

PRESS RELEASE
UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL MARCH 16, 2023, 5 P.M.

A DAZZLING LOOK AT THE FUTURE MARKS THE 25TH EDITION OF BLUE METROPOLIS!



Montreal, March 16, 2023—The future of the planet, of democracy and identities, of languages and people, and of our imaginations: this is the theme of the 2023 edition of the Blue Metropolis International Literary Festival, which is gearing up to celebrate its 25 years, first online starting April 12 and culminating in a massive in-person program from April 27 to 30 in Montreal, at Hotel 10 (10, Sherbrooke Street W).

What will the decades to come hold for our communities, our literatures, our freedoms and aspirations? We'll have a chance to look ahead with a staggering range of author events and performances in French, English, Spanish, Portuguese, and other languages such as Welsh, Ojibway, ancient Greek, and Innu-Aimun, and featuring over 200 Quebec, Canadian, and international writers, thinkers, and artists converging on Montreal.

LEADING VOICES FROM HERE AND ABROAD

This anniversary edition will shine a bright light on Montreal's thriving literary communities, featuring local writers alongside nationally and internationally acclaimed authors.

On April 17 at St. James Church, **Margaret Atwood** will be in conversation onstage talking about *Old Babes in the Woods*, her latest collection of short stories. The Festival's in-person program includes a packed lineup of such storied writers as **Duncan Mercredi**, who is the 2023 laureate of the Blue Metropolis First Peoples Prize, 2023 Azul Prize laureate **Lina Meruane**, British author

Philippe Sands, Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist **Paul Harding**, American-Canadian novelist **Rivka Galchen**, Israeli writer **Yaël Neeman**, French travel writer **Sylvain Tesson**, and 2022 Governor General-winning Anishinaabe author **Eli Baxter**, among many more. To top it all off, **Michael Ondaatje**, the internationally acclaimed author of *Warlight* and *The English Patient*, will be recognized for his work with the 2023 Blue Metropolis International Grand Prize.

And don't miss a **conversation on Leonard Cohen** at the Congregation Shaar Hashomayim with writer and international law expert **Philippe Sands** with cantor **Gideon Zelermyer** and a sci-fi retelling of the Haudenosaunee confederation story from **Mohawk multimedia artist Skawennati**, among many other highlights. The Festival also presents a special evening with Blue Metropolis founder **Linda Leith**, a big night for the **Atwater Poetry Project**, local favourites **Dimitri Nasrallah**, **Christopher DiRaddo**, and **Daniel Allen Cox** on how Montreal is evolving, and an intimate conversation with most recent Blue Metropolis/Conseil des arts de Montréal New Horizons Prize laureates **Tawhida Tanya Evanson (2022)** and the **2023 winner**, whose name will be unveiled on April 29th during the Grand Prix award ceremony.

MAJOR EVENT SERIES: A PROPER SPLASH

What would Blue Met be without its special series programming?

The Jerusalem of the Mind event is back, featuring from Israel **Maya Savir** and **Rami Younis**, with Montrealers **Carlos Fraenkel** and **Ehab Lotayef**. What is an activist's role? A writer's? How does the current political situation affect literature in Palestine and Israel?

Meanwhile, the Book under Pressure series will address current issues in the literary world and the book industry, while the Azul series features acclaimed authors such as **Jorge Carrion**, **Cristina Morales**, and **Carol Bensimon**.

Don't miss out on the LGBTQ+ series, featuring a special **Violet Reading event** and many queer and trans authors, including **Su J. Sokol**, **Gabrielle Boulianne-Tremblay**, **Laura Doyle Péan**, **Jen Currin**, and 2023 Blue Metropolis Violet Prize laureate **Michel Marc Bouchard**.

Queer speculative fiction, hope punk, Afrofantasy or graphic video books: our series on sci-fi and fantasy will draw you into lesser-known, strange, and stimulating worlds.

Last but not least, don't miss the NEXT series and the most ambitious emerging artist programming yet. The series focuses on English-language talent from underrepresented communities, with workshops, carte blanche events, and podcasts featuring community leaders.

GET YOUR FESTIVAL PASS

The Festival Pass is back with a twist. For \$25, festivalgoers have access to the Festival's bountiful program, along with a **special \$25 rebate on books at Paragraphe Bookstore**, the Festival's official bookseller, which will be setting up shop at Hotel 10 **from April 27 to 30** inclusively.

THE FUTURE IS ONLINE, TOO

The Festival's virtual program is really hitting its stride, with three events starting April 12: a tribute to Innu poet Josephine Bacon, winner of the First Peoples Prize; a conversation between **Gioconda Belli** and **Claudia Piñeiro**; and a discussion on capitalism and literature. The online

programming kicked off in late February with the “Tio’tia:ke/Montréal” literary walking tour, a *Foulée | Strides* podcast series that takes a decolonial look at Montreal. Tune in too for a literary look at green Montreal with the “Montréal vert” walking-tour podcast series on April 23, available wherever you get your podcasts.

PLENTY FOR THE KIDS

Presented in over 50 libraries, schools, Greater Montreal bookstores, and about 40 daycare centre across Quebec, the TD – Blue Metropolis Children’s Festival is an every-green, year-round affair. This spring’s activities will take place between April 21 and 30, with a full slate of events for the whole family on both weekends, and events exclusively for school groups during the week.

BLUE METROPOLIS AT A GLANCE

Established in 1997, the Blue Metropolis Foundation is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to bring together people from different cultures to share the pleasures of reading and writing and encourage creativity and cross-cultural understanding. The Foundation presents the annual **Blue Metropolis International Literary Festival** and offers a wide range of **educational and social programs** year-round in classrooms, libraries, and online, using writing and reading as therapeutic tools, to encourage students to stay in school, and to combat poverty and exclusion.

The Blue Metropolis Festival is one of the largest multilingual literary events in North America. For several days each year, writers from Quebec, Canada, and around the world converge on Montreal. Festivalgoers are treated to live interviews, round-table discussions, public readings, debates, masterclasses, readings, and writing workshops. Every year, the Festival is built around several strong themes that bear witness to a keen social awareness and a passion for literature in all its richness.

– 30 –

Media relations (English): Janis Kirshner
514 287-8912 or jkirshner@sympatico.ca

MERCI AUX PARTENAIRES MAJEURS DE LA FONDATION METROPOLIS BLEU QUI SOUTIENNENT LE FESTIVAL 2023
ET NOS PROGRAMMES ÉDUCATIFS ET SOCIAUX 2022-2023
THANKS TO BLUE METROPOLIS FOUNDATION’S MAJOR PARTNERS WHO SUPPORT THE 2023 FESTIVAL
AND OUR 2022-2023 EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL PROGRAMS

Canada

Canada Council
for the Arts
Conseil des arts
du Canada

Québec

Montréal

CONSEIL
DES ARTS
DE MONTRÉAL

TOURISME /
MONTRÉAL

TD

DAVIES

GINNY STIKEMAN

Fondation
Azrieli
Foundation

Fondation
Cole
Foundation

UNIVERSITÉ
Concordia
UNIVERSITY

McGill
UNIVERSITY

CDPQ

PORT MONTREAL

POWER CORPORATION
DU CANADA

Stella-Jones

ERIC T. WEBSTER
FOUNDATION

Fondation J.A. DeSève

OBSERVATOIRE QUÉBÉCOIS
inégalités

Paragraphe
Librairie / Bookstore

LA LIBRAIRIE
GALLIMARD
DE MONTRÉAL

Les
libraires

LEDEVOIR

mRb
Montreal Review of Books