Library**, and the hugely popular live poetry and music night **Out-Spoken** continues its residency in the Purcell Room.

Spring 2020 Season highlights include:

- A series of London exclusive in-conversation events and readings with award-winning fiction writers **Marian Keyes** (QEH, 5 Feb), **Eimear McBride** (PUR, 13 Feb), **Roddy Doyle** (QEH, 11 Mar) and already announced **Isabel Allende** (RFH, 9 Feb)
- **David Wallace-Wells** makes a London exclusive appearance to discuss his international bestseller *The Uninhabitable Earth* (QEH, 8 Apr)
- A one-off live reading responding to the Hayward Gallery's new exhibition **Among the Trees** (4 March – 17 May 2020) with poets **Mona Arshi**, **Anna Selby**, **L.Kiew** and **Seán Hewitt** who perform newly-commissioned poems (HG, 22 Apr)
- Vice UK Executive Editor **Zing Tsjeng** chairs a special panel discussion with climate and mental health specialists on the term 'Eco-anxiety' as part of Southbank Centre's **Reading the Mind** series (PUR, 6 Apr)
- Leading young voices on the climate emergency **Dara McAnulty**, **Yetunde Kehinde** and **Anna Taylor** discuss the breadth of their activism (PUR, 16 Apr)
- The continuation of **Out-Spoken's** residency at Southbank Centre with monthly masterclasses and live poetry and music nights featuring award-winning poet **Robin Robertson** (PUR, 30 Jan), poet laureate **Simon Armitage** (PUR, 27 Feb), Scotland's national poet **Jackie Kay** (PUR, 26 Mar) and more
- The return of **National Poetry Library Lates** (HG, 25 Mar) and a new free exhibition, by **Joo Yeon Park**, **Library of the Unwords**, in Southbank Centre's **National Poetry Library** (NPL, 5 Dec - 29 Mar 2020)
- The annual **T.S. Eliot Prize readings**, showcasing the poets shortlisted for the 2019 prize (QEH, 12 Jan)
- The return of **Polari**, London's leading LGBTQ+ literary salon featuring **Paul Bailey** (L5FR, 26 Jan), **Lucy O'Brien** (L5FR, 15 Feb) and **Philip Hensher** (L5FR, 27 Mar)
- **Imagine Children's Festival** (12 - 23 Feb) returns for its 19th year with a nationwide creative writing project provided for free to primary schools and teachers alongside many talks, events and workshops

**Bea Colley, Acting Senior Literature Programmer, Southbank Centre**, said: *"2019 saw a record number of events take place across Southbank Centre's literature programme, and after a truly inspiring and successful year, we're delighted to start 2020 with an array of new and established authors and poets from around the UK and the world. We're particularly excited to be celebrating Hayward Gallery's new exhibition 'Among the Trees' with a supporting programme of talks and events around the natural world and environmental issues."*

Tickets go on sale to Southbank Centre Members on Tuesday 5 November and to the General Public on Wednesday 6 November with the exception of Polari, which will go on

sale at a later date. *Isabel Allende: A Long Petal of the Sea*, *T.S. Eliot Prize Readings* and *T.S. Eliot Prize Preview with Jeremy Noel-Tod* are already on sale. For more information please visit the Southbank Centre website [HERE](#).

More events are to be added to the programme.

### **Further Programme Detail**

#### **TALKS AND IN CONVERSATION EVENTS**

Award-winning writers present new works of fiction in exclusive London events. Renowned Irish novelist **Marian Keyes** presents her much anticipated new book *Grown Ups* (QEH, 5 Feb); award winning Irish writer **Eimear McBride** reads from her third novel *Strange Hotel* followed by a Q&A (PUR, 13 Feb); Beloved Irish writer **Roddy Doyle** reflects on his writing career as he reads from titles such as *The Woman Who Walked Into Doors*, *Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha* and *A Star Called Henry* (QEH, 11 March) and international bestselling Chilean writer **Isabel Allende** visits the UK for the first time in 12 years to present her much-awaited new novel *A Long Petal of the Sea* (RFH, 9 Feb).

The season's non-fiction programme sees writer and journalist **David Wallace-Wells** reflect on his global bestseller *The Uninhabitable Earth* in a London exclusive event. His book has sparked an unprecedented debate about how we should be talking about the planetary threat from climate change (QEH, 8 Apr).

