

Springtime and literature at the Blue Metropolis Festival Pure joy!

Montreal, April 7, 2021 – for immediate release

Starting April 24, 2021, the spring programming of the 23rd Blue Metropolis International Literary Festival will be in full swing. Online or outdoors, more than 50 events with 200 artists will delight the eyes and mind around the theme “The Challenges of Our Times.” When literature rhymes with pleasure, literacy with discovery, books with hooked (sort of), you know the Blue Metropolis Literary Festival is about to start. Here’s a preview.

First, there are **7 literary prizes** to be awarded:

- the Words to Change Prize to novelist Nathacha Appanah (France/Mauritius);
- the First Peoples’ Prize to writer Richard Van Camp (Canada);
- the Sciences and Literature Prize to economist Thomas Piketty (France);
- the Violet Prize to writer André Roy (Quebec);
- the 2020 Azul Prize to novelist Gioconda Belli (Nicaragua),
- the 2021 Azul Prize to novelist Javier Cercas (Spain);
- and the Blue Metropolis / Conseil des arts de Montréal Diversity Prize goes to writer Nicholas Dawson (Quebec/Chile).

Next, we have the introduction of a new series of special events, **Eight Headlining Events**, that will bring together internationally-renowned authors to take on a wide variety of issues:

- African philosopher Souleymane Bachir Diagne (Senegal/France/US) on post-colonial memories;
- novelist David Grossman (Israel) on the threat posed to democracies by racism, fundamentalism and other forces weighing on our democracies;
- journalist and essayist Carl Honoré (Canada) on the new paces of slowness;
- novelists Hanan Al-Shaykh and Hoda Barakat reflect on their wounded Lebanon;

- through Hervé Guibert, author Mathieu Lindon (France) ponders writers who've passed on... or not;
- Indigenous authors Kim Scott (Australia), Gregory Scofield (Canada) and Devon A. Mihesuah (US) on the intersection of art and activism;
- queer authors Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore and Randa Jarrar (US) delve into each other's work;
- musician and icon Caetano Veloso (Brazil) recalls the finest hours of Brazilian jazz.

Finally, festivalgoers will get to explore our “**Converging Perspectives and Conversations**” and “**Other encounters**” sections, where 25 literary events await, including panels, debates, interviews, book launches, and literary performances. For instance, “Effets d’imaginaire: du sombre au lumineux,” by Congrès Boréal, now in its 42nd edition, explores the imaginary affects at work in crime novels, sci-fi, fantasy, and horror. Thanks to our ongoing partnership with Les rendez-vous du premier roman (UNEQ) and Lectures plurielles / Festival du premier roman de Chambéry (France), we’ll spotlight four first-time novelists from Quebec and France: Victoria Mas (*Le bal des folles*), Marie-Ève Thuot (*La trajectoire des confettis*), Paul Kawczak (*Ténèbres*) and Caroline Dorka-Fenech (*Rosa Dolorosa*). Once again this year, our “Jerusalem of the Mind” roundtable will break with engrained divisions of the Middle East to bring together Palestinian and Israeli authors. And a few more topics, among others: theatre in Montreal post COVID-19; an intergenerational dialogue on literary experiments; the art of reconnecting with nature; our online Dreams and Peace Forum, where ten authors talk about tomorrow’s emergencies and today’s tranquillity; a literary and musical performance based on the works of the great Lebanese poet Kahlil Gibran, who is more than just the celebrated author of *The Prophet*; an Irish suite direct from Dublin; poets, essayists and, at every turn, fascinating discussions.

And let’s not forget kids, parents and grandparents

April 24-25, and May 1-2, two “Festive Weekends” will be on offer as part of the TD-Blue Metropolis Children’s Festival, which now runs year-round. These weekends will feature **Marie-Andrée Arsenault**, winner of the 2020 Harry Black Award, **Erin Bow**, winner of the 2019 Governor General’s Award (English), **Jacques Goldstyn**, winner of the 2020 TD Award, **Amélie Dumoulin**, finalist for the 2020 TD Award, **Geneviève Guilbault**, **Virginia Pesemapeo Bordeleau**, and **Jan Thornhill**, whose renown precedes her.

We'll also be presenting podcasts on lessening anxiety in teens, as well as the second of our Childcare Days on April 16. Both are part of the Blue Metropolis Foundation's 2021 educational programming. You can find out more on the Blue Metropolis website.

And when you feel you've done the rounds online, you can head outside with our literary podcasts. Beginning May 20, 2021, six surprising walking tours will have you following in the footsteps of authors, artists and actors. Walk. Discover. Listen. Read. Dream. All outdoors.

To view the complete program: www.bluemetropolis.org/2021festival

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MERCI AUX PARTENAIRES MAJEURS DE LA FONDATION METROPOLIS BLEU QUI SOUTIENNENT LE FESTIVAL 2021
ET NOS PROGRAMMES ÉDUCATIFS ET SOCIAUX 2020-2021
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