

Shorter  
Faster  
Films 2023  
MAY 12-27

at the Institut français, London

# BEYOND WORDS

FRENCH Talks  
LITERATURE FESTIVAL

[www.beyondwordstfest.co.uk](http://www.beyondwordstfest.co.uk)

Performances

LES  
LIT  
LIT

INSTITUT  
FRANÇAIS  
Royaume-Uni

# Beyond Words at a Glance

## Friday 12 May

**8.30pm** – Film + Q&A  
**Brainwashed**

## Saturday 13 May

**2pm** – Film – **Brainwashed**  
**8.30pm** – Film – **Brainwashed**

## Sunday 14 May

**11.45am** – Film – **Loving Highsmith**  
**4pm** – Film – **Brainwashed**  
**4.15pm** – Film + Talk – **Gigi**

## Monday 15 May

**6pm** – Talk + Readings – **Art Matters with Tarek Lakhrissi**  
**6.30pm** – Film – **The Super 8 Years**  
**7.30pm** – Talk + Readings  
**The Birthday Party: Laurent Mauvignier & Lauren Elkin**  
**8.30pm** – Film – **Brainwashed**

## Tuesday 16 May

**4pm** – Readings – **Story Time**  
**6.30pm** – Talk + Readings  
**Muriel Barbery, Antoine Laurain, Jean-Baptiste Andrea & Viv Groskop**  
**6.40pm** – Film + Intro  
**Milan Kundera, Odysée des illusions trahies**  
**8.30pm** – Performance – **A Musical Journey with Colette by Julie Anna Zappalà**  
**8.30pm** – Film – **Brainwashed**

## Wednesday 17 May

**4.30pm** – Film – **Loving Highsmith**  
**6pm** – Talk + Readings  
**Ian McEwan & Ted Hodgkinson**  
**8.15pm** – Film – **Brainwashed**

## Thursday 18 May

**6.15pm** – Film – **Brainwashed**  
**6.30pm** – Talk – **Éric Vuillard & Natalya Benkhaled-Vince**

## Friday 19 May

**6.30pm** – Talk + Readings  
**Deborah Levy, Michèle Roberts, Emmanuelle Lambert & Diana Holmes**  
**8.15pm** – Talk – **Paul B. Preciado & Merve Emre**

## Saturday 20 May

**10.30am** – Talk – **Café Philo**  
**11am** – Workshop – **If I was a sock... with Pauline Kerleroux**  
**1pm** – Performance – **Live Drawing: Sock Portraits by Pauline Kerleroux**  
**1.50pm** – CinéFamilies – **Alice in Wonderland**  
**3.30pm** – Film + Intro – **India Song**

## Sunday 21 May

**2pm** – Film – **Une aussi longue absence**

# French literature, live, loud and proud!

From **12 to 21 May**, the Institut français goes **Beyond Words** to cross borders and genres and takes us on a literary journey through lively discussions, powerful readings and inspiring live performances and screenings.

This year, we will partner with our friends from Gallic Books for a special evening with **Muriel Barbery, Antoine Laurain and Jean-Baptiste Andrea**.

We'll showcase the New French Novel with **Laurent Mauvignier, Lauren Elkin** and **Éric Vuillard**, while celebrating the 150th anniversary of the birth of **Colette** with **Emmanuelle Lambert, Deborah Levy, Michèle Roberts** and **Diana Holmes**, and a special screening of *Gigi*, attended by **Leslie Caron**.

**Virginia Woolf** will be in the spotlight with **Paul B. Preciado**, and so will **Marguerite Duras**, with the screenings of *India Song* and *Une aussi longue absence*.

The festival will also feature Nobel Prize-winner **Annie Ernaux's** directorial debut.

Last but not least, it's a great honour to welcome **Ian McEwan**, who will present his new novel, *Lessons*, a compelling reflexion on history and humanity.

