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POETRY INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

LAUREATES & LEGENDS

Today we will get inspired by laureates and legends from around the world. Poetry International organizes the first Poetry Summit with the Dutch Poet Laureate, Babs Gons. This jubilee edition of the festival brings together only the most renowned poets - all recipients of the highest (inter) national honors.

As representatives of their countries, they participate in lectures, conversations, workshops, interviews, debates, and performances. Don't miss it: this special jubilee edition celebrates Poetry International Festival's 55th anniversary with a unique gathering of influential voices!

See our complete program over here
On our website: poetry.nl



Or on our digital timetable app • TMSQR
Do you prefer to view the timetable on your phone? Then go to our festival app in Time-Square. Download it here.



HIGHLIGHTS

Poets: Warsan Shire, Ilja Leonard Pfeijffer and Tom Lanoye

TIPS

Warsan Shire • Reading and interview
Poetry International is proud to welcome British poet Warsan Shire. Shire rose to global prominence when her poetry featured in Beyoncé's visual albums *Lemonade* and *Black is King*. With her vulnerable and powerful work, she touches readers of all ages on a profound level. Her appearance at Poetry International marks Warsan Shire's very first visit to Rotterdam. In this exclusive session, she will be interviewed by Charisa Chotoe about her work and will read from her poetry. The audience will have a unique opportunity to experience this powerful, lyrical voice live.

Unwanted Words Presents: Ballroom is a poem

In a completely renewed collaboration with Unwanted Words, we present you a ballroom poetry program during the festival. Where movement meets metaphor, and

self-expression becomes revolution: Ballroom is a Poem. This program is an experimental showcase blending the fierce spirit of ballroom culture with the raw emotion of queer poetry. More than just a show, this program is a tribute to the legacy of Black and Brown queer and trans communities who created ballroom as a radical act of resistance, survival, and self-actualization.

Living between languages - Suriname: 50 years of independence

Fifty years after Suriname's independence, we reflect and look ahead, through the lens of poetry. In this special program, poet and writer Astrid H. Roemer (SUR), literary scholar Michiel van Kempen (NLD), and poet Romeo Grot (SUR) engage in a conversation with moderator Nicole Terborg (NLD) about the multilingual richness of Surinamese poetry. What role does language play in the literary landscape of Suriname? How do writers navigate between Dutch, Sranantongo, and other languages? And what does this multitude of voices reveal about identity, history, and future?

Only the Clouds are Beautiful - Poems from Camp Ravensbrück

In this year of commemorating eighty years of liberation, Poetry International Festival dedicates a special program to the poems written by female Polish prisoners in the Ravensbrück concentration camp during the war. In the inhumane conditions they endured, these poems offered a glimpse of humanity. The Polish resistance fighter Irena Pannenkowa was imprisoned in the camp in 1942 and survived. She compiled many of the poems into an anthology after the war. This program – curated by journalist and literary reviewer Janita Monna, presents a selection from that anthology.

VISTOR INFORMATION

All programs and rooms are free to walk in and out of with a wristband, but full = full applies. So be on time before a program starts to secure a place. The program in the foyer of LantarenVenster is freely accessible without a festival ticket.

Grab a quick bite at the LantarenVenster restaurant, explore the different stands in the foyer, get your merchandise at our Poetry International shop and take home your favorite poetry from the bookshop.

Our top secret forthcoming poetry app

Can you keep a secret? We've been working on a poetry app. Wanna see it? Test it even? Be among the first to experience our Poetry app in the foyer. Your insights will help us in creating the best digital poetry experience possible.



Stop by our testing corner to get an exclusive first look, share your insights and help shape our poetry app. Start testing now!

