



# LYRA

BRISTOL  
POETRY  
FESTIVAL

# 24

POETIC FUTURES  
FRIDAY 12<sup>TH</sup> APRIL -  
SUNDAY 21<sup>ST</sup> APRIL '24



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

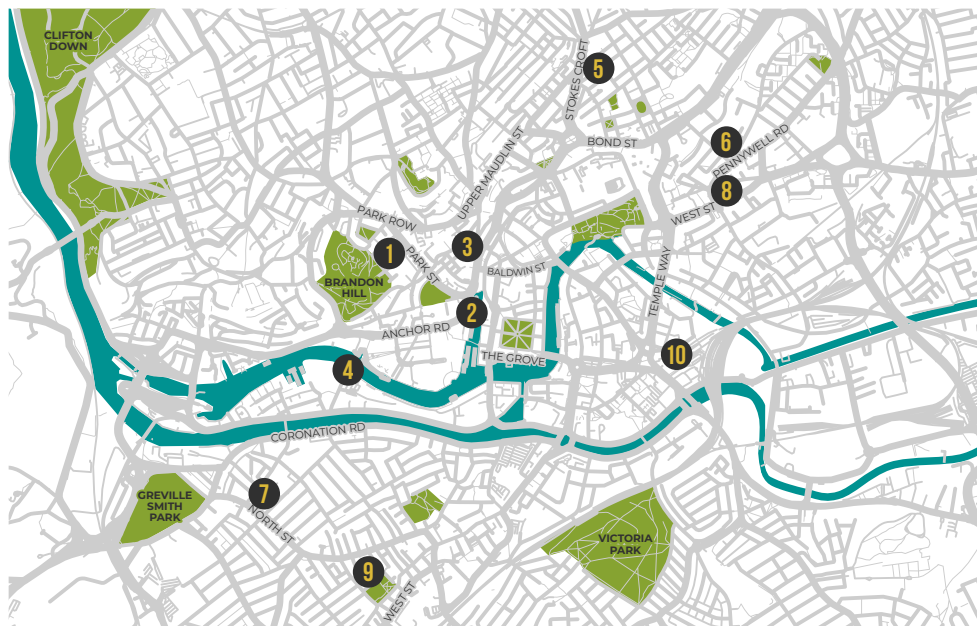
**TICKETS** [LYRAFEST.COM](https://lyrafest.com)

 [@LYRAFEST](https://www.instagram.com/lyrafest)

 [@LYRAFEST](https://www.twitter.com/lyrafest)

## VENUES

Lyra Festival 2024 takes place across 10 wheelchair accessible venues in Bristol.



**1 ST. GEORGE'S BRISTOL**  
Gt. George St, BS1 5RR

**2 WATERSHED**  
1 Canons Road, BS1 5TX

**3 BRISTOL BEACON**  
Trenchard St, BS1 5AR

**4 BRUNEL'S SS GREAT BRITAIN**  
Gas Ferry Rd, BS1 6TY

**5 HAMILTON HOUSE**  
80 Stokes Croft, BS1 3QY

**6 395 BRISTOL**  
Old Malt House, BS2 9EB

**7 TOBACCO FACTORY THEATRES**  
Raleigh Rd, BS3 1TF

**8 WARDROBE THEATRE**  
25 West St, BS2 0DF

**9 ACTA COMMUNITY THEATRE**  
Gladstone St, BS3 3AY

**10 LOCO KLUB**  
Clock Tower Yd, BS1 6QH



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

Thank you to our main funders, Arts Council England, for supporting a sixth consecutive Lyra Festival. We are incredibly grateful for their ongoing support of Bristol poetry.

## ABOUT THE FESTIVAL

**LYRA**<sup>24</sup>  
POETIC FUTURES

Welcome to the sixth successive edition of Lyra - Bristol Poetry Festival, taking place from 12th - 21st April 2024, at ten venues. This year's festival theme, *Poetic Futures*, explores, through the lens of poetry and words, not only technology and the future, but also the imaginative power of language in shaping and reimagining new worlds. This year's headline poets include Alice Oswald, Raymond Antrobus, Safiya Kamaria Kinshasa, Nikita Gill, Simon Armitage, Salena Godden and many more of the most exciting names in contemporary poetry, including three winners of the most recent Forward Prize for Poetry.

We're delighted to be exhibiting technologically ambitious installations, including the *Bonds* audiovisual poetry exhibition at Bristol Beacon, the *Cancer Alley* poetry film hologram exhibition at Watershed, and Deanna Rodger's *Poetic Fortune Teller*. There will be a panel and performance on AI and poetry (part of Lyra's new *Page Against the Machine* project), an AI and poetry writing workshop, a poetry and technology film screening, and other expansive, genre-pushing activities. Poetic Futures will be explored through a *Queer Futures* event, a workshop and Joelle Taylor's new show *The Night Alphabet*, a multimedia Hot Poets talk on poetry, climate and saving the world, and activities which contrast the past and future, such as our *Caribbean Nights* film screening, poetry and archives workshop, a *Beyond Poetry* panel discussion, and historical walking tours. On the centenary of American writer James Baldwin, a workshop led by US writer Danez Smith and panel led by Bristol-based Edson Burton will reflect on his legacy and Baldwinian futures. Our closing event, *City of Words*, will be a celebration of Bristol, with its many perspectives and histories, and a collaboration with the inimitable Bristol Ideas, as part of their closing activity. Many community groups commissioned by Lyra in 2024 will also showcase their work.

We're thrilled to welcome four poets from Ghana for an exclusive performance at Lyra this year, including acclaimed poet Gabriel Awuah Mainoo. A huge welcome to our friends who are travelling all this way to Bristol and

curating *Back Stories of the Afro Wind*, an evening of West and East African poetry. Thank you to Bath Spa University for funding this exciting cultural exchange.

