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## [New Suns: A Feminist Literary Festival](#)

Experience the 2021 programme from home

Fri 5 – Sun 7 Mar 2021, online

The annual literary festival **New Suns** returns for a weekend of talks, workshops and a film centred around feminist storytelling. The weekend will feature acclaimed writers, activists, artists, and academics including **adrienne maree brown**, **Season Butler** and **Dorothea Lasky**. This third edition of the festival, running from Friday 5 – Sunday 7 March 2021, will take place entirely online for the first time. New Suns is a co-production between the Barbican and independent publisher and curator **Sarah Shin**.

This year's New Suns will look to the legacy of eminent science-fiction author **Octavia Butler**, to explore the power we have to both sustain and change the world around us, and how to commune with others. In particular, New Suns will reflect on Butler's prophetic, unfinished Earthseed series, which imagines Earth in the 2020s ravaged by ecological disaster and violent divisions. The young Black protagonist Lauren Olamina not only survives a journey through a treacherous version of the American West after being forced to leave her home, but also seeds hope with her writing, and builds a new community that she believes one day will travel to the stars.

The festival will navigate the books' central themes, such as the inevitability of change, community-building, examinations of race and gender, and humanity's relationship to the cosmos.

The New Suns 2021 programme includes a talk between writers and activists adrienne maree brown and **Ama Josephine Budge**, exploring the practice and legacy of Octavia Butler; poetry readings and a discussion with **Izabella Scott** of *The White Review*, poet Dorothea Lasky and artist and poet **Precious Okoyomon**, exploring the relationship between space and our existence on Earth. There will be a workshop led by **Alice Spawls**, the co-editor of the *London Review of Books*, inviting audiences to experience journaling as a foundation for creative writing; and a film about the feminist scholar **Donna Haraway**. Another highlight of New Suns 2021 includes a science fiction writing workshop with writer and performance artist Season Butler. The full programme details can be found below. Festival bookers can continue to watch back all New Suns content until Tuesday 9 March 11.59pm.

There are two ways for audiences to join this year's festival: a standard offer with access to the weekend's live online programme (£15), and a 'New Suns Plus' ticket which includes a limited-edition anthology and a merchandise package in the post, plus the workshop on science fiction writing with Season Butler (£25). There will also be a concession ticket of £5 / £15 for Young Barbican members. The festival is available to UK based audiences and all tickets are available to book via the Barbican's website.

The New Suns anthology booklet includes an extract from Octavia Butler's book *The Parable of the Sower*, poetry by Dorothea Lasky and **Daisy Lafarge**; guides for self-reflection and meditation; as well as herbal recipes for strength and healing to enjoy this spring and beyond. The anthology is accompanied by thyme seeds and instructions how to use the herb beyond the culinary.

**Sarah Shin, New Suns Founder and Co-producer**, said: *'Taking inspiration from Octavia Butler's Earthseed belief system and community, this year's New Suns festival and accompanying anthology may be considered like seed: to*

*sow ideas and practices to cultivate adaptation, resilience and hope to create inhabitable futures.'*

**Razia Jordan, Producer, Barbican**, said: *'We're super excited to celebrate the third year of New Suns. As always, the festival aims to be a space for the exchange of ideas on new types of community and societies, and a platform for the creators and feminists who help us to envision these new worlds. Given the current circumstances, we've transformed New Suns into an online festival, and, for the first time, have been able to commission a special anthology which people can enjoy at home. New Suns is a key part of the Barbican's Level G programme, an experimental platform for projects that ask crucial social and cultural questions, spark conversations and bring people from different disciplines together.'*

In lieu of a traditional book fair this year, New Suns is partnering with [Bookshop.org](https://www.bookshop.org) – a new online retailer for books that directly supports independent bookshops all over the UK and US. There will be a special New Suns section on Bookshop.org from today, offering reading lists for audiences who would like to dive into New Suns-related literature, while supporting independent booksellers at the same time.