Other stories, wonders and encounters await you. Turn the pages, discover the full programme and join us at Beyond Words Festival.

With special thanks to Florence and Vincent Gombault for their support to the festival.

# FRIDAY 12 MAY

## Brainwashed: Sex - Camera - Power

### FILM + Q&A

dir. Nina Menkes, 2022, 107 mins

'The first step of freedom is consciousness.'

So says director **Nina Menkes**, introducing her compelling documentary about the systemic use of gendered techniques in filmmaking and how these subconsciously impact the representation of women in society. Building upon feminist film theorist **Laura Mulvey's** landmark essay *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*, Menkes draws on excerpts from over 175 films to prove her point.

8.30pm + Q&A with dir. Nina Menkes  
£13, conc. £11

Also showing on Sat 13, Sun 14, Mon 15, Tue 16 and Wed 17 May – various prices  
in English



# SUNDAY 14 MAY



## Loving Highsmith

### FILM

dir. Eva Vitija, 2022, 83 mins

*Loving Highsmith* is a unique look at the life of celebrated American author **Patricia Highsmith**, based on her diaries and notebooks and the intimate reflections of her lovers, friends and family. Excerpts from unpublished notes voiced by Gwendoline Christie (*Game of Thrones*), beautifully interwoven with archive material create a vivid, touching portrait of one of the most fascinating female writers of the 20th Century.

11.45am - £13, conc. £11

Also showing on Wed 17 May (4.30pm)  
£10, conc. £8

## Gigi

### FILM + TALK

dir. **Vincente Minnelli**, 1958, 115 mins  
Gigi (**Leslie Caron**), an innocent French girl, finds herself being trained by two veteran Parisian courtesans so that she can become the mistress of Gaston Lachaille, a family friend and heir to a sugar fortune. The source material for director **Vincente Minnelli**'s ornate musical lies in **Colette**'s 1944 novella of the same name, one of the most recognised works in her illustrious writing career.

*4.15pm + discussion with Leslie Caron and Diana Holmes - £15, conc. £13 in English*



# MONDAY 15 MAY



## Art Matters with Tarek Lakhri

### TALK + READINGS

Poet and artist **Tarek Lakhri** explores the themes of desire, queer poetic and empowerment through a reading followed by a conversation with curator **Lynton Talbot**. The discussion will delve into the relation between his writing and visual arts practice, and his use of language as a tool for resistance and self-defence.

*6pm - £9, conc. £7  
in English and French*

MONDAY 15 MAY

## The Birthday Party: Laurent Mauvignier & Lauren Elkin

TALK + READINGS

Told in a rhythmic and propulsive prose that weaves seamlessly from one consciousness to the next over the course of a day, **Laurent Mauvignier's** *The Birthday Party* is a deft unravelling of the stories we hide from others and from ourselves, a gripping tale of the violent irruptions of the past into the present. Meet **Laurent Mauvignier**, a major contemporary French writer, in conversation with author and translator **Lauren Elkin**.

Readings by **Félicité du Jeu**  
7.30pm - £9, conc. £7  
in English and French



## The Super 8 Years

FILM

dir.s Annie Ernaux & David Ernaux-Briot,  
2022, 61 mins

In 2022, **Annie Ernaux**, winner of the Nobel Prize in literature, together with her son **David Ernaux-Briot**, created a wistful cine-memoir composed of super-8 family footage shot between 1972 and 1981. This dreamy documentary, which premiered to critical acclaim in Cannes' Directors' Fortnight, written and narrated by Ernaux herself, tells of a time when the author was in her thirties and raising two children.

