

Asia House

Festival of Asian Literature

10–26 May 2011

'An indisputable gem amongst literature festivals'

— Ziauddin Sardar



CHING-HE HUANG PATRICK  
ALI ROMA FRENCH  
ALAWI TEARNE  
ANJALI HANIF KUREISHI  
JOSEPH TAHMINA ANAM  
ABDURAZAK ANGELA SAINI ANANDA  
GURNAH MIRZA DEVI  
NIKESH SHUKLA WAHEED  
SIDDHARTHA TABISH KHAIR  
BOSE MINI KHALVATI  
COLIN GYAN TAMARA  
THUBRON PRAKASH CHALBI

Welcome to the fifth annual Asia House Festival of Asian Literature – the first and only Festival in the UK dedicated to the celebration of writing about Asia and Asians. It is *the* destination for the culturally curious to engage in debate and discussion about literature, trends, issues and events from the Persian Gulf to the Pacific.

The 2011 Festival features some of the most exciting writers in the genre, in a series of talks, debates, political discussions, poetry, family workshops and cookery writing events. All will take place at Asia House, our vibrant home in Marylebone, with special events at Southbank Centre and the Commonwealth Club off Trafalgar Square.

We look forward to welcoming you at Asia House, the gateway to Asian culture in London.

# WELCOME

Asia House, the leading pan-Asian organisation in the UK, exists to build dynamic links with Asia, important now more than ever. By providing unique insights into culture, policy, business and education, Asia House promotes informed understanding and the mutual exchange of ideas, building stronger relationships between the diverse communities of Europe and Asia. Asia House is a non-profit, non-political organisation.

#### Asia House Literature

Asia House offers a lively and topical programme of literature events throughout the year. Become an Asia House member or register to receive information about our on-going talks, debates, workshops and book launches.

#### Indian Summer

Each week during the month of June, Asia House will be launching a remarkable book about India. Arivind Adiga, Siddhartha Deb and others during this special series dedicated to new writing and new ideas from the subcontinent.

#### Reaching Out

The Asia House Festival of Asian Literature will be hitting the road in June and July with book group events and author talks to bring our stimulating programme to towns and cities around England.

#### For more information

[www.festivalofasianliterature.com](http://www.festivalofasianliterature.com)  
[www.asiahouse.org](http://www.asiahouse.org)

**Before the Festival**  
**Saturday, 16 April, 12:00**  
**Tales from Maximum City**  
**New Writing from Mumbai**

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At The Alchemy Festival  
Southbank Level 5 Function Room

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Siddhartha Bose *Kalagora*

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Gyan Prakash *Mumbai Fables*

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Anjali Joseph *Saraswati Park*

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Moderator: Stephen McCarty  
*Asia Literary Review*

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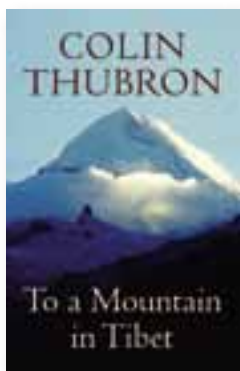
The spotlight is on Mumbai, as three debut authors offer their diversely different views of the world's most exciting and chaotic city.

Anjali Joseph looks at family life amidst the chaos of the megacity. Gyan Prakash explores the inner life of Mumbai through its turning points, comic book heroes and famous scandals. Poet Siddhartha Bose weaves a tale of the new fractured and globalised city. Moderator Stephen McCarty is editor-in-chief of the Asia Literary Review.

Part of The Alchemy Festival at Southbank Centre.

**Tickets £8**

For tickets and further information:  
[www.southbankcentre.co.uk](http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk)  
Phone: +44 (0)844 875 0073



**Opening Night**  
**Tuesday, 10 May, 18:45**  
**A Tibetan Journey**

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Colin Thubron *To a Mountain in Tibet*

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Moderator: Erica Wagner *The Times*

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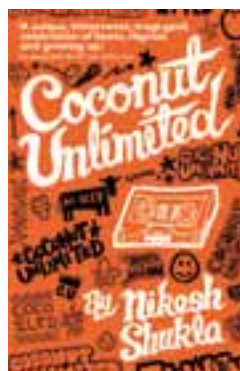
Acclaimed as one of the greatest living travel writers, Thubron follows the pilgrimage route through Tibet to Mount Kailas, the most sacred of the world's mountains. He talks with villagers and monks and tells the stories of exiles and of eccentric explorers from the West.

A haunting and beautiful travel book, it is also a very personal journey, undertaken shortly after the death of his mother, and interwoven with his own reflections on love, grief and solitude.

