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The American Library in Paris

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Editor: Carolyn Dubol

In Memoriam: The Honorable James G. Lowenstein (1927–2023)



Photo © Krystal Kenney

Ambassador Lowenstein at the 2022 Gala, receiving an honor for his service to the Library.

It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of Ambassador James Lowenstein, a steadfast supporter of the American Library and a beloved member of our community. Throughout the years, he played an instrumental role in shaping the Library, first as a trustee, then as the founding chairman of our Advisory Council, and most recently as the Chairman Emeritus of that Council.

Beyond his work at the Library, Jim was an accomplished and respected figure in the American community in Paris, with a distinguished career that spanned from the Marshall Plan to the French-American Foundation, which he co-founded. His contributions to the cultural life of Paris were immeasurable and will not be forgotten.

Jim's passing is a great loss to the Library community and to all who knew him. We will be considering ways to honor his legacy and tremendous service, and we welcome any ideas or memories you would like to share.

On behalf of the Library, we extend our deepest condolences to Jim's family and loved ones. He will be dearly missed.

Sincerely,

Audrey Chapuis, Library Director

Read the Best Books of 2022

Our Collections team spent the last month combing through "Best of 2022" reading lists in all of our favorite publications, including the *New York Times*, the *Financial Times*, the *Publishers Weekly*, the *New Yorker*, as well as book prize nominations throughout the English-speaking world. Our end-of-year book order has finally arrived, and now the Library's shelves are brimming with outstanding new books, across all genres.

Stop by our New Books section on your next trip to the Library to find titles like [Michelle Obama's *The Light We Carry*](#), [Stacy Schiff's *The Revolutionary: Samuel Adams*](#), [Hua Hsu's *Stay True*](#), and [Hernan Diaz's *Trust*](#), as well as hundreds of others that defined 2022. Many are also available as e-books and e-audiobooks through the Library's [OverDrive](#) platform.



Ecologues Begins 26 January



[Ecologues](#) is the Library's new series of interactive webinars featuring experts on the environmental crisis.

The inaugural meeting takes place on Thursday 26 January in a hybrid format, at the Library and live on Zoom. The conversation will begin at 19h CET and run for ninety minutes.

[Ecologues: What is the Climate Crisis?](#)

Hybrid Event: In Person at the Library; Live on Zoom
Thursday 26 January at 19h CET

Speakers Alister Doyle, Matthew Pye, and Rahmina Paulette will join us virtually and in person to wonder: **What is happening to the earth, the sky, and the oceans? How did we get here, and where are we going?**

Alister Doyle, author of [The Great Melt](#), formerly reported on the environment for Reuters.



Matthew Pye, founder of the [Climate Academy](#), is a teacher, philosopher, and author.



Rahmina Paulette, founder of [Kisumu Environmental Champs](#), is an activist and conservationist.



Ecologues is presented in cooperation with the following partners:



From the Archives: Fashion Designer Claire McCardell



The recent reissue of American designer Claire McCardell's 1956 book [What Shall I Wear?](#) reminded us of an exciting anecdote that fashion historian Julie Eilber brought to our attention.

In the fall of 1926, a young McCardell studied for a year in Paris at Parsons, then known as The School for Fine and Applied Arts. In a letter McCardell sent to her parents (held at The Maryland Center for History and Culture), she wrote, "Then we went to the American Library to look up Renaissance history too. The library is grand, they have a wonderful collection of books." McCardell must have remembered her visits to the Library fondly for decades, since she's listed as a donor in our 1946 Treasurer's Report.

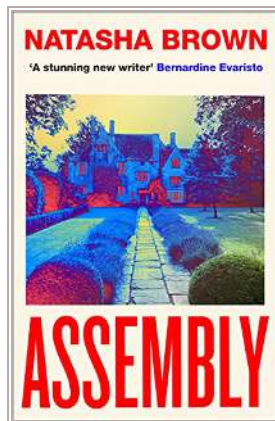
After her year abroad, McCardell went on to revolutionize American fashion. She proudly rejected the codes of Paris-centric *haute couture* in favor of affordable ready-to-wear and sportswear. As a testament to her achievements, she graced the cover of Time Magazine in 1955. In the above photo, Julie Eilber, Assistant Director Abigail Altman, and volunteer Mayanne Wright (l-r) pose with the Library's archival issue of this magazine, bringing McCardell into the Library once more.

Julie Eilber has teamed up with the sewing website [Cashmerette](#) to release two Claire McCardell-inspired patterns: The Rockwell Dress and The Carroll shrug. You can see more of McCardell's designs on Eilber's Instagram feed @julie_eilber or by making an appointment to view the Library's fashion magazine archives.

Programs for Adults

Evenings with an Author, sponsored by GRoW @ Annenberg

Evenings with an Author and other evening programs are free and open to the public, unless otherwise noted. You must RSVP to attend our programs, whether you join us in person or via Zoom.



