



Press Release | 4 May 2023



Beyond Words Festival

12 – 21 May 2023, at the Institut français

The Institut français in London is pleased to announce the 7th edition of Beyond Words, a **week-long festival of literature** featuring acclaimed authors and new voices, and the latest publications from both sides of the Channel.

Guest of honour of this year's festival, **Ian McEwan** will be awarded the **insignia of Commandeur in the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres** by **French Ambassador Hélène Duchêne** on **Wed 17 May**.

'France is a country whose literature, art, music and landscapes I have admired and loved since my teens. This honour brings me great joy.' Ian McEwan

Ian McEwan will then present his new novel, **Lessons**, a compelling reflexion on history and humanity.

The line-up includes **luminaries of French literature**, from **Muriel Barbery**, author of the global sensation *The Elegance of the Hedgehog*, **Éric Vuillard**, recipient of the 2017 Prix Goncourt, to **Laurent Mauvignier**, author of *The Birthday Party*, longlisted for the International Booker Prize 2023. **Jean-Baptiste Andrea**, author of *Devils and Saints* and **Antoine Laurain**, bestselling author of *The Red Notebook* will also attend the festival.

Women literary greats are in the spotlight with a series of events dedicated to **Colette** on the 150th anniversary of her birth, including a discussion with **Deborah Levy**, **Michèle Roberts**, **Emmanuelle Lambert** and **Diana Holmes**; and a special screening of *Gigi*, attended by **Leslie Caron**. **Virginia Woolf's Orlando** will be the starting point of a discussion with writer and philosopher **Paul B. Preciado**. The festival will also feature Nobel Prize-winner **Annie Ernaux's** directorial debut, *The Super 8 Years*, and films by or adapted from **Marguerite Duras**.

More films are on the menu with a documentary on **Milan Kundera**, and *Loving Highsmith*, a unique look at the life of **Patricia Highsmith**. Director **Nina Menkes** will also present her documentary *Brainwashed: Sex – Camera – Power*, addressing the representation of women on screen and in society.

Poet and artist **Tarek Lakhri** will explore the themes of desire, queer poetic and empowerment through a reading followed by a conversation with curator **Lynton Talbot**.

Kids can also join a programme of reading sessions, a workshop with illustrator **Pauline Kerleroux**, and (re)discover the magic of Disney's now classic adaptation of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*.

Last but not least, Beyond Words goes on tour with its **Beyond Our Walls** programme featuring a special conversation with **Éric Vuillard** at the Maison Française d'Oxford, **Olivier Guez** at the British Library, **Caroline Laurent** in Bristol and **François Beaune** in Scotland.

www.beyondwordslitfest.co.uk

[Programme](#)

[Line-up](#)

Venue: Institut français, 17 Queensberry Place, London SW7 2DT

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