



DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS
City of Los Angeles

PRESENTS

THE BIG READ

PROGRAM IN LOS ANGELES



THE MALTESE FALCON
BY DASHIELL HAMMETT



NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
FOR THE ARTS

A great nation
deserves great art.

NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
FOR THE ARTS



THE
**BIG
READ**

INSTITUTE of
Museum...Library
REVISED





ANTONIO R. VILLARAIGOSA
MAYOR

October 2008

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the City of Los Angeles, I invite you to join the Department of Cultural Affairs in celebrating The Big Read Program in Los Angeles. In partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts, we are proud to join over 300 communities throughout the nation in a common goal to restore reading to the center of American culture.

The Big Read Program in Los Angeles will demonstrate the power of reading to bring people of all ages and backgrounds together. During the month of November, high school students and teachers, including students from our Partnership for Los Angeles Schools, will join residents throughout the City and participate in reading groups, youth activities, tours, lectures, and film screenings designed to motivate us all to read, learn, and communicate.

Please join us for any of the exciting activities listed in this brochure. Together, let's work to increase literacy, inspire young people and their families, and celebrate the great literary and historical significance of Los Angeles.

Very truly yours,

ANTONIO R. VILLARAIGOSA
Mayor

LETTER FROM DANA GIOIA CHAIRMAN NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

Some people were surprised when *The Maltese Falcon*, a detective novel, appeared on The Big Read list. Yes, it is a detective novel - one of the best ever written. It's also a brilliant literary work, as well as a thriller, a love story, and a dark, dry comedy. The only criticism I would offer Hammett's private-eye classic is that it is so much fun to read, it might be hard the first time through to realize how deeply observed and morally serious it is.

The Big Read is an initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) designed to revitalize the role of literary reading in American popular culture. *Reading at Risk: A Survey of Literary Reading in America*, a 2004 NEA report, identified a critical decline in reading for pleasure among American adults. The Big Read aims to address this issue directly by providing citizens with the opportunity to read and discuss a single book within their communities.

A great book combines enlightenment with enchantment. It awakens our imagination and enlarges our humanity. It can even offer harrowing insights that somehow console and comfort us. Whether you're a regular reader already or a nonreader making up for lost time, thank you for joining The Big Read.

Dana Gioia
Chairman
National Endowment for the Arts

The NEA presents The Big Read in partnership with the Institute of Museum and Library Services and in cooperation with Arts Midwest.

THE BIG READ PROGRAM IN LOS ANGELES

Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa has mandated that education be a top priority in Los Angeles, and has dedicated the resources of his office to improving educational opportunities. The Big Read Program in Los Angeles, produced by the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA), will support the Mayor's commitment to education, and directly benefit thousands of residents in the numerous and diverse neighborhoods throughout the City. The Big Read is designed to combat a declining literacy rate, inspire young people and their families, and celebrate the great literary and historical significance of Los Angeles.

The Big Read Program in Los Angeles will feature a series of activities throughout the City designed for all ages. Reading groups, tours, lectures, and film screenings will be held weekly throughout November. We welcome you to read our book, participate in our activities, and interact with your neighbors as we celebrate the joy of reading.

LOS ANGELES BIG READ PARTNERS

The Big Read Program in Los Angeles is produced by the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs and is made possible through partnerships with the following organizations:

The National Endowment for the Arts
Partnership for Los Angeles Schools
Sony Pictures
Los Angeles Unified School District
Hollywood Entertainment Museum
California Institute for the Arts
The Los Angeles Conservancy
Zócalo Public Square Lecture Series
Random House Books
Friends of the Warner Grand Theatre
KCET-TV
Warner Bros. Classics

THE MALTESE FALCON

The Big Read Program in Los Angeles celebrates the novel *The Maltese Falcon* by Dashiell Hammett.

Published in 1930, *The Maltese Falcon* set the standard by which all subsequent detective fiction would be judged. Recognized as the father of the "Noir" genre, Dashiell Hammett's clean prose, sharp ear for dialogue, and complex plots brought a new energy to popular fiction that went on to define the genre in literature, film, radio, and television.

