



2024

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**Haystack Book Festival** brings together in unmoderated conversation writers and thinkers who have something to talk about. Past and upcoming talks are as various as Pulitzer Prize finalist Janice Nimura and Dorothy Wickenden on the women who helped spark the first American civil rights movement, Sam Sifton and cookbook author Melissa Clark on the world of *New York Times Cooking*, leading journalists George Packer and Elizabeth Becker on how the coverage of war has changed, Allen Ellenzweig and Jarrett Earnest on the life of photographer George Platt Lynes, and Neil King Jr. and Rinker Buck on traveling through history in contemporary America.

In memoriam

Neil King Jr. author of *American Ramble*

## Writers in Conversation

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FRIDAY, OCTOBER 4th, at the Norfolk Library

**3:30 PM:** Out of Steps

Marina Harss and Mindy Aloff

**5:30 PM:** The Brendan Gill Lecture

Gillian Linden, author of *Negative Space: A Novel*

*Open reception to follow at Manor House Inn on Maple Avenue*

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5th, at the Norfolk Library

**10:30 AM:** A Conversation About Wisdom and Memory

Michael Korda and Simon Winchester

**1:00 PM:** Institutions and Ideas

William Egginton and Samuel Moyn

**3:00 PM:** Reading the Landscape: How Trees Tell a Story

Noah Charney and Mike Zarfos

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6th, at Great Mountain Forest

**8:00 AM:** A Walk in the Woods with Noah Charney and Mike Zarfos

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6th, at the Norfolk Library

**11:00 AM:** Horses and Us: Treasured Companions and Engines  
of Power

David Chaffetz and Sarah Maslin Nir

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6th, at the Norfolk Hub

**1:30 PM:** Sarah Maslin Nir and the *Once Upon a Horse* Series

A celebration for *The Star Horse* with children aged 8 to 11 years old



Image by Jorge Vargas

## Out of Steps

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Marina Harss, author of the critically acclaimed biography *The Boy from Kyiv: Alexei Ratmanský's Life in Ballet*, and Mindy Aloff, author of *Why Dance Matters*, discuss the history of ballet and what we are to make of it now.

Ballet often appears as the very epitome of an art of the past, but throughout the twentieth century it was entangled with modern art and what we distinguish from ballet as “modern dance,” perhaps nowhere more so than in the extraordinary work of George Balanchine. The new century has only further underlined the complexity of this history, both directly in the work of Alexei Ratmanský and indirectly in the Russian attack on Ukraine, with consequences for both dancers and choreographers, including Ratmanský. If it was already hard to parse the weight of tradition and modernism in Balanchine, we find ourselves caught now in crisscrossing wakes that vanish immediately into the larger heave of the waves, leaving no track. What are we to make of ballet now?



Friday, October 4th • 3:30 PM

Marina Harss is a dance writer based in New York City. Her work has appeared in the *New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *The New York Review of Books*, the *Nation*, the *Guardian*, *Ballet Review*, *Dance Europe*, *Tanz*, *Dance Magazine*, and elsewhere. She is a recipient of the Robert and Ina Caro Research and Travel Fellowship and was a fellow at the Center for Ballet and the Arts in 2019; she is currently a member of Columbia University's Seminar on Dance.

Mindy Aloff's writing on dance, literature, film, and other cultural subjects has appeared in the *New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, and many other periodicals throughout the U.S. and abroad. She is the author or editor of several books, including *Hippo in a Tutu: Dancing in Disney Animation* and *Leaps in the Dark: Art and the World by Agnes de Mille*. A past winner of a Whiting Writers Award and a fellow of the Woodrow Wilson and John Simon Guggenheim memorial foundations, she is currently an adjunct professor of dance and a lecturer in the first-year seminar program at Barnard College.

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"History itself flows through the life and choreography of Alexei Ratmansky: the histories of Ukraine, Russia, and the West, ballet heritage and ballet modernity, and the evolving presentations of women, of partnering, and of community are Ratmansky terrain. Marina Harss's *The Boy from Kyiv*—a page-turner from the first—tells Ratmansky's story with a fluent lightness that's like his choreography. Ratmansky's work and the many possibilities of ballet grow richer and deeper in the mind as you read."