Poetry Buddies

Poetry Buddies are volunteers who are available for visitors with a support request. They are ready to help where needed. You can recognize our Poetry Buddies by their special T-shirts. Would you like to have a Poetry Buddy by your side during your visit, for example upon arrival, departure, or throughout your entire festival visit? Or do you need help, for example, to reach the festival location from the parking lot or metro station Wilhelminaplein? Feel free to put in a request for a Buddy beforehand, by sending an email to info@poetry.nl

Wheelchair accessibility


LantarenVenster is fully wheelchair accessible. The entrance for room 1 is located on the ground floor, the elevator to reach room 5 and 6 is located in the corridor (on the water side) behind the wheelchair-friendly toilet. Verhalenhuis Belvédère is also accessible for people who use a wheelchair or walker. The building has an elevator and adapted toilet, equipped with supports and adapted sink.

In the rooms, three places are always reserved for wheelchairs. These places are located at the front of the room on the first row.

Visually impaired audience

We are happy to offer visually impaired people the opportunity to sit at the front. Are you bringing a guide or guide dog for the blind? This is allowed at all locations.

Deaf and hard of hearing audience

On the Sunday of the festival, many programs are made in collaboration with and are accessible to deaf and hard of hearing audience. Programs that feature sign language interpreters will have a  sign next to the title in this leaflet.

On Sunday, you will see performances by the best deaf poets in the world, sign language interpreters are present at most programs.

LOCATIONS

LantarenVenster, 1, 5, 6 and foyer are located in LantarenVenster. Address: Otto Reuchlinweg 996, Wilhelminapier

Belvédère, Belvédère Expo and Belvédère Luisterlobby are located in Verhalenhuis Belvédère. Address: Rechthuislaan 1, Katendrecht.

It's a 750 meter walk from LantarenVenster to Verhalenhuis Belvédère

Toilets

At the festival, we make sure to spice up every corner of the festival. As you take a moment's respite in our restrooms, you'll find yourself in the company of poets from past editions of Poetry International Festival. Don't worry, they won't intrude your privacy. They're preoccupied, immersed in their verses with their eyes cast down on their pages. So, carry on in peace: do your thing, while the poets do theirs.

Visitor survey

Poetry International would like to know how visitors experienced the festival. That's why we conduct audience research. Pollsters are walking around during the festival. After the festival, we will send you a survey by e-mail. If we don't have your e-mail address yet, you can also complete the survey yourself via this QR code or via one of the pollsters. Your data will be treated confidentially and will be used for this survey.



Recordings for films and photographs

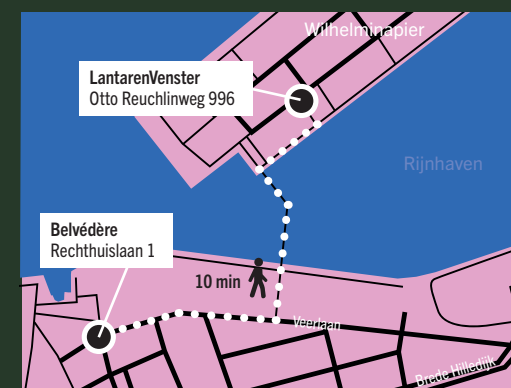
We record the festival on film and photo. The images are used for our archive and the promotion of future editions of Poetry International Festival.

Questions and comments

If you have any questions, comments or compliments please let us know. Come to the festival box office in LantarenVenster (or mail us at info@poetry.nl).

SEE YOU IN 2026!

The 56th Poetry International Festival will take place from the 4th of June until the 7th of June 2026. Early bird tickets will be on sale the day after this year's festival on June 16th, 2025 via our website: www.poetry.nl.



SATURDAY

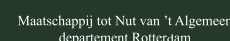
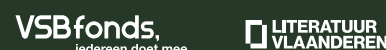


55th

POETRY INTERNATIONAL
FESTIVAL ROTTERDAM

SATURDAY 14 JUNE 2025

THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS



Special thanks to all poets, translators, artists, hosts, co-programmers, interpreters, volunteers, partners, freelancers and staff of Theater Zuidplein, LantarenVenster and Verhalenhuis Belvédère for making this festival possible.