



Power relations – the politics of being human

Monday 2 November

Humanitarians, authors, satirists and poets will join the UK's only national festival of the humanities this November to highlight the astonishing breadth and depth of the UK's academic research communities through a focus on the politics of being human.

'Politics enshrines people's struggles and experiences. From the edge of despair to the inspiring struggles of refugees carving new lives in sometimes hostile surroundings as we see on our TV screens,' said Being Human festival participant Terry Waite, the hostage negotiator who spent almost five years in total solitary confinement after being captured by Lebanon-based extremists.

Led by the School of Advanced Study, University of London in partnership with the Arts & Humanities Research Council, the British Academy and the Wellcome Trust, this year's Being Human festival brings a range of events focusing on political issues running from 12–22 November, including:

- [Survival in Solitude](#) at the University of Aberdeen
While Terry Waite has consistently shown a reluctance to talk about his experience, the English humanitarian and author puts his head above the parapet to discuss how he retained his humanity under such extreme conditions and will also draw some conclusions for living in the so-called 'normal' world.
- [Gillray's Ghost](#) at the University of Kent
Taking as his cue the recent demonstrations of the political clout of graphic satire, *Guardian* cartoonist Martin Rowson will debate the impact of graphic satire on British politics. 'Personally, I believe satire is a survival mechanism to stop us all going mad at the horror and injustice of it all by inducing us to laugh instead of weep,' said Martin Rowson. 'More simply, satire serves to remind those who've placed themselves above us that they, like us, shit and they, too, will die.'
- [Writing human rights](#) at the University of East Anglia
In Norwich, human rights go under the microscope, as Professor Dame Marina Warner, academic and writer of fiction, criticism and history, will explain how displaced and exiled peoples have used literature to help them deal with challenges, and what we can learn from them today. Reading some of his own poems and those of others, award-winning Hungarian-born poet George Szirtes will analyse the role of poetry in freedom of expression.
- [Radical New Cross](#) at Goldsmiths, University of London
From radical parish priests to anti-fascist resistance, Goldsmiths will use the south-east London district as an anchor to explore marginalised histories. One event involves an artistic workshop where black women will tell, or write, the stories behind their own small examples of black radical memorabilia to reveal forgotten histories and reconfirm our humanity.

This is just a sample of the more than 300 events on offer at Being Human 2015. For more politically themed events, please visit beinghumanfestival.org/politicsevents2015. Other themes explored include diversity, technology and science, health and arts and culture. See beinghumanfestival.org/press for more information on these themes.

Find out more about the festival at www.beinghumanfestival.org and follow the latest news on Twitter at @BeingHumanFest.

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Notes to Editors:

1. **For further information**, please contact: Maureen McTaggart, Media and Public Relations Officer, School of Advanced Study, University of London +44 (0)20 7862 8653 / Maureen.mctaggart@sas.ac.uk.
2. **Being Human: a festival of the humanities** 12–22 November 2015. Led by the School of Advanced Study, University of London, in partnership with the Arts & Humanities Research Council and the British Academy, Being Human is a national forum for public engagement with humanities research. The festival will highlight the ways in which the humanities can inspire and enrich our everyday lives, help us to understand ourselves, our relationships with others, and the challenges we face in a changing world, and foster world-class knowledge that is vibrant, vital, and accessible to all. For more information, please visit www.beinghumanfestival.org or follow the festival on Twitter at @BeingHumanFest
3. **The School of Advanced Study (SAS)**, University of London, is the UK's national centre for the promotion and support of research in the humanities and celebrates its 20th anniversary in 2015. It was officially opened on 15 March 1995, by Sir Anthony Kenny as a federation of the University of London's research institutes and, since then, has established itself as the UK's national humanities hub, publicly funded to support and promote research in the humanities nationally and internationally. SAS and its member institutes offer unparalleled academic opportunities, facilities and stimulation across a wide range of subject areas for the benefit of the national and international scholarly community. In 2013-14, SAS: welcomed 743 research fellows and associates; held 2,081 research dissemination events; received 26.4 million visits to its digital research resources and platforms; and received 202,891 visits to its specialist libraries and collections. The School also leads the UK's only nationwide festival of the humanities: Being Human. Find out more at www.sas.ac.uk or follow SAS on Twitter at @SASNews
4. **The Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC)** funds world-class, independent researchers in a wide range of subjects: ancient history, modern dance, archaeology, digital content, philosophy, English literature, design, the creative and performing arts, and much more. This financial year the AHRC will spend approximately £98m to fund research and postgraduate training in collaboration with a number of partners. The quality and range of research supported by this investment of public funds not only provides social and cultural benefits but also contributes to the economic success of the UK. www.ahrc.ac.uk
5. **The British Academy** is the UK's expert body that supports and speaks for the humanities and social sciences – that rich variety of disciplines that study peoples, cultures and societies, past, present and future. It funds research across the UK and in other parts of the world, in disciplines ranging from archaeology to economics, from psychology to history, and from literature to law. The British Academy seeks to raise understanding of some of the biggest challenges of our time through policy reports, forums, conferences, publications and public events. The Academy receives around £30m a year in Government grants to support its work. But it operates autonomously as a Fellowship of more than 1,000 of the world's most eminent scholars in the humanities and social sciences, elected for their outstanding research. For more information, please visit www.britishacademy.ac.uk. Follow the British Academy on Twitter @britac_news.
6. **The Wellcome Trust** is a global charitable foundation dedicated to improving health. We provide more than £700 million a year to support bright minds in science, the humanities and the social sciences, as well as education, public engagement and the application of research to medicine. www.wellcome.ac.uk