

Being Human festival launches 2018 'Origins and Endings' programme

It's time for the annual Being Human festival, now in its fifth year, when universities throughout the UK open their doors to share their innovative humanities research with the public.

Run by the School of Advanced Study, University of London, in partnership with the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the British Academy, the festival will take place from 15–24 November. Now embedded as the UK's unique national celebration of the humanities, its reach is now global with related events in Melbourne, Singapore, Paris, Rome, and in Princeton, New Jersey, USA.

This major event's [2018 UK programme](#), unveiled today, reveals that this year's theme, 'Origins and Endings', has inspired unusual events that draw on innovative and engaged humanities research, including those at our six festival 'hubs' in the universities of Dundee, Exeter, Newcastle, Nottingham, Queen Mary London and Swansea. Activities range from the topical to the 'out there' and they're all