

"Chocolat" Author Comes to D.C.

British author Joanne Harris, author of "Chocolat," is coming to D.C. May 4 to present her new book "The Girl with No Shadow."

Three years after her novel "Chocolat," in which chocolatier Vianne Rocher turned a French village upside down became a bestseller, the screen adaptation co-starring French actress Juliette Binoche and movie star Johnny Depp, was nominated for several Oscars.

Now, "Chocolat" fans can indulge in "The Girl with No Shadow," which catches up with Vianne and her daughters five years later, as they try to start a new life in the Montmartre neighborhood of Paris. For more information, please visit: www.la-maison-francaise.org.

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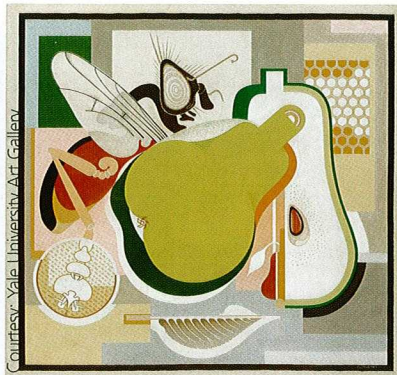
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France in America

Modernist Iconic "It" Couple on Display in New Haven

Currently on display at the Yale University Art Gallery in New Haven, CT, "Making It New: The Art and Style of Sara and Gerald Murphy" is a special exhibition that explores the modernist influence of these American expatriates. Running until May 4, the exhibit is the first to explore the couple's relationships with some iconic figures of the avant-garde circles of Paris during the 1920s.

When Sara and Gerald Murphy moved to France in 1921, they settled in Cap d'Antibes, a fishing village on the French Riviera. In their new house, Villa America, they hoped to escape the conservatism from back home. Their legendary lifestyle and "joie de vivre" invigorated many other artists, writers, and musicians of the time including F. Scott Fitzgerald, Fernand Léger, Pablo Picasso, and Ernest Hemingway. From sun-



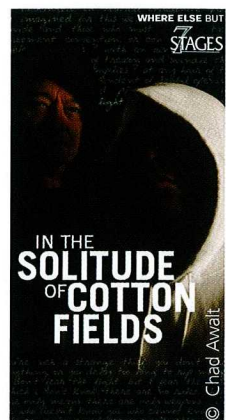
"Wasp and Pear," by Gerald Murphy, is on display at Yale University Art Gallery.

bathing on the sands of the Riviera to inspiring Picasso paintings, the Murphys kindled the sparks that set off new and fashionable trends.

An artist himself, Gerald Murphy's work has received much praise from contemporary French critics and is often said to anticipate the Pop Art movement. The Yale exhibit displays seven of his surviving canvases, revealing his unique style that blends realism and abstraction. Paintings, watercolors, drawings, and photographs by artists within his circle—Picasso, Léger, Juan Gris, and Amedée Ozenfant—accompany Murphy's work for the first time.

Sara's creative flair for making life into art also translated into creations of her own, such as her delicate costume designs that were an important contribution to the ballet "Within the Quota." For more information, please visit: www.artgallery.yale.edu.

Koltès Classics Come to Life in Atlanta, Georgia



"In the Solitude of Cotton Fields" debuts April 24.

Atlanta theater group 7 Stages is hosting the world premiere production adapted to an American audience of "Dans la solitude des champs de coton" ("In the Solitude of Cotton Fields") by the highly acclaimed French playwright Bernard-Marie Koltès. Atlanta actor and translator Isma'il ibn Conner has undertaken the translation of the play, and has teamed up with Artistic Director of 7 Stages Del Hamilton to interpret it. Co-produced by CDDB—Théâtre de Lorient, the play explores two aspects of one entity and the

powerful interaction of two men who are more familiar than they appear. Directed by Eric Vigner, a leading French theater director and artistic director of CDDB—Théâtre de Lorient, "In the Solitude of Cotton Fields" opens April 24 and runs through May 18, 2008.

This production marks the beginning of the U.S. Koltès Project, a ten-year program established to translate and produce six of Koltès' plays: "In the Solitude of Cotton Fields," "The Day of Murders in the History of Hamlet" ("Le Jour des meurtres dans l'histoire d'Hamlet"), "Sallinger," "The Night Just Before the Forests" ("La Nuit juste avant les forêts"), "Tabataba and Quay West" ("Quai Ouest"). Beginning with the 2008 production of "In the Solitude of Cotton Fields," 7 Stages will present a world premiere translation of each work every other year through 2018 filling each off year with residencies at national and international universities.

For more information, please visit: www.7stages.org.

