WEDNESDAY 3 JULY

FRANZ KAFKA

READ BY KRISTIN SCOTT THOMAS

DEEP CUTS

BOLDTENDENCIES

BOLD
TENDENCIES

WEDNESDAY 3 JULY at 7.30PM

Franz Kafka
DEEP CUTS
Read by Kristin Scott Thomas

"I enclose an invitation to a reading. To appear in public with your story, and thus as it were with you, will be a strange feeling."

—30 November 1912. *Kafka, Letters to Felice*

"Not a word is lost, nor is there the whisper of an echo, instead everything grows gradually larger as though the voice, already occupied with something else, continues to exercise a direct after-effect; it goes stronger after the initial impetus and swallows us up."

—3 March 1912. *The Diaries of Franz Kafka*

"Cumulatively Kafka's work is an archive of our era: its anomie, depersonalization, afflicted innocence, innovative cruelty, authoritarian demagoguery, technologically adept killing. But none of this is served raw… Always for Kafka, behind meaning there shivers an intractable darkness or (rarely) an impenetrable radiance."

—Cynthia Ozick, *The Impossibility of Being Kafka*, January 1999. The New Yorker.

FLOORS 7–10
95A RYE LANE
LONDON SE15 4TG
BOLDTENDENCIES.COM

BOLD
TENDENCIES

Franz Kafka
3 July 1883 – 3 June 1924



Readings on 3 July 2024

Children on the Road (1912)
transl. Michael Hofmann

At Night (1920)
transl. Tania and James Stern

Unhappiness (1912)
transl. Joyce Crick

FLOORS 7–10
95A RYE LANE
LONDON SE15 4TG
BOLDTENDENCIES.COM

BOLD
TENDENCIES

Before the Law (1915)
transl. Mark Harman

My Business (1917)
transl. Michael Hofmann

It Was One Summer (published posthumously 1931) transl. Michael Hofmann

An Imperial Message (1917)
transl. Mark Harman

The Bridge (published posthumously 1931)
transl. Michael Hofmann

A Crossbreed (published posthumously 1931)
transl. Mark Harman

Little Fable (1920)
transl. Mark Harman

The Great Swimmer (1922)
transl. Daniel Slager

A Hunger Artist (1922)
transl. Mark Harman

FLOORS 7–10
95A RYE LANE
LONDON SE15 4TG
BOLDTENDENCIES.COM

BOLD
TENDENCIES

On the occasion of what would have been Kafka's 141st birthday, and the year of the centenary of his death, we celebrate the works of this iconic force majeure of 20th century literature. Taken cumulatively Kafka's sentences are a plainchant for our own traumatic times – full of dread, resignation, sadness and practical impossibilities – yet equally they uplift the wildest of supernatural aspirations; examining transformative communities resting at the fringes of a troubled society, and offering a means to read the world differently.

Walter Benjamin spoke of Kafka's universe as a world theatre, where humanity is on stage from the very beginning. Many of the most striking qualities of his writing are best appreciated by hearing the prose read aloud. Regularly reading his work aloud to friends and family, and attending "Rezitationen" (recitals), Kafka's love of recitation as a hybrid acoustic form is well documented – across his diary entries, in letters to friends and lovers; and embedded within his writing.

In ode to Kafka's fascination with the power of the voice, we are honoured to be joined this evening by distinguished actor Kristin Scott Thomas; who reads aloud a sequence of short stories specially selected from Kafka's archive. Scott Thomas' voice needs no introduction; and we can think of no one better to animate these "deep cuts" – stories alternately funny and absurd, bizarre and troubling, captivating and unsettling; all unequivocally unforgettable.

FLOORS 7–10
95A RYE LANE
LONDON SE15 4TG
BOLDTENDENCIES.COM

Born into a middle-class, German-speaking, Czech Jewish family in Prague, Kafka initially trained as a lawyer. He was then employed full-time by the Workers' Accident Insurance Institute for the Kingdom of Bohemia. Despite being a model official – fastidious, precise and efficient (even pioneering insurance policies such as the introduction of the hard hat) - Kafka deemed his job an obstacle to his true life's work as a writer.

Forced to live a form of 'double life', Kafka dedicated most of his free time to writing, often working late into the night. He belonged to the ring of prolific Prague-German writers dubbed the Prague Circle and including Max Brod – his lifelong close friend, editor and subsequent literary executor. From their vantage point in the Bohemian capital during the early part of the 20th century, the circle's work and dialogue explored religion and spirituality, expressionism, activism (and anti-activism), international solidarity with the working class, and transcendence.