6.30pm - £13, conc. £11  
in English and French



©Marianne Katzer

THE  
BIRTHDAY PARTY

LAURENT MAUVIGNIER

Félicité du Jeu



©DR



©Pascal Ito - Flammarion

©Boyan Topaloff



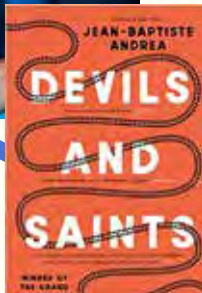
## A Gallic Evening with Muriel Barbery, Antoine Laurain & Jean-Baptiste Andrea

### TALK + READINGS

Gallic Books launched 15 years ago with a mission to publish the very best of French into English, and have since gained a reputation for championing books that are brilliant, unique and always enjoyable. With Beyond Words, they are delighted to showcase three of the most exciting and successful authors from their pool:

**Jean-Baptiste Andrea**, screenwriter, director and author of *Devils and Saints*; **Antoine Laurain**, international bestselling author of *The Red Notebook*; and **Muriel Barbery**, author of the global sensation *The Elegance of the Hedgehog*. Join them for a special evening with award-winning journalist **Viv Groskop**. Together, they'll talk about their latest books, their writing lives and how publishing compares in France and in the UK.

*Readings by Félicité du Jeu*  
6.30pm - £9, conc. £7  
in English and French



TUESDAY 16 MAY

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## Milan Kundera, Odyssée des illusions trahies

### FILM + INTRO

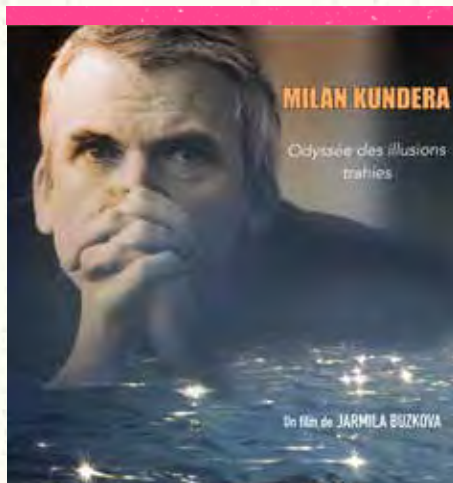
dir. Jarmila Buzkova, 2022, 53 mins

This rare documentary examines the singular and enigmatic trajectory of one of the most widely read writers in the world. From his time in Communist Czechoslovakia to his Parisian exile and writing in French, from his quest for glory to his withdrawal from public life, this moving homage conceived as an Odyssey sheds light on the author of *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*.

6.40pm + intro by dir. Jarmila Buzkova

£12, conc. £10

in English and French



## A Musical Journey with Colette by Julie Anna Zappalà

### CONCERT

To mark the 150th anniversary of the birth of Colette, let's wander into the musical landscape of the celebrated author of the *Claudine series*, *The Vagabond* or *Gigi*. On the occasion, pianist **Julie Anna Zappalà** invites you to a musical journey with pieces by composers of the late 19th century and early 20th century such as Poulenc, Debussy and Ravel.

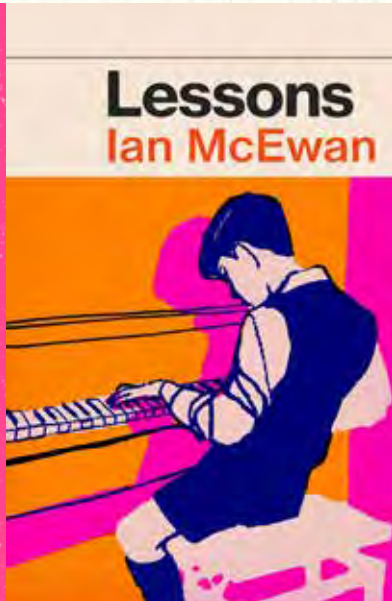
8.30pm - £15, members £13, students £5



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## Lessons on Life and Literature with Ian McEwan & Ted Hodgkinson

### TALK + READINGS

In *Lessons*, **Ian McEwan** masterfully unravels a fascinating chronicle of our time. How do global events beyond our control shape our lives and our memories? What can we really learn from the traumas of the past? From the Cuban Missile Crisis to the fall of the Berlin Wall, from the COVID pandemic to climate change, one of the greatest British writers discusses his 500-page socio-political epic *tour de force* with **Ted Hodgkinson**, Head of Literature at Southbank Centre.