This year we have more live streamed events than ever before, so you can watch along at home or even take part in a workshop, if you're unable to attend in person. We also have numerous BSL interpreted events across the two festival weekends. There are more than ten free activities in this year's 30+-strong programme. Specific information about accessibility across our various venues can be found on our website homepage, which will also take you to an access form, if you'd like to let us know in advance about anything we can help you with.

Check out our full programme of performances, workshops, exhibitions, walking tours, family activities, film screenings, poetry slams, open mics, wellbeing activities, multilingual events and much more!

Lyra Festival is co-directed by Professor Lucy English and Danny Carlo Pandolfi. A special thanks to all our key partners who have helped to make this programme possible, including Arts Council England, Bristol University's Poetry Institute, Bath Spa University, Bristol Ideas, Apples and Snakes, Super Culture, Renaissance One, Poetry Translation Centre, Hot Poets and Speaking Volumes, as well as all our event collaborators and venues. We hope you enjoy April's dynamic programme of poetry in Bristol, and we look forward to seeing everybody, both online and in-person.

## FESTIVAL TICKETS & PASSES

Please book all tickets in advance at [www.lyrafest.com](http://www.lyrafest.com), even for free events. Entry cannot be guaranteed without an advance ticket.

Festival Passes are available:

**LYRA FESTIVAL EVENT PASS** £50/£40 CONC  
Includes entry to all festival events <sup>1</sup>

**LYRA FESTIVAL EVENT & WORKSHOP PASS** £70/£50 CONC  
Includes entry to all events AND writing workshops <sup>2</sup>

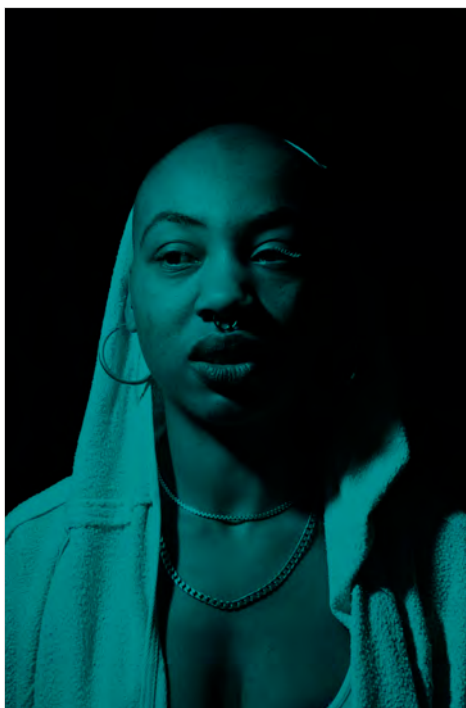
<sup>1</sup> excluding writing workshops and the following events: Family Poetry Workshop: Letter Writing (13th April), Family Stories & Poems (14th April), The Mum Poet Club (21st April). These must be booked separately.

<sup>2</sup> excluding: Family Poetry Workshop: Letter Writing (13th April), Family Stories & Poems (14th April), The Mum Poet Club (21st April). These must be booked separately.

## 2024 FESTIVAL POET

### shakara

Our 2024 Festival Poet is shakara, who will be running a workshop and performing new work at the festival, as well as taking part in a discussion panel and running community outreach activities across March and April. shakara is a Jamaican-born artist who embodies a fusion of technology and creativity, weaving together poetry, spoken word and filmmaking with AI. They seamlessly blend their academic background with their creative practice, incorporating coding and AI-inspired creations. shakara is intrigued by AI's potential to uplift global majority voices and is dedicated to centering the narratives of black queer women. They will be exploring the intersection of art and technology, paving the way for technologies rooted in human-based ethics.



### BONDS

**POETRY SOUNDSCAPE AND EXHIBITION**

**APRIL 12<sup>TH</sup> - APRIL 21<sup>ST</sup>**

A free mobile phone audio poemscape situated around Pero's Bridge. Also a free poetry exhibition at Bristol Beacon, open to the public for the duration of the festival.

**PERO'S BRIDGE & BRISTOL BEACON KENNEDY ROOM**

Time: 8:00-18:00 (10:00-16:00 Sun)

Price: Free

The Bonds project invited Bristol poets to respond to the theme of 'Bonds' as they relate to our shared Bristol heritage, and also featured community workshops. The resulting poems – with themes ranging from the bondages of enslavement to those of multiple diasporas (as well as those of love) – have been made into a gps-located poemscape centred around Pero's Bridge. They are also the subject of an exhibition hosted by Bristol Beacon (in the Kennedy Room at the back of the main foyer). To experience the soundscape on your phone: Scan QR. Download and open Satsymph QR. Use the 'SCAN' button in the app to scan the same QR again. Go to Pero's Bridge, open 'Library', tap 'Bonds'. Find the soundpools!

*Project curated by Ralph Hoyte and Martin Rieser, coding by Phill Phelps.*



TICKETS [LYRAFEST.COM](http://LYRAFEST.COM)  
@LYRAFEST @LYRAFEST

### CANCER ALLEY

**POETRY FILM HOLOGRAM EXHIBITION**

**APRIL 17<sup>TH</sup> - APRIL 21<sup>ST</sup> 2024**

**WATERSHED W2**

Time: 10:00-17:00 Price: Free

*Cancer Alley* is an immersive poetry film hologram which features environmental destruction in 'Cancer Alley', Louisiana, the heart of the global petrochemical industry. The project draws attention to the need for multinational companies to take more responsibility for their impact on the environment and to growing public awareness of how people's lives are affected by extreme pollution. *Cancer Alley* is free, and is available to view, on a continuous loop, at Watershed 17th-21st April.