Renowned for his fusion of the real and the fantastic, Kafka's work is typically defined by his protagonists: isolated; thrust into strange, surreal predicaments; forced to encounter incomprehensible socio-bureaucratic powers. Some of his best known works include *The Metamorphosis* (1915), *The Trial* (1914-15; published posthumously 1925) and *The Castle* (published posthumously

1926); each exemplary of Kafka's key themes of alienation, existential anxiety, guilt and absurdity.

At least 94 Franz Kafka titles have been published, including 76 short stories, five essays, three novels, notebooks and diaries spanning the years 1910–23, and a book of aphorisms. Kafka's profligacy in writing over the course of his life included letters, of which he penned hundreds to family and close friends (including his father, with whom he had a strained relationship); and have since been collated across five published books to date. His largest collection of some 500 letters were written to Felice Bauer, to whom he was engaged between August 1912 and December 1917; it was said she was the love of his life. Following Felice, Kafka had three further relationships - with Julie Wohryzek, Milena Jesenka and Dora Diamant, in whose arms Kafka died of tuberculosis in an Austrian sanatorium, three days short of his 41st birthday.

Kafka was also a great draughtsman. Roughly 300 drawings mainly made between 1901-07 survive him, as fantastical, referential and uncanny as his writings. He also had a vested interest in travel, even dabbling in the writing of guidebooks. Conceiving of a business plan dubbed "On The Cheap" whilst travelling across the continent with Brod in 1911, the ahead-of-its-time idea sought to improve upon the traditional Baedeker travel guides – augmenting typical hotel and restaurant listings with insider knowledge and recommendations.

Though Kafka was confident in his creative calling he was less certain of his creative output, which was an endless source of personal insecurity; his was a lifelong struggle with self doubt. The majority of Kafka's works were published posthumously, with those published during his lifetime receiving little attention. When he died he did so in relative obscurity.

In his will Kafka instructed Max Brod to destroy his unfinished work – including his novels *The Trial*, *The Castle*, and *Amerika* – but Brod ignored these instructions. Without Brod, much of the author's now-canonic writing would not have been introduced to the world; nor would we be celebrating Kafka's enduring legacy today. In the years following Kafka's death his writings proliferated in fame in German-speaking countries. With his mark on German Literature evident post World War II, in the 1960s his influence spread worldwide and it continues to inspire and intrigue artists, composers, philosophers and readers today.

This unique programme has been supported by the team at Kafka's Transformative Communities, an Arts and Humanities Research Council Project, and part of the Oxford Kafka Research Centre; with particular thanks to Prof. Carolin Duttlinger, and Prof. Barry Murnane – Co-Directors of the Kafka Research Institute, University of Oxford, and Co-Curators of the centenary exhibition *Kafka: Making of an Icon*, Bodleian Libraries.

We are also grateful to prize-winning literary translator and Kafka scholar Mark Harman for his help and guidance; and to him and the team at Harvard University Press for permission to work with copies of his new translations in advance of their publication this year.

Dame Kristin Scott Thomas DBE is a British-French actor. A five-time BAFTA Award and Olivier Award nominee, she won the BAFTA Award for Best Actress in a Supporting Role for *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, and the Olivier Award for Best Actress for the Royal Court revival of *The Seagull*. She was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Actress for *The English Patient*. She has played memorable roles in *Slow Horses* (2023), *The Party* by Sally Potter (2017) *Fleabag* by Phoebe Waller-Bridge (2016), *Leaving (Partir)* by Catherine Corsini (2009) and *I've Loved You So Long (Il y a longtemps que je t'aime)* by Philippe Claudel (2008); and on the stage in *Lyonnesse* (2023), *Elektra* (2014) and Harold Pinter's *Old Times* (2013) and *Betrayal* (2008).

Carolin Duttlinger is Professor of German Literature and Culture at the University of Oxford and Co-Director of the Oxford Kafka Research Centre. She has published four books on Kafka to date, and has also been part of the recent BBC Radio Four 'Orwell vs Kafka' season. She is leading a major three-year research project, *Kafka's Transformative Communities*, which brings together academics and creative practitioners working on Kafka to assess his ongoing influence and legacy today.

Barry Murnane is Associate Professor in German at the University of Oxford and Co-Director of the Oxford Kafka Research Centre. He has been interested in Franz Kafka and Prague modernism for a long time, including his book *“Verkehr mit Gespenstern.” Gothic und Moderne bei Franz Kafka* (2008) and the essay collection *Popular Revenants* (ed. with A. Cusack, 2012). One of the curators of the critically acclaimed centenary exhibition, *Kafka: Making of an Icon*, his current research aims to develop a material(ist) history of world literature, and he leads on the “Worldliness” strand of Oxford’s AHRC-funded research project *Kafka's Transformative Communities*.

