

**Brooklyn Public Library and the Cultural Services of the French Embassy Present New York Edition of “Night of Philosophy and Ideas”**

**Dr. Kwame Anthony Appiah, New York University professor of philosophy and law and the author of “The Ethicist” column in the New York Times to Deliver Keynote Address**

**Free, 12-Hour, Overnight Event Will Feature Music, Rare Films, VR, Puppets and More Than 60 Speakers and Performers**

**7 p.m. to 7 a.m. on February 2, 2019, at BPL**

**BROOKLYN**, January 11, 2018— For the third consecutive year, Brooklyn Public Library (BPL) and the Cultural Services of the French Embassy will present the hallmark edition of ***A Night of Philosophy and Ideas***, bringing philosophers, authors, artists, and musicians from around the world together with the New York community through a series of intellectual and thought-provoking conversations and performances from **February 2 at 7:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. on February 3, 2019, at the historic Central Library at Grand Army Plaza.**

The event runs from sundown to sunrise—the only such event in the nation to do so—as the concept of the Institut français’ global **La Nuit des idées** expands across the country to Washington D.C., Houston, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. The nation-wide events are modeled after the New York intellectual marathon, created by the Brooklyn Public Library and the Cultural Services in 2017, and which attracted 8000 people in 2018.

Featuring more than 60 philosophers, intellectuals, researchers and artists, the event will explore the overarching theme “Facing the Present” and the most pressing issues in contemporary society in simultaneous conversations, performances, screenings, VR and 360 experiences. **Dr. Kwame Anthony Appiah**, New York University professor of philosophy and law and the author of “The Ethicist” column in the New York Times will deliver the night’s keynote address on identity and freedom.

“Night of Philosophy has become one of the most anticipated programs Brooklyn Public Library offers, providing patrons with the chance to discover and debate ideas within the safe space of the Library all night long,” said **Linda E. Johnson, Brooklyn Public Library President and CEO.** “Alongside the Cultural Services of the French Embassy, we are excited to host thousands of people for twelve hours in our flagship branch on Grand Army Plaza for the third consecutive year.”

“We believe that it is essential, in this time of uncertainty, to call upon the power of intellectuals and artists to engage with the general public and encourage critical thinking” says **Bénédicte de Montlaur, Cultural Counselor of the French Embassy in the United States.** “The success of the past New York editions shows the appetite of the local community to face and

investigate some of the most pressing issues of our time through a profusion of conversations, performances, screenings, exhibitions and VR experiences that we propose each year.”

Throughout the night and into the early morning, philosophers will present topics and debate ideas on a wide range of issues in 20-minute mini-lectures, with the last one at 6:30 a.m. The wildly popular *Dilemma Series*—in which philosophers will lead discussions about modern-day concerns from gentrification to sexual harassment—will return in 2019 with lead questions developed by **Professor George Yancy**, a regular contributor *The New York Times* philosophy forum *The Stone* and author of “Dear White America”.

“For our third edition of *A Night of Philosophy and Ideas*, we are pushing the boundaries even further to engage with people from all corners of the city. This event is a tender suggestion to our city to slow down, face the beasts of reality and relentlessly ask questions. Stay up and think! Attending the Night of Philosophy is a subversive act that will stay with you throughout the year,” said **László Jakab Orsós**, **BPL’s Vice President of Arts and Culture**.

**Dr. Todd May**, professor of philosophy and philosophical advisor to the hit NBC show, *The Good Place* will lead a discussion titled What is Decency in an Indecent Present?

**WNYC’s 10 Things That Scare Me** podcast will invite participants to share their own fears in a special midnight program, accompanied by a live cello performance.

The ACLU will host a live edition of their podcast **On Liberty**.

MIT will present “**Manufacturing Mischief**,” a puppet show featuring wood puppets of Noam Chomsky, Karl Marx and Elon Musk, created by Mexican artist Pedro Reyes.

Award-winning writer Colm Toibin, a mentor in the Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative—a program to pair accomplished cultural figures with emerging artists—will be in conversation with protégé **Colin Barrett**.

Brooklyn-based **D.R.E.A.M** (Dance Rules Everything Around Me) Ring will transform the Grand Lobby with off-the-chart energetic dance performances and a battle with local dance crews.

Les Souffleurs Commandos Poétiques—a group of French actors, writers and musicians—will whisper poetry and literary secrets into the ears of participants using long hollow canes, which they call “nightingales”. Their aim is to bring back poetry in the fast-paced world we live in, a world where we might have forgotten to take the time to open books.

**National Sawdust**, an artist-led nonprofit music organization presents **J. Hoard** and **Innov Gnawa**. Hoard is a Brooklyn-based singer and songwriter on the Grammy Award-winning *Coloring Book*, and the lead singer of the legendary Lower East Side curated hip-hop jam *The Lesson*. Pitchfork described his vocals as “triumphant”. Innov Gnawa is a Grammy-nominated

music collective dedicated to exploring Morocco's traditional trance Gnaw music against the backdrop of contemporary New York City.

**Saxophonist Jacques Schwarz-Bart** will also perform. The recording artist, composer and educator, featured on over 150 albums collaborations include work with Roy Hargrove, Danilo Pérez, John Scofield, D'Angelo, Erykah Badu, John Legend, and many others. He has performed at Lincoln Center and throughout New York as well in 12 different countries.