Dashiell Hammett's influence on Los Angeles' literary and cinematic landscape is undeniable. His novels have influenced generations of Los Angeles writers who have helped define the image of our City in popular culture, including Raymond Chandler (*The Big Sleep*, *The Long Goodbye*), James M. Cain (*Double Indemnity*, *The Postman Always Rings Twice*), James Ellroy (*L.A. Confidential*), Walter Mosley (*Devil in a Blue Dress*), Denise Hamilton (*The Last Embrace*), and Michael Connelly (*Concrete Blonde*).

In Hollywood, filmmakers have adapted all of Hammett's novels at least once. *Film Noir*, a term for the highly stylized crime dramas first made popular in the 1940s can be traced back to the 1941 film version of *The Maltese Falcon*, starring Humphrey Bogart and directed by John Huston. As a resident of, and screenwriter in Hollywood, Hammett worked with MGM, Warner Bros., and Paramount studios; received an academy award nomination; and introduced a style to film that continues to be popular with audiences today.



LOS ANGELES ACTIVITIES 2008

CITY COUNCIL PROCLAMATION

The month of November will be dedicated as “Los Angeles Big Read Month” by the Los Angeles City Council. Students, schools, partners, and participating organizations will be recognized by elected officials at City Hall.

Date: Friday, October 24, 10:00 a.m.

Location: City Hall Council Chambers, 3rd Floor
200 North Spring Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012

Ages: All

Information: 213.202.5542

THE BIG READ KICK OFF CELEBRATION

Students from participating schools who have been reading *The Maltese Falcon* will be taking a journey back to the 1930s. First stop: they’ll view a classic car exhibition including a 1931 LAFD fire truck, a 1929 Model A Ford police car, and several other vehicles of the period. Next, the time travelers will hear Max Zooi’s Student Quartet performing live jazz tunes from the era.

After seeing, hearing, and sensing the 1930s, guests will venture inside the Barnsdall Gallery Theatre to be greeted by Dashiell Hammett’s own granddaughter, Julie Rivett.

The 1930s are brought to life upon the stage by the Long Beach Shakespeare Company, presenting scenes from the play version of *The Maltese Falcon*. Celebrity Sam Spade aficionados will interact with the actors and students. The Los Angeles Zoo will close the show with a demonstration of a live falcon, which will bring us all back to the present - “The stuff that dreams are made of!”

Date: Thursday, November 6, 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Location: Barnsdall Park
4800 Hollywood Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90027

Ages: 15 to 18

Information: Anisa Dillihay at 213.644.6272

MALTESE FALCON EXHIBITION

A visual exhibition, provided courtesy of the Hammett Literary Estate, will be presented throughout The Big Read Program in Los Angeles. The display will feature the American and British first edition prints of the novel, photographs of the author, relevant correspondence, as well as original movie posters and memorabilia from the 1941 film. Learn more about the author and take a visual tour through the early days of pulp fiction.

Dates: November 3 to 30, Monday through Friday, 12:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Location: Barnsdall Park Junior Arts Center Gallery
4800 Hollywood Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90027

Ages: All

Information: Jeffrey Herr at 323.913.4031

THE SONY PICTURES MEDIA ARTS PROGRAM

Sixty young people enrolled in classes offered throughout Los Angeles will learn film animation and computer editing techniques. Students enrolled in the fall program will read the novel and each site will create its own short film version. A selection of the final short films will be shown to the public at the culminating Big Read event film screening at the Warner Grand Theatre on November 22.

Dates: October through November, After School

Location: The Sony Pictures Media Arts Program is offered at the following locations:

The Charles Mingus Youth Arts Center and the Watts Towers Arts Center in Watts

Banning’s Landing Community Center in San Pedro

William Reagh Los Angeles Photography Center near Downtown Los Angeles

Center for the Arts, Eagle Rock in North-East Los Angeles

San Fernando Gardens Housing Project in Pacoima

Ages: 13 to 15

Information: Leslie Thomas at 310.522.2015

The Sony Pictures Media Arts Program is a partnership of the Department of Cultural Affairs, Sony Pictures, and the California Institute of the Arts (Cal Arts).