Further Reading

Books

Franz Kafka, *Metamorphosis and Other Stories*, transl. Joyce Crick (Oxford: OUP, 2009)

Franz Kafka, *Selected Stories*, transl. Mark Harman (Cambridge MA: Harvard UP, 2024)

Franz Kafka, *The Burrow and Other Stories*, transl. Michael Hofmann (London: Penguin Classics, 2017)

Franz Kafka, *Investigations of A Dog, and other Creatures*, transl. Michael Hofmann (New York: New Directions, 2017)

Karolina Watroba, *Metamorphoses: In Search of Franz Kafka* (London: Profile Books, 2024)

Franz Kafka, *The Complete Stories*, foreword by John Updike. (New York: The Schocken Kafka Library, 1995)

Franz Kafka, *The Diaries of Franz Kafka*, transl. Ross Benjamin. (New York: The Schocken Kafka Library, 2023)

LRB Diary for 2024: *52 ways of thinking about Kafka* (London: Profile Books, 2023)

Articles

Patricia Lockwood, “Putting on Kafka’s Tux”. London Review of Books Vol. 44, No. 6, March 2022.

Alan Bennett, “Fresh Revelations”. London Review of Books, Vol. 16, No. 20, October 1994.

Rivka Galchen, “In the Nightmare Kitchen”. London Review of Books, Vol. 39, No. 6, March 2017.

Adam Phillips, “On Being Left Out”. London Review of Books, Vol. 43, No. 10, May 2021.

Anne Hollander, “How He Got of Them”. London Review of Books, Vol. 14, No. 18, September 1992.

Gabriel Josipovici, “A Human Kafka”. London Review of Books, Vol. 3, No. 4, March 1981.

Christian Lorentzen, “Short Cuts: Not a Little Kafkaesque.” London Review of Books, Vol. 3, No. 6, March 2014.

Rivka Galchen, “What kind of funny is he?”. London Review of Books, Vol. 36, No. 23, December 2014.

Michael Wood, “Double Thought”. London Review of Books, Vol. 30, No. 22, November 2008.

Amit Chaudhuri, “Unlike Kafka”. London Review of Books, Vol. 17, No. 11, June 1995.

Joe Dunthorne, “Hurt in the Guts”. London Review of Books, Vol. 43, No. 7, April 2021.

BOLD
TENDENCIES

Bold Tendencies 2024 Live Events Programme

Saturday 1 June at 7.30pm
Songs of Communion — Kristina Arakelyan: Songs of Communion (World Premiere) & Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: Requiem in D Minor

Saturday 15 June at 7.30pm
Keith Jarrett: The Köln Concert
Maki Namekawa

Thursday 20 June at 7.30pm
Fitzcarraldo Editions: Annual Summer Party
Marianne Brooker, Zarina Muhammad,
Antonia Lloyd-Jones, and Toby Jones reading Jon Fosse

Wednesday 3 July at 7.30pm
Franz Kafka: Deep Cuts
read by Kristin Scott Thomas

Thursday 4 July & Friday 5 July at 7pm
The Multi-Story Orchestra: Verified

Thursday 11 July at 7.30pm
#Merky Books Live!
Hafsa Zayyan, Monika Radojevic, Jyoti Patel,
William Rayfet Hunter, Sufiyaan Salam

Saturday 20 July at 8pm
BULLYACHE: Who Hurt You?

Thursday 25 July at 8pm
Oona Doherty and National Youth Dance Company: Wall

Saturday 27 July at 7.30pm
Orchestre des Jeunes de la Méditerranée
conducted by Evan Rogister
Dvorak: New World Symphony, Music by Florence Price, Leonard Bernstein, Hector Berlioz

FLOORS 7–10
95A RYE LANE
LONDON SE15 4TG
BOLDTENDENCIES.COM

BOLD
TENDENCIES

Friday 2 August at 7.30pm
James Baldwin's 100th Birthday Concert
NYJO (National Youth Jazz Orchestra)
with special guest soloists Moses Boyd & Theon Cross

Saturday 3 August at 7.30pm
The Fire Next Time! – Notes on a Native Son
Nicholas Boggs, Deborah Levy, Rhea Dillon, Glenn Ligon, Liam Sangmuah, Caleb Azumah Nelson, Mendez with the London Review of Books

Sunday 4 August at 3.30pm
The Fire Next Time! – Little Man, Little Man
read by Baldwin's nephew Tejan Karefa-Smart

Saturday 10 August at 7.30pm
GBSR Duo: Music for a Summer Evening
– Crumb, Martland, Reich