—Alastair Macaulay, chief dance critic at the *New York Times*, 2007–2018

"[*Why Dance Matters* is a] smart, bracing book of reflection, analysis, memoir and history. . . . Even people with some experience of dance and lifetimes of attending performances will be impressed by the author's range and expertise. Obscure anecdotes and facts are scattered throughout, little gifts to the reader."

—Willard Spiegelman, *Wall Street Journal*



## The Brendan Gill Lecture

Gillian Linden, author of *Negative Space: A Novel*

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"Beguiling, vexing, and exhilarating.... The feeling is that of the fiction of the New Journalists... like the murmurous specificity of Joan Didion. It also brought to mind the classic of closely observed domestic life in Brooklyn, Paula Fox's *Desperate Characters*." —Thomas Beller, *Air Mail*

Gillian Linden's debut novel is about a young mother navigating the instabilities of teaching, parenting, and marriage in the wake of the pandemic.

With deadpan humor and a keen eye for the strangeness of our days, *Negative Space* follows a week in the life of an English teacher at a New York private school. At home, her two children, increasingly restless, ask constant questions about mortality and find hidden wisdom in the cartoons they watch on television. Her husband tends to his plants and offers occasional counsel between Zoom calls to Hong Kong and Australia. And at school, as she navigates the currents between wealthy, increasingly

Friday, October 4th • 5:30 PM

disconnected students and bewildered faculty, she accidentally witnesses an ambiguous, possibly inappropriate interaction between a teacher and a student... She feels compelled to say something, but how can she be sure of what she saw?

Precisely rendered and filled with sly observations about our off-kilter days, *Negative Space* is a witty and resonant portrait of a woman caught between the pressures of home and work, parenting and teaching, what's normal and what isn't.

Gillian Linden received her MFA from Columbia University. She is a 2011 winner of the Henfield Prize for fiction. Her previous book, *Remember How I Told You I Love You?*, is a collection of short stories. She lives in Brooklyn and Norfolk with her husband and children.

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"The prose throughout is lapidary, sharp...*Negative Space* beautifully executes a good amount of what feels imperative; acutely, assuredly, it mirrors a particular world back to us."

— Lynn Steger Strong, *New York Times Book Review*

"Subtly written... [I]ts style most resembles the so-called Minimalist writing of Raymond Carver and Ann Beattie."

— Sam Sacks, *Wall Street Journal*

"It's the good life. Or is it? Gillian Linden's eminently engaging heroine—loving mother, wife, and teacher in an elite private school—valiantly aims to do the right thing as she navigates the complexities of ironic absurdities and quiet tragedies reflective of our time. Written with a cool eye and a warm heart, this remarkable novel is both wryly comic and profoundly thought-provoking. It's a stunning achievement worthy of all the praise it will undoubtedly receive."

—Binnie Kirshenbaum, author of *Rabbits for Food*



Photo by Dave Krugman

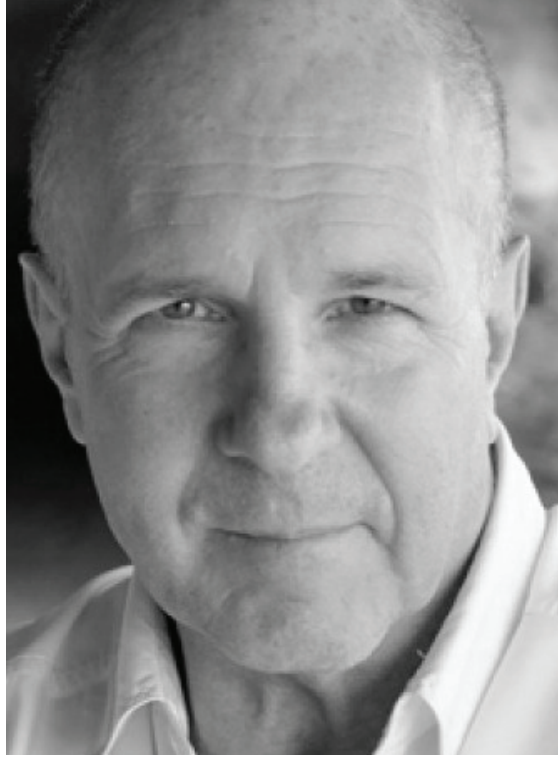


Photo by Setsuko Winchester

## A Conversation About Wisdom and Memory

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Bestselling authors Michael Korda, most recently the author of *Muse of Fire: WWI as Seen Through the Lives of the Soldier Poets*, and Simon Winchester, whose most recent book is *Knowing What We Know: The Transmission of Knowledge: From Ancient Wisdom to Modern Magic*, will share their thoughts on the wisdom we learned from the past and how to find the wise way forward.