IN-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

In alliance with Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa’s Partnership for Los Angeles Schools, the Los Angeles Unified School District, and the Hollywood Entertainment Museum, the following high schools are participating in The Big Read Program in Los Angeles:

Hollywood Entertainment Museum’s
“The Film Academy” at Morningside High School
Lincoln High School
Marshall High School
Roosevelt High School
Santee Education Complex

At Roosevelt High School, parents will also read the novel in Spanish along with the students. The Hollywood Entertainment Museum's "The Film Academy" is a school serving youth on probation. Participating students will read the novel as part of the required curriculum, discuss the novel's themes of honor and loyalty, and learn about the 1930s time period. Over 1,000 11th grade students will read the novel and engage in The Big Read activities.

Dates: October through November

Ages: 15 to 18

Information: Elizabeth Morin at 213.202.5567

DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS PROGRAMS AT NEIGHBORHOOD ARTS AND CULTURAL CENTERS

DCA's Neighborhood Arts and Cultural Centers are offering the following special youth activities and art projects based on the novel:

CANOGA PARK YOUTH ARTS CENTER

Digital Darkroom - Students will produce still photos honoring the Film Noir tradition and learn about film techniques associated with this genre including black and white and atmospheric photo qualities. Students will create photographs based on the content of the novel. During the class, students will read selections of the story and view scenes from the film.

Dates: Saturdays, October 4 to November 22,
11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Location: Canoga Park Youth Arts Center
7222 Remmet Avenue, Canoga Park, CA 91303

Ages: 12 to 17

Information: Stuart Vaughan at 818.346.7099

Cost: \$48 / 8 Weeks

Open Studio for Teens - Students will learn the art of shadow puppetry and create puppets based on characters in *The Maltese Falcon*, culminating in a shadow puppet version of the story. During the class session, students will read selections from the novel and view scenes from the film. Students will learn about the literature that influenced the films in the 1930s and 40s.

Dates: Tuesdays, September 29 to November 18,
5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Location: Canoga Park Youth Arts Center
7222 Remmet Avenue, Canoga Park, CA 91303

Ages: 12 to 17

Information: Stuart Vaughan at 818.346.7099

Cost: \$48 / 8 Weeks

The work of students from both classes will be shown at the culminating event at the Warner Grand Theatre on November 22.

SUN VALLEY YOUTH ARTS CENTER

Activities are designed for students in LAUSD schools enrolled in the Sun Valley Youth Arts Center programs. Students will read and create art projects inspired by *The Maltese Falcon*, and their art work will be on display at the Barnsdall Junior Arts Center Gallery throughout November. All programs are free and open to the public.

West Mark Senior High School students will create a Photo Novela (graphic novel) version of the story.

Sun Valley Middle School students will create a comic book version of the story.

Sun Valley Youth Arts Center students will create Maltese Falcon clay sculptures.

Dates: October 1 to 30

Location: Sun Valley Youth Arts Center
8642 Sunland Boulevard, Sun Valley, CA 91352

Ages: 12 to 17

Information: Jesus Rangel at 818.202.4619

WILLIAM GRANT STILL YOUTH ARTS CENTER

A series of one-day workshops will encourage young adults to read the novel through book giveaways, staged readings, and art projects. All programs are free and open to the public.

Big Read Book Club for Youth - Free books and readers' guides will be given, and tutors will be available at the center.

Date: Saturday, November 1, 12:00 p.m.

Ages: 15 to 18

Staged Reading of *The Maltese Falcon* Film Script - Come and enjoy a great story presented by professional actors!

Date: Saturday, November 8, 12:00 p.m.

Ages: All

Poster Workshop - Youths will create their own movie posters to take home. Poster boards, markers, and paint will be provided.

