



the British Library

Conversation:  
Adapting Books to Screen

**ASHANTI  
OMKAR**

BAFTA member and jury participant.  
Renowned film, TV, and culture critic.

Tickets on SALE now

the British Lib

Workshop on Book

**NIDHI  
SAHAN**

Renowned entertainment  
journalist and marketing ex-  
ecutive. Founder of *Popcorn Pixel*.

Tickets on SALE now

The Institut Français

Keynote Address by

**LADY KISHWAR  
DESAI**

Author of *The Longest Kiss: The Life  
and Times of Devika Rani*. Award-winning  
playwright and historian.

Tickets on SALE now



**AIM  
LITERARY  
FESTIVAL**

**14TH OCTOBER  
TO  
19TH OCTOBER  
2024**

the Roald Dahl

Live Book Launch

**DIVYA  
THOMA**

Storyteller and campaigner for  
gender equality and the environment.  
Author of *I am so much more than the  
color of my skin*.

Tickets on SALE now

the Hearsh

Editorial Critiquing

**ARDEN  
JONES**

Writer & Agency Assistant at  
*The Good Literary Agency*.

Tickets on SALE now

the British Library

Workshop: Public Speaking

**ANILA  
DHAMI**

Award-winning British Journalist,  
Presenter and Reporter.

Tickets on SALE now

the Roald Dahl Museum

Discussion & Gra

**DEBAS  
DASGUPTA**

Silver Nautilus award-winning  
children's book illustrator, author,  
novelist, and art-for-change  
activist.

Tickets on SALE now

Keynote Speech by 10-year Old  
Award-Winning Author, **AISHWARYA GUPTA**

the Roald Dahl Museum

The AIM Literary Festival is funded by Arts Council England and organised by Author In Me, an award-winning small press that publishes culturally diverse books. The 2024 Festival will feature events across London, Brent and Buckinghamshire, including the Roald Dahl Museum for children's event . Our mission is to amplify unheard voices and celebrate the rich diversity of storytelling.

#### MISSION

AMPLIFY UNHEARD VOICES

PROMOTE DIVERSITY IN PUBLISHING

PROMOTE READING AND WRITING IN CHILDREN

This year, our festival's theme is "Life, Experiences, and the Stories In Between," reflecting the idea that life is made up of countless moments, both monumental and subtle, that shape our identity. These experiences bring joy, impart wisdom, and sometimes challenge us in ways that lead to profound growth. Yet, every moment, no matter how small, carries a story worth sharing.

Throughout the week, we will celebrate these stories, inviting both emerging and established authors to share their journeys, insights, and the lessons they've learned along the way. This festival is a celebration of the stories that connect us all.



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

**Author In Me** is an award-winning small press fostering inclusive storytelling. With a focus on nurturing young writers and underrepresented authors, AIM provides tools, resources, and opportunities to empower storytellers of all backgrounds. From publishing services to writing workshops, Author In Me is committed to bridging gaps in the literary world and promoting diversity in publishing. Our mission is to inspire creativity, cultivate talent, and bring meaningful stories to life that reflect the richness of our collective human experience.



## EKTA BAJAJ

The CURATOR of the AIM Literary Festival and co-founder of the award-winning small press, **AUTHOR IN ME**

Ekta Bajaj wears many hats – she’s a visual artist, a columnist, a podcaster, and co-founder of award-winning Small Press, Author In Me Publishing. With her empowering book, **The Voice of Kali**, and her co-authored work, **Shine Like a Star: Book of Affirmations for Children**, she champions positive thinking and storytelling. Delving into ancient Vedic wisdom and Sanskrit, Ekta adapts a holistic mental and emotional well-being approach in her writing. Her upcoming literary inspirational fiction, **Let the Fish Fly**, explores the multiple dimensions of human experiences.

As the curator of the AIM Literary Festival, Ekta actively fosters creativity and community engagement. She is a sought-after speaker at events and Literary festivals, sharing insights on the power of ancient wisdom and storytelling.

Recognised for her entrepreneurial spirit, Ekta was *shortlisted for Female Entrepreneur of the Year 2020* by Thames Valley Business Awards and honoured with the WOW Woman of the Year 2021 award for The Voice of Kali.