**Tickets £15**

Concessions £12  
Asia House Friends £10

Reception sponsored by



**Wednesday, 11 May, 18:45**  
**How to be Asian in Britain**

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Zaiba Malik *We are a Muslim Please*

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Nikesh Shukla *Coconut Unlimited*

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Moderator: Sathnam Sanghera  
*The Boy with the Topknot*

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There are almost as many ways of being Asian in Britain as there are Asians. For Zaiba Malik, growing up in Bradford in the '70s and '80s, it meant being torn between opposite identities – British and Muslim – searching for a goat for Eid or dancing to Top of the Pops. For Nikesh Shukla in 1990's Harrow it was forming a hip-hop band, looking cool and getting girls. For Sathnam Sanghera it was George Michael mix tapes, and a strange family life full of secrets. For all three there is contradiction, angst, music and above all, humour.

**Tickets £8**

Concessions £6  
Asia House Friends £5



**Thursday, 12 May, 18:45**  
**Bangladesh**

**Tahmima Anam** *The Good Muslim*

Moderator: Claire Armitstead *The Guardian*

In this sequel to *A Golden Age*, Commonwealth Prize winning author Anam shows us a family navigating through the aftermath of war, in a young nation searching to define itself. Set in the dusty streets of Dhaka and the villages of rural Bangladesh, at a time when the rise of religious fundamentalism had not yet encroached, *The Good Muslim* asks what it is to be a good daughter, sister, friend and citizen – and a good Muslim.

**Tickets £10**

Concessions £7

Asia House Friends £6

**Tahmima Anam**  
© Marzela Pogozaly



**Friday, 13 May, 12:30**  
**Lunch with Ching-He Huang**

**Ching-He Huang**

*100 Quick and Healthy Chinese Favourites*

Talk, demonstration and sampling.

The star of BBC's Chinese Food Made Easy, Ching brings a new and exciting dimension to Chinese cooking with her latest book, fusing Chinese and Western culture in healthy recipes, interspersed with anecdotes, Chinese superstition and etiquette. Fast food never looked better, or more healthy as it does with Ching's recipes. Ticket price includes talk, demonstration and samples from the book's recipes.

This event is limited to 30 people.

**Tickets £20**

Concessions £15

Asia House Friends £15

**Monday, 16 May, 18:45**  
**Global Feminisms –**  
**A Literary Exploration**

**Wendy Law Yone** *The Road to Wanting*

**Moni Mohsin** *Diary of a Social Butterfly*

**Rachel Cusk** *Bradshaw Variations*

Moderator: Ellah Allfrey *Granta*

Granta Deputy Editor Ellah Allfrey will moderate a discussion including Wendy Law Yone, Moni Mohsin, and Rachel Cusk, on the topic of how feminism is experienced around the world with emphasis on Asian countries, drawing from these authors' experiences writing about women's lives. This discussion will draw on themes of the family, changing roles and issues, human trafficking, politics and more. This event is in celebration of the launch of *Granta 115: The F-Word*.

**Tickets £12**

Concessions £10

Asia House Friends £8

Includes a copy of *Granta 115: The F-Word*

In partnership with:

**GRANTA**

**Tuesday, 17 May, 18:45**  
**Patrick French – India:**  
**A Portrait**

Moderator: Ritula Shah BBC

From the award winning author of *The World is What It Is* and *Liberty or Death: India's Journey to Independence and Division*, comes this new epic of India in the 21st century. French creates a vivid, surprising picture of what it is like to live at a time when millions have pulled themselves free of poverty – with fortunes made almost overnight – but where violence, corruption and caste prejudice have equally been given new outlets. Speaking to everyone from the nation's political leadership to Maoist revolutionaries and mafia dons, from chained quarry workers to self-made billionaire entrepreneurs, French examines the cultural foundations that have made India's accelerated transformation from socialist economy to capitalist powerhouse possible.

**Tickets £10**

Concessions £7

Asia House Friends £6

Reception sponsored by

**AMAN**  
RESORTS



## Wednesday, 18 May, 18:45 An Evening of Persian Poetry

With Mimi Khalvati, Ziba Karbassi and  
Stephen Watts

Moderator: Dominic Parvez Brookshaw

Poets Mimi Khalvati and Ziba Karbassi look at the interplay of their Iranian heritage and the influences of their lives in England. Poet and translator Stephen Watts will read the English translations of Karbassi's poems.

Mimi Khalvati's most recent collection *The Meanest Flower* was shortlisted for the 2007 T. S. Eliot Prize. Ziba Karbassi is one of the rising stars of Iranian poetry, with seven volumes of poetry in Persian which have received wide critical acclaim. Stephen Watts is a poet, translator and professor, who is currently translating an entire volume of Karbassi's work into English. Dominic Parvez Brookshaw is Lecturer in Persian Studies and Iranian Literature at the School of Languages, Linguistics, and Cultures, University of Manchester.

