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The American Library in Paris

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Editor: Carolyn Dubol



Winter 2023 Hours

Welcome 2023!

Our winter operating hours are as follows:

Tue–Wed: 10h–21h
Thu–Fri–Sat: 10h–19h
Sun: 13h–19h
Mon: Closed

Last hour: self-service only
Last entry: 30 minutes before closing time


New Book Groups and *Evenings with an Author*

This winter 2023, *Evenings with an Author* programming returns to the Library with a renewed commitment to conversations. Our first event of the season with celebrated novelist **Natasha Brown** will highlight intersections of race, gender, sexuality, and class in today’s society. We’ll continue to consider

prose, poetry, and cinema's ability to confront social issues in our evenings with writers **Jean d'Amérique**, **Toni Ann Johnson**, and **Deesha Philyaw**.

We'll also explore developments in science and technology, and the climate crisis. **Astronomer Royal Martin Rees** will explain how science may save us, while **Barnabas Calder** will propose a new approach to energy in architecture. **Akil Kumarasamy's** vision of an AI-oriented world offers an image of the fiction of the future. As we consider what is to come, we also celebrate the heritage we bring with us into the new year, and reflect upon ways to renew and revitalize it: We will learn about innovations in jazz during our Entre Nous event with **Robert G. O'Meally** and **Courtney Bryan**, and a discussion with Bibliothèque nationale de France president **Laurence Engel** will push us to consider the role of the library in contemporary France and beyond.

Accompanying these programs, our rich selection of new and ongoing **book groups** continue to animate life at the American Library. Contemplating new ideas, turning toward new voices, and embracing our responsibility in creating a new world, we look forward to an invigorating new year.



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.

Book Groups for Winter/Spring 2023

The following book groups are currently accepting new members.

Spots are limited, so please sign up soon.

For detailed information about all book groups, as well as **instructions on how to register**, please visit the [Library's website](#).



NEW GROUP

Queer Womanhood: Fiction and Memoir

For anyone who wishes they knew and read more books by queer authors, who wants to explore the world from the perspective of the historically marginalized, or who just wants to read exceptional literature.



NEW GROUP

Writing the Impasse: Capitalism and Narrative

A mix of contemporary fiction, essays, and theory exploring the strange impasses of life under capitalism and the climate emergency.



The American Library in Paris Book Award

This group looks to past winners of the American Library in Paris Book Award. Exploring the perennially relevant relationship between the United States and France, the books will span many genres: fiction, historical fiction, and non-fiction.



The Art of Writing: Look. Look Again... or Baldwin par Delaney

James Baldwin, a writer, and Beauford Delaney, a painter, were both relieved—to some extent—of the burden of their identities as ‘Black’ and ‘queer’ upon relocating to Paris from New York. This book group will consider Baldwin’s Paris period through the lens of Delaney’s portraits.



Prize-Winning American and British Plays

Through reading and discussing plays, we confront characters and their dilemmas, societal problems, and the human condition. This group reads and discusses award-winning works of American and British theater.



Explorations at the Limits of our Knowledge

This group will discuss texts that chronicle explorations outside of day-to-day human activities. Participants will delve into topics such as scientific discovery, the problem of consciousness, the origins of life on earth, and our responsibility to nature.



French and American Encounters

This group reads non-fiction works about French and American history, and how the two countries have influenced each other. We will read about environmental, geographic, and social history.



Contemporary French Fiction

This book group reads contemporary French fiction, not yet translated into English, as well as one 20th century French classic novel per term. Author talks and regular outings to see new French plays are also organized.



Tackling Proust

In Search of Lost Time, Proust's masterpiece, has a reputation for difficulty that stops many from giving it a serious try. This group reads Volume I, *Swann's Way*, learning to navigate long sentences and cascading metaphors, and savoring Proust's delicious humor and intellect.

Programs for Adults

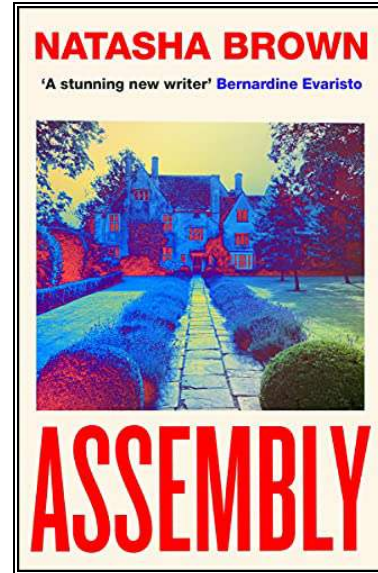
Evenings with an Author, sponsored by GRoW @ Annenberg

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.

[Natasha Brown on *Assembly*](#)

**Hybrid Event:
In Person at the Library; Live on Zoom
Tuesday 10 January at 19h30 CET**

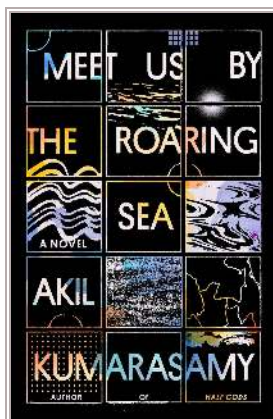
Natasha Brown's debut novel, *Assembly*, offers a poetic and concise examination of race, gender, and class. When a successful Black woman receives unsettling news, she considers the constituent parts of her life: her high-paying job in finance, her prestigious education, her white boyfriend. She finds 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](#)



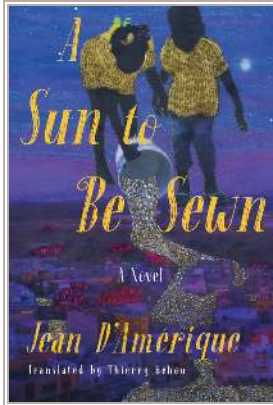
[Akil Kumarasamy and Dinaw Mengestu on *Meet Us by the Roaring Sea*](#)

**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](#)



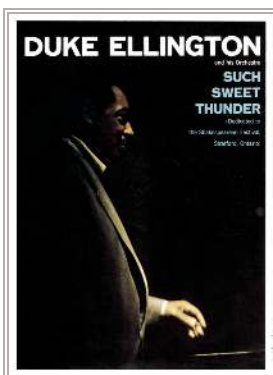
Martin Rees on *How Science Can Save Us*

**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**

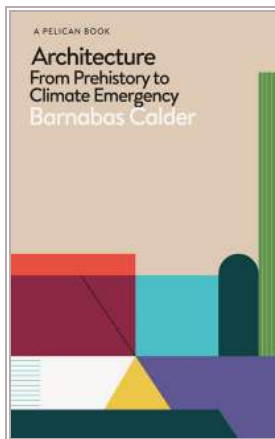
Please note the special start time and location of this event.

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*](#)

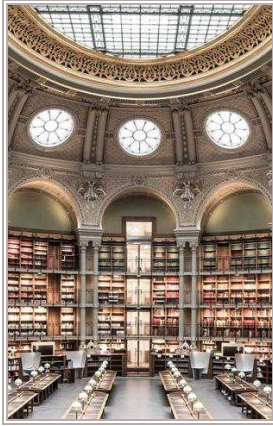
Hybrid Event: In Person at the Library; Live on Zoom

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 Bibliothéque 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 Bibliothéque 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 Bibliothéque 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.

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.

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www.americanlibraryinparis.org



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