



NIGHT OF IDEAS

5 FEBRUARY 2026
FRENCH INSTITUTE, LONDON



Introduction

Launched in 2016, the Night of Ideas has become a worldwide project staged in 190 cities and 104 different countries. In London and Edinburgh, the French Institute convenes debates and performances to challenge our understanding of the world.

Crossing French and British perspectives, the Night of Ideas champions the free circulation of ideas to help apprehend the trends transforming our societies.

This year's edition will address key issues of our times, including global imbalances, geopolitical upheavals, the growing polarisation among Gen Z, AI in education, ending life ethically and shifting masculinities.

We thank our donors, among them the Friends and Patrons of the Institute, and all the speakers.

TIME	CINÉ LUMIÈRE 1	LIBRARY	CINÉ LUMIÈRE 2
18.00-19.20	Opening Event		
19.40-20.50	The Baltic Frontline	Ethics, Law and Care at the End of Life	Contemporary Masculinities
21.10-22.20	Global Imbalances: Is It Still Time to (Re)Act?	Gen Z's Political Split	AI in the Classroom: Promise and Pitfalls

FOYER

- From 18.00: **Book Sale**
- 22.20 – 23.20: **Closing Event – DJ set with The DJ Sax**

Master of Ceremonies: **Pierre-Antoine Denis**

Programme

Opening Event

18.00–19.20 – Ciné Lumière 1

- HE **Hélène Duchêne**, French Ambassador to the UK, will launch the Night of Ideas 2026
- Welcome by **Anissia Morel**, Director of the Institut français du Royaume-Uni
- Dance performance by **Alice Renavand**, ballerina and former Danseuse Étoile of the Paris Opera Ballet with piano improvisation by **Karol Beffa**
- Opening address by **Benoit Swan Pouffer**, Artistic Director of Rambert, the London-based contemporary dance company
- **Alice Renavand** and **Benoit Swan Pouffer** in conversation, chaired by **Sanjoy Roy**



HE Hélène Duchêne



Karol Beffa



Anissia Morel



Alice Renavand



Benoit Swan Pouffer



Sanjoy Roy

The Baltic Frontline

19.40–20.50 – Ciné Lumière 1

European countries can no longer avoid addressing the challenges posed by Russia's recent choices and the long-term pressure they create for Europe's security and politics. From a Baltic and Northern European perspective, these threats are particularly acute: these States are Europe's strategic frontline and serve as laboratories for innovation in defence, democratic resilience and the fight against disinformation, offering important pointers for the future shape of Europe's security architecture.

With

- **Ian Bond** – Deputy Director of the Centre for European Reform
- **Marie Mendaras** – Professor at the Paris School of International Affairs - Sciences Po, author of *La Guerre permanente, L'ultime stratégie du Kremlin* (Calmann-Lévy, 2024)
- **Oliver Moody** – Berlin bureau chief for *The Times*
- **Elena Volochine** – Senior reporter at France 24

Chaired by **Luc Raynal** – Defence Attaché at the French Embassy to the UK



Ian Bond



Marie Mendaras



Oliver Moody



Elena Volochine



Luc Raynal

Ethics, Law and Care at the End of Life

19.40–20.50 – Library

Set against ongoing UK debates on the Terminally Ill Adults Bill and proposed legislation on assisted dying and palliative care in France, this panel will explore the legal, medical and social questions surrounding the end of life. It will clarify the tensions between individual freedom, medical responsibility and collective solidarity, forming part of the current, broader reflection on what it means to “die with dignity” and how societies frame or limit the freedom to choose one’s own death.

With

- **Alexandra Mullock** – Senior Lecturer in Medical Law at the University of Manchester
- **Dr Annabel Price** – Associate Specialty Director in Palliative Care, University of Cambridge
- **Bernard Stirn** – Honorary Section President at the Conseil d’État, Permanent Secretary of the Académie des sciences morales et politiques

Chaired by **Soazick Kerneis** – Professor of Legal History at the University of Paris Nanterre and Research Fellow at the Maison Française d’Oxford



Alexandra Mullock



Annabel Price



Bernard Stirn



Soazick Kerneis

Contemporary Masculinities

19.40–20.50 – Ciné Lumière 2

Representations of masculinity have become central to a wider cultural battle, with an imagined return to patriarchal order taking shape across digital and political spaces. In response to this rhetoric of lost virility, artists, researchers, and activists are reclaiming masculinities to explore their plurality, contradictions, and vulnerabilities. Between fragility and dominance, tenderness and performance, masculinity offers a lens through which to read our times. From couples to parenthood, masculinities are being redefined in the intimacy of daily life. What do these reconfigurations of the masculine reveal about how we live together?

With

- **Daisy Letourneur** – Writer, feminist, trans and lesbian activist
- **Alona Pardo** – Director at the Arts Council Collection, London

Chaired by **Bradley Stephens** – Academic Director for Programmes in the Faculty of Arts, Law, and Social Sciences at the University of Bristol



Daisy Letourneur



Alona Pardo



Bradley Stephens

Global Imbalances: Is It Still Time to (Re)Act?