*Cancer Alley has been created by poet Lucy English, US filmmakers Pamela Falkenberg and Jack Cochran, and Bristol-based company Holotronica.*





## SUNDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2024



IMAGE TIM WOOLF

### LYRA BRISTOL SLAM QUALIFIERS

#### POETRY SLAM

#### WATERSHED W3

Time: 16:00-18:00 (including 3 heats, with 2 short intervals)

Price: Free

Join us for the first in-person Lyra Slam Qualifying heats since 2020, as poets compete for a place in the Grand Slam Finals on Sunday 14th April, at the iconic St. George's Bristol (which will also feature headline performances by Safiya Kamaria Kinshasa and Jonny Fluffypunk). Come along and cheer on the poets and cast your votes as the audience, too. Hosted by Cal Wensley.

*The event is also available to watch via live stream. Please book a Live Stream Ticket at checkout.*



## FRIDAY 12<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2024



### WE WILL READ U QUEER FUTURES

#### PERFORMANCE

*An evening exploring queer futures with an array of guest poets, hosted by Aish Humphreys and Sam J Grudgings.*

#### 395 BRISTOL

Time: 19:30-21:30

Price: £5

Aish Humphreys and Sam J Grudgings present an evening of poetry and performance on the theme of QUEER FUTURES. Join us in exploring themes of utopia, dystopia and speculation through a queer lens. Headlined by Chuck SJ, and featuring poetry from Iman Sultan West, Harper Walton and Ife Grillo.

PRESENTED IN COLLABORATION WITH WE WILL READ U.

# SATURDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2024

## APPLES AND SNAKES POETRY AND WELLBEING RETREAT

*The popular Apples and Snakes retreat is back at Lyra! A one-day event for poets at all stages to refresh, reboot and connect.*

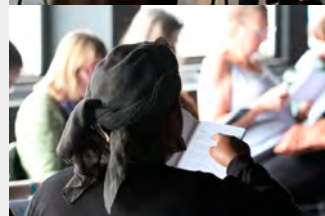
### HAMILTON HOUSE

Time: 10:00-16:00 Price: Free

This unique retreat offers creative workshops, discussions, mentoring and practical advice to reenergise your practice, soothe your soul and leave you with a new spring in your step. Led by acclaimed poetry and wellbeing facilitators. Advanced booking essential.

Including: *Yoga and Creative Writing* with Rebecca Tantony and Kitty Billings, *Shared Space Silent Reading* with Laurie Bolger, *Voice Bath* with Dom Coyote, *Inner Life Drawing* with Bohdan Piasecki, *Intention-setting and Affirmations* with Rose Bird.

PRESENTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH APPLES AND SNAKES.



APPLES  
AND  
SNAKES

## LETTER WRITING STEPHEN LIGHTBROWN

### FAMILY POETRY WORKSHOP

### BRUNEL'S SS GREAT BRITAIN METLOCK EDUCATION ROOM

Time: 14:30-16:00

Price: £5 Adults/£4 Children

In this poetry workshop, Stephen Lightbrown will explore letter-writing as a technique to write poems as a way to try and understand things that may at first seem confusing or difficult to put into words.

You will use a variety of techniques such as rhyme, repetition and writing to your future self to see how letters can create brilliant poems. Lightbrown shows how to use your own experiences to make sense of the world and to help people better understand challenges that you may face.



## BLACK WRITERS REFLECTIONS ON THE ROAD

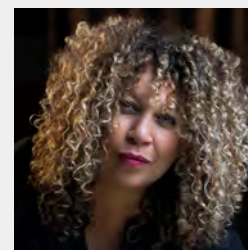
*Join Edson Burton, Sukina Noor and Roger Griffith on James Baldwin's centenary year for a discussion on travelling and freedom.*

### BRISTOL BEACON TERRACE BAR

Time: 17:30-18:30 Price: Free

As part of the centenary of the life of American writer James Baldwin, Lyra Festival presents a conversation with some of Bristol's leading Black writers, including Roger Griffith, Edson Burton and Sukina Noor.

Baldwin found creative freedom in Europe, far away from America's peculiar brand of racism. Do today's Black writers find similar opportunities for freedom in travel, or are they pursued by narratives of race in our increasingly connected world? Join these poets for discussions and readings on the challenges and freedoms of travelling as a Black creative.



## RAISE THE BAR SALENA GODDEN + GUESTS

*Raise the Bar presents another raucous, dynamic, thought-provoking and life-affirming evening of live poetry at Bristol Beacon, featuring Salena Godden, Nikita Gill and Cecilia Knapp.*

### BRISTOL BEACON LANTERN HALL

Time: 19:30-21:30 Price: £12/£10/£8/£6 conc.

Salena Godden FRSL is an award-winning writer, novelist, poet, memoirist and broadcaster whose debut novel *Mrs Death Misses Death* won the Indie Book Award for Fiction and the People's Book Prize.

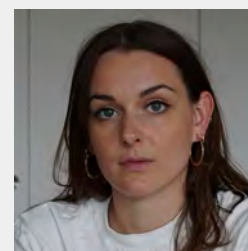
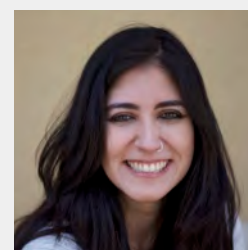
Nikita Gill is a British-Indian poet, playwright, writer and illustrator who has written and curated eight volumes of poetry and uses social media to engage her audience of over 650,000 followers on Instagram, as one of the most popular poets on the platform.

Cecilia Knapp is a poet and novelist and the Young People's Laureate for London 2020/2021. She was shortlisted for the 2022 Forward Prize for Best Single Poem and was winner of the 2021 Ruth Rendell Award.

*The event is also available to watch via live stream. Please book a Live Stream Ticket at checkout.*

*This event will be BSL interpreted.*

PRESENTED IN PARTNERSHIP  
WITH RAISE THE BAR.





# SUNDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2024

## CREATIVE WRITING BREAKFAST CLUB

Join Laurie Bolger for a morning of creative writing and mindfulness.