#### **PANEL DISCUSSIONS**

Leading young voices on the climate emergency, **Dara McAnulty**, **Yetunde Kehinde** and **Anna Taylor** reflect on a year of unprecedented growth in youth activism as they discuss their work on raising awareness about the future of the planet (PUR, 16 Apr); executive editor of *Vice UK* **Zing Tsjeng** chairs a panel talk with climate and mental health specialists debating the term 'Eco-anxiety', anxiety arising from feelings of hopelessness surrounding climate change, whilst reflecting on how to deal with anxiety and stay informed in the climate change movement. The event is part of Southbank Centre's *Reading The Mind* series exploring mental health and wellbeing through literature (PUR, 6 Apr); writer and activist **Guppi Bola** discusses the theme of 'decolonising climate conversations' with a panel of environmental activists (PUR, 19 Mar).

#### **POETRY AND SPOKEN WORD**

**Out-Spoken**, one of London's premier poetry and live music nights, continues its year-long residency at Southbank Centre with four live events. Hosted by poet and founder of *SLAMBassadors* national youth slam, **Joelle Taylor** and featuring the beats of **DJ Sam 'Junior' Bromfield**, the performances are headlined by multi-award winning poets **Robin Robertson** (PUR, 30 Jan), poet laureate **Simon Armitage** (PUR, 27 Feb) and Scotland's national poet **Jackie Kay** (PUR, 26 Mar) with further names to be announced. The April edition marks Out-Spoken's eighth birthday, where the winners of the prestigious

Out-Spoken Prize for Poetry are announced. The evening will see performances from six shortlisted poets in each category, performance and film as well as readings from the panel of judges (PUR, 30 Apr). Four corresponding masterclasses open to anyone with an interest in poetry, are hosted by leading poets including **Jack Underwood** and **Yomi Sode** (SUN, 25 Jan; 29 Feb; 21 Mar; 25 Apr).

**National Poetry Library Lates**, Southbank Centre's series of poetry salons in the Hayward Gallery Cafe, returns for an evening of poetry inspired by the natural world, celebrating the Hayward Gallery's **Among the Trees** exhibition. Taking place in the intimate atmosphere of Southbank Centre's Hayward Gallery Cafe, the evening features readings from leading poets including **Anna Selby** whose poetry often explores our relationship with water and the natural world (HG, 25 Mar).

Southbank Centre's **National Poetry Library** presents a number of live readings this Spring. London open-mic night **Pen-Ting Poetry** brings to the library an evening of live poetry and hip-hop with Pen-Ting founders **SKY GOD** and **The Repeat Beat Poet** (NPL, 8 Jan); a week after the announcement of the T.S. Eliot Prize winners, the library hosts a special **T.S. Eliot Prize Book Club** offering the opportunity to discuss the winning poetry collection (NPL, 20 Jan); Spanish poet **Eduardo Moga** and translator **Terence Dooley** read from a newly published anthology, *Streets Where to Walk is to Embark: Spanish poets in London 1811 - 2018* (NPL, 5 Feb); leading voices in contemporary poetry **Jacqueline Saphra**, **Jessica Mookherjee** and **Julia Webb** explore themes of myth, magic, fable and feminism as they read their poetry (NPL, 4 Mar) and UK-based poets of East Asian heritages and identities **Natalie Linh Bolderston**, **L.Kiew**, **Jennifer Lee Tsai**, **Jennifer Wong**, **Nina Mingya Powles** and **Jay G Ying** reflect on East Asian visibility and representation in British culture as they read from their recent work and respond to existing work in the library. Actor and writer **David Tse Ka-Shing** will give an introductory talk ahead of the readings (NPL, 1 Apr). The library also marks the 30th anniversary of Samuel Beckett's death with **Library of the Unwords**, a new free exhibition from South Korean artist **Joo Yeon Park** who has created new works in response to Beckett's poems (NPL, 5 Dec - 29 Mar 2020).

#### LIVE READINGS AND PERFORMANCE

Author **Johny Pitts** is joined by Benin City's poet **Joshua Idehen** and musicians **Tom Leaper** and **Shanaz Dorsett** for a multi-sensory whistle-stop tour around unseen Europe through music, readings, images and film. The performance will lead through various locations showcasing the continent's diversity, from Sheffield's once-glorious industrial past to an exploration of the Afropean music of Brussels. The evening, presented in collaboration with **A Speaking Volumes Production**, also features a screening of an episode of the iconic BBC documentary series *Arena* (PUR, 30 Mar).