*Readings by Olivia Ross*

6pm - £9, conc. £7  
in English

WEDNESDAY 17 MAY

THURSDAY 18 MAY

## Revisiting Colonialism with **Éric Vuillard** & **Natalya Benkhaled-Vince**

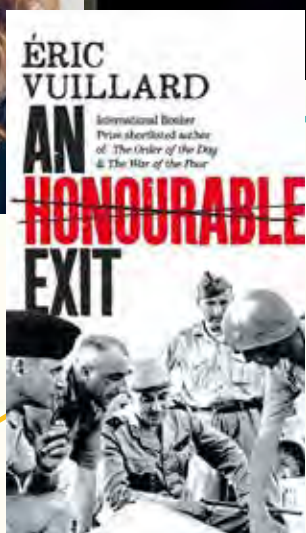
### TALK

In recent years, debates around France's colonial past have multiplied and literature has played a significant political and critical role to address this legacy. From the Belgian colonisation in *Congo* (2012) to the Indochina War in *An Honourable Exit* (2022), Goncourt Prize-winning author **Éric Vuillard** deconstructs the official version of History. He will discuss how literature aims to illuminate structural inequalities and oppression with **Natalya Benkhaled-Vince**, historian of the French Empire, decolonisation and post-colonial histories.

6.30pm - £9, conc. £7  
in English and French



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## Colette by Deborah Levy, Michèle Roberts, Emmanuelle Lambert & Diana Holmes

### TALK + READINGS

Once a figure of scandal, now a literary icon – **Colette** (1873-1954) is being hugely celebrated in France as 2023 marks the 150th anniversary of her birth. Acclaimed authors **Deborah Levy**, **Michèle Roberts**, **Emmanuelle Lambert** and **Diana Holmes** join the celebration with a discussion on her colourful life but above all on her luminous writing, with its implicit feminism and affirmation of a profound *joie de vivre*.

*Readings by Olivia Ross*

6.30pm - £9, conc. £7  
in English and French



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FRIDAY 19 MAY

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## Who Am I? Orlando, with Paul B. Preciado & Merve Emre

### TALK

*"Virginia Woolf wrote my biography before me when publishing Orlando, a century ago"* - Paul B. Preciado. Published in 1928, **Virginia Woolf's** *Orlando* follows a character who transforms into different bodies and genders throughout history, challenging binary systems and demonstrating relevance in queer theory. In a conversation with author, academic and literary critic **Merve Emre**, trans philosopher and writer **Paul B. Preciado** will discuss how *Orlando* resonates with his personal transformation, writing and theory.

8.15pm - £15, conc. £13  
in English

# SATURDAY 20 MAY

## Café Philo: The Function of the Author

### DEBATE

Open to everyone interested in discussing philosophical issues, this festival's edition of the Café Philo wonders: "Is the function of the author to reveal the world, or to invent it?" Join the conversation.

10.30am - £3  
in English





## India Song

### FILM + INTRO

dir. Marguerite Duras, 1975, 120 mins

**Delphine Seyrig** plays the bored and promiscuous wife of a French diplomat in **Marguerite Duras's** Calcutta based drama, now fully restored to its original glory. Set in the 1930s, the tedium of her existence is relieved when she embarks on a string of affairs, all of which are known but ignored by her husband. From intense connections to brief encounters, Duras creates a world in which the off-screen voice represents the ghostly presence of a time that once was.