### WRITING WORKSHOP

#### ST. GEORGE'S BRISTOL GLASS STUDIO

Time: 10:00 - 11:30

Price: £8/£5 conc.

The *Creative Writing Breakfast Club* (as featured in *Time Out*) is a free-flow creative writing session with Laurie Bolger. This workshop is about letting your creativity lead the way, generating new and exciting writing in your own unique style. During this workshop, Laurie will take you through fast-paced writing exercises to boost mindfulness. All you need is a pen and paper and to let your imagination do its thing.

"If you ever want a cosy, creative, calming place to explore writing, Laurie's sessions are just perfection..." Breakfast Clubber 2022



## ISAMBARDS

### WALKING TOUR

#### MEETING POINT QUEEN SQUARE ENTRANCE

Time: 11:00 - 12:00 Price: £5

A poetry walk in the centre of Bristol led by the Isambards, Pamela Benham, Dominic Fisher, Deborah Harvey and David C Johnson, who will share their original poems inspired by places and people on a poetic promenade from Queen Square to Millennium Square. We'll start at the entrance to Queen Square near the top of King Street and Prince Street (by the Cow & Sow BS1 4JZ). On the walk we'll encounter a Big Wheel and a Solar Tree, pirates hanging from gibbets, hotels for bees and beetles, Pero's Bridge, Williams Tyndale and Penn, Robinson Crusoe and Isambard Kingdom Brunel, Thomas Chatterton and Cary Grant. The walk will take just over an hour, entirely on level ground.



## FAMILY STORIES AND POEMS

### PERFORMANCE + Q&A

Family-friendly stories and poetry readings from Raymond Antrobus, Nikita Gill and Stephen Lightbown. Aimed at 3-11 year olds (Key Stage 1 & 2), but open to the whole family.

#### ST GEORGE'S BRISTOL GLASS STUDIO

Time: 12:00 - 13:00 Price: £5 adults/£4 children

A brilliant poetry event for the whole family, with performers Raymond Antrobus, Nikita Gill and Stephen Lightbown reading some of their favourite stories and poems. Raymond Antrobus will be reading from his brand-new picture book, *Terrible Horses* (illustrated by Ken Wilson-Max), exploring sibling conflict and companionship. Nikita Gill's children's books include *Animal Tales from India*, and Bristol-based Stephen Lightbown's debut children's poetry book is titled *And I Climbed And I Climbed*. This event will bring stories and poems to make you feel, think, laugh and smile, with a short Q&A and a book signing at the end.

PRESENTED IN PARTNERSHIP  
WITH RENAISSANCE ONE.



## SIMON ARMITAGE POET LAUREATE

### READING/PERFORMANCE + Q&A

The Poet Laureate Simon Armitage delivers an exclusive reading + Q&A, as part of Lyra Festival 2024.

#### ST GEORGE'S BRISTOL MAIN HALL

Time: 14:00 - 15:00 Price: £10/£8 conc.

A solo poetry reading + Q&A with the UK Poet Laureate Simon Armitage, as part of Lyra - Bristol Poetry Festival 2024. He is the recipient of numerous prizes and awards, including the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry and the PEN Prize for Translation, and has published over a dozen collections of poetry. The event will be followed by a book signing.



## THE POETRY MACHINE

### IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCE

#### ST GEORGE'S BRISTOL FOYER

Time: 13:30-14:00, 15:00-17:00

Price: Free

Poet Beth Calverley will be joining us with her magical Poetry Machine. Beth will ask you some gentle questions and weave your words into a typewritten poem to take away with you. Just follow the clatter of her vintage typewriter and look out for the machine's bright yellow umbrella, flagpole and bubble engine...

Feel free to come on your own or bring a friend or group. Pop by between 13:30 - 14:00 or 15:00 - 17:00. Poems are absolutely free, but first come, first served.



IMAGE AMANDA THOMAS & OH MAGAZINE

## BEYOND POETRY

### PANEL DISCUSSION

A panel discussion with Vanessa Kisuule, Travis Alabanza and Cecilia Knapp, three leading UK poets who have written across literary forms.

#### ST GEORGE'S BRISTOL GLASS STUDIO

Time: 15:30 - 16:30 Price: £5

Lyra's 2024 theme is *Poetic Futures*. In this panel, we ask the question how poetry is moving into the future and how these poets are transforming their poetic practice. Travis Alabanza recently released their debut memoir *None of the Above: Reflections on Life Beyond the Binary* (2022), Cecilia Knapp released her debut novel, *Little Boxes*, in 2023, and Vanessa Kisuule is releasing her debut collection of essays, *Neverland*, with Canongate in 2024. All three poets have also used their poetry in solo theatre shows. Join them for fascinating insights about how their crafts are developing beyond (but still within) poetry, and how poetry itself is developing and moving into new places.

The event is also available to watch via live stream. Please book a Live Stream Ticket at checkout.

This event will be BSL interpreted.



## FORWARD PRIZE WINNERS

Readings from three of the recent Forward Prize for Poetry Winners (2023): Momtaza Mehri, Bohdan Piasecki and Malika Booker.



#### ST GEORGE'S BRISTOL GLASS STUDIO

Time: 17:00 - 18:00

Price: £8/£5 conc

We are delighted to welcome three of the 2023 Forward Prize for Poetry recipients, including Momtaza Mehri (Best First Collection), Malika Booker (Best Single Poem - Written) and Bohdan Piasecki (Best Single Poem - Performed). Enjoy back-to-back readings of some of the finest works in UK poetry today, followed by a short discussion and Q&A with the writers.

The event is also available to watch via live stream. Please book a Live Stream Ticket at checkout.

This event will be BSL interpreted.

PRESENTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH FORWARD ARTS FOUNDATION.



