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**10 November 2023**

**Book Award 2023 Winner**  
***Joan: A Novel***  
**by Katherine J. Chen**

Congratulations to **Katherine J. Chen** for ***Joan: A Novel*** (Random House USA / Hodder & Stoughton UK), winner of the eleventh annual American Library in Paris Book Award. The announcement was made before an audience of Library supporters on 9 November at the George C. Marshall Center in the Hôtel de Talleyrand on the Place de la Concorde.

This exceptional work of historical fiction transforms the legend of Joan of Arc into a flesh-and-blood young woman: reckless, steel-willed, and brilliant. The novel is a sweeping narrative of Joan's life, from a childhood steeped in both joy and violence to her meteoric rise to fame at the head of the French army, where she must navigate both the dangers of the battlefield and the equally treacherous politics of the royal court.





In awarding this year's prize, the 2023 Book Award jury—**Lauren Groff** (jury chair), **Sudhir Hazareesingh**, and **Doan Bui** (pictured)—wrote:

**“Deeply researched and fully imagined, *Joan* manages to subvert the old, dusty narratives about the ardent virgin warrior from Domrémy in eastern France, and creates a flawed, complicated, and compelling heroine for our age.”**

### About the winner

Katherine J. Chen's debut novel, *Mary B*, was also published in the US by Random House. This retelling of *Pride and Prejudice* from the perspective of the middle sister, Mary, was released in 2018 to high critical praise.

Chen has written for the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Review of Books*, *Literary Hub*, and the historical fiction anthology *Stories from Suffragette City*. She received her MFA from Boston University, where she was a senior teaching fellow and was awarded the Florence Engel Randall Fiction Prize.

### About the award

Founded in 2013, The American Library in Paris's \$5,000 literary prize is given to a title originally published in English that best realizes new and intellectually significant ideas about France, the French people, or encounters with French culture.



### The shortlist

A screening committee chaired by Rachel Donadio, the award administrator, selected the shortlist from sixty-three submissions. In addition to the winning title, the finalists included:

- *#You Know You're Black in France When...: The Fact of Everyday Antiracism* by Trica Keaton (MIT Press)
- *Americans in Paris: Artists Working in Postwar France, 1946–1962* by Lynn Gumpert and Debra Bricker Balken, eds. (Grey Art Gallery, New York University, and Hirmer Publishers)
- *The Curse of the Marquis de Sade: A Notorious Scoundrel, a Mythical Manuscript, and the Biggest Scandal in Literary History* by Joel Warner (Crown)
- *France on Trial: The Case of Marshal Pétain* by Julian Jackson (Allen Lane UK / Belknap Press USA)



Awaiting the announcement of the winner.

### The longlist

In addition to the five finalists, five further titles were named to the longlist:

- *Barnave: The Revolutionary Who Lost His Head for Marie-Antoinette* by John Hardman (Yale University Press)
- *The French Resistance and Its Legacy* by Rod Kedward (Bloomsbury Academic)
- *Kiki Man Ray: Art, Love, and Rivalry in 1920s Paris* by Mark Braude (W. W. Norton & Company USA / Two Roads UK)
- *Paris and her Cathedrals* by R. Howard Bloch (Liveright)
- *Unmaking Sex: The Gender Outlaws of Nineteenth-Century France* by Anne E. Linton (Cambridge University Press)





The sixty-three submissions to the 2023 prize have all been added to the Library's circulating collection.

### Book Award Patrons and supporters

The Library thanks the prize's generous Patrons: **Judith Aubry, Mary Duncan, Peter and Jeanne Fellowes, Clydette de Groot, Suzanne Justen, and Usha Viswanathan.**

The Book Award is supported by a grant from the **Florence Gould Foundation**, which will sustain the Book Award for many years to come.

Special thanks to the **U.S. Embassy, France** and **Cultural Affairs Officer Michael Turner** for hosting the evening. Thanks also to **Random House US** for donating copies of the winning title.



(l-r) Michael Turner, Cultural Affairs Officer for the U.S. Embassy, France; Executive Director Audrey Chapuis; and Chairman of the Board of Trustees Forrest Alogna



(l-r) Head of Communications and Marketing Carolyn Dubol and Head of Development Morgan Wurzbürger

## Submitting to the 2024 Book Award

We are accepting nominations for the 2024 Award through 1 May 2024. For information on eligibility and the submissions process, visit our [website](#).



(l-r) Programs Manager Emilie Biggs and Library supporter Molly Minton



(l-r) Library Supporter and Advisory Council member Jacqueline Cessou, Executive Director Audrey Chapuis, and Trustee and Book Award screener Barbara Diggs

## Attending the Book Award ceremony

The Book Award ceremony is the Library's most important donor appreciation event of the year. If you are not currently a donor and would like to learn more about supporting the Book Award or attending the 2024 ceremony, contact Morgan Wurzburger, Head of Development: [giving@americanlibraryinparis.org](mailto:giving@americanlibraryinparis.org)

For more information about special donor-only events and donor benefits, please visit our [website](#).





Guests enjoy a cocktail reception at the Hôtel de Talleyrand on the Place de la Concorde.

All photos: © Krystal Kenney. More photos of the evening are available on the Library's [Flickr page](#).

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