What will matter in the end is whether we have acted wisely when called upon to do so. The human track record in this area is not encouraging, and it seems to become only less encouraging the further we enter into what otherwise appears a time of extraordinary achievement. In the midst of a world more than ever submitted to solely human measure and command, we seem as if condemned to endlessly repeat what we should remember instead—a world in which we evidently recall nothing of what we have struggled to know, so have everything at our fingertips and nothing coming to mind. With our smartphones in hand and stalemated trenches and no-man's-lands now carved into the territory of Ukraine, where can we look to find the wise way forward. What calculations, what expressions, matter?

**Saturday, October 5th • 10:30 AM**

Michael Korda is the *New York Times* bestselling author of many books including *Horse People*, *Country Matters*, *Ulysses S. Grant*, *Cat People*, *Journey to a Revolution*, and *Ike*; as well as *Another Life: A Memoir of Other People* and *Charmed Lives: A Family Romance*.

Simon Winchester studied geology at Oxford and has written for *Condé Nast Traveler*, *Smithsonian*, and *National Geographic*. His many books include *The Professor and the Madman*; *The Map that Changed the World*; *Krakatoa*; and *A Crack in the Edge of the World*. Each of these has been a *New York Times* bestseller and appeared on numerous best and notable lists. Winchester was made Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) by Queen Elizabeth in 2006.

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"Every page of *Muse of Fire* betrays a profound intimacy with both the 'sheer horror' of the war and, even more, of a time when 'poetry mattered to people in a way it no longer does to us.' Michael Korda's unique angle allows him to break through the clichés and restores to us these poets with a fierce immediacy. His book is itself a moving memorial."

—Daniel Mendelsohn, author of *An Odyssey: A Father, a Son, and an Epic*

"A delightful compendium of the kind of facts you immediately want to share with anyone you encounter... Simon Winchester has firmly earned his place in history... as a promulgator of knowledge of every variety, perhaps the last of the famous explorers who crisscrossed the now-vanished British Empire and reported what they found to an astonished world."

—*New York Times*



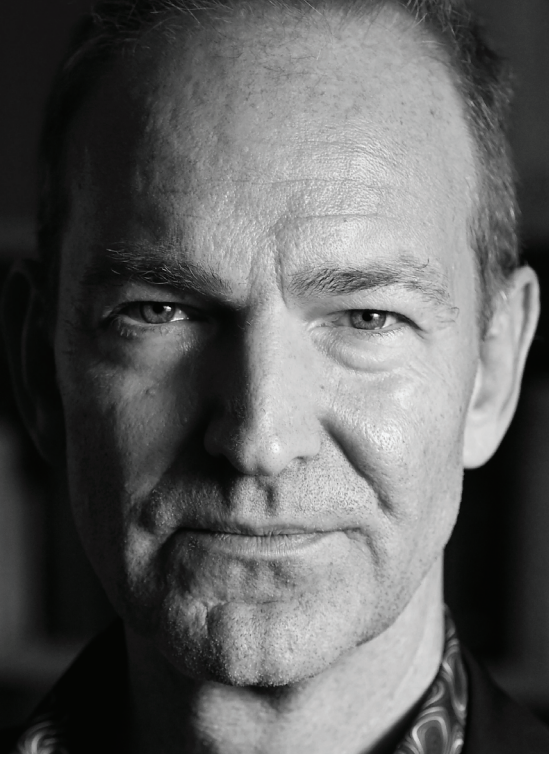


Photo by Xandi Waystaone



## Institutions and Ideas

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Two distinguished public academics, William Egginton, author of *The Rigor of Angels: Borges, Heisenberg, Kant, and the Ultimate Nature of Reality*, and Samuel Moyn, author of *Liberalism Against Itself: Cold War Intellectuals and the Making of Our Times*, explore the public circulation of ideas.