## LYRA POETRY GRAND SLAM FINAL

### POETRY SLAM

Lyra's annual Bristol Poetry Slam Finals return for a raucous evening, headlined by Safiya Kamaria Kinshasa and Jonny Fluffypunk.

#### ST GEORGE'S BRISTOL MAIN HALL

Time: 19:30-22:00

Price: £10/£8 conc

Come along to see ten of Bristol's finest wordsmiths battle it out to be crowned the 2024 Lyra Bristol Poetry Slam Champion, as well as feature performances from world-class poets. The winning poet will need to impress the judging panel as well as YOU, the audience, who have the biggest say of all. Raucous, energetic and passionate, this is an audience favourite at Lyra Festival and a landmark event in Bristol's cultural calendar. Featuring headliners Safiya Kamaria Kinshasa and Jonny Fluffypunk, as well as last year's Lyra Slam Winner, Emma Taylor.

The event is also available to watch via live stream. Please book a Live Stream Ticket at checkout.

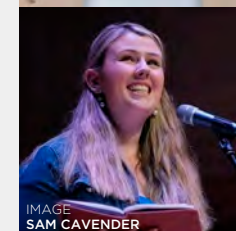
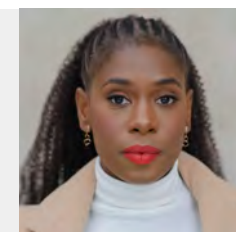


IMAGE SAM CAVENDER

IMAGE TIM WOOLF



## MONDAY 15<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2024



### BALDWIN AND FUTURES DANEZ SMITH

#### WRITING WORKSHOP

An exclusive online poetry workshop with Danez Smith on James Baldwin's centenary year.

#### ONLINE ZOOM

Time: 18:00-19:30 Price: £12/£10 conc

Join acclaimed US poet and winner of the Forward Prize for Poetry, Danez Smith, for an exclusive online workshop responding to the work of James Baldwin on his 100th anniversary year. The workshop will consider how to write futures in the context of James Baldwin's enduring ideas, how these futures might look, and how to write ourselves and our communities into them. We particularly welcome participants from minority/marginalised backgrounds.

*This workshop will be live captioned and BSL interpreted.*



### THE SOUTH WEST POETRY SHOWDOWN

#### POETRY SLAM

A team slam competition between poets from Bristol, Weston, Clevedon and Exeter. A poetry showdown like no other!

#### WARDROBE THEATRE

Time: 19:30-21:30 Price: £8/£5 conc

Bristol vs Clevedon vs Exeter vs Weston! It's a poetry showdown like no other! Join us at The Wardrobe Theatre for an energetic evening of impressive wordsmithery and good-spirited competitiveness. Slammers from each of the teams will take to the stage to battle it out, in the hopes of impressing the audience and winning the title of South West Showdown Champions!

PRESENTED IN COLLABORATION  
WITH RHYME AGAINST THE TIDE.



## TUESDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2024

### BBC UPLOAD SHOWCASE

BBC Upload presents a Lyra Festival special of South West poets they've featured on the radio, plus a first-half open mic led by Bristol Tonic.

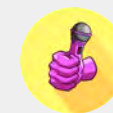
#### acta COMMUNITY THEATRE

Time: 19:00 - 21:00 Price: £5

BBC Upload is the home of new comedy, poetry and spoken word on the BBC! They're bringing together some of the best emerging poets they've featured on air, as part of a very special BBC Upload showcase at Lyra Festival. Plus a first-half open mic led by Bristol Tonic. (Sign up to perform by buying an Open Mic Ticket at checkout)

Want to get your poetry featured on the BBC? Head to [bbc.co.uk/upload](https://bbc.co.uk/upload) and submit your recordings now, and you could get on air!

PRESENTED IN PARTNERSHIP  
WITH BBC UPLOAD AND BRISTOL TONIC.



## WEDNESDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2024

### REVERENCE POETRY AND THE SACRED

#### LOCO KLUB

Time: 19:00 - 20:00

Price: £5

Embark on a poetic journey with Sukina Noor and guests, in an event that stands at the intersection of poetry and the sacred. Expect a tenderly curated experience, where sound healing and poetry blend, creating a space of mindfulness for the poetry to resonate deeper. Experience poetry after meditation: can it heighten your connection with the words? Witness verses unfold amid sound bath vibrations and the healing call of the flute. Enter the performance space with reverence, like entering a sacred temple of words. Let the words and soundscape wash over you. Feel free to bring your own blankets, cushions and anything comfortable (there will be some chairs, also).





# THURSDAY 18<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2024

## RESPONDING TO ARCHIVES

### WRITING WORKSHOP

This workshop, led by Helen Thomas, will explore some ways in which archival material can be used to inspire and shape our writing.

### WATERSHED W/1

Time: 18:00-19:15

Price: £5

This workshop will explore some of the ways in which archival material can be used to inspire and shape our writing. Using film clips and museum artefacts as prompts, we will consider how we might use objects, collections and archival spaces to stimulate our writing practices and guide our creative techniques. As 'roving-poet-in-residence' for Your Local Arena, Helen has been writing commissioned responses to the archive of the BBC's flagship arts and culture programme *Arena*.

PRESENTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH SPEAKING VOLUMES.



## CARIBBEAN NIGHTS POETRY

### DOCUMENTARY + PANEL DISCUSSION

A screening and panel presented by Your Local Arena and Speaking Volumes, with Anthony Joseph, Rishi Dastidar, Louisa Adjoa Parker and Helen Thomas, chaired by Madhu Krishnan.

