

## Whatever you believe, it's all part of Being Human

Whatever you can imagine, it's a fair bet that someone, somewhere believes it. And the 'Beliefs' strand of Being Human 2018 is packed with fascinating insights into subjects from 'First Contact' with aliens through to folk practices, children's myths and ancient religions such as Zoroastrianism.

Led by the School of Advanced Study, University of London, in partnership with the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the British Academy, Being Human, now in its fifth year, is a public engagement event par excellence. It is the time when the UK's humanities researchers come together to share their work with the public, and it highlights beliefs through a range of activities running from 15–24 November. They include:

- [First Contact: Imagining Aliens and Strangers](#), a talk with Dr David Sergeant, a lecturer in English at the University of Plymouth who will discuss the concept of utopias by looking at the traditional trope of travelling to strange lands, where travellers make contact with advanced civilisations (19 November, 6.15–7.15pm).
- [Once Upon a Time, the End](#) gives visitors in Swansea the chance to meet Old Peter and listen to stories about Baba Yaga, the witch with iron teeth, the little daughter of the snow and more! It's a performance organised by Professor D J Britton and Theatr Cadair to bring Arthur Ransome's '*Old Peter's Russian Tales*' to life on stage (24 November, 3-7pm). See also [Our Mythical Childhood](#), an exhibition showcasing illustrations of myths in children's literature, and producing more with children (15–24 November, 9am–6pm).
- [Living Zoroastrianism: A Virtual Reality Experience](#) at the Brunei Gallery, SOAS, will allow participants to immerse themselves in a rare and ancient Zoroastrian ritual in virtual reality and listen to Zoroastrians from Iran speaking in their local dialect (15–24 November, 10.30am-5pm).
- [Folk – a MERL Late](#) at the Museum of English Rural Life, University of Reading, will explore everything from folktales and wolf lore to adultery, rough music and religious pilgrimage (20 November, 7–10pm).

Now embedded as the UK's unique national celebration of the humanities, Being Human's reach is also going global with related events in Melbourne, Singapore, Paris, Rome, and in Princeton, New Jersey, USA.

This is just a sample of some of the 250 free-to-attend public events on offer by more than 73 universities, research organisations and cultural and community groups in and around 50 towns and cities across the UK. The 'Beliefs' strand is one of five - the others are Politics and Protest; Science; Technology; and Culture.

Find out more about the festival at <https://beinghumanfestival.org> and follow the latest news on Twitter at [@BeingHumanFest](https://twitter.com/BeingHumanFest).

### Ends

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](mailto:Maureen.mctaggart@sas.ac.uk).
2. **Being Human: a festival of the humanities 15–24 November 2018**  
Led by the School of Advanced Study, University of London, in partnership with the Arts and 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.
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. SAS and its member institutes offer unparalleled resources, facilities and academic opportunities across a wide range of subject areas for

the benefit of the national and international scholarly community. Last year SAS welcomed 786 research fellows and associates, held 2,007 events highlighting the latest research in the humanities, received 24.4 million online visits to its research resources and platforms, and hosted 194,145 visits to its specialist libraries and collections. The School also leads Being Human, the UK's only nationwide festival of the humanities. Find out more at [www.sas.ac.uk](http://www.sas.ac.uk) or follow SAS on Twitter at [@SASNews](https://twitter.com/SASNews).

4. **The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)** funds world-class, independent researchers in a wide range of subjects: history, archaeology, digital content, philosophy, languages, design, heritage, area studies, 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 to the economic success of the UK but also to the culture and welfare of societies around the globe. Visit us at: <https://ahrc.ukri.org>, on Twitter at [@ahrcpress](https://twitter.com/ahrcpress), on Facebook at Arts and Humanities Research Council, or Instagram at [@ahrcpress](https://www.instagram.com/ahrcpress).
5. **The British Academy** is the voice of the humanities and social sciences. The Academy is an independent fellowship of world-leading scholars and researchers; a funding body for research, nationally and internationally; and a forum for debate and engagement. For more information, please visit [www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk](http://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk) or call [020 7969 5273](tel:02079695273). Follow the British Academy on Twitter [@BritishAcademy](https://twitter.com/BritishAcademy)
6. **The University of London** is a federal university and is one of the oldest, largest and most diverse universities in the UK. Established by Royal Charter in 1836, the university is recognised globally as a world leader in higher education. Its members are 18 self-governing institutions of outstanding reputation, and nine research institutes. Learn more about the University of London at <http://www.london.ac.uk>.