

Human by design – formulas for Being Human

There are those who think that Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* blockbuster is merely a horror tale. But it's also a cutting-edge science fiction parable, even today, (see 'Your DNA, Your History?' *below*) foreseeing the ethical issues that science encounters in fields like DNA and genetics.

And the idea that science and the humanities are somehow completely mutually exclusive is undermined by the Science strand of this year's Being Human festival which includes 'My First Death', a fascinating discussion for healthcare professionals dealing with mortality.

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 takes place from 15–24 November with the theme of 'Origins and Endings'. It's when universities, research organisations, and cultural and community groups, demonstrate their commitment to public engagement by sharing trailblazing research with the public.

Highlights from the Science strand include:

- [My First Death](#) – so how do healthcare professionals cope with death? In what ways do deaths affect them? The Royal College of Nursing (Queen Mary University of London) will stage a frank and candid conversation about death, dying and mourning in the modern health service, and how the humanities can help (16 November, 5.30–7.30pm).
- [Making Monsters!](#) Part of series of Frankenstein related activities at the University of Dundee, this exciting take-over of the Dundee Science Centre offers a day of monstrous pop-up activities, including crafts, 'Frankenstein-me' drawing, performances, face-painting and more. Suitable for all ages (17 November, 10am–4pm).
- [Creating Ourselves: Humans Designing Humans](#) – an interdisciplinary panel event organised by research publisher Palgrave Macmillan, that explores what it means to Be Human in an age of rapid scientific advance, 'designer babies' and genetic editing. Should we allow ourselves to create bespoke human embryos? What has history taught us about trying to create a master race? (20 November, 6.30–9pm).
- [Before the NHS: Discovering East London's Medical Past](#) - the launch event for the Walking Map of East London's Medical Past. The free map can be collected from any of the Queen Mary University of London sites throughout Being Human and the walk can be done at any time (19 November, 5.30–7pm).
- [Your DNA, Your history?](#) Have you had your DNA tested for family history? Does having your DNA tested change the way you think about the past? How do we think about our past using science? Should we be worried about sharing our biodata for genealogy? This University of Manchester workshop introduces ways that your DNA connects to your past (17 November, 10am–1pm)

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 'Science' strand is one of five – the others are Politics and protest; Technology; Culture; 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.

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 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 or call 020 7969 5273. 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>.