Participants will see innovative film making, including the virtual reality (VR) piece **Battlescar**, an animated coming of age drama, as well as a nostalgic homage to the Lower East Side in the late 1970's, narrated by Rosario Dawson. **I Saw the Future**, a 360° experimental film which allows viewers to submerge themselves in a three-dimensional space echoing the futurist predictions of a visionary and humanist scholar, Arthur C. Clarke, the famed author of *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

**15 Hours** is a hypnotic film made in a single 15-hour take in a Chinese garment factory by Wang Bing on the meaning of work and labor condition in present-day China will be shown. The night will also feature a rare screening of **L'Heritage de la Chouette/The Owl's Legacy**, a 13-episode documentary exploration of ancient Greece influences on Western culture including democracy and mythology. Directed by enigmatic documentary essayist **Chris Marker**, the series was unavailable for decades but has been restored and released in 2018.

**Le peuple qui manque (A People Is Missing)** is an art curatorial platform. Founders **Aliocha Imhoff & Kantuta Quirós**, will broadcast **Les Impatients**, a video installation about the great issues of our time. Episodes take place in Chicago and Detroit, where the marks of the subprime crisis and the wounds inflicted upon black lives are challenged by the movement Black Lives Matter; in Leipzig, where the movement that led to the Fall of the Berlin Wall began; in Paris, on the political, intellectual movement of protest "Nuit Debout"; and in Dakar. **Le peuple qui manque** will lead philosophers from ten different countries – France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Switzerland, Lithuania, Bulgaria, the United Kingdom, Mexico and the United States to explore:

- The Art of the Philosophical Op-ed with Peter Catapano
- A Rise in Humanity with Felwine Sarr
- Keeping Calm in a Raging World with Trungram Gyalwa Rinpoche
- Radicalized Loyalties with Fabien Truong
- How to Err Wisely with Marcin Mikowski
- Philosophy & Happiness with Adriana Cavarero
- Media Cultures of Drone Warfare: Thinking About the (Un)Seen with Svea Braeunert
- The Powerful Present with Judith Revel
- What Does It Mean To Face the Present? with Frank M. Kirkland
- Palaces for the People: How Social Infrastructure Can Help Fight Inequality, Polarization, and the Decline of Civic Life with Eric Klinenberg
- Why Reparations? with Kazembe Balagun
- The Long Now: Ecology and Time After the End of History with Ajay Singh Chaudhary

- Concepts of Social Justice—Humanitarian, Recognitive, and Environmental—with Omar Dahbour
- Reinventing Masculinities with Olivia Gazalé
- Tricycle The Buddhist Review Thread: Community Building as a Social, Political and Spiritual Practice with Dr. Rebecca Li
- Detectives and Murderers: The History of Truth in Mexico with Pablo Piccato
- On the Life and Death Importance of Thinking: Hannah Arendt Revisited with Elizabeth Minnich
- What is Alienation? Capital and the Commons with Akeel Bilgrami
- Not So Strange Bedfellows: Populists and Plutocrats in a Speculative Age with Michel Fehrer
- Foucault and Buddhism with Muhammed Naeem
- End of the American Century and the Transatlantic Project with Mary Nolan
- Radical Acceptance with Lama Justin von Bujdoss
- Facing the Present as the World Spins Out of Control with Frances Fox Piven
- A.I. and Biased Algorithms with Susanna Schellenberg
- Terrorism, Nihilism, and the Politics of the Present with Suzanne Schneider
- Why Voltaire Today with Paul LeClerc (former president of New York Public Library)

The full list of events may be found at: <https://www.nightofphilosophyandideas.com>

**Citypoint**, Brooklyn's largest food, shopping and entertainment destination, will distribute chocolate bars with five BKLYN GOLDEN TKTS each worth \$500 at five of the center's retailers. Winners will be revealed at City Point in Downtown Brooklyn the weekend following the event..

**Nespresso** will generously donate free coffee to participants at the all-night event. Brooklyn-based **Colson Patisserie** will provide free croissants at 5 a.m.

**Emma's Torch**—a nonprofit organization that empowers refugees through culinary education and job readiness training and who will begin operating the concession program at Central Library next month—will sell snacks for hungry all-nighters, marking their debut at the Library. Concessions will also be available from **Miti Miti** and **Bogota Latin Bistro**, winner of BPL's first PowerUP! entrepreneur competition; and **Sixpoint Brewery**.

*A Night of Philosophy and Ideas* kicks off BPL Present's Spring 2019 season, which will be officially announced in the coming weeks.

The 2019 *A Night of Philosophy and Ideas* is co-presented by Brooklyn Public Library and the Cultural Services of the French Embassy. *A Night of Philosophy and Ideas* is produced in connection with La Nuit des Idées, a project of the Institut français, Paris.

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### **About Brooklyn Public Library (BPL)**

Brooklyn Public Library (BPL) is an independent library system for the 2.5 million residents of Brooklyn. It is the fifth largest library system in the United States with 60 neighborhood libraries located throughout the borough. BPL offers free programs and services for all ages and stages of life, including a large selection of books in more than 30 languages, author talks, literacy programs and public computers. BPL's eResources, such as eBooks and eVideos, catalog information and free homework help, are available to customers of all ages 24 hours a day at our website: <https://www.bklynlibrary.org>

### **About Cultural Services of the French Embassy of the United States**

The Cultural Services of the French Embassy promotes the best of French arts, literature, cinema, language, and higher education across the US. Based in New York City, Washington D.C., and eight other cities across the country, the Cultural Services brings artists, authors, educational and university programs to cities nationwide. It also builds partnerships between French and American artists, institutions and universities on both sides of the Atlantic. In New York, through its bookshop Albertine, it fosters French-American exchange around literature and the arts, <http://frenchculture.org/>

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