The 1960s saw, among many other things, the emergence of a new publishing market, perhaps most visible in such series as Doubleday's Anchor and Vintage Books, as well as Harper & Row's visually striking Torchbooks, but also prominently represented in such imprints as Pantheon, Beacon Press, and Basic Books—all intended for, as Todd Gitlin has put it, "the idea-hungry and college-bound." By and large, the ensuing decades have seen a considerable contraction of this space, with the university often seeming to withdraw into its own distinctly separate and professional space, at best uneasily related to the wider culture. But recent years have perhaps seen a renewed concern for a wider public circulation of ideas—as in, for example, a recent spate of books on topics as varied as humanism, German Romanticism, contemporary political theory, various strands in twentieth-century philosophy, and selected episodes in the history of science, as well as in the emergence of a new institutional interest in "public humanities."

**Saturday, October 5th • 1:00 PM**

William Egginton is the Decker Professor in the Humanities, chair of the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, and director of the Alexander Grass Humanities Institute at Johns Hopkins University. He is the author of multiple books, including *How the World Became a Stage; A Wrinkle in History; The Philosopher's Desire*; and *The Theater of Truth*. *The Rigor of Angels* was named to several best of 2023 lists, including the *New York Times* and *The New Yorker*.

Samuel Moyn is Chancellor Kent Professor of Law at Yale University, and a notable intellectual historian and political theorist whose writings have appeared in such widely circulated publications as the *Atlantic*, the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Commonword*, *Dissent*, the *Guardian*, the *London Review of Books*, the *Nation*, *The New Republic*, the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and the *Washington Post*. His books are *Origins of the Other: Emmanuel Levinas Between Revelation and Ethics*; *A Holocaust Controversy: The Treblinka Affair in Postwar France*, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History*, *Not Enough: Human Rights in an Unequal World*, and *Humane: How the United States Abandoned Peace and Reinvented War*.

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"[A] mind-expanding book.... Elegantly written.... This is a book about the tiniest of things—the position of an electron, an instant of change. It is also about the biggest of things—the cosmos, infinity, the possibility of free will. Egginton works through ideas by grounding them in his characters' lives.... The beauty of this book is that Egginton encourages us to recognize all of these complicated truths as part of our reality, even if the 'ultimate nature' of that reality will remain forever elusive. We are finite beings whose perspective will always be limited; but those limits are also what give rise to possibility. When we choose what to observe, we insert our freedom to choose into nature. As Egginton writes, 'We are, and ever will be, active participants in the universe we discover.'"

—*New York Times*

"Skeptical of received wisdom and over-burnished reputations, *Liberalism Against Itself* is a continuously bracing and necessary exercise in intellectual iconoclasm. It not only rescues a distinguished Western tradition from its skittish cold-war exponents and bellicose neo-conservative exegetes; it also alerts us to the many political and intellectual possibilities still open to us."

—Pankaj Mishra, author of *Age of Anger: A History of the Present*





## Reading the Landscape: How Trees Tell a Story

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Noah Charney, author of *These Trees Tell a Story: The Art of Reading Landscapes*, talks with Great Mountain Forest's Mike Zarfos on how to unravel the clues to the unique ecological history of the natural landscape.

Charney's stories and lessons will provide anyone with the necessary investigative skills to look at a landscape, interpret it, and tell its story—from its start as rock or soil to the plants and animals that live on it. By critically engaging with the landscape, Charney argues that we will become better at connecting with nature and ourselves.

*These Trees Tell a Story* challenges readers to see the world through the eyes of a trained naturalist. Carney and Zarfos will talk about field walks through New England ecosystems and reveal the millions of years of forces at play. Tying together geology, forest ecology, wildlife biology, soil processes, evolution, conservation, and more to illustrate how and why landscapes appear in their current forms.

**Saturday, October 5th • 3:00 PM**

Noah Charney is assistant professor of conservation biology at the University of Maine and coauthor of the award-winning *Tracks and Sign of Insects and Other Invertebrates: A Guide to North American Species*. He also leads a conservation nonprofit (Radnor to River) and helped create a jazz club that he co-owns (Rudy's Jazz Room)—both in Nashville, TN.