## MONICA SOOD

The CURATOR of the AIM Literary Festival and co-founder of the award-winning small press, **AUTHOR IN ME**

Monica Sood is a children’s author, co-founder of the award-winning publishing house Author In Me, and curator of the Annual AIM Literary Festival. Her deep commitment to promoting storytelling and ensuring diverse representation shines through in all her projects. An advocate of storytelling, she believes in its transformative power to enhance mental well-being, self-awareness and resilience. Her books **Shine like Star- A Book of Affirmations** and **Santa Wants a Makeover** inspire young readers to embrace their uniqueness. Her upcoming picture book, **The Gift that Gives Back**, beautifully weaves environmental awareness into storytelling, planting the seeds of responsibility in children’s hearts. As a creative writing program curator and mentor, She is dedicated to cultivating the talents of young writers.

Passionate about empowering diverse voices in the publishing industry, Monica guides authors from concept to publication with personalised strategies that reflect their unique vision. Combining science, storytelling and mindfulness, she helps children build confidence, develop emotional intelligence, and cultivate a lifelong love for learning.

# SPEAKERS

**Keynote  
Speaker**  
14th October



## Lady Kishwar Desai

Lady Kishwar Desai is an **award winning author, playwright, historian**. As a historian, her book "Jallianwala Bagh, 1919: The Real Story" won critical acclaim, and led to exhibitions in India, UK and New Zealand at the centenary of the massacre.

**Moderator**  
14th October



## Anila Dhani

Anila Dhani is an award-winning British Journalist, Presenter and Reporter who is committed to serving local, national and global audiences. She has worked for major media companies like ITV News, Channel 5, LBC and the BBC. For over a decade on TV, radio and online, Anila has helped tell people's stories authentically; shared information; opened up conversations; and asked questions people want answers to. She is also Ambassador of the UK's biggest children's charity Barnardo's, and period charity Binti.

**Masterclass**  
15th October

**Panelist**  
15th October



## Ashanti Omark

Ashanti Omark is a renowned film, TV, and culture critic with a career spanning BBC TV, Sky News, and Channel 4. As a BAFTA member and jury participant, Ashanti brings a wealth of expertise from the world of film and television. She has worked with global giants like Netflix, Disney+, Marvel, and Amazon MGM Studios, and has interviewed iconic figures such as John McTiernan and Wendell Pierce.

**Moderator**  
15th October



## Loveena Tandon

With nearly 25 years of international experience, award-winning journalist and documentary filmmaker Loveena has reported exclusive headline stories for India Today and Aaj Tak as a foreign correspondent. Her documentaries have featured in the South Asian Film Festival, and she has worked with BBC World Service Trust, Zee TV, and Business Standard. She hosted the popular weekly show "Chai Chat with Loveena" for India Today and Aaj Tak for over a decade. Currently, she curates and hosts the video podcast "India: A Story in the Making," exploring India's evolving narrative. She also leads Megarush, a media consultancy.

**Workshop**  
16th October

**Panelist**  
14th and 15th  
October



## Alan Durant

Alan Durant is a British children's author and has written over one hundred books for children of all ages -- from picture books to poetry to young adult thrillers. His picture books include the award-winning Burger Boy, Always and Forever and Dear Tooth Fairy.

**Workshop**  
19th October

**Moderator**  
19th October



## Rani Singh

Rani Singh's work, marked by originality and exclusivity, is about telling the stories of our world. From authoring six books to her diverse broadcast journalism, reviewers comment on the accessibility of the content as well as a filmic, storytelling quality.

**Speaker**  
19th October



**Panelist**  
**14th and 15th**  
**October**

**Workshop**  
**19th October**



## Debasmita Dasgupta

Debasmita illustrates and writes books for children and young adults. Initially self-taught, she recently completed a Masters degree in Children's Book Illustration & Graphic Novels at Middlesex University, London. Besides her books, Debasmita is passionate about cinema and has been a screen-writer and producer of some award-winning short films, documentaries, and a feature film.

**Workshop**  
**19th October**



## Eva Wong Nova

Eva Wong Nava is a multiple award-winning children's author. She writes stories that entertain, enthrall and engage all children. When she was young, she read books that transported her to other worlds, so she knows the power of reading for pleasure. When she grew up, she decided to focus on retelling some of the ancient stories she had read when she was a child.

**Editorial**  
**Critiquing**  
**16th October**



## Arden Jones

Arden is a neurodiverse, working-class writer from Essex/East London and the Agency Assistant at The Good Literary Agency. Alongside her role as an assistant, she is actively working towards her goal of becoming a Literary Agent and is carefully building her own list of children's authors.

**Panelist**  
**14th October**



## Kerry-Ann Bentley

Kerry-Ann Bentley is a literary agent at The Good Literary Agency where she represents established and debut writers. She represents select children's authors (middle-grade, YA) as well as some poetry. Clients include award-winning author Alex Wheatle MBE, Yvonne Bailey-Smith, Gemma Weekes, Karla Neblett, Lela Burbridge, Charlie Castelletti, Jackson King, Dr Aleema Gray, and Dominique Palmer.

