

LAUNCH

The Paul Auster Society was launched at the *British Association for American Studies* annual conference, 12-14 April 2023 at Keele University, UK. <https://baas.ac.uk/conferences/baas-2023/>
The Auster Panel was chaired by Aliko Varvogli.

Speakers:

1. I.B. Siegumfeldt, "Pleasure and Challenge: The Appeal of Paul Auster's Work"
2. François Hugonnier, "Paul Auster's coming-of-age, aging and ailing protagonists"
3. James Peacock, "Something sparkling and beautiful: Paul Auster, Property and Gentrification"

MEMBERSHIP

Anyone interested in Auster's work is warmly welcome here [Society Membership](#)

NEWS

Auster's new novel, *Baumgartner*, will come out at Grove Press in November 2023. It is a story about the contours of memory, the devastating effects of grief and the force of love: past, present and future. The heterogeneous narrative bears the classic imprints of Auster's writing: enchanting, dense yet crystal clear and tender, ever such a tender portrait of an ageing protagonist caught between white spaces flooded at once by memories of his beloved Anna Blume and exhilaration at the prospect of the arrival of a young critic of Anna's poetry.

A selection of Ostrander's photographs in his and Auster's *Bloodbath Nation* are exhibited at the *Rencontres de la Photographie* in Arles www.rencontres-arles.com/en/expositions/view/1508/spencer-ostrander-and-paul-auster

VISITING FELLOWS at [The Paul Auster Research Library](#)

In residence

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|-----------------------|--|
| 19 - 25 February 2023 | James Peacock, Reader in English and American Literatures and Research Director for School of Humanities, Keele University, UK |
| 2 - 26 May 2023 | François Hugonnier, Associate Professor of American Literature at the University of Angers, France |
| 1 - 30 October 2023 | Seth Murray, Ph.D. student, University of Rochester, New York |
| May 2024 | Aliko Varvogli, Head of Humanities and Senior Lecturer in American literature, University of Dundee, Scotland |

[More Information](#)

TALKS

Francois Hugonnier, “Voices and Silences: from Edmond Jabès to Paul Auster/Voix et silences: d’Edmond Jabès à Paul Auster,” 12th May 2023, University of Copenhagen, Denmark

[More information](#)

PUBLICATIONS (by core members)

Francois Hugonnier, *Les interdits de la représentation. Paul Auster, Jerome Rothenberg*, ed. Otrante, 2022, 647 p. Essai suivi d’entretiens avec Paul Auster et Jerome Rothenberg, ISBN: 979-10-97279-19-6.

FUTURE EVENTS

COLLOQUIUM: OPENING LINES IN PAUL AUSTER’S WORK

University of Copenhagen, May 2024 (date TBA) (online)

The Paul Auster Research Library and The Paul Auster Society

[The Paul Auster Research Library](#)

SPEAKERS

1. Jesús Gonzalez
2. Francois Hugonnier
3. James Peacock
4. I.B. Siegumfeldt
5. Alike Varvogli

ABSTRACT

Is the most important sentence in a book the first sentence? Is it that “everything follows from it,” as Paul Auster argues? “The first words have to stop the reader in his tracks and tell him that he’s in a different place now, that he’s entered the world of the book.” (Auster & Siegumfeldt, 2017: 219). Needless to say, a beginning cannot be understood in and of itself. It relates in multiple ways to what precedes it (e.g. language, culture, a canon, a set of critical and/or creative thoughts) and to what follows it (e.g. the narrative trajectory it announces, epitomizes, informs and/or determines). Opening lines take many forms that, each in their own way, implant, if only imperceptibly, certain expectations in the reader’s mind and invite us to approach the ensuing story in particular ways. They may work as a prelude, e.g. “According to family legend, Ferguson’s grandfather departed on foot from his native city of Minsk with one hundred rubles sewn into the lining of his jacket, traveled west to Hamburg through Warsaw and Berlin ...” (4321). They may be prognostic in that they depart from a past or present situation and herald future events as in “Mr. Bones knew that Willy wasn’t long for this world,” (*Timbuktu*) or “I shook his hand for the first time in the spring of 1967” (*Invisible*) or indeed operate within a retrospective frame of reference as in “It was the summer that men first walked on the moon” (*Moon Palace*) or “I was twelve years old the first time I walked on water” (*Mr. Vertigo*). First lines can also work metatextually by reflecting their own nature: “He lays out a piece of blank paper on the table before him and writes these words with his pen. It was. It will never be

again” (*The Book of Memory*), or “These are the last things, she wrote. One by one they disappear and never come back. I can tell you of the ones I have seen, of the ones that are no more, but I doubt there will be time. It is all happening too fast now, and I cannot keep up” (*In the Country of Last Things*). With special focus on the conceptual and emotional power concentrated in narrative beginnings, this colloquium will look at Paul Auster’s verbal and visual work with a view to addressing such questions as: How do first lines affect and/or inform the story they open? To what do they refer? How do we respond to different types of verbal inception? Is there congruency between beginning and ending?

WORKSHOP: “Translating Paul Auster”

Spring 2025, University of Angers, France

Paul Auster reminded us recently (NY, 2019) that writing starts with translation. According to him, and in line with his Modernist predecessor Ezra Pound, translating is a bridge between reading and writing, that he experienced when adjusting to other writers’ voices and cadences leading to his own. In his formative years, Paul Auster notably translated Twentieth-century French poets, but also works by Mallarmé and Blanchot. Translation is also a recurrent topic in his books of fiction and non-fiction. Therefore, this conference hosted by the University of Angers aims at discussing the theme of translation within the work of Paul Auster, but also the actual translation of his body of work in more than forty languages. We would like to invite specialists and translators of Auster’s work to partake in a broad discussion on creative writing and translation in the form of talks, workshops, and round tables. For more information, please contact the organizing committee: François Hugonnier (francois.hugonnier@univ-angers.fr) and Aliko Varvogli (A.Varvogli@dundee.ac.uk)