NEWS FROM FRANCE

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France Takes Initiative at 20th NATO Summit

Heads of State and high-ranking officials from the North Atlantic Council convened in Bucharest, Romania, for the 20th NATO Summit held from April 2 to 4. The summit also brought together, for the first time, the leaders from the 40 countries participating in the NATO-led operation in Afghanistan with Afghan President Hamid Karzai, and Secretary-General of NATO Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, as well as officials from the European Union and other international organizations.

France has responded to NATO's call for more troops by pledging to send an additional battalion to eastern Afghanistan, adding approximately 700 troops to France's current contingent of 1,600 in the country. The troop increase is part of France's commitment to Afghanistan. French President Nicolas Sarkozy also announced that France would take command of the central region of Afghanistan beginning this summer. President Sarkozy declared in November before the US Congress that France would "remain engaged [for] as long as it takes," explaining that "what's at stake in that country is the future of our values and of the Atlantic Alliance."

President Sarkozy has also indicated that France would continue the renovation of



Presidents Karzai (Afghanistan) and Sarkozy (France) met at the 20th NATO Summit.

its relationship with NATO as European Defense moves forward. He proposed that the 60th Anniversary NATO Summit take place in 2009 in Strasbourg and Kehl, to reinforce NATO and ESDP, and to conclude the process engaged by France. This move would accompany the development of the European Security and Defense Policy (ESPD), which has won the approval of the United States.

President Bush strongly affirmed at the NATO Summit that the European Union needs to be a strong and effective actor on the international stage and encouraged European nations to develop the resources and steps needed to strengthen their defense capabilities, which must be robust and flexible enough to support both NATO and EU operations. President Bush recalled that America supports a strong Europe because it needs a strong partner in the hard work of advancing freedom in the world. "A stronger Europe contributes to European and global security and stability."

Strengthening the ESPD is one of President Sarkozy's goals for France's six-month EU presidency, which begins on July 1.

France Bids Farewell to Its Last "Poilu"



France's last surviving WWI veteran, Lazare Ponticelli, received a state funeral in Paris on March 17.

France recently lamented the loss of its last surviving World War I veteran, who died on March 12 at age 110. Lazare Ponticelli was one of 8.4 million French WWI soldiers, called *poilus*. The nickname, meaning

"hairy one," refers both to the beards worn by the soldiers in the trenches and to their toughness and bravery.

Corporal Frank Woodruff Buckles, age 107, is the last surviving American veteran of the Great War to have served in a combat zone. Cpl. Buckles was awarded the Legion of Honor, France's highest decoration, by then-President Jacques Chirac in 1999.

Lazare Ponticelli was born on December 7, 1897, in Bettola, Italy, but left his birthplace at a young age for Paris, where he found work as a chimney sweep and paper boy. When the war broke out in 1914, Ponticelli volunteered to fight for France as a way of thanking the country that had welcomed him. Only 16-years-old, he lied about his age to join the French Foreign Legion and served on the front lines at Argonne and Verdun. After the War, Ponticelli returned to France and started a piping company with his brothers. He became a French citizen in 1939.

In a statement issued on March 12, French President Nicolas Sarkozy

expressed France's sorrow over the loss and honored the contributions made by Ponticelli as well as all the soldiers of WWI: "Lazare Ponticelli thought he owed a lot to France. I affirm today that it is our country which owes a debt to him. [...] It is to him and his generation that we owe in large part the peaceful Europe. It is up to us to be worthy of it."

Ponticelli was given a state funeral at the Saint-Louis des Invalides cathedral in Paris on March 17. That day was also designated a national day of homage for all the combatants of World War I, including more than 50,000 American soldiers who gave their lives fighting alongside the French. "It is our duty," President Sarkozy declared, "to place on record our grateful thanks to all the combatants, of all ranks, of all origins, of all faiths, who gave France the victory." Ponticelli and the soldiers of World War I were honored throughout France and worldwide through France's diplomatic network. At the Embassy of France in Washington, D.C., flags stood at half-mast and a formal ceremony was held during which staff observed a moment of silence in memory of those who fought.

Embassy Gives Web Site a Facelift

The Embassy of France in the United States will soon launch a new version of its Web site (www.ambafrance-us.org) designed to streamline communication about France with the American public. The new Web site is based on a content management system (CMS), allowing it to be updated more rapidly. The new site integrates recent improvements in Web applications and the internet, notably, the extensive use of audiovisual multimedia—an addition now possible thanks to faster internet connections.

A central aspect of the new site is the video center, "Ambafrance-us TV." This section provides a broad range of clips about the embassy and its events, featuring coverage of French ministerial visits, Ambassador Pierre Vimont's activities, and cultural events organized by La Maison Française, as well as a virtual tour of the embassy. Videos of certain French officials' speeches—President Sarkozy's annual UN address or his Bastille Day speech, for example—will also be available.

The embassy's Web site is the most visited French embassy Web site in the world, with one million visitors per month.

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