**Panelist**  
**15th October**



## Kitty Walker

After completing placements at Penguin, Hodder and Oxford University Press, Kitty joined the team at the Eve White Literary Agency, where she had the chance to work with a variety of different writers. One of her roles there was overseeing the submissions inboxes and helping to find new literary talent. In this role she learned what publishers are looking for and how to spot and develop potential.

**Panelist**  
**15th October**



## Sonia Bahl

Sonia has co-written the screenplay for Noblemen. The film received critical acclaim in international film festivals and is presently on Netflix. She was also commissioned to develop a screenplay for Fox Star Studios (Disney) and is working on a fantasy series for a leading Indian production house.

**Masterclass**  
**15th October**



## Nidhi Sahini

With a wealth of experience in marketing across New York, London, the Middle East and India, Nidhi has worked with leading global brands in retail, digital advertising, health & wellness, as well as media and entertainment. As the Founder of Popcorn Pixel, a boutique marketing firm and media outlet, she has mastered the art of developing unique and innovative marketing strategies.

**Panelist**  
**15th October**



## Preethi Nair

Preethi worked as a management consultant and gave it up to follow her dream and write her first book, Gypsy Masala. Working under the alias of Pru, Preethi managed to gain substantial coverage and after two years of a roller-coaster journey, she signed a three-book deal with HarperCollins. She won an Asian Women of Achievement Award for her endeavours and "Pru" was also shortlisted as Publicist of the Year for the PPC awards.

**Book Launch**  
**15th October**



## Bhavya Arora

Bhavya Arora is a Certified Professional Co-Active Coach (CPOCC), trained by the Co-Active Training Institute (CTI), one of the most highly regarded professional coach-training institutes. She holds the title of Associate Certified Coach (ACC) with the International Coaching Federation (ICF), adhering to ICF's code of ethics and core competencies.

**Book Launch**  
**14th October**



## Priyanka Pandya

Priyanka is a devoted teacher and children's life coach, she has dedicated her career to nurturing the emotional growth and confidence of young minds. But her most profound lessons in courage and strength came through her own battle with cancer. In 2022, Priyanka received a life-altering diagnosis while her children were just 4 and 2 years old.

**Book Launch**  
**15th October**



## Stephen C. Lawley

Born in London's East End and now residing in Buckinghamshire, Stephen brings a lifetime of rich experiences to his writing. Married for 28 years, blessed with four children and a grandchild, his personal life is as fulfilling as his professional journey.

**Book Launch**  
**19th October**



## Divya Thomas

Divya Thomas is a storyteller and campaigner for gender equality and the environment. She is an alumnus of Cornell University and Northwestern University where she studied communications and data driven marketing. She is passionate about changing the narrative to empower both young children and grown-up children (adults) to redefine our world.

**Book Launch**  
**19th October**



## Ruchi Shah

Ruchi Shah is an award winning book illustrator / wall artist. She is an alumnus of University of the Arts, London and IDC, IIT Bombay. She received the Charles Wallace Scholarship in 2012 through the British Council. After working in Yahoo as a senior designer, she quit in 2010 to work independently. She has illustrated more than 30 books, some which have been published multilingually.

**Workshop**  
**19th October**



## Sarah Surgey

Sarah Surgey is a children's author of six published books under her own name and many more as a picture-book ghostwriter, and freelance writer for publishers.



# AIM LITERARY FESTIVAL

## 14TH OCTOBER - 19TH OCTOBER

**LIFE, EXPERIENCES AND THE STORIES IN BETWEEN**

**14TH OCTOBER**  
**INAGURAL GALA EVENING**  
**THE INSTITUT FRANÇAIS**  
6PM - 9PM

**15TH OCTOBER**  
**KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE**  
**THE BRITISH LIBRARY**  
10AM - 5PM

**16TH OCTOBER**  
**STORYGARDEN DAY**  
**THE HEARTH, LONDON NW6 6RD**  
5PM - 8PM

**17TH OCTOBER**  
**WORKSHOPS**  
**KILBURN LIBRARY**  
4PM - 6PM

**18TH OCTOBER**  
**BOOK SIGNING**  
**SOUTH KENSINGTON BOOKSHOP**

**19TH OCTOBER**  
**AIM LITERARY FESTIVAL FOR YOUNG VOICES**  
**ROALD DAHL MUSEUM**  
11AM - 4PM





## **14TH OCTOBER - INAUGURAL GALA EVENING,** **THE INSTITUT FRANÇAIS, 6PM - 9PM**

**6:00 pm - 6:30 pm** - Welcome drinks and Address by the founders of the AIM Literary Festival, **Ekta Bajaj and Monica Sood**.