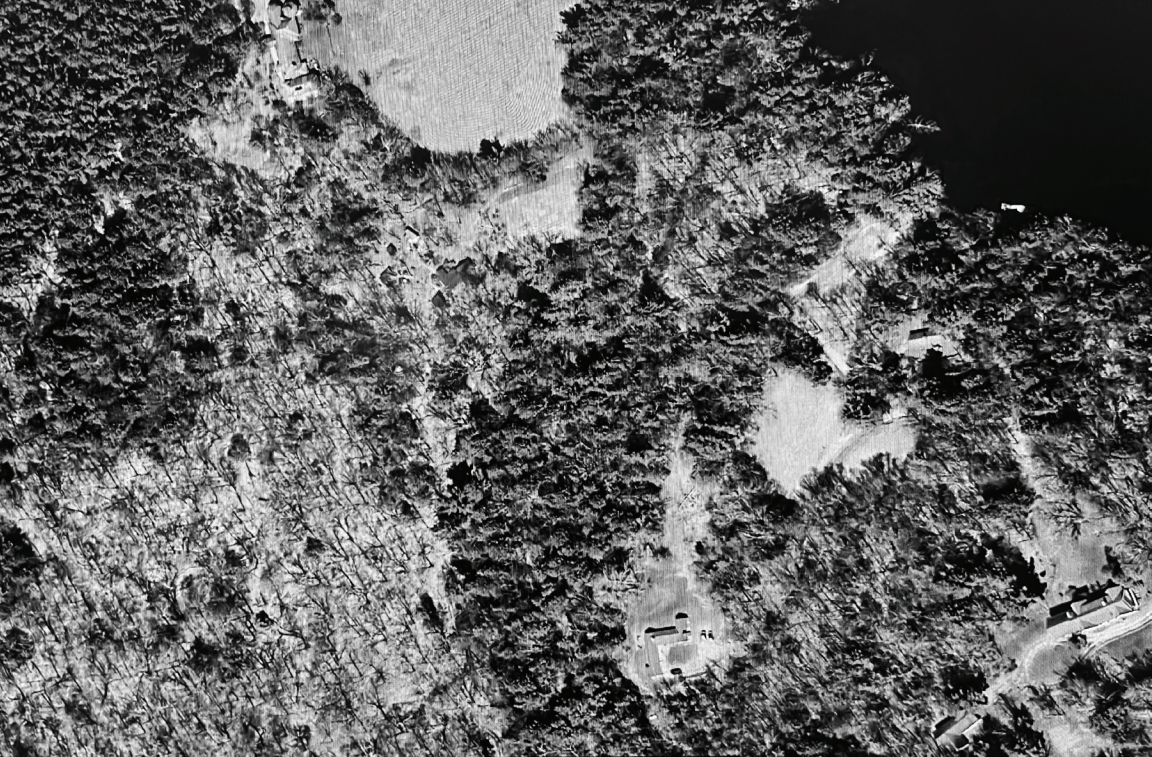
Mike Zarfos is the executive director of Great Mountain Forest. He holds a BA in biology and global studies from Colby College in Maine, an MA in international relations from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University, and a PhD in conservation biology from SUNY Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF). For his PhD, Zarfos investigated how drivers of global environmental change, such as acid rain, climate change, and invasive species, may impact temperate hardwood forests.

Zarfos has also led research teams studying bird and plant communities on seabird islands in the Gulf of Maine with National Audubon, in the salt marshes around Long Island Sound with UConn, and in the beech-maple-birch forests of the Adirondack Mountains. He codirected the SUNY College of ESF 1,000-acre Cranberry Lake Biological Station in 2019.

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"[Charney] is an amiable host.... The cumulative effect of his book on the reader is the realization that, as much as we talk about 'managing' nature, nature has been managing itself for eons just fine without us."

—Alexandra Horowitz, *The Atlantic*



## A Walk in the Woods\*

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Make sure you have your hiking boots ready for a short field trip in Great Mountain Forest with conservation biologist Noah Charney, author of *These Trees Tell a Story* and GMF Executive Director Mike Zarfos. Explore the history of the woods by examining slopes, soil, trees, and animal routes, and survey the diversity of birds and other wildlife.

Charney is an advanced practitioner of reading the landscape and providing information about its past and present and hints of its future. A walk in the woods will look different through his eyes as he observes the mix of trees, comparing the older canopy to the younger understory, imagining what it once was and what it will become as the force of succession continues.

## Sunday, October 6th • 8:00 AM

Praise for *These Trees Tell a Story*:

"A delightful immersion in close observation and deep understanding."

