

# THE LONDON LIBRARY LIT FEST

1 -3 May 2021

A weekend of talks,  
workshops and  
performances celebrating  
The London Library as  
a place of community,  
discovery & refuge.



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## Gender Swapped Fairy Tales Workshop

Saturday 1 May, 12pm

To create their new book, *Gender Swapped Fairy Tales*, graphic novelist Karrie Fransman and digital wizard Jonathan Plackett used the classic Lang's Fairy Books as their source material, gender swapping the stories using a computer algorithm. By turning 'he' to 'she' and 'mother' to 'father', the result illuminates the gender binaries inherent in our language, the roles we adopt and the stories we've been telling our children for generations.

Join the authors for a Gender Swapped Stories workshop and a deep dive into The London Library collection. Discover the secrets behind the Lang's *Fairy Books* (1889 and 1913) and the other wife-and-husband team who created them. Learn how Plackett created the gender-swapping algorithm, have a go at finding texts to gender swap yourself and try your hand at drawing your own swapped literary characters.



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## Sarah Waters: In Conversation

Saturday 1 May, 2pm

Sarah Waters burst onto the literary scene with her stunning first novel *Tipping the Velvet* in 1998. Speaking to Hallie Rubenhold, author of *The Five* and other hidden histories of women's lives, Waters will discuss her extraordinary body of work, the research which goes into each book, the discoveries she has made in The London Library and what inspires and motivates her to tell the stories she so beautifully tells.

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## Buried Treasure

Saturday 1 May, 4pm

Hannah Chukwu, editor of Bernardine Evaristo's *Black Britain: Writing Back* series and Lennie Goodings, Chair of Virago Books, speak to writer and broadcaster Bidisha about the political nature of publishing, the importance of bringing forgotten works to new generations and why institutions such as The London Library are essential as treasure troves full of literary wonders waiting to be discovered.

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## Rebecca West: A Celebration

Saturday 1 May, 6pm

'Hard as nails... a cross between a charwoman and a gipsy, but as tenacious as a terrier, with flashing eyes... immense vitality... suspicion of intellectuals, and great intelligence...'

So said Virginia Woolf of Rebecca West, prolific author, journalist, literary critic, travel writer and one of the foremost public intellectuals of the twentieth century.

West was a founding member of English PEN and Vice President of The London Library. As both organisations celebrate our anniversaries, 100 years and 180 years respectively, we, in turn, celebrate one of the most energetic, fearless and fierce figures in our organisations' histories.

In partnership with English PEN.



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## A Room of One's Own (performance)

Saturday 1 May, 8pm

To mark the 80th anniversary of Virginia Woolf's death, we celebrate one of the most important works of her life. Filmed in the atmospheric spaces of The London Library, where Woolf, a long-standing member, would once have browsed the book stacks, Charlotte Westerman directs Linda Marshall-Griffiths' dramatic adaptation of this ground-breaking work, which still resonates today.

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## The London Library Emerging Writers Programme Showcase

Sunday 2 May, 12pm

John O'Farrell hosts a showcase of exceptional talent from the inaugural cohort of our Emerging Writers Programme with readings from *From the Silence of the Stacks*, *New Voices Rise*, an anthology of their work. Featuring poet Helen Howell, novelists Amber Medland and L M Dillsworth, short story writer Deborah Torr and playwright Carmina Bernhardt.

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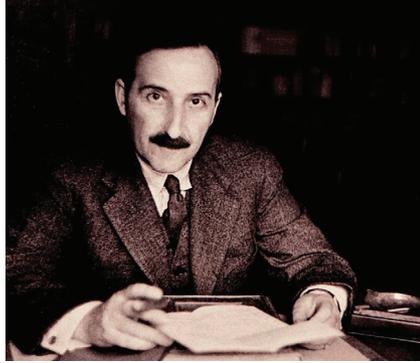
## Salman Rushdie: In Conversation

Sunday 2 May, 2pm

Salman Rushdie joins English PEN and The London Library to mark our anniversaries and celebrate 40 years since the publication of his trailblazing, bestselling, two-time Best of Booker-winning novel, *Midnight's Children*.