**6:30 pm - 7:00 pm** - Keynote address by **Lady Kishwar Desai**

**7:00 pm - 7:20 pm** - Focus on 'Diversity in Publishing' with **Ekta Bajaj and Kerry-Ann Bentley**. Moderated by **Anila Dhmi**.

**7:20 pm - 7:50 pm** - Book launch of **When Mummy Had Cancer** written by debut author and cancer survivor, **Priyanka Pandya**, illustrated by **Debasmita Dasgupta**. Editorial guidance by **Alan Durant**. Panel on 'Courageous conversations' with **Monica Sood**, moderated by **Anila Dhmi**.

**7:50 pm - 8:00pm** - Q&A with debut author **Bhavya Arora**.

**8:00pm - 9:00 pm** - Book signing and networking

## **15TH OCTOBER - KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE** **THE BRITISH LIBRARY**

**MORNING SESSION - 10AM - 1PM**

**9:30 am - Registrations open**

**10:00 am - 10:20 pm** - Q&A with the founders of the AIM Literary Festival, **Ekta Bajaj and Monica Sood** moderated by **Sarah J Rose**

**10:20 am - 10:40 am** - Freestyle interactive writing

**10:45 am - 11:15 am** - Panel discussion: '**Judge a book by its cover**' by **Preethi Nair** and **Debasmita Dasgupta** moderated by **Sarah J Rose**

**11:20 am - 11:45 pm** - Book Launch of fiction book, **Catalyst**, written by debut author, **Stephen C. Lawley** moderated by **Sarah J Rose**

**12:00 pm - 12:45 pm** - Masterclass on 'Public Speaking' with **Anila Dhmi**.

**12:45 pm - 1:00 pm** - Book signing and networking



## **15TH OCTOBER - KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE**

### **THE BRITISH LIBRARY**

**AFTERNOON SESSION, 1PM -5PM**

**2:00 pm - 2:20 pm** - Breaking the Myths of the Publishing Industry by **Ekta Bajaj** and **Monica Sood**.

**2:20 pm - 3:00 pm** - Panel discussion on **Page to Screen** with **Ashanti Omkar**, broadcaster, host and BAFTA jury, and **Sonia Bahl**, author and screenwriter. Moderated by **Loveena Tandon**.

**3:00 pm - 3:30 pm** - Panel discussion- **Refining Without Redefining: Keeping Stories Authentic in Edits** with editor **Kitty Walker** and author **Ekta Bajaj**  
Conversation moderated by **Sarah Jane Rose**

**3:30 pm - 4:00 pm** - Book Launch of non-fiction book, **Where the F\*\*k do I go from here?** written by life coach, **Bhavya Arora**. Moderated by **Loveena Tandon**.

**4:00 pm - 4:45 pm** - Masterclass on Book marketing with **Nidhi Sahani**, founder of Popcorn Pixel

**4:45 pm - 5:00 pm** - Book signing and networking

## **16TH OCTOBER - STORYGARDEN**

### **THE HEARTH, LONDON NW6 6RD**

**5PM - 8PM**

StoryGarden- Showcasing Books by Diverse Authors

1-2-1 Editorial critiquing with Literary agent, Arden Jones.

Network with Bookstagramers and Book reviewers

Book Marketing and Book PR

Happy Tree Book Club

Book Exchange



## **19TH OCTOBER - YOUNG VOICES** **ROALD DAHL MUSEUM, HP16 OAL**

**11AM - 4PM**



### **ROOM 1 - UPSTAIRS**

11:00 - 12:00: Welcome and Keynote Speech by Young Author Aishwarya Gupta

12:00 - 12:30: Author Talk

12:30 - 1:15: Book Launch: **I Am So Much More Than the Colour of My Skin**

1:30 - 2:00: **Knowledge Exchange** – A discussion between young and established authors Alan Durant and **Eva Wong Nava** about the joy of reading and writing moderated by 16 year old author, Megan Tandon

2:00 - 2:30: **Courageous Conversations** with Priyanka Pandya, author of **When Mummy Had Cancer**

