



Monday, Sept. 16, 2024

## SAVE THE DATE! THE 20TH LOUISIANA BOOK FESTIVAL SET FOR SATURDAY, NOV. 2

**BATON ROUGE, La.** — The Louisiana Center for the Book in the State Library of Louisiana is excited to announce the return of the Louisiana Book Festival on **Saturday, November 2, 2024**, the 20th year celebrating readers, writers, and their books. This year's festival is set for 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in downtown Baton Rouge at the Louisiana State Capitol, the State Library of Louisiana, the Capitol Park Museum, and the surrounding Capitol Park area. The festival is free and open to the public, with authors for readers of all ages and activities for children and teenagers.

The day before the festival will see the return of the popular WordShops, writing workshops with major authors and publishing industry professionals as instructors. Details about this year's workshops will be released soon, at which point online registration will open.

"This year's book fest lineup is shaping up to be another stellar one," said Lieutenant Governor Billy Nungesser. "It's an especially meaningful year since this will be the 20th festival. There were a few hiccups along the way over the years thanks to storms and the pandemic, but the fest hasn't only survived, it's thrived."

The Louisiana Writer Award will also celebrate its 25th year. This year's recipient is Baton Rouge-area native <u>David Kirby</u>, a prolific poet and long-time professor at Florida State University.

The festival's fifteenth One Book One Festival program will feature Eudora Welty's The Optimist's Daughter, which opens in a New Orleans hospital during Mardi Gras. The reader discussion group will be led by perennial favorite Dr. Gary Richard.

"We'll have more than 200 authors and presenters taking part this year. Some are just starting out, and others are big names; some are homegrown, and others are from out of state. We're excited to welcome all of them, and we know attendees will be pleased with the lineup," said State Librarian Meg Placke.

Author and illustrator <u>William Joyce</u> returns with the anxiously awaited Rocket Puppies, his first book in eight years, which will be available at the festival to get autographed for the first time anywhere.

<u>Ashley Elston</u> also returns with her adult debut novel First Lie Wins, a New York Times bestseller, the Penguin Random House's bestselling fiction book for the first half of the year, and the January pick for the Reese Witherspoon Book Club.

There are more than books, too. The festival will host the premiere of Books Across America, a documentary from filmmaker Mason Engel in which he travels to 50 states, reads 50 books, and interviews 50 authors in 50 days. Among those interviewed is <a href="Maurice Carlos Ruffin">Maurice Carlos Ruffin</a>, the 2023 Louisiana Writer Award winner, whose new book, The American Daughters, will also be featured.

"I am very proud of the great and varied authors we have invited and the presentations we're planning," said Jim Davis, Executive Director of the Louisiana Book Festival. "We've worked on this festival for almost a year to make it particularly special, featuring the return of some festival favorites and introducing new voices to our dedicated attendees and hopefully to many new festivalgoers. Just take a scroll through our featured books page and see the variety."

Popular cooking demonstrations with cookbook authors are also on the menu. "We call the festival a celebration of readers, writers, and books, and what's a Louisiana celebration without a little food?" said Robert Wilson, Louisiana Book Festival assistant director.

As usual, the Louisiana Book Festival selects a Louisiana artist to design the artwork for the festival. This year, Kelly A. Mueller, an artist who recently began to teach at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette after two decades teaching in New Orleans, was chosen. The artwork is called Come to Find Out.

"When we first began discussion about the design for this year's Louisiana Book Festival, conversations quickly centered on the fact that I regularly include projected text in my work," Mueller said. "Here, we saw it as an opportunity to celebrate this year's recipient of the 25th Louisiana Writer Award, David Kirby." "In the image, a writer sits quietly working at a window at dusk, while the surrounding cypress swamp comes to life," Mueller said.

Excerpts from some of Kirby's poems with a Louisiana connection are found throughout the piece, including "come to find out," as are numbers that celebrate the 20th book festival, the 25th Louisiana Writer Award, and the 40 years of Kirby's poems featured in his new collection, The Winter Dance Party.



The 2024 Louisiana Book Festival official artwork titled Come to Find Out was designed by Kelly A. Mueller, an artist who recently began to teach at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette after two decades teaching in New Orleans

For more information about the 2024 Louisiana Book Festival, visit <u>LouisianaBookFestival.org</u> or follow the fest on the <u>Louisiana Book Festival Facebook page</u>.

The <u>Louisiana Center for the Book</u> was established in the State Library of Louisiana in 1994. Its mission is to stimulate public interest in reading, books, literacy, and libraries and to celebrate Louisiana's rich literary heritage. It is the official state affiliate of the Library of Congress Center for the Book.



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