**3.30pm + intro by film curator Federico Rossin – £15, conc. £13**  
*in French with EN subs*

# SUNDAY 21 MAY



## Une aussi longue absence

### FILM

dir. Henri Colpi, 1961, 94 mins

Drawing from a screenplay by **Marguerite Duras**, Henri Colpi's *Une aussi longue absence* depicts the unbearable longing of Thérèse Langlois for her husband, who disappeared during World War Two. One day, a tramp passes by humming a familiar tune, and Therese is convinced that the vagabond is her husband, but she soon discovers this stranger has lost his memory. Therese tries hard to make him recollect in the hope of renewing the love they once knew.

**2pm – £10, conc. £8**

*in French with EN subs*

# Beyond Words for Kids

## Story Time: Books on Books

### READING SESSION

Let your kids' imagination run wild through listening to our librarians' favourite stories from French authors. For Beyond Words, they will discover tales about literature. This session is also a good occasion to develop young learners's sensibility to French.

*Tue 16 May - 4pm - £7, members £5, carer £3 - ages 2-6  
in easy French*



## If I was a sock... with Pauline Kerleroux

### WORKSHOP

What makes you you? London-based French illustrator **Pauline Kerleroux** invites you to create your self-portrait... as a sock. Discover how to use colour, composition and detail to give inanimate objects a personality. A fun exercise that will change the way you perceive yourself - and your socks - forever.

*Sat 20 May - 11am - £9, conc. £7 - ages 8-12  
in easy French*

## Live Drawing: Sock Portraits by Pauline Kerleroux

### PERFORMANCE

French illustrator **Pauline Kerleroux** has a thing for socks and she's imagined a series of sock portraits that have a lot to say about you. Watch her as she draws live on the windows of Bibliothèque Quentin Blake to see how her socks come alive.

*Sat 20 May - 1pm - Free - Open to all*

## Alice in Wonderland

### CINÉFAMILIES

*dir.s Clyde Geronimi & Wilfred Jackson, 1951,  
75 mins*

Lewis Carroll's ever celebrated, sometimes controversial, *Alice in Wonderland* has been adapted for the big screen several times. But Disney's 1951 version remains one of the favourites. Take your children to Wonderland and let them hold hands with Alice to make up their own mind about it. Will they get back home? Not if the Queen of Hearts has her way.

*Sat 20 May - 1.50pm - £5 - Age 8 +  
in English*



# Beyond our Walls

## **Glasgow**

15 May – Talk – Omar et Greg with François Beaune – Alliance Française de Glasgow

[www.afglasgow.org.uk](http://www.afglasgow.org.uk)

## **Bristol**

16 May – Talk – An Impossible Return with Caroline Laurent – Waterstones Bristol

[www.waterstones.com](http://www.waterstones.com)

## **Oxford**

17 May – Talk – Éric Vuillard in conversation with Ann Jefferson – Maison française d'Oxford

[www.mfo.ac.uk](http://www.mfo.ac.uk)

## **Edinburgh**

17 May – Talk – Creative Writing with François Beaune – Institut français d'Écosse

[www.ifecosse.org.uk](http://www.ifecosse.org.uk)

## **London**

21 May – Talk – Looking Forward: Olivier Guez, as part of the European Writers' Festival – British Library

[www.bl.uk](http://www.bl.uk)

## Book signings

Come and browse through hundreds of books from our on-site booksellers: both English and French editions will be available. All the authors will be happy to sign after their events.

## And further...

Ahead of (and after) the festival, you can find the featured books in our in-house library, La Médiathèque, and on our digital library, Culturethèque.

[www.institut-francais.org.uk/la-mediathèque](http://www.institut-francais.org.uk/la-mediathèque)

[www.culturetheque.com](http://www.culturetheque.com)

## Info & booking

[www.beyondwordslitfest.co.uk](http://www.beyondwordslitfest.co.uk)

020 7871 3515

Early booking essential

*All information is correct at the time of print but subject to change.*

*Please check our website for updates*

## Venue


Institut français



17 Queensberry Place, South Kensington

London SW7 2DT

## Stay connected

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