### **READING ROOM: STORYTIME WITH AUTHORS**

12:00 - 12:30: Sarah Surgey

12:45 - 1:15: Rani Singh

1:30 - 1:45: Divya Thomas

2:15 - 2:30: Aanya Arora

2:30 - 2:45 : Keynote speech by Aishwarya Gupta

2:45 - 3pm: Monica and Ekta

### **FRONT ROOM: CREATIVE WORKSHOPS**

12:00 - 12:45: **The Quil Soup Workshop** By Alan Durant

1:00 - 2:00: **My Zine My Story** by Debasmita Dasgupta

2:15 - 3:00: **Celebrating You** by Divya Thomas and Ruchi Shah

3:15- 4:00: **Writing A Story Within A Story** with the author, Eva Wong Nava

### **Chomping Room- Book Corner for creating personalised books for children based on titles**

Shine Like A Star - A Book of Affirmation

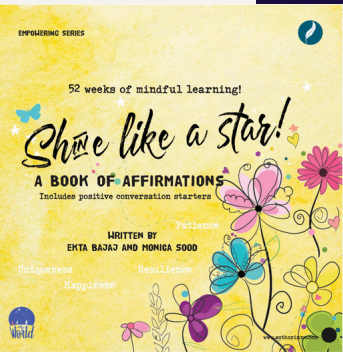
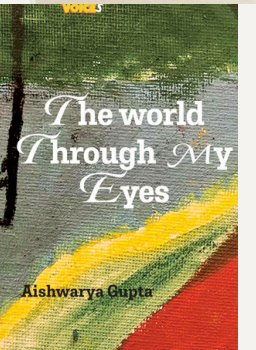
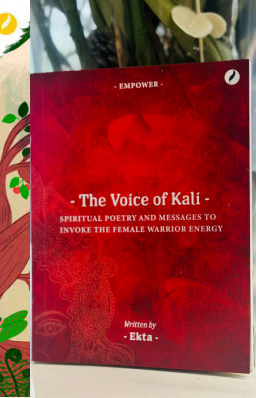
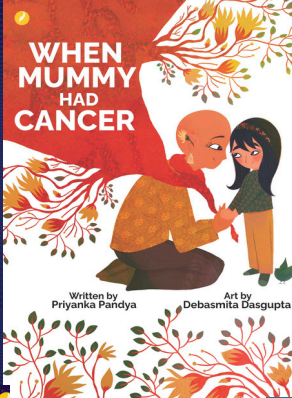
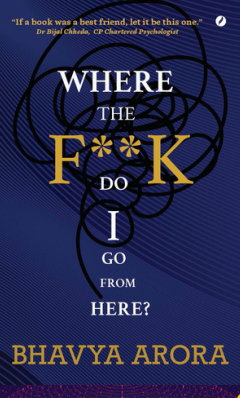
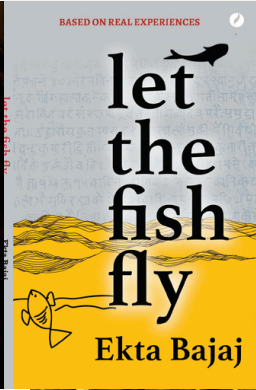
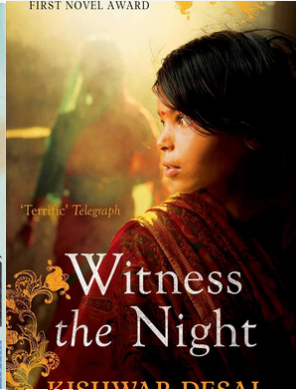
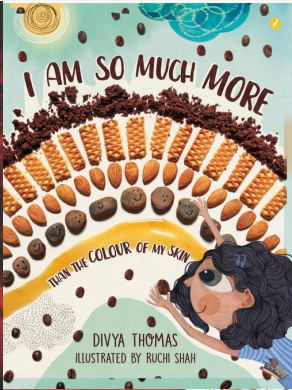
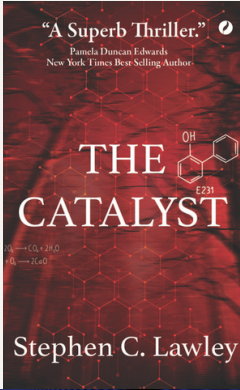
Santa Wants A Makeover

### **Book Readings by Young Authors throughout the day**

#### **Outdoor:**

10:45 SWARAM - UK Performance by talented young musicians







# AIM ADVISORY BOARD



**Dr Pushpinder Chowdhry**  
Director, UK Asian Film Festival



**Loveena Tandon**  
Award-winning Broadcast Journalist



**Alan Durant**  
Award-winning children's author



**Anila Dhani**  
Multi Award Winning  
Presenter & Reporter



**Rani Singh**  
Broadcaster and Author

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