—Tristan Gooley, author of *The Lost Art of Reading Nature's Signs* and *The Natural Navigator*

"A book for the shelf of any forest wanderer—and a book to take on those wanders, so you can much better understand what you're seeing!"

—Bill McKibben, author of *Wandering Home*

"Charney inspires readers to rediscover a sense of wonder in their local landscapes, from soil to slopes to stone walls to salamanders. Become a nature detective by reading this insightful book!"

—Meg Lowman, author of *Life in the Treetops* and *The Arbornaut*

"Unfolding as a series of puzzles or mysteries in the landscape, this book is a thought-provoking, vivid, and creative guide to asking the right questions and being in the moment in the outdoors."

—James Barilla, author of *My Backyard Jungle*

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**\*Registration required – limited to 20 people.**

**Meet at the Great Mountain Forest parking lot at the top of Windrow Road.**



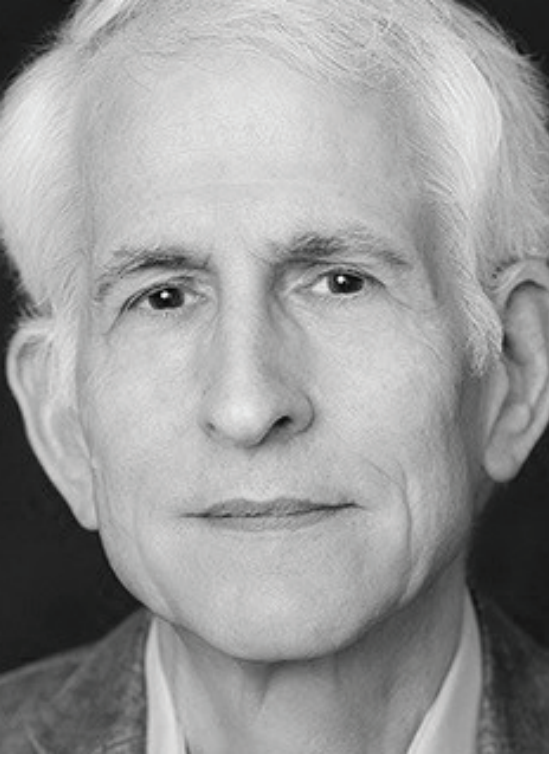


Photo by *New York Times*

## Horses and Us: Treasured Companions and Engines of Power

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David Chaffetz, author of *Raiders, Rulers, and Traders: The Horse and the Rise of Empires*, and Pulitzer Prize finalist Sarah Maslin Nir, author of *Horse Crazy: The Story of a Woman and a World in Love with an Animal*, talk about the history of our relationship with the horse from the beginnings of time to today.

No animal is so entangled in human history as the horse. The thread starts in prehistory, with a slight, shy animal, hunted for food. Domesticating the horse allowed early humans to settle the vast Eurasian steppe; later, their horses enabled new forms of warfare, encouraged long-distance trade routes, and ended up acquiring deep cultural and religious significance. Chaffetz tells the story of how the horse made rulers, raiders, and traders interchangeable, providing a novel explanation for the turbulent history of the “Silk Road,” which might better be called the Horse Road.

There are over seven million horses in America—even more than when

**Sunday, October 6th • 11:00 AM**

they were the only means of transportation—and nearly two million horse owners.

Nir takes readers into the lesser-known corners of the riding world and profiles some of its most captivating figures. Woven into these compelling character studies is Nir's own moving personal narrative. She details her father's harrowing tale of surviving the Holocaust and describes an enchanted but deeply lonely upbringing in Manhattan, where horses became her family.

David Chaffetz is an independent scholar. He is a regular contributor to the *Asian Review of Books* and has written for the *South China Morning Post* and the *Nikkei Asian Review*. He is also the author of *Three Asian Divas* and *A Journey Through Afghanistan*. Chaffetz is a member of the Royal Society for Asian Affairs, the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asian Society, and the Gremio Literario (Literary Society) of Lisbon.

Sarah Maslin Nir is a staff reporter for the *New York Times*, a two-time finalist for the Pulitzer Prize, and the author of the newly published *The Star Horse*, book #3 in her *Once Upon a Horse* series of young adult readers.

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"A fascinating, compelling, and scholarly history . . . that brings the great horse-powered empires of Central Asia to life and places the horse at the center of world history where it belongs."

