



Libraries through the lens

Richard J. Riordan Central Library, Los Angeles Public Library

INSPIRATION for this month's Libraries through the lens comes from events in Washington last month. A new President delivered a speech that spoke of unity and hope – but for many it was 22-year-old poet Amanda Gorman who stole the show.

Canada-based librarian and photographer, Thomas Guignard, was one among many to be taken by the words of the poet, and this month's image is a reflection of that. Thomas says: "On 20 January of this year, most of the world's attention was turned towards Washington D.C. for the inauguration of Joe Biden as the 46th president of the United States. Among the pomp and circumstance, star-studded performances and almost audible global sigh of relief at the overall

normalcy of the event, one act stood out.

"Rarely have I witnessed a more powerful, poignant and yet hopeful sight than that of national youth poet laureate Amanda Gorman reciting her poem *The Hill We Climb*. The pandemic is still raging on, deep political divisions the world over and uncertain economic outlooks are still sources of acute concern, but for a brief moment, hope took the shape of this 22-year-old woman speaking of unity and healing.

"The Los Angeles Public Library, pictured here during my visit in 2018, played a pivotal role in Gorman's literary career. In 2014, at the age of 16, she became the city's first youth poet laureate, an event sponsored and organised by the library.

"The Los Angeles Public Library is itself

a powerful symbol of hope and rebuilding, having closely escaped total destruction by fire in 1986, as told in Susan Orlean's *The Library Book*. One of the most impressive features of the original building, designed by Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue and completed in 1926, is the rotunda and its colourful murals. Crowning this expansive space is the Zodiac chandelier, which represent the Earth surrounded in a ring of light.

"To represent the grandeur of this space and to draw the eye upwards, I chose to depart from my usual horizontal perspective and tilted my camera towards the ceiling. I hope that this image will inspire all readers of *Information Professional* to look up, metaphorically, and enter this new year full of hope and courage."