The festival's name is directly inspired by Octavia Butler, who said in her third and unfinished Earthseed novel: *'There is nothing new under the sun, but there are new suns'*. In 2018 and 2019, the festival took place as a day of events, film screenings and workshops around a major book fair, featuring over thirty independent and major publishers at the Barbican Centre.

The Barbican believes in creating space for people and ideas to connect through its international arts programme, community events and learning activity. To keep its programme accessible to everyone, and to keep investing in the artists it works with, the Barbican needs to raise more than 60% of its income through ticket sales, commercial activities and fundraising every year. Donations can be made here: [barbican.org.uk/donate](https://barbican.org.uk/donate)

## **NEW SUNS 2021 PROGRAMME**

### **Friday 5 March 2021**

**Keynote talk: *The Parables of Octavia Butler***  
**adrienne maree brown in conversation with Ama Josephine Budge**  
5 Mar 2021, 7-8.15pm, online

Writers and activists **adrienne maree brown** and **Ama Josephine Budge** will be in conversation to discuss the work and legacy of American science fiction author Octavia Butler. The power and inevitability of change is central to Butler's visionary stories, as well as the reimaginings of social relations across race, gender and class. How can we collectively seed, cultivate and create the worlds we want, and build habitable futures?

**Cinema on Demand: *Donna Haraway: Story Telling for Earthly Survival***  
**2016 Fabrizio Terranova, 90 min**  
Available to stream from 5 Mar 2021, online

Feminist thinker, writer and historian of science **Donna Haraway** shares her life, influences and ideas in this documentary film by director **Fabrizio Terranova**. An essential and insightful glimpse into the thoughts of a major contemporary figure.

Haraway is a passionate storyteller, presenting a playful exploration of ideas in this film. Discussing topics as diverse as capitalism, and science-fiction writing;

the conversations - which are punctuated by quirky animation - have a casual and intimate feel, drawing the viewer into their confidence.

The film will be available to watch at any time over the festival weekend via the Barbican's [Cinema on Demand](#) platform. Cinema on Demand is available to audiences across the UK with a rolling four-week programme of titles and events that reflect the Barbican's international cinema programme.

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### **Saturday 6 March 2021**

#### **Workshop: *What-if?***

#### **A Speculative Science Fiction Writing Workshop with Season Butler**

6 Mar 2021, 11am – 1pm, online

Writer, performance artist and teacher **Season Butler** will lead a workshop on fantastical, futuristic writing and share her insights into how to conjure voice, subjectivity, and compelling, engaging prose. Part of the workshop will include breakout sessions for participants to practice writing exercises. Writers at all levels are welcome. Only available to New Suns Plus ticket holders.

#### **Panel talk: *Among the Stars***

#### **A poetry live reading with Precious Okoyomon and Dorothea Lasky + discussion with *The White Review***

6 Mar 2021, 5-6pm, online

For millennia we have stargazed for inspiration and knowledge via astrology, astronomy and space exploration. This session will include poetry readings and a conversation with **Izabella Scott**, an editor at *The White Review*, poet **Dorothea Lasky** and artist and poet **Precious Okoyomon**, exploring the relationship between space and our existence on Earth: how can what lies beyond our world help us here on Earth?

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### **Sunday 7 March 2021**

#### **Workshop: *Journaling / Diary writing with the London Review of Books***

7 Mar 2021, 12-1.15 pm, online

Led by **Alice Spawls**, co-editor of the *London Review of Books*, this workshop will explore journaling as a foundation for creative writing. Focusing on skills for independent editing, playing with time and structuring prose, the workshop will draw from a combination of Octavia Butler's writings and the diary columns from the *London Review of Books*.

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**ENDS**

**Notes to editors**

#### **Press Information**

For any further information, images or to arrange interviews, please contact:

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**About the Festival Participants**

**adrienne maree brown**

adrienne maree brown is the author of *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds*; *Pleasure Activism: The Politics of Feeling Good*; *We Will Not Cancel Us: And Other Dreams of Transformative Justice*; co-editor of *Octavia's Brood: Science Fiction from Social Justice Movements*; cohost of the podcasts *How to Survive the End of the World* and *Octavia's Parables*; and founder of the Emergent Strategy Ideation Institute.