Southbank Centre welcomes back London's leading LGBTQ+ literary salon, **Polari**, for three events this Spring Season, curated and hosted by founder and writer **Paul Burston**, and featuring leading authors from the LGBTQ+ community. The first is headlined by writer and critic **Paul Bailey** who will read from his first poetry collection *Inheritance* (L5FR, 29 Jan); The second welcomes **Lucy O'Brien** for an evening dedicated to British pop singer Dusty

Springfield and LGBTQ+ History Month (L5FR, 15 Feb) whilst British novelist **Philip Hensher** headlines the March edition as he reads from his new novel *A Small Revolution in Germany* (L5FR, 27 Mar).

Ten leading poets including **Mona Arshi, Anna Selby, L.Kiew** and **Seán Hewitt** come together in the Hayward Gallery for a performance of newly commissioned poems in response to the gallery's new exhibition *Among the Trees*. The poems will be read aloud by the poets in different locations throughout the gallery as visitors move around the exhibition at their own pace (HG, 22 Apr).

### NEW SPRING COURSES

Writer, poet and essayist **Jude Yawson** leads *Writing to understand Climate Change*, a new course for Spring 2020. Over the course of 6 sessions, Yawson will offer tips on how to approach research, debate and documentary and how writing can tackle and help understand the climate crisis. The course is focussed on the history, present and future of climate change (20 Jan - 6 Apr, BR & SUN).

Southbank Centre also presents *Unearthing The Southbank*, a six-part poetry course, which explores queerness, self, desire and landscape. The course, led by poet **Richard Scott**, over 6 sessions draws inspiration from Southbank Centre's archival materials and exhibitions and supports aspiring poets to develop their poetical skills (20 Jan - 6 Apr, BR & SUN).

### PRIZES

The **T.S. Eliot Prize Readings** will be the first major highlight of the 2020 literary calendar, showcasing the poets shortlisted for the 2019 prize. Hosted by **Ian McMillan**, the evening of poetry will offer the opportunity to hear some of the best contemporary poets in the English-speaking world reading from their own work, on the evening before the award ceremony and the announcement of the winner (RFH, 12 Jan).

Ahead of this, poetry critic **Jeremy Noel-Tod** will open up discussions around the ten books shortlisted for this year's prize in a preview event (L5FR, 12 Jan).

### IMAGINE CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL

From 12 - 23 February 2020 the UK's leading children's festival, *Imagine Children's Festival*, returns to Southbank Centre for its nineteenth year with twelve days of performance, music, literature, comedy, creativity, parties, participation and free fun for children aged 0-11 and their grownups. Culminating at the festival is *Imagine a Story*: a nationwide creative writing project provided for free to primary schools and teachers devised by Southbank Centre and delivered with author **Sharna Jackson** (High-Rise Mystery, Sunday Times Children's Book of the Week), illustrator **Dapo Adeola** (Look Up!; The Last Last Days of Summer) and Brixton-based publishers and founders of #BooksMadeBetter, **Knights Of**. The full programme will be announced on 2 December. Press release [HERE](#).

**#ENDS#**

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For more information or to buy tickets please visit the Southbank Centre website [HERE](#) or call 020 3879 9555.

**2020 Spring Literature Season Event Listings** [HERE](#)  
**Press Images** [HERE](#)

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## NOTES TO EDITORS

### About Southbank Centre

Southbank Centre is the UK's largest arts centre and one of the UK's top five visitor attractions, occupying a 17 acre site 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. 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).

### Literature at Southbank Centre

Southbank Centre has a lively and diverse literature programme which takes place throughout the year and includes its annual London Literature Festival and biennial Poetry International festival. Featuring talks, debates, poetry, workshops, performance, live reading and more, Southbank Centre's

literature programme has played host to some of the world's greatest writers and thinkers including Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Margaret Atwood, Malorie Blackman, John le Carré, Richard Dawkins, Neil Gaiman, Malcom Gladwell, Naomi Klein, Celeste Ng, Michelle Obama, Philip Pullman and Zadie Smith.

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

Southbank Centre's National Poetry Library is the largest public collection of modern poetry in the world and is housed at 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, the library is free to use [www.nationalpoetrylibrary.org.uk](http://www.nationalpoetrylibrary.org.uk)

### **Southbank Centre Venues**

RFH - Royal Festival Hall  
QEH - Queen Elizabeth Hall  
PUR - Purcell Room  
HG - Hayward Gallery  
SUN - Sunley Pavilion  
FOY - Foyle Pavilion  
L5FR - Level 5 Function Room  
BR - Blue Room  
HGC - Hayward Gallery Cafe  
CBR - The Clore Ballroom at Royal Festival Hall