He'll discuss the inspiration and genesis of the magical realist classic, an allegorical tale about Indian Independence, which sparked a revolution in post-colonial literature. He'll speak about his remarkable body of work since, about literature, freedom of expression and the role The London Library and English PEN have played in his writing life.

In partnership with English PEN.



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## Zweig in London

Sunday 2 May, 4pm

Joining Philippe Sands, writer, human rights lawyer and Zweig fan, are George Prochnik, author of *The Impossible Exile*, a biography of Zweig, and Daria Santini, author of *The Exiles*.

Woven through with readings of some of the letters Zweig wrote from London, they discuss his life and work, his five years of physical and cultural displacement in the city and the particular condition of what it means to be a writer in exile.

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## After Vienna: Edmund de Waal and Tom Stoppard in conversation

Sunday 2 May, 6pm

Coming together in conversation for this very special event, Tom Stoppard and Edmund de Waal discuss some of the themes and concerns they share in their work, including diaspora, displacement, art and libraries and the cultural particularity of pre-War Vienna.

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## 5x15: Science and Miscellaneous

Sunday 2 May, 8pm

The London Library's Science and Miscellaneous section has its own unique classification system, designed for book explorers to make unexpected discoveries. Disparate subjects jostle up against each other in wonderfully evocative juxtapositions – Death, Dentistry and Devil &c or Post Office, Poultry, Predictions, for example. To celebrate the Library's wild heart, we have teamed up with 5x15 to bring five acclaimed speakers, each sharing their Science & Miscellaneous-inspired stories. Featuring historian Suzannah Lipscomb, novelist and screenwriter David Nicholls, novelist Naomi Ishiguro and writer and engineer Yassmin Abdel-Magied.

In partnership with 5x15.

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## Global Conversations: Myth and Discovery

Monday 3 May, 2pm

We bring Monique Roffey (UK) and C Pam Zhang (USA) together across two continents to discuss the common themes in their recent novels: myth, discovery and the lure/lore of the frontier.

In partnership with Brighton Festival as part of their Global Conversations series.



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## Friendships & Rivalries with Simon Schama

Monday 3 May, 4pm

Historian Simon Schama discusses some of the most famous and fascinating friendships and rivalries to have been forged amongst writers throughout history: from Boccaccio and Petrarch to Montaigne and La Boétie and plenty others since.





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## Theatre for Dreamers

**Monday 3 May, 6pm**

1960. The world is dancing on the edge of revolution, and nowhere more so than on the Greek island of Hydra.

Alongside readings and music, acclaimed novelist Polly Samson speaks to novelist and journalist Edward Docx about her spellbinding new novel, utopian dreams, the wars waged between men and women on the battlegrounds of genius and the explosive, and sometimes implosive, potential of artistic communities.



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## Too Young, Too Loud, Too Different: Poetry party with Malika's Poetry Kitchen

**Monday 3 May, 8pm**

In the early years of the new millennium, poets Malika Booker and Roger Robinson saw the need for a space for writers outside of the establishment to grow, improve, discuss and learn.

One Friday night, Malika offered her Brixton kitchen table as a meeting place. And Malika's Poetry Kitchen was born.

Celebrating 20 years of MPK, and their forthcoming anthology *Too Young, Too Loud, Too Different*, we host a party of poetry featuring MPK members past and present including Inua Ellams, Malika Booker, Kayo Chingonyi, Zakia Carpenter-Hall, Arji Manuelpillai, Charlotte Ansell and hosted by poet and MPK Director Jill Abram.

In partnership with Malika's Poetry Kitchen.



Tickets from **£5**, all events are taking place online.

Find out more at [londonlibrarylitfest.co.uk](http://londonlibrarylitfest.co.uk)