### WATERSHED CINEMA 3

Time: 19:30-21:30

Price: £8/£5 conc

Back in the 1980s, the UK had little idea of the wealth of poetry coming from the Caribbean. In 1986, the BBC's thought-provoking *Arena* film *Caribbean Nights: Poetry* changed all that. Featuring Trinidadian intellectual Darcus Howe chairing an illuminating discussion with St Lucian poet Derek Walcott (1992 Nobel Prize for Literature), pioneering British-Jamaican reggae poet Linton Kwesi Johnson and emerging British-Guyanese poet Fred D'Aguiar, it also includes clips of, among others, the electrifying Jamaican dub poet Michael Smith and innovative Barbadian Kamau Brathwaite, who championed using Caribbean English in poetry.

Come and watch *Caribbean Nights: Poetry*, which, even now, feels fresh in its insights. Afterwards, poet and editor Rishi Dastidar, 2023 TS Eliot Prize winner Anthony Joseph and Louisa Adjoa Parker will talk to noted Bristol academic Madhu Krishnan about the vital need for diverse poetry in our everyday lives, before Helen Thomas reads a new poem inspired by the film.

Your Local Arena is a Lucy Hannah and Speaking Volumes co-production, featuring BBC *Arena*'s film archive. Funded by Arts Council England.



## FRIDAY 19<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2024

### ALICE OSWALD + GUESTS

#### READING/PERFORMANCE

*An evening of readings from extraordinary guest poets Alice Oswald, Rachel Long and Caroline Bird.*

#### ST. GEORGE'S BRISTOL MAIN HALL

Time: 19:00-21:00

Price: £10/£8 conc

Alice Oswald has published six collections of poetry, including *Dart* (2002), which won the TS Eliot Prize. She is the first female Professor of Poetry at Oxford and has a particular interest in poetry as an oral tradition.

Rachel Long's debut collection, *My Darling from the Lions* (2020), was published by Picador and shortlisted for numerous prizes, including The Costa Book Award, The Sunday Times Young Writer of the Year Award, The Rathbones Folio Prize and the Jhalak Prize Book of the Year.

Caroline Bird's selected poems *Rookie* (2022) and *The Air Year* (2020) are two of Carcanet's most popular books of the present decade. She won the Forward Prize for Best Collection in 2020 and has been shortlisted for a number of prizes, including the TS Eliot Prize, the Costa Book Awards, the Ted Hughes Award, the Polari Prize and the Dylan Thomas Prize.



IMAGE AMAAL SAID



## SATURDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2024



### THE MUM POET CLUB

#### WRITING WORKSHOP

*A free workshop for poetry-writing parents - babies welcome.*

#### WATERSHED W1

Time: 10:30-12:00 Price: Free

The Mum Poet Club was born in lockdown, as a way to connect, support and encourage poetry-writing parents. This workshop is open to any mums with a child under one. No writing experience is needed - everyone is welcome (including babies), and it is free to join.

*"This organisation is amazing for any women who fancy giving poetry a go as a way to express all the ups and lows of motherhood - it is so welcoming"* Hollie McNish

PRESENTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE MUM POEM CLUB.



### WONDERFULL A POETIC FORTUNE TELLER MACHINE

#### IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCE

*A free prototype experience developed by Deanna Rodger. Come along and have your palm read and find out your poetic future.*

#### WATERSHED CAFE & BAR

Time: 11:00-14:00 Price: Free

If we fail to see the magic of the world, how will we ever find it? In every brick, tree and bin, there is a message, a renewed way to receive the world. There is fortune all around us, waiting.

Be filled with wonder. Place your palm on the reader and hold still to be shown your three numbers. Move into the machine, get settled. Take your time to look where your number is, look through your number and, once you are ready, press anywhere in the ink. A fortune will sound out. Repeat for your next two numbers.

*Special thanks to Mon Merttens and Tarim. Idea developed under Pervasive Media Studio's Winter Residency 2023.*

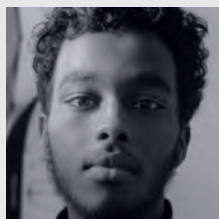




## AN INTRODUCTION TO TRANSLATING POETRY

### WRITING WORKSHOP

Join poets, editors and translators Ibrahim Hirsi and Helen Bowell for a poetry translation workshop.



### WATERSHED W1

Time: 12:30-14:00 Price: £5

How would you translate a poem? Join poets, editors and translators Ibrahim Hirsi and Helen Bowell for a unique poetry translation workshop, open to all. Led by these facilitators, you'll collaborate with other workshop participants to explore the art of translation and create a group translation of a poem by beloved Somali poet and songwriter Xasan Ganey. No experience of Somali, translation or poetry is necessary to take part.

Online Zoom tickets are also available, limited to four per workshop. Please book an Online Zoom Participant Ticket at checkout.



THIS WORKSHOP IS PRESENTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE POETRY TRANSLATION CENTRE, CELEBRATING ITS 20TH BIRTHDAY THROUGHOUT 2024.



## TRANSLATION & DISPLACEMENT AL-SADDIQ AL-RADDI + GUESTS

### READING/PERFORMANCE

An afternoon with Sudanese, Somali, Argentine and Palestinian poets, headlined by Al-Saddiq Al-Raddi.

### WATERSHED W3

Time: 14:00-15:00 Price: Free

An afternoon of poetry responding to displacement, occupation, exile and other kinds of othering. Our annual multilingual events showcase the power of poetry across different languages and cultures, with the poems being performed in both their original language and their English translation versions. This event, in partnership with the Poetry Translation Centre in their 20th year, will feature Sudanese poet Al-Saddiq Al-Raddi with poet and friend Stephen Watts, Italian-Palestinian writer Sabrin Hasbun, Somali poet Ibrahim Hirsi, and Girasol Press reading the works of imprisoned Argentine poets.

The event will be BSL interpreted.

The event is also available to watch via live stream. Please book a Live Stream Ticket at checkout.

PRESENTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH POETRY TRANSLATION CENTRE.



## POETRY AND TECHNOLOGY FILM SCREENING

### SHORT FILMS + Q&A

Lyra's annual poetry film screening, this year on the subject of Poetry and Technology.

