

**MAINE  
HUMANITIES  
COUNCIL**  
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@MaineHumanities  
#MaineHumanities



**FALL  
2023**

# JOIN THE DISCUSSION



Photo: Michelle Schupp



# LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Executive Director Samaa Abdurraqib welcomes  
attendeess at Readers Retreat 2023. Photo: Michelle Shupp



As we step away from 2023 and toward 2024, we are getting ourselves geared up to tackle the question that will frame all of our work for the coming year: “What do we hold on to? What do we let go?” I’m struck by what a powerful question that is as we say goodbye to 2023, a year that moved us further away from the height of the pandemic but left us feeling the continued weight of COVID uncertainty, political uncertainty, and most recently, unspeakable violence both locally and globally.

We will continue to hold tight onto our faith in the humanities to bring people together and to help us more fully understand each other. One way to more fully understand each other is to dive into the histories and stories that define our communities and the places we live. In 2024, Maine Humanities will be working on developing a Community History program – a program that will combine historical research and public storytelling. Developing this new offering will be a slow, intentional process, and we hope that this work will provide us with new ways to connect with new partners and new communities.

In 2024, we will continue holding onto our sense of the expansiveness of Maine and our commitment to develop deeper engagements throughout the state. As a part of that commitment, we are hosting both of our public programs – The Big Question and Readers Retreat – in Bangor next year. These are programs we’ve traditionally hosted in southern Maine, a tradition we are happily letting go of in favor of making our programs more accessible to people in other parts of the state. These two programs will still be presented in a hybrid manner, giving folks from all across the state an opportunity to participate.

This past year, we asked “What if we go on this way?” which gave us space to talk about continued grief, loss, and the inequitable systems that shape our lives here in Maine and the US. We look to 2024 to bring us deep, expansive connections that will help us create and dream of new futures to hold onto.

Samaa Abdurraqib  
Executive Director

# OUR ANNUAL EVENTS

*will be in and around Bangor in 2024*

## THE BIG QUESTION - February 24 | BANGOR

### **What do we hold onto? What do we let go?**

Meet a team of extraordinary guides from in and around Bangor; think and talk through this Big Question with others in the beautiful spaces at Bangor Arts Exchange or online; participate in a one-of-a-kind event with lunch and cake provided; What do we hold onto? What do we let go?

## READERS RETREAT - April 5-6 | ORONO

### **There There by Tommy Orange**

Join three thoughtful, dynamic, Indigenous writers and thinkers as they respond to and reflect on Tommy Orange’s riveting novel *There There*; connect with fellow participants over dinner on Friday evening; join the speakers and others in facilitated discussions on Saturday; chat over lunch; dive into one incredible book in a way that’s nourishing, inspiring, humbling.

Registration opens January 2024. Learn more at [mainehumanities.org](https://mainehumanities.org)

## NOMINATE A HUMANITIES HERO

### *for our 2024 Public Humanities Prize*

Maine Humanities is eagerly accepting nominations for the 2024 Constance H. Carlson Public Humanities Prize, awarded to a Maine resident who has connected and empowered people in Maine through the public humanities. Nominate now through December 31, 2023.

**Learn more and submit your nomination  
at [mainehumanities.org](https://mainehumanities.org)**



2022 Constance H. Carlson Public Humanities Prize-winners  
Joseph Jackson (left) and Carol Dana (right)

## INSPIRE AND EMPOWER

*Supporting Maine Humanities Council  
statewide programming shares books and  
discussions that deepen knowledge, broaden  
perspectives, and change lives all over Maine.*

Gifts to the Maine Humanities Council help fund books, facilitators, speakers, and staff who make possible the Discussion Project, Maine Speaks, Readers Retreat, the Big Question, and other programs throughout Maine.

**Online:** [mainehumanities.org](https://mainehumanities.org)

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