—Simon Sebag Montefiore, author of *The World*

"Lyrical, lovely, and thoroughly engaging. *Horse Crazy* is that rare book that looks inward and outward. . . . Wonderful."

—Susan Orlean, author of *The Library Book*



## Once Upon a Horse\*

From Pulitzer Prize nominee Sarah Maslin Nir, the *Once Upon a Horse* series are middle-grade novels inspired by real horses and the people who love them—illustrated with black-and-white art by Laylie Frazier.

### *The Flying Horse* (#1)

Trendsetter is a horse destined to fly—in more ways than one. Sarah is a horse-loving seventh grader who has a secret and a fear of losing the thing she loves most in the world.

Separated by an ocean, a horse and a girl's parallel struggles to be their best include lots of luck and grit, some stubbornness, and a few failures. It is only when they find each other that the two kindred spirits find themselves.

### *The Jockey & Her Horse* (#2)

Billy is a Norwegian Fjord horse—short as horses go, but with the natural star power of a Hollywood celebrity. Lori Allegra is a horse-loving seventh grader, as awkward as she is tall for her age, who finds refuge from her shyness on her family farm with her best friend: Billy. Their peace is



**Sunday, October 6th • 1:30 PM**

shattered when Billy is given the opportunity to star in a film and with that, the chance for Lori and her mom to save their struggling stables.

***The Star Horse* (#3)**

Billy's star turn is cut short when a mountain lion stalking the movie set sends him fleeing into the Mojave. When word reaches Lori, she runs away to find him. Lost in the desert, Billy and Lori are joined in their search by a wild donkey, a sassy teenage cowgirl, a plucky service dog, and even the world's biggest kid actor. *The Star Horse* is a story about finding your herd—human and horse—and along the way, finding your voice.

Sarah Maslin Nir is a Pulitzer Prize–nominated *New York Times* reporter and the author of *Horse Crazy: The Story of a Woman and a World in Love with an Animal*.

Laylie Frazier is a fine artist and illustrator inspired by the natural world. And while she doesn't ride horses, she loves to illustrate them. Her books include *Poppy Needs a Puppy*.

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**\*This event will be held at the Norfolk Hub. Free copies of the series will be available for all middle-grade readers.**



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# HAYSTACK BOOK TALKS

Steve Melville & Michael Selleck, co-chairs

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Ann Havemeyer & the Norfolk Library staff	Norfolk Library Associates John and Tobin DeShazo	Tom Hlas and Paul Madore The Norfolk Hub
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## What writers are saying about Haystack Book Festival

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"As a writer of environmental books, I've had the pleasure and fun of appearing at book festivals around the country, but I sincerely think my favorite so far was the Norfolk Book Festival in Connecticut in 2019. There are bigger festivals, with more writers and bigger crowds. But Norfolk's festival, leading with that small town, autumn-in-New-England charm, outdoes Tucson's or San Antonio's or Missoula's by a wide margin. And the lit-savvy audience of book lovers there is second to none. I'd go back at the drop of a hat."

—**Dan Flores**, *New York Times* Bestselling author of *Coyote America: A Natural and Supernatural History*

"My visit to Haystack was among the highlights of my book-promotion experience. Rarely have I spoken in such a lovely venue, to such an engaged audience, with such a thoughtfully selected interlocutor. I had a wonderful time as both a participant and attendee, and highly recommend the festival to any lover of literature!"

—**Ben Goldfarb**, author of *Eager: The Surprising, Secret Life of Beavers and Why They Matter*

"I have nothing but fond memories of my time at Haystack. It was a weekend of provocative ideas, good books, and stimulating conversation."

—**Ken Ilgunas**, author of *This Land Is Our Land: How We Lost the Right to Roam and How to Take It Back*

"As a writer, it's so important for me to know and understand my readers. Coming to Norfolk for the Haystack Book Festival was a warm, wonderful opportunity to meet with people who truly love literature, who love words, who love books. Being in such a beautiful environment, speaking in a room full of interested, curious people who wanted to know more about what I do was a joy. I hope I am invited back."

—**Janine di Giovanni**, author of *The Morning They Came for Us: Dispatches from Syria*

# NOTES

Haystack Book Festival is sponsored by The Norfolk Hub.



The Norfolk Hub is a 501(c)3 private operating organization that works to contribute to the vitality and sustainability of Norfolk, Connecticut—its natural, cultural, and community resources.

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