Date: Thursday, November 13, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Ages: 6 to 12

Poster Workshop - Older students will create their own movie posters to take home. Poster boards, markers, and paint will be provided.

Date: Saturday, November 15, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Ages: 12 and Older

Location: William Grant Still Youth Arts Center
 2520 South West View Street, Los Angeles, CA 90002

Information: Joyce Maddox at 323.734.1164

DCA'S COMMUNITY FILM SCREENINGS OF THE MALTESE FALCON IN HOLLYWOOD AND THE SAN FERNANDO VALLEY

Free screenings of the film will be shown in Hollywood and the San Fernando Valley.

Hollywood Screenings:

Two screenings will be shown indoors at DCA's Barnsdall Gallery Theatre at Barnsdall Park.

Date: Saturday, November 8 at 12 p.m. (with subtitles in Spanish) and at 2 p.m.

Location: Barnsdall Gallery Theatre
 4800 Hollywood Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90027

Ages: All

Information: Anisa Dillihay at 323.644.6272

San Fernando Valley Screening:

An evening outdoor screening of the film will be presented at the Sun Valley Youth Arts Center.

Bring a blanket, some refreshments, and enjoy the film under the night sky.

Date: Saturday, November 15 at 7 p.m.

Location: Sun Valley Youth Arts Center
 8642 Sunland Boulevard, Sun Valley, CA 91352

Ages: All

Information: Jesus Rangel at 818.252.4619

"L.A. NOIR-CHITECTURE TOUR"

Join us as we explore the literary and cinematic landscape of the historic city, where the buildings are as dramatic as the stories themselves. This tour, presented in partnership with the Los Angeles Conservancy, will feature docent-led tours of seven historic locations from the works of Los Angeles-based noir authors Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler, James M. Cain, and James Ellroy, among others.

The historic buildings provide the authenticity craved by authors and filmmakers alike, alive with the city's past, often glorious and sometimes shady.

Date: Sunday, November 9, 2008,
 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Location: Various sites. Directions provided with ticket purchase.

Tour stops include:

The Warner Bros. Studios lot where Dashiell Hammett's *The Maltese Falcon* was filmed.

The Formosa Café, the iconic West Hollywood watering hole featured in the 1997 film adaptation of James Ellroy's *L.A. Confidential*.

The Glendale Railroad Depot, featured in James M. Cain's *Double Indemnity*.

Parva-Sed-Apta Apartments in Hollywood, where Nathanael West lived while he penned *The Day of the Locust*.

Ages: All

Information: For tickets and up-to-date tour information, visit www.laconservancy.org or call 213.623.2489.

Cost: The tour costs \$30 for the general public, \$25 for Los Angeles Conservancy members, and \$10 for children 12 and under.

The Los Angeles Conservancy is a nonprofit membership organization that works through education and advocacy to recognize, preserve, and revitalize the historic architectural and cultural resources of Los Angeles County.

ZÓCALO NOIR LECTURE AND RECEPTION

In coordination with the Zócalo Public Square Lecture Series, join us for a free brunch and panel discussion.

TOPIC: DASHIELL HAMMETT...IN L.A.?

We can be forgiven for thinking of Dashiell Hammett as a San Francisco writer. *The Maltese Falcon* takes place in Northern California, where Hammett somehow transformed himself from a tubercular detective for the Pinkerton Agency into a novelist for the ages.

But Hammett's roots in Los Angeles run deep. Here, in the 30s, he worked on several pictures while under contract to the studios. Here he began his lifelong affair with Lillian Hellman. And here he returned frequently over the years to visit his beloved daughters.

Zócalo and DCA bring together a panel of writers, family members, and scholars to culminate L.A.'s month-long celebration of this great California novelist. Among the

mysteries and questions sure to crop up are: Why did Hammett fall creatively silent for the last three decades of his life? How did he influence the L.A. Noir scene? And the ultimate, unanswerable question: Hammett or Chandler?