TONIGHT

[Natasha Brown on Assembly](#)

Hybrid Event:

In Person at the Library; Live on Zoom

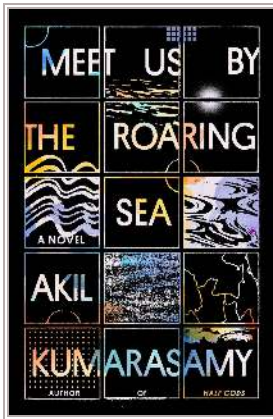
Tuesday 10 January at 19h30 CET

Natasha Brown's debut novel, *Assembly*, offers a poetic and concise examination of race, gender, and class. When a successful Black woman receives unsettling news, she considers the constituent parts of her life: her high-paying job in finance, her prestigious education, her white boyfriend. She finds her life reduced to the narrative white society demands of her, and must decide the price she is willing to pay to reclaim agency over her circumstances.

Free and open to the public. Registration required.

Join us for a reception at the Library following the event.

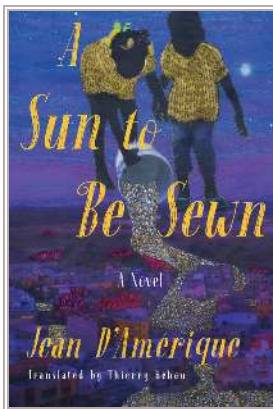
RSVP to attend in person or on Zoom

**TOMORROW****Akil Kumarasamy and Dinaw Mengestu
on *Meet Us by the Roaring Sea*****Hybrid Event: In Person at the Library; Live on Zoom
Wednesday 11 January at 19h30 CET**

Written in vivid, striking prose, Kumarasamy's debut novel takes place in a future located ambiguously near the present. Dealing with loss, the narrator escapes from the monotony of her AI job and her personal grief by translating a mysterious manuscript written in Tamil. Originally seeking a distraction, she uncovers channels of human connection lost in her impersonal, technology-driven world. Kumarasamy will be joined by writer Dinaw Mengestu.

Free and open to the public. Registration required.

[RSVP to attend in person or on Zoom](#)

**Jean D'Amérique on *Soleil à coudre*****Hybrid Event: In Person at the Library; Live on Zoom
Tuesday 17 January at 19h30 CET**

Celebrated poet and dramaturg Jean D'Amérique, one of the most prominent voices in contemporary Haitian literature, will be speaking on his debut novel, *A Sun to be Sewn*. This rhythmic, phantasmagoric journey into a Haitian neighborhood plagued by violence adopts the voice of a child to observe the many tragedies and cruelties of the adult world. At the center of this story, D'Amérique carves out a space for love as a redemptive and remedial force. D'Amérique will speak on language, form, genre, the Haitian present, and the Haitian future.

Free and open to the public. Registration required.

[RSVP to attend in person or on Zoom](#)



Martin Rees on How Science Can Save Us

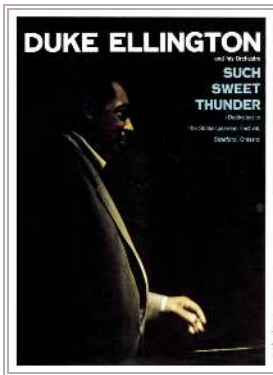
Online Event: Live on Zoom

Wednesday 18 January at 19h30 CET

In a time of unprecedented climate crisis, as faith in channels of communication erodes and systems of knowledge fracture, the development of a public scientific consciousness has never been more urgent. In his new book, *If Science is to Save Us*, Astronomer Royal Martin Rees demonstrates the extreme importance of science in confronting humanity’s most pressing challenges.

Free and open to the public. Registration required.

RSVP to attend on Zoom



Entre Nous: Ellington Plays Shakespeare with Robert G. O’Meally and Courtney Bryan

In Person at Reid Hall

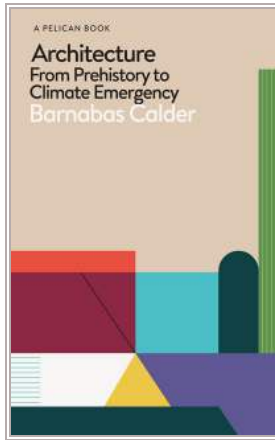
Thursday 19 January at 19h00 CET

Please note the special start time and location of this event.

For the Stratford, Ontario Shakespeare Festival of 1957, the American composers Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn created *Such Sweet Thunder*, a jazz concert honoring Shakespeare. This talk will examine scores and recordings of Duke and Strays’ dark bluesy “harlemizations” of certain Shakespearean scenes and characters, and will also feature contemporary video responses to these richly vibrant materials by the award-winning composer Courtney Bryan. The conversation will take place in person at Reid Hall, and is organized in collaboration with Columbia Global Centers | Paris and the Institute for Ideas & Imagination.

Free and open to the public. Registration required.