### Tickets £10

Concessions £7

Asia House Friends £6

Sponsored by:



## Thursday, 19 May, 18:45 The Literature of Conflicted Lands

Mirza Waheed *The Collaborator*

Roma Tearne *The Swimmer*

Daisy Hasan *The To Let House*

Moderator: Andrew Feinstein

Kashmir, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Western China - all beautiful places - all embroiled in decades long conflicts. What is the effect of such unresolved conflicts on the ordinary people of these countries and how do they express the trauma? Mirza, Tearne and Hasan look at literature of conflict, how governments censor the news and the ways in which the distress of their people is expressed through their own fiction.

BBC Urdu service journalist Mirza's debut novel is a disturbing and humane account of the separatist uprising in 1990's Kashmir. Tearne's many novels chronicle life amidst the conflict in Sri Lanka and that of those in exile. Hasan looks at the forgotten conflict in Northeastern India and its effect on the lives of children growing up knowing no other way of life. Andrew Feinstein is a broadcaster and author of the soon to be published book on the global arms trade, *The Shadow World*.

### Tickets £10

Concessions £7

Asia House Friends £6

Mimi Khalvati

## Monday, 23 May, 18:45 Iraq - Lost Homeland or Salvageable Nation?

Tamara Chalabi *Late for Tea at the Deer Palace*

Ali Allawi *The Occupation of Iraq*

Moderator: Justine Hardy

*Late for Tea at the Deer Palace* is a multi-generational memoir of Chalabi's family, one of the oldest and most prominent in Iraq, from 1900 to the present. It is the story of a lost homeland, whose turbulent transformations over the twentieth century left gaping wounds not only in her exiled family, but throughout her country.

When Tamara returned to her ancestral land in 2003, she found a country she didn't recognize - and a nation on the brink of a terrifying and uncertain new beginning.

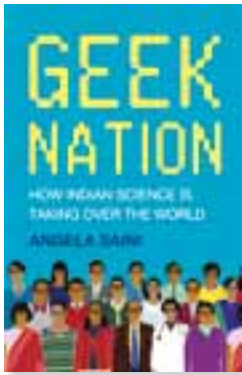
Dr Ali Allawi is the former minister of Defence and Minister of Finance in the Iraqi post-war governments. He is senior visiting fellow at Princeton and author of *The Crisis of Islamic Civilization*. His position in the transitional government gives him unique insight into the future of this troubled country.

### Tickets £10

Concessions £7

Asia House Friends £6





## Tuesday, 24 May, 18:45 Will Indian Science Take Over the World?

Angela Saini *Geek Nation*

Moderator: Alok Jha *The Guardian*

One in five of all medical and dental staff in the UK, one in six science or engineering doctorates in the US and a third of all engineers in Silicon Valley are of Indian origin. *Geek Nation* is a journey to meet the inventors, engineers and scientists helping to give birth to the world's next scientific superpower. Through witty, first-hand reportage and penetrative analysis, *Geek Nation* explains what this means for the rest of the world, and how a spiritual nation squares its soul with hard rationality.

Journalist/author Angela Saini was named Science Writer of the Year in 2009 and has reported for *BBC*, *The New Scientist*, *Wired* and *The Economist*. Alok Jha is Science editor of *The Guardian*.

**Tickets £8**

Concessions £6

Asia House Friends £5

## Wednesday, 25 May, 18:45 Making Waves – Connections Across the Indian Ocean

Ananda Devi *Indian Tango*

Abdulrazak Gurnah *Desertion*

Tabish Khair *Filming*

With Susheila Nasta and Stephanie Jones

Join three eminent writers whose evocations of Indian Ocean worlds have established new literary geographies, and whose new work continues to re-define the landscapes of international contemporary writing.

Ananda Devi, from Mauritius, writes lyrical narratives centred on the troubled lives of women at the edges of Mauritian communities. Zanzibar novelist Abdulrazak Gurnah's narratives trace both the regular and irregular routes of migrants, and work provocatively upon the vagueries of memory and history-telling. Poet, novelist, journalist and academic Tabish Khair provocatively addresses topics from guilt to religion to love in his writing.