PANELISTS:

David Kipen, Director of Literature, National Reading Initiatives, NEA - Moderator

David Kipen joined the National Endowment for the Arts in September 2005 as the Director of Literature. More recently, Kipen was appointed Director of Literature, National Reading Initiatives. Beginning in 2000, David Kipen was the book critic for the San Francisco Chronicle, where he reviewed six to eight books each month. He was also a book critic and essayist for National Public Radio's "Day to Day" program and presented Santa Monica station KCRW-FM's weekly commentary and podcast "Overbooked."

Richard Laymon is the editor of *Discovering The Maltese Falcon and Sam Spade*, and has written six books on Dashiell Hammett, including *Literary Masterpieces: The Maltese Falcon*, *Dashiell Hammett: A Descriptive Bibliography*, and *Shadow Man: The Life of Dashiell Hammett*. He was nominated for an Edgar Award by the Mystery Writers of America for editing *Selected Letters of Dashiell Hammett, 1921-1960* and has been nominated for another Edgar Award for *Discovering The Maltese Falcon and Sam Spade*.

Tom Nolan reviews mystery fiction for the Wall Street Journal and has been a contributing editor for California and Los Angeles magazines. He has also written for Rolling Stone, Playboy, TV Guide, and the Los Angeles Times. He is the author of several books, including *Ross Macdonald: a Biography*.

Julie Rivett is one of four grandchildren of Dashiell Hammett. Working with Hammett scholar Richard Laymon, she helped to edit both *Selected Letters of Dashiell Hammett 1921-1960* and her mother's memoir, *Dashiell Hammett: A Daughter Remembers*. To celebrate the publication of *Selected Letters in 2001*, she also curated *Dashiell Hammett: A Life in Letters*, one of the most successful exhibits ever held at the San Francisco Public Library.

Vince Emory is the publisher of the Ace Performer Collection-Books by and about Dashiell Hammett. Mr. Emory is the editor of *Lost Stories*, a book of rare "lost" Hammett Stories

Date: Saturday, November 22, 11:00 a.m.

Location: Barnsdall Gallery Theatre
 4800 Hollywood Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90027

Ages: All

Information: For more information, please visit www.zocaloLA.org or call 213.403.0416

Bringing together an extraordinarily diverse group of Angelenos, Zócalo - "Public Square" in Spanish - seeks to create a non partisan and multiethnic forum where participants can enjoy a rare opportunity for intellectual fellowship.

THE MALTESE FALCON CULMINATING FILM SCREENING EVENT AT THE WARNER GRAND THEATRE

Rarely displayed in a theatrical setting, a 35mm print of the 1941 Warner Bros. film, *The Maltese Falcon* starring Humphrey Bogart, will be shown on the historic Warner Grand Theatre's 30 by 50 foot screen courtesy of Warner Bros. Classics. Preceding the film will be a presentation by family members and a noted Hammett scholar who will provide a behind-the-scenes introduction of the making of the film, and discuss relationships between Dashiell Hammett, John Huston, and Humphrey Bogart. In addition, film shorts from students in the Sony Pictures Media Arts Program and DCA's Canoga Park Youth Arts Center will be shown.

Date: Saturday, November 22, at 7:30 p.m.

Location: Warner Grand Theatre
 478 West 6th Street, San Pedro, CA 90731

Ages: All

Information: Please visit the theater website at www.warnergrand.org, or call the Box Office at 310.548.7672.

Cost: Tickets are \$10 for general admission, and \$5 for seniors over 60 and for students with valid identification. Tickets can be purchased online at www.warnergrand.org, or in person at the theater Box Office.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Special thanks to Dana Gioia and David Kipen from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and our other Los Angeles Big Read partners; our teachers and students; Julie Rivett and the Hammett Family; Richard Laymon, Vince Emory, Linda Dishman, and Trudi Sandmeier from the LA Conservancy; John K. Robinson from LAUSD; Warner Bros. Classics; Anne Messitte from Random House/Vintage Books; and David Lynch from Sacred Grounds Coffee House for all their efforts to realize this project.