RSVP to attend in person at Reid Hall



Barnabas Calder on Architecture and Energy

Online Event: Live on Zoom

Wednesday 25 January at 19h30 CET

A central question in the climate debate today is that of energy. Yet the problem of energy—how to acquire it, how to wield it—is as old as human civilization. Behind every building, from the Colosseum to the modern home, lies the energy technology used to build it. Barnabas Calder's project in *Architecture: From Prehistory to Climate Emergency* is to trace out the history of architecture from this perspective. From manual labor and the Parthenon to coal's impact on Victorian building styles, Calder maps out transformations in built space along the timeline of industrialization. Leading us all the way to the present day, he proposes a new approach to energy, seeking to revolutionize architecture and lead us away from environmental collapse.

Free and open to the public. Registration required.

[RSVP to attend on Zoom](#)



Toni Ann Johnson and Robinne Lee

on *Light Skin Gone to Waste*

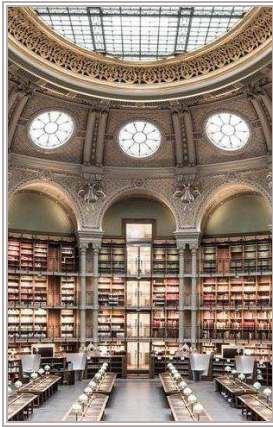
Hybrid Event: In Person at the Library; Live on Zoom

Wednesday 1 February at 19h30 CET

When a middle class Black family moves to an all-white suburb, fantasies of class ascension and racial transcendence clash with cruel realities. *Light Skin Gone to Waste*, by Toni Ann Johnson, is an honest and devastating account of an already-fractured family's collapse under the prism of a racialized world. This story of intergenerational trauma, cycles of abuse, childhood, marriage, lofty aspirations and high prices paid, lays bare the multiple networks of pain which have racism at their core. Johnson will be in conversation with author and actor Robinne Lee.

Free and open to the public. Registration required.

[RSVP to attend in person or on Zoom](#)



**[Laurence Engel and Elaine Sciolino](#)
[on the Bibliothèque Nationale de France](#)
Hybrid Event: In Person at the Library; Live on Zoom
Tuesday 7 February at 19h30 CET**

After twelve years of construction, the reopening of the 18th-century Bibliothèque nationale de France Richelieu site has been hailed as a triumph. From a museum exhibiting Greek vases, rare coins, and diverse costumes; to a lavish public reading room; to a peerless collection of manuscripts ranging from Pascal to Proust; the library serves as both a sumptuous celebration of French intellectual history and an inspiring community space for the French intellectual present. Join Bibliothèque nationale de France president Laurence Engel, in conversation with *New York Times* journalist Elaine Sciolino, to discuss the role of the BnF in the French cultural landscape.

Free and open to the public. Registration required.

[RSVP to attend in person or on Zoom](#)



Past programs are on YouTube, including Joanna Walsh on *My Life as a Godard Movie*; Simon Critchley on *Questioning Everything*; *Thinking Translation* with Gayatri Spivak and Emily Apter; Marc Selverstone on *The Kennedy Withdrawal*; and *The Story of African Émigrés in Harlem* with Boukary Sawadogo.



GROW@
ANNENBERG

Evenings with an Author and other weeknight programs at the Library are free and open to the public (with a 10€ suggested donation) thanks to support from GROW @ Annenberg, our members, and those who attend programs.

Children's and Teens' News



Happy New Year! It's time to start working on a new short story for the Young Authors Fiction Festival!

YAFF is free to enter and is open to all young authors, from Kindergarten/Grande Section to 12th Grade/Terminale, who write in English and live in the greater Paris area. Submissions will be accepted through the [Library's website](#) from **1 February 2023 through 1 April 2023**.

Looking for inspiration or writing advice? Visit the Children's and Teens' Services Desk for recommended short story anthologies, writing guides, and more. And keep an eye on the Library's [online calendar](#) and this newsletter, as we'll be offering writing workshops for young writers throughout the winter.

Programming Highlights for Teens:

[Setting Yourself Up for Success: An Overview of the US College Admissions Process](#)

Saturday 14 January at 17h00

[Monuments of Paris Scavenger Hunt](#)

Sunday 15 January at 14h00

[Teen Night: Stuck in the Middle, Part 2](#)

Friday 20 January at 19h00

[Teen Night: 90s Movie Night](#)

Friday 3 February at 19h00

How Can You Help the American Library?



As an independent, non-profit institution, we rely on the support and generosity of our community. How can you help the American Library in Paris throughout the year? Renew your Library membership, make a donation online, become a volunteer, and tell your friends about the Library.

RENEW

DONATE

VOLUNTEER

The American Library in Paris is an independent, non-profit institution that receives no regular government funding. Your generosity is essential in keeping the Library vibrant and creative.

All contributions are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.

BECOME A LIBRARY MEMBER

www.americanlibraryinparis.org



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