### WATERSHED CINEMA 3

Time: 15:00-16:00 Price: £5

Haus für Poesie presents a selection of the best films from the ZEBRA Poetry Film Festival. The programme shows short films on the subject of Poetry and Technology. On the one hand, the poetry films are technically extremely sophisticated and, on the other, they deal with topics such as artificial intelligence, algorithms and social media. How does AI replace humans – in straightforward tasks and complicated ones? How does a farm rebel against technology, the fulfilment of plans, where what it sees, thinks or feels is not important? The films are based on poems by Jörg Piringer, Raed Wahesh and Yehuda Amichai, among others.

Presented by Thomas Zandgiacommo Del Bel, who will join us all the way from Berlin for a special in-person Q&A.

The film screening and Q&A will both be BSL interpreted by Nikki Harris. The film screening itself will be captioned.

The event is also available to watch via live stream. Please book a Live Stream Ticket at checkout. However, this will include only the screening itself and not the Q&A.



## PAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE AI AND POETRY

### PANEL DISCUSSION + PERFORMANCE

A panel discussion featuring poets and technologists from Lyra's new poetry/AI project, Page Against the Machine.

### WATERSHED W3

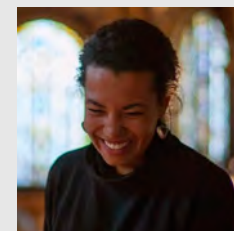
Time: 16:30-17:30 Price: Free

Come along to this fascinating and interactive panel and performance at Watershed to confront the key ethical, creative and human dilemmas of the future of poetry and art posed by the development of AI. For this new project, Page Against the Machine, poets have been paired with technology experts and researchers to write poetry against, and in collaboration with, advanced AI. The different versions of these poems will be read aloud, with the audience guessing which ones were written by the poet, which by AI, and which in collaboration with AI. There will be a discussion and Q&A with acclaimed poet Deanna Rodger, Lyra's 2024 Festival Poet shakara, and voices at the forefront of AI and creativity.

The event is also available to watch via live stream. Please book a Live Stream Ticket at checkout.

This event will be BSL interpreted.

PRESENTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH BRISTOL POETRY INSTITUTE. SUPPORTED BY UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL'S BRISTOW INSTITUTE. SPECIAL THANKS TO WATERSHED'S PERVERSIVE MEDIA STUDIO.





## HOT POETS POETRY, SCIENCE & SAVING THE WORLD

### MULTIMEDIA TALK + PERFORMANCE

Join Chris Redmond and Liv Torc, as they share, in words, poetry and film, the phenomenal story of Hot Poets, as well as short guest readings from local legends Dizraeli and Vanessa Kisuule.

### WATERSHED W3

Time: 18:00-19:00 Price: Free

Hot Poets is a climate science and poetry project that, in just three years, has travelled from a muddy field in Glastonbury to a partnership with the UN Climate Convention. Now an award-winning CIC, Hot Poets has engaged artists, audiences and changemakers in five continents - all with the aim of bringing to life the climate solutions, technology and ideas that could save our planet.

The event will feature short films made by two of Hot Poet's international artists from Thailand and Cape Town and live performances from Liv, Chris and fellow Hot Poets Dizraeli and Vanessa Kisuule.

The event is also available to watch via live stream. Please book a Live Stream Ticket at checkout.

PRESENTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH HOT POETS, GAIA FOUNDATION  
AND THE UNFCCC'S RESILIENCE FRONTIERS



HOT POETS



## BACK STORIES OF THE AFRO WIND

### READING/PERFORMANCE

An evening of performances from poets all the way from Ghana! Including multiple award-winning poet Gabriel Awuah Mainoo. A collaboration with Ashesi University (Ghana), supported by Bath Spa University (UK).

### WATERSHED W3

Time: 20:00-21:00 Price: £5

It all lies in the past, but what makes us who we are? What contributes to our present and is transforming our future? Get a glimpse of what it is like to be African, as our talented poets immerse you in their culture, life and history, and in a reimagining of the future through the lens of technology, creativity and uniqueness. With a taste of West and East African, we want you to see our world as we do. AKWABA.

Featuring poetry from headliner and acclaimed Ghanaian poet Gabriel Awuah Mainoo, as well as some of the finest up-and-coming voices in poetry and spoken word from Ashesi University, Ghana, including Alhassan Mohamed, Nice Cailie Ineza and Ewurama Nhyira Essel. Hosted and presented by Dr. Millicent Adjei of Ashesi University, with an introduction from John Strachan of Bath Spa University.

IN COLLABORATION WITH BATH SPA UNIVERSITY, WHO HAVE FUNDED THIS CULTURAL EXCHANGE WITH ASHESI UNIVERSITY IN GHANA.

This event will be BSL interpreted.

The event is also available to watch via live stream. Please book a Live Stream Ticket at checkout.





# SUNDAY 21<sup>ST</sup> APRIL 2024



## QUEER FUTURES JOELLE TAYLOR

### WRITING WORKSHOP

A writing workshop led by T. S. Eliot Prize Winner Joelle Taylor, open exclusively to LGBTQI+ writers.

### WATERSHED W1

Time: 10:00-12:00 Price: £8/£5 conc

Join T. S. Eliot Prize-winning poet and author of *The Night Alphabet*, Joelle Taylor, for an exclusive writing workshop in Bristol looking at the theme of queer futures and writing yourself and your community in a futuristic lens. This workshop is open exclusively to writers who identify as LGBTQI+.

Online Zoom tickets are also available, limited to four per workshop.

Please book an Online Zoom Participant Ticket at checkout.



## ROMANTIC BRISTOL WOMEN WRITERS

### WALKING TOUR

A guided tour exploring the city, its layered histories, its cultural complexity and the voices of Romantic-era women writers and poets.

