**ASMCF Report**

**Passages**

On Friday and Saturday 26th and 27th May 2023, the UCD School of Languages, Cultures and Linguistics (UCD SLCL) hosted an international hybrid conference on the theme of “Passages” in Francophone contexts. The conference was organised by Dr Charlotte Berkery (UCD) and Dr Laëtitia Saint-Loubert (UCD) and was generously supported and funded by the ASMCF, the Society for French Studies, the UCD School of Languages, Cultures and Linguistics, the UCD Thresholds of Knowledge research network, the UCD College of Arts and Humanities, the Embassy of Belgium in Ireland and the Embassy of France in Ireland. The event brought together 24 in-person attendees and 16 online participants.

The conference sought to interrogate the multiplicity of meanings associated with ‘passages’ (spatial/temporal movements, textual transfers, rural, urban and transoceanic interpretations, as well as environmental readings) and included contributions pertaining to the French and Francophone world and encompassing as broad an historical range as possible. It moved beyond the traditional dissociation of French and Francophone Studies, instead including France as one of a multiplicity of Francospheres, thereby demonstrating an outward-looking and decentred approach to the discipline.

The conference was a truly international event that brought together scholars and artists from Ireland, the UK, Canada, the USA, the Caribbean (Martinique and Trinidad), Germany, Belgium, Algeria, Poland, Bulgaria and France. This was made possible thanks to the hybrid format of the event. The two languages used during the event, French and English, further contributed to collaboration across disciplines and institutions. This was also evidenced by presenters whose expertise in related fields, such as philosophy or architecture, generated a further decentred approach to French and Francophone Studies. Overall, presenters and attendees included colleagues at various stages of their academic careers, enabling connections between graduate students, ECRs, mid-career and senior researchers.

The conference opened with speeches in Irish, French and English by Dr Síofra Pierse, the Head of the UCD SCLC, H.E. Mrs Karen Van Vlierberge, the Ambassador of Belgium in Ireland, and Mrs Mariam Diallo, from the Embassy of France in Ireland. Direct links were established between the “Passages” conference and a forthcoming joint conference on “Migration” co-organised by the EPIC Museum of Dublin and the French National Museum of the History of Immigration. The keynote was delivered by Professor Mary Orr (Buchanan Chair of French, University of Saint Andrews) on Day 1. Her paper, “‘Critical Aquacultures’: Mapping the Spaces of Interdisciplinary Confluence for Francophone Studies”opened up a dialogue across disciplines, time, space, languages and the human/non-human realms that generated echoes with the closing roundtable on “Pasay” in a Caribbean context. The roundtable on Day 2 took the form of an organic discussion between writer Roger Parsemain, poet-scholar Hanétha Vété-Congolo and visual artist Valérie John. The three speakers addressed the notion of “Pasay” in relation to their work and embodied experiences as Martinican beings, and further established connections between the inter-relatedness of their artistic practices.

The conference was a success that garnered positive reviews from participants, speakers and attendees. The event has been advertised on the UCD SCLCL website on a dedicated [webpage](https://www.ucd.ie/slcl/newsandevents/slclconferencesandevents/passages2023/), through the FRANCOFIL and Adeffi mailing lists, as well as on social media (tweets were posted on Twitter prior, during and after the conference using the #UCDPassages2023 hashtag). The UCD IT Services photographer was also invited to take part in the event and created photographs that will be used to further advertise the outcomes of the event on the UCD SLCL website. We anticipate the following additional outcome of the conference: the bilingual publication of a special double issue on the theme of “Passages” based on the papers delivered at the conference for an international, peer-reviewed journal.