**Tickets £8**

Concessions £6

Asia House Friends £5

In partnership with Wasafiri, the AHRC Landscape and Environment Programme and the University of Southampton

*Wasafiri*



Tabish Khair © Lars Kruse



## Closing Night Thursday, 26 May, 18:45 Saying it Like it is – Culture, Free Speech, Power

Hanif Kureishi *Collected Essays*

Moderator: Kenan Malik

This event takes place at the Commonwealth Club (address on back)

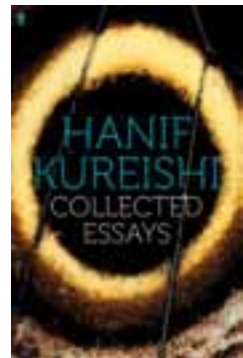
Hanif Kureishi has long chronicled the changing experience of Asians in Britain through his novels such as *My Beautiful Laundrette* and *The Buddha of Suburbia*. His new collection begins with the introduction to *My Beautiful Laundrette* which allowed him to expand upon the questions posed by the film – about race, class, sexuality. Over the past decades he has developed these ideas as Islam's relation to the West has become one of the burning issues of our age.

As with his fictional work, these essays display Kureishi's ability to capture the temper of the times. His conversation with Kenan Malik, author of *From Fatwa to Jihad*, himself an outspoken commentator, is sure to provoke an intense and fascinating discussion.

**Tickets £15**

Concessions £12

Asia House Friends £10



# WEEKEND EVENTS

**Saturday 14 May, 14:30**

**Tales from Here and There  
South Asian Storytelling and  
Workshop for Families**

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**Storytelling and Interactive Workshop**

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The Vayu Naidu Company

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Meet a fabled cast of beasts and hear their boasts. See how a monkey and crocodile became friends, and how a peacock became the king of the jungle.

Become part of the story, as you become part of a journey, with wonder and imagination as your guide. Vayu Naidu is a storyteller, writer, performer and workshop leader whose art is derived from the Indic oral tradition. Join Vayu and her friends as they bring folktales from the Subcontinent to life at the Festival.

For children 5-10 years of age.

Free to children accompanied by a responsible adult.

Vayu Naidu Company



**Saturday 21 May**

**Saturday in the City –  
Iranian Style  
A day of events for adults  
and families**

Join us for a day of Persian food and fun with a music and storytelling workshop for families and a lunch and cookery event for adults.

**12:00-14:00**

**Lunch and Literature  
New Persian Cooking  
Talk, Demonstration  
and Sampling**

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**Jila Dana-Haeri and Shahrzad Ghorashian**

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New Persian Cooking - A Fresh Approach to the Classic Cuisine of Iran

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Join us to experience one of the world's most fascinating and elegant culinary cultures as the authors of this beautifully illustrated new cookbook share the history and personal memories of family and food. Dana-Haeri has adapted traditional Persian recipes to fit the requirements of modern cooks and will present samples of the delicious recipes from the book.

Ticket price includes talk, demonstration and samples from the book's recipes.

This event is limited to 30 people.

**Tickets £20**

**Concessions £15**

**Asia House Friends £15**



**14:30-16:00**

**Tales from the *Shahnameh*  
Iranian Storytelling and  
Workshop for Families**

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**Xanthe Gresham**

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Music by Arash Moradi

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Storyteller extraordinaire, Xanthe will perform tales from the Persian epic *Shahnameh* or *The Book of Kings*, accompanied by the music of Arash Moradi. Children will be invited to take part in the story through theatre and dance. Following the performance, children will be invited to join an interactive workshop where they will create objects in the spirit of the *Shahnameh*.

For children 5-10 years of age.

Free to children accompanied by a responsible adult.



Saturday in the City – Iranian Style  
is sponsored by Iran Heritage  
Foundation

## How to book

Telephone: +44 (0)207 307 5454  
Email: [enquiries@asiahouse.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@asiahouse.co.uk)  
[www.asiahouse.org](http://www.asiahouse.org)  
[www.festivalofasianliterature.com](http://www.festivalofasianliterature.com)

Tales From Maximum City tickets:  
Book through Southbank Centre:  
[www.southbankcentre.co.uk](http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk)  
Telephone: +44 (0)844 875 0073

## Credits

### Adrienne Loftus Parkins

Director  
Asia House Literature & The Asia House  
Festival of Asian Literature

### Festival Advisory Board

Ellah Allfrey, Claire Armitstead,  
William Dalrymple, Toby Eady,  
Suzi Feay, David Godwin,  
Rachel Holmes, Razia Iqbal,  
James Kidd, Suzie Nicklen, Erica Wagner

## Venues

### Asia House

63 New Cavendish Street  
London  
W1G 7LP

Nearest Tube Stations:  
Oxford Circus, Bond Street

### Commonwealth Club

25 Northumberland Avenue  
London  
WC2N 5AP

Nearest Tube Stations:  
Embankment, Charing Cross

### Southbank Centre

Belvedere Road  
London  
SE1 8XX

Nearest Tube Stations:  
Waterloo, Embankment

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