### MEETING POINT OUTSIDE WILLS MEMORIAL BUILDING

Time: 12:00-13:00 Price: £5

A guided tour exploring the city, its layered histories, its cultural complexity and the voices of its poets, with a particular focus on Bristol's Romantic-era women writers. The walk will explore some of the key sites connected to these female poets, writers, feminists and reformists, whose revolutionary work has continued to influence the city to the present day. Based on the Romantic Bristol app, which you'll be able to use on a smartphone during the walk. Led by Dr Rebecca Hutcheon.



## QUEERING AI

### WRITING WORKSHOP

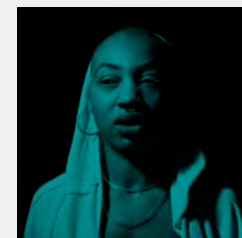
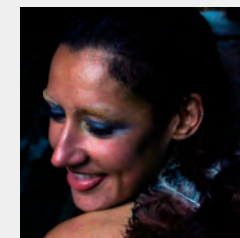
Join local poets paz and shakara from *Sonder Spoken Word*, for a workshop crafting poetry in collaboration with AI.

### WATERSHED W1

Time: 13:00-14:30 Price: £8/£5 conc

Join local poets paz (they/them) and shakara (they/she) from *Sonder Spoken Word*, for a workshop queering AI. We will be guiding you through how to craft poetry in collaboration with ChatGPT, the possibilities of approaching AI through a queer lens, and hosting a juicy discussion about wider ethical questions for writers and artists. Whether you're a seasoned poet, a curious beginner or a consciousness uploaded onto a toaster, this workshop welcomes you to play, get curious and question the beep beep boop beep.

Online Zoom tickets are also available, limited to four per workshop. Please book an Online Zoom Participant Ticket at checkout.



## JOELLE TAYLOR THE NIGHT ALPHABET

### STAGED READING/PERFORMANCE

T. S. Eliot Prize winner Joelle Taylor performs a stage reading of her debut novel *The Night Alphabet*.

### TOBACCO FACTORY THEATRES

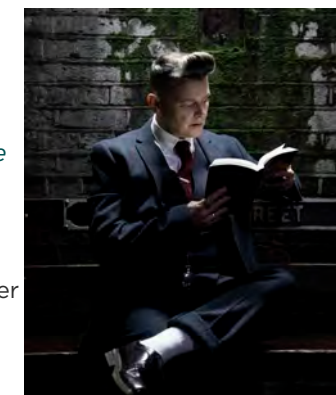
Time: 17:00-18:00 Price: £10/£8 conc

Hackney, 2233: a woman walks into a tattoo parlour. Her body is covered all over with tattoos, but she wants to add one final inking to her gallery - a thin line connecting the haunting images of her body art together. If you follow this strand, what narrative do these images tell you?

*The Night Alphabet* is set across geographies and timespans, replete with literary fireworks. It is a furious, gripping, dazzlingly original novel and a deep and bold investigation into violence, resilience and women's stories. It was published by Riverrun in February 2024.

Joelle Taylor is the author of four collections of poetry. Her most recent, *C+NTO & Othured Poems*, won the 2021 TS Eliot Prize, the 2022 Polari Book Prize for LGBT authors, and is currently being adapted for the theatre.

The event is also available to watch via live stream. Please book a Live Stream Ticket at checkout.





## CITY OF WORDS

### READING/PERFORMANCE

*The closing event of Lyra 2024 celebrates poets from all over Bristol sharing their perspectives, in collaboration with Bristol Ideas, as part of their closing activity. With an introduction from Andrew Kelly.*

### WATERSHED W3

Time: 19:30-21:00 Price: £5

Come along to celebrate Bristol's wide range of stories and perspectives, as we welcome an array of poets from all over the city, as well as community groups who have been commissioned to create new work. This 90-minute showcase of quick-fire readings will also include a feature set from Lyra's 2024 Festival Poet shakara. Hear from current City Poet Kat Lyons, former City Poets Caleb Parkin and Miles Chambers, our Young City Poets Altoma and Nara, newly commissioned poems about Bristol from Stephen Lightbown, Asmaa Jama, Deborah Harvey, Lawrence Hoo and Sukina Noor, plus showcases from community groups Word by Word, Bristol After Stroke, Our Future (Polish and Somali women) and the *Bonds* poetry exhibition project.

The event will be followed by festival afterparty drinks in the Watershed Café & Bar from 21:00.

The event is also available to watch via live stream. Please book a Live Stream Ticket at checkout.



## TUESDAY 30<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2024

### JACKIE KAY MAY DAY

#### READING/PERFORMANCE + Q&A

*A special bonus event, nine days after Lyra Festival, in collaboration with Bristol Ideas, as part of their closing programme.*

#### WATERSTONES GALLERIES

Time: 19:00-20:00

Price: £8/£5 conc

One of the finest poets and writers today, Jackie Kay's long-awaited new collection, *May Day*, casts an eye over several decades of political activism, from the international solidarity of the Glasgow of Kay's childhood, accompanying her parents' Socialist campaigns, through the feminist, LGBT+ and anti-racist movements of the 80s and 90s, up to the present day, when a global pandemic intersects with the urgency of Black Lives Matter.

Kay brings to life a cast of influential figures, delving beneath the surfaces of received narratives: the Jamaican model Fanny Eaton, for example, muse of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in England; Paul Robeson, Angela Davis and the poet Audre Lorde; and a 'what-if' poem concerning Robbie Burns and a road-not-taken towards the West Indian slave trade. Woven through the collection is a suite of lyric poems concerning the recent losses of Kay's parents: poems of grief and profound change that are infused with the light of love and celebration.

Kay will read from her new work and discuss this with Bristol Ideas' director, Andrew Kelly.





# SUPPORTERS & COLLABORATORS

We are incredibly grateful to the partner organisations who have helped make Lyra Festival 2024 possible.



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
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