21.10–22.20 – Ciné Lumière 1

Persistent global macroeconomic imbalances pose serious risks to the global economy. They fuel trade, financial and geo-economic tensions, they increase the risk of geopolitical fragmentation, and they hinder the ability to find solutions for common challenges such as climate change, development and inequalities. Addressing global imbalances in a cooperative manner is a core point of the international agenda, including the French presidency of the G7 in 2026. Which solutions could be explored to respond to urgent and long-term issues?

With

- **Vikram Doraiswami** – High Commissioner for India in the UK
- **Emmanuelle Lachaussée** – Deputy Director General for Political and Security Affairs at the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs
- **Ann Pettifor** – Director of PRIME (Policy Research in Macroeconomics)
- **William Roos** – Managing Director for Corporate Strategy at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

Chaired by **Philippe Wen** – Financial Counsellor, Deputy Head of the Economic Department of the French Embassy to the UK



Vikram Doraiswami



Emmanuelle Lachaussée



Ann Pettifor



William Roos



Philippe Wen

Gen Z's Political Split

21.10–22.20 – Library

Often seen as a progressive bloc, Gen Z is in fact deeply divided. In France, young voters increasingly back parties at opposite ends of the political spectrum. In the United States, recent polls point to a growing gender divide among under-30s, and in the UK, youth support is largely directed toward Labour, while many of their peers stay away from the polls altogether. Shaped by fragmented media ecosystems, this polarisation is reinforced by growing inequality, social decline, and distrust in politics.

With

- **Marie Boëton** – Journalist, Senior Reporter for *La Croix L'Hebdo*
- **Rosie Campbell** – Professor of Politics at King's College London
- **Roberto Foa** – Director of the Centre for the Future of Democracy, Cambridge University
- **Cole Stangler** – French-American journalist

Chaired by **Emma Connolly** – Research Fellow in the Digital Speech Lab in the Department of Political Science at UCL



Marie Boëton



Rosie Campbell



Roberto Foa



Cole Stangler



Emma Connolly

AI in the Classroom: Promise and Pitfalls

21.10–22.20 – Ciné Lumière 2

School as we knew it has come to an end. The AI revolution is going on, and is already reshaping how pupils learn and how teachers work. This major evolution raises questions, concerns, and hope. What choices around curricula, assessment and governance are needed for education systems to foster an ethical, responsible digital culture? Can technologies contribute to address other unachieved challenges in education, such as equality?

With

- **Jonas Erin** – General Inspector for Education, Sport and Research, French Ministry for Education and Youth
- **Rebecca Eynon** – Professor of Education, the Internet and Society at the University of Oxford
- **Jasmine Sekou** – Stemettes Educator & Youth Advocate

Chaired by **Maira Klyshbekova** – Postdoctoral Research Associate in AI Education at King's College London



Jonas Erin



Rebecca Eynon



Jasmine Sekou



Maira Klyshbekova

Closing Event: DJ set with The DJ Sax

22.20 – 23.20 – Foyer

Join **The DJ Sax**, where DJ energy meets live saxophone. Sasha – aka The DJ Sax – is a mainstay of the entertainment scene, known for a high-energy set that fuse club sounds with live performance. From the O2 Arena to London's iconic KOKO and international stages, she'll bring infectious energy to end the Night of Ideas.

With special thanks to Olivia and Benoît Verbrugghe.



Books for Thought

From 18.00 – Foyer

To deepen the debates, books from the guests of this year's edition of the Night of Ideas will be on sale in the foyer of the French Institute thanks to our partner bookshop **Librairie La Page**. Book signings will be organised throughout the event.

Partners

The Night of Ideas is produced by



With the support of



In collaboration with



Service Enseignement Supérieur, Recherche et Innovation



Librairie
La Page

Academic Partners



Closing Event Partner



Admission

All debates and events in the **Night of Ideas** are **free** to attend and open to all, but prior registration is required.

Venue

Institut français du Royaume-Uni
17 Queensberry Place, London SW7 2DT

Food and Drinks

Food and drinks can be purchased on site.

Stay Tuned

www.institut-francais.org.uk/night-of-ideas

X, Instagram
@ifru_london
#nightofideas

Facebook
@InstitutFrancaisLondon

LinkedIn
Institut français du Royaume-Uni

Bluesky, YouTube
FrenchInstituteUK

Press Enquiries

Natacha Antolini: natacha.antolini@institut-francais.org.uk

Images

The Institut français reserves the right to use pictures or videos taken during the event for marketing and media purposes. If you do not wish to have your photo taken or to be on the video, please tell the camera operator.

Info & Booking



[www.institut-francais.org.uk/
night-of-ideas](http://www.institut-francais.org.uk/night-of-ideas)



This leaflet is printed on
100% recycled paper.