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**Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts  
and Writers Bloc**

**Present**

***AN EVENING WITH AUTHOR JANE SMILEY***

**Moderated by David Ulin**

**Pulitzer Prize-Winning Author Takes a Deep Dive into Her Latest Work,  
*The Questions That Matter Most***

**Thursday, June 15, 2023, 7:30 PM**

(Beverly Hills, CA, May 31, 2023) – The Wallis Annenberg Center for the Arts and Writers Bloc present “An Evening with Jane Smiley,” featuring David Ulin moderating a conversation with the Pulitzer Prize-winning author about her latest work, *The Questions That Matter Most*, on Thursday, June 15, 2023, 7:30 pm, at The Wallis’ Lovelace Studio Theater. In the book, Smiley reflects on the literature that has meant the most to her—from Icelandic sagas to Mark Twain, from *Little Women* to Jessica Mitford and Harriet Beecher Stowe. She explores what connects us to the stories we love, and why. It is the acclaimed novelist’s first non-fiction work on writing since her 2005 best-seller, *Thirteen Ways to Look at the Novel*.

One of the country’s preeminent writers, Smiley is the author of numerous novels, including *A Thousand Acres*, which was awarded the Pulitzer Prize, the *Last Hundred Years Trilogy: Some*

*Luck, Early Warning, and Golden Age*. Her novel *Horse Heaven* was shortlisted for the Orange Prize, and *Some Luck* was longlisted for the National Book Award. Most recently, she authored *The Questions That Matter Most: Reading, Writing, and the Exercise of Freedom*. A member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, she has also received the PEN Center USA Lifetime Achievement Award for Literature. She lives in Northern California.

Ulin is the author or editor of ten books, including *Sidewalking: Coming to Terms with Los Angeles* (University of California Press, 2015), shortlisted for the PEN/Diamonstein- Spielvogel Award for the Art of the Essay; *The Lost Art of Reading: Books and Resistance in a Troubled Time* (Sasquatch Books, 2018), and *Writing Los Angeles: A Literary Anthology* (Library of America, 2002), which won a California Book Award. He is currently editing the *Collected Works of Joan Didion* for the Library of America. The former book editor and book critic of the *Los Angeles Times*, he has also written for *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Harper's*, *The New Yorker*, *The Nation*, *The New York Times*, National Public Radio's "All Things Considered" and more. He teaches at the University of Southern California and lives in Los Angeles.

Tickets, \$25-\$35, are on sale now. The Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts is located at 9390 N. Santa Monica Blvd, Beverly Hills. To purchase tickets and for more information, please call 310-746-4000 or visit <https://thewallis.org/smiley>

The health and safety of patrons, staff, and artists inside and outside the venue are a top priority for The Wallis. Masks are optional, and proof of full COVID vaccination is no longer required; however, guests are welcome to wear masks in our spaces.

The Wallis' health and safety protocols are also subject to change at the venue's sole discretion or in accordance with LA County and City of Beverly Hills regulations. Current Health & Safety Protocols and updates may also be accessed at [TheWallis.org/Safety](https://thewallis.org/Safety). Policies are subject to change.

#### **About Writers Bloc**

Writers Bloc is a nonprofit literary series dedicated to bringing to Los Angeles our favorite writers and thinkers, as they discuss their ideas with other interesting personalities. Writers Bloc is now in its 19th season, and has hosted many of the most influential voices, who have made a significant impact on our cultural and literary landscape. Writers Bloc seeks to expand the general public's access to and understanding of literature through community-based programs featuring writers, thinkers, public figures and others in conversation about fictional and nonfictional work, and to create and foster opportunities for dialogue and interaction between the general public and writers, thinkers, public figures or others about reading, writing, literature, the literary process, the role and relationship of literature to music, film and other media, and the relevance and impact of literature on modern society.

#### **About the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts:**

Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts is a dynamic cultural hub and community resource where local, national and international artists share their artistry with ever-expanding audiences. The campus, located in the heart of Beverly Hills, CA, is committed to robust and distinctive presentations and education programs curated with both creativity and social impact in mind. Distinguished by its eclectic programming that mirrors the diverse landscape of Los Angeles and its location in the entertainment capital of the world, The Wallis has produced and presented more than 350 theater, dance, music, film, cabaret, conversation, and family entertainment programs since its doors opened in October 2013. Hailed as "au courant" (*LaLa Magazine*), The Wallis was lauded by *Culture Vulture*, which proclaims, "If you love expecting the unexpected in the performing arts, you have to love The Wallis." Its programming has been nominated for 79 Ovation Awards and nine L.A. Drama Critic's Circle Awards. The campus itself, a breathtaking 70,000-

square-foot facility, celebrating the classic and the modern, has garnered six architectural awards. Designed by acclaimed architect Zoltan E. Pali (SPF:architects), the restored building features the original 1933 Beverly Hills Post Office (on the National Register of Historic Places), which serves as the theater's dramatic yet welcoming lobby, and includes the contemporary 500-seat, state-of-the-art Bram Goldsmith Theater; the 150-seat Lovelace Studio Theater; an inviting open-air plaza for family, community and other performances; and GRoW @ The Wallis: A Space for Arts Education, where learning opportunities for all ages and backgrounds abound. Together, these elements embrace the city's history and its future, creating a performing arts destination for L.A.-area visitors and residents alike. The Wallis is led by Michael Nemeroff Chairman of The Wallis' Board of Directors, and Robert van Leer, Executive Director and CEO.

For more information about The Wallis, please visit: [TheWallis.org](http://TheWallis.org).

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**EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:**

**WHAT:**

**Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts and Writers Bloc**

Present

**AN EVENING WITH AUTHOR JANE SMILEY**

(in conjunction with the release of her newest work, *The Questions That Matter Most*)

**Moderated by David Ulin**

**WHEN:**

Thursday, June 15, 2023, 7:30 PM

**WHERE:**

Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts

Lovelace Studio Theater

9390 N. Santa Monica Boulevard

Beverly Hills, CA 90210

**RUN TIME:**

Approximately 90 minutes, no intermission

**TICKET PRICES AND INFORMATION:**

\$25 - \$35

(prices subject to change)

310-746-4000 (Monday – Friday, 10 am to 6 pm)

<https://thewallis.org/smiley>

310-746-4000 (Monday – Friday, 10 am to 6 pm)

**PLEASE NOTE:**

Due to current health and safety variables, the engagement or select performances are subject to change, postponement or cancellation.

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