Friday 16 August at 7.30pm
The Kanneh Masons: The House of Music

Thursday 22 & Friday 23 August at 7pm
The Multi-Story Orchestra: Bottled Up

Saturday 24 August at 7.30pm
Julia Bullock and Bretton Brown present music by Kurt Weill, Rodgers & Hammerstein, Connie Converse, Allan Berg, Bob Dylan, Elizabeth Cotten, Marian Anderson, Nina Simone, Odetta, John Cage

Thursday 5 September at 7.30pm
Paul B. Preciado: Dysphoria Mundi
moderated by Juliet Jacques

Saturday 7 September at 7.30pm
Oliver Leith: Written in Swamp and Gold
Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Naomi Woo

Saturday 14 September at 7.30pm
Gustav Mahler: Symphony No 2 'Resurrection'

FLOORS 7–10
95A RYE LANE
LONDON SE15 4TG
BOLDTENDENCIES.COM

BOLD
TENDENCIES

Upcoming Creative Learning Activity

Thursday 11 July at 1.30pm
Backstage Pass: #Merky Books

Wednesday 19 July at 4pm
Backstage Pass: BULLYACHE

Wednesday 24 July at 1.30pm
Backstage Pass: National Youth Dance Company

Saturday 26 July at 1.30pm
Backstage Pass: Mediterranean Youth Orchestra

Friday 2 August at 1.30pm
Backstage Pass: National Youth Jazz Orchestra

Friday 2 August at 1.30pm
Reading Session: James Baldwin Little Man, Little Man

Friday 16 August at 1.30pm
Backstage Pass: Kadiatu Kanneh-Mason and Konya Kanneh-Mason

Saturday 24 August at 1.30pm
Public Rehearsal: Julia Bullock and Bretton Brown

Saturday 7 September at 1.30pm
Public Rehearsal: Oliver Leith

Saturday 14 September at 1.30pm
Public Rehearsal: Gustav Mahler No. 2 'Resurrection'

To get involved please contact **Misty Ingham**, **Senior Curator & Producer: Creative Learning**, misty@boldtendencies.com.

FLOORS 7–10
95A RYE LANE
LONDON SE15 4TG
BOLDTENDENCIES.COM

BOLD
TENDENCIES

Bold Tendencies 2024 is generously supported by

Selfridges & Co
Henry Moore Foundation
Bloomberg Philanthropies
Art Fund
The Ashley Family Foundation
Southwark Council
The Mila Charitable Trust
London Review of Books
British Council
Steinway & Sons

In partnership with

CASS Art
Southby Productions
Penguin

With thanks to the COMMUNION Founding Friends

Juliet Barclay
Edmund Barry
Kevin Barry
Lena & Nathalie Baume
Brian Boylan
May Calil & Tom Dingle
Janine Catalano
John Cavanagh
Sadie Coles
Carolyn Dailey
Ronojoy Dam
Isabella de Sabata
John & Emma Donnelly
Maryam Eisler
Sue Grayson-Ford
Caroline Issa
Marcelle Joseph
Caroline Karim-Kassar
James Lingwood &
Jane Hamlyn
Fatima Maleki
Penny Mason
Naomi Milgrom
The Naomi Milgrom Foundation
Theo & Fiona Nzegwu
Anne Pitcher
Susan Spindler & Peter Brown
Sara Stewart
Christoph & Marion Trestler
Felicity Waley-Cohen
Don Weniz

& those who wish to remain anonymous

FLOORS 7–10
95A RYE LANE
LONDON SE15 4TG
BOLDTENDENCIES.COM

BOLD
TENDENCIES

Bold Tendencies is a not-for-profit arts organisation established in the rooftop spaces of Peckham's Multi-Storey Car Park in 2007. It has transformed a disused building in the heart of South London into an iconic, much-loved place of culture and assembly with spectacular views out over the city and pioneering architecture project Frank's Cafe. Supporting a new generation of creative voices alongside acclaimed international artists, it delivers an ambitious annual programme of experimental Visual Arts, Creative Learning and Live Events open to the public, offering access, participation and enjoyment of the arts for everyone.

More and Better! Your generosity allows us to bring a world-class Visual Arts, Creative Learning and Live Events programme to Peckham. We cannot do the work we do without our supporters.

Join our COMMUNION Founding Friends or pledge your early support for our 2025 programme Déjà Vu.
If you'd like to get involved please ask for information at the Kiosk or email us info@boldtendencies.com.

FLOORS 7–10
95A RYE LANE
LONDON SE15 4TG
BOLDTENDENCIES.COM