

Festival of Italian Literature in London



A NEW LITERARY FESTIVAL WILL BRING TOGETHER DIFFERENT VOICES IN THE LONDON OF BREXIT

Two days of events, over 30 speakers, authors and thinkers from different backgrounds, established writers and younger radical ones. Italian, British, and international voices will discuss literature and topics such as migration, politics, Italy, the present and future of London, and how Brexit is already affecting novels and poems. Today more than ever, London is an outpost facing epic social changes.

That is the formula of the Festival of Italian Literature in London / Festival Italiano di Letteratura a Londra (FILL), which will take place in Notting Hill on October 21 and 22, 2017.

Envisioned by the London-based Italian literary community and organised with the Italian Cultural Institute, the festival took form in the turmoil of the post-referendum. It was then that a group of Italian authors, journalists, and academics living in London started to meet and felt the impulse to react with a new ambitious cultural event. The Culture Institute embraced the project and became its co-organiser.

For its part, the Turin International Book Fair spotted the festival's innovative potential and decided to become a partner, building an ideal London-Turin bridge.

Over two days, the audience will be able to attend panel discussions and readings, meet the authors, and enjoy DJ sets as well as other side events. Brexit will be by no means the sole topic, but it will give to the festival an inevitable, underlying political tension. Instead of following the format of a classic foreign-literature festival, with a selected display of Italian authors introduced to the London audience, the organisers have opted for a more fluid format, bringing together Italian and non-Italian voices, blending meet-the-author events with panel discussions centred on contemporary themes.

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THE PROGRAMME

The 21-22 October two-days event will take place at the Coronet, Notting Hill's historical theatre venue, in its three evocative spaces (auditorium, studio, bar). The near totality of the events will be in English or in Italian with English translation, to stress the will to aim at the Italian community as much as to the wider London community.

The programme includes "Citizens of Nowhere?" (titled after Theresa May's notorious statement), with Strega Prize winner **Melania Mazzucco** and American author **Lauren Elkin**. Lampedusa-based doctor **Pietro Bartolo** will launch the English edition of his book about his experience with migrants, with co-author **Lidia Tilotta** and **Clare Longrigg** from The Guardian. **Iain Sinclair** ("The last London") will be in conversation with **Olivia Laing** ("The lonely city") and with Tate Modern's senior curator **Andrea Lissoni**. Author **Christian Raimo** and **Jonathan Hopkin** from the London School of Economics will get into "Italian politics for dummies", while a debate on the cultural industry and feminism in the 2010s will gather a group of panelists including **Sara Taylor** and Granta editor **Ka Bradley**.

A professional panel of British publishers and editors will discuss the new wave of "post-Ferrante" Italian literature in the UK market. **Giancarlo De Cataldo**, co-author of bestseller "Suburra", will join the festival to celebrate the worldwide launch of the Netflix series based on his book. Cartoonist **Zerocalcare**, hugely popular in Italy, will meet the London audience for the first time.

And again, a poetry collaborative performance commissioned by the festival with some of the most interesting voices of the new Italian and British scene; bestselling children and YA author **Pierdomenico Baccalario** with a bitter-sweet reading on children and Brexit; music journalists **Valerio Mattioli** and **Rob Young** from The Wire on the secret history of Italian (and British) music.

The full programme is on www.fill.org.uk/events.

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STATEMENTS

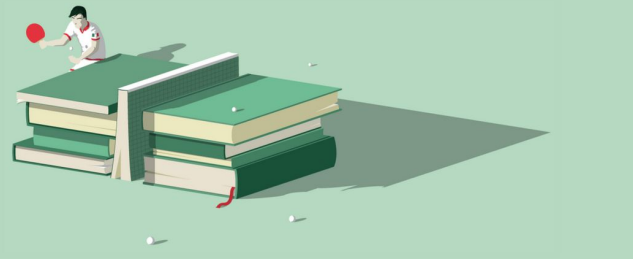
Marco Mancassola, the festival's creator and coordinator: "In a way, this festival could come only out of London: a restless metropolis in perpetual movement, poised and uncertain about its own future. London is both the festival's background and engine. We have worked on themes, questions, and intersections between Italian and non-Italian authors. The only regret is not having been able to include more events in the programme."

Marco Delogu, director of the Italian Cultural Institute (co-organiser of the festival): "The Institute has seized on the growing demand for Italian literature in the UK: over 60 Italian books translated within the past year, more than 20 British publishing houses involved, literary hits such as Elena Ferrante's. This has brought us to believe in an extraordinary festival like FILL, and to get out of the walls of our usual venue in Belgrave Square to find original and warm spaces like the Coronet's, in the heart of Notting Hill, in order to engage with the public in new innovative ways."

Claudia Durastanti, who is also a coordinator of the festival: "There are over 600,000 Italians in the UK, constantly dealing with a culture that's changing them and that they're also helping to change. This festival doesn't celebrate an abstract idea of Italianness. FILL is different from other community festivals in the sense that it focuses on a dynamic idea of our culture, on the dialogue among literatures and on certain transnational processes."

Lauren Elkin, Franco-American author who will be a speaker at the festival: "The FILL festival is a celebration of the fact that ideas and literature slip easily across borders: this is the most basic form of resistance to people who would try to build walls around their nation-states. So that's what we're going to do, at the festival and beyond. Hard or soft Brexit, we will continue to talk, and laugh, and read and exchange with each other."

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Nicola Lagioia, director of the Turin International Book Fair (partner of the festival): “An intellectual hub of writers, journalists, translators, musicians, academics, artists at the heart of the big Italian community in London have turned cosmopolitanism into a distinctive trait. I don’t think they should be described as “brain drain” – rather, they are a standing proof of what Europe is meant to be. They bring their original perspective to London and they help feeding their home country with new and exciting ideas. They’re not building an ideal city, but a wider ideal continent, a place we’re all eager to live in. We might see glimpses of it during this festival.”

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THE NETWORK



The festival team includes Marco Mancassola (author), Claudia Durastanti (author and translator), Marco Magini (author), Stefano Jossa (literary critic, Royal Holloway University of London), Livia Franchini (author, Goldsmiths University), Paolo Nelli (author, King's College), Gianluca Didino (cultural critic), Barbara Barbieri (literary agent), Emanuela Patti (Royal Holloway University of London), Leonardo Clausi (translator and journalist), Pierdomenico Baccalario (author of young adult fiction), Beatrice Finauro (Teads.tv).

The Italian Cultural Institute is directed by Marco Delogu.

FILL is supported by the Turin International Book Fair and by an extraordinary network of people and energies, both in London and in Italy and elsewhere. The partners of the festival are:



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