**Ama Josephine Budge**

Ama Josephine Budge is a Speculative Writer, Artist, Curator and Pleasure Activist whose praxis navigates intimate explorations of race, art, ecology, and feminism, working to activate movements that catalyse human rights, environmental evolutions, and troublesomely queered identities. Ama is the recipient of the 2020 Local, International and Planetary Fictions Fellowship with Curatorial Frame (Helsinki) and EVA International (Limerick) and will be researching the topic Pleasurable Ecologies – Formations of Care: Curation as Future-building. Ama is also a member of Queer Ecologies 2020, initiator of the Apocalypse Reading Room project, a recipient of 2020 Bernie Grant Micro commission funding, and Lead Artist on the MycoLective project with Chisenhale Studios and Feral Practice.

**Season Butler**

Season Butler is a writer, artist, dramaturg and lecturer in Performance Studies and Creative Writing. Her writing, research and art practice centre around intersectionality and narratives of otherness, isolation and negotiations with hope. Her recent artwork has appeared in the Baltic Centre, Tate Exchange and Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art. Her debut novel, *Cygnets*, was published in Spring 2019 and won the Writer's Guild 2020 award for best first novel.

**Dorothea Lasky**

Dorothea Lasky is the author of six books of poems and prose, most recently, *Animal* and *Milk*, both published by Wave Books and, with Alex Dimitrov, *Astro Poets: Your Guides to the Zodiac* (Picador). Currently, she teaches poetry at Columbia University's School of the Arts and lives in New York City.

**Precious Okoyomon**

Precious Okoyomon is an artist and writer. Her first book *Ajebota* (2016) was published by Bottlecap Press, and her second book *But Did U Die?* is forthcoming from Wonder.

**Izabella Scott**

Izabella Scott is Editor of *The White Review* alongside Rosanna Mclaughlin and Skye Arundhati Thomas. Her essays and criticism have appeared in *ArtReview*, *Artforum*, *Frieze*, *Art Monthly*, *art-agenda*, *Affidavit* and *The White Review*.

**Sarah Shin**

Sarah Shin is a publisher, curator, and writer. She is the founder of New Suns, an independent curatorial project, and a co-founder of Ignota Books and Silver Press.

**Alice Spawls**

Alice Spawls is the co-editor of the *London Review of Books* and writer. She is a co-founder and director of Silver Press, the feminist publisher.

### **About Bookshop.org**

Bookshop.org is a socially-conscious way to buy books online. They dedicate the majority of their profits to supporting local, independent bookshops, as well as authors and publishers. The platform seeks to preserve the profound cultural benefits of bookshops and offer book lovers a true alternative to Amazon, while helping small businesses compete more effectively for online market share.

### **About the Barbican**

A world-class arts and learning organisation, the [Barbican](#) pushes the boundaries of all major art forms including dance, film, music, theatre and visual arts. Its creative learning programme further underpins everything it does. Over a million people attend events annually, hundreds of artists and performers are featured, and more than 300 [staff](#) work onsite. The architecturally renowned centre opened in 1982 and comprises the Barbican Hall, the Barbican Theatre, The Pit, Cinemas 1, 2 and 3, Barbican Art Gallery, a second gallery The Curve, public spaces, a library, the Lakeside Terrace, [a glasshouse conservatory](#), conference facilities and three restaurants. The City of London Corporation is the founder and principal funder of the Barbican Centre.

The Barbican is home to Resident Orchestra, [London Symphony Orchestra](#); Associate Orchestra, [BBC Symphony Orchestra](#); Associate Ensembles the [Academy of Ancient Music](#) and [Britten Sinfonia](#), Associate Producer [Serious](#), and Artistic Partner [Create](#). Our Artistic Associates include [Boy Blue](#), [Cheek by Jowl](#), Deborah Warner, [Drum Works](#) and [Michael Clark Company](#). The [Los Angeles Philharmonic](#) are the Barbican's International Orchestral Partner, the [Australian Chamber Orchestra](#) are International Associate Ensemble at Milton Court, and [Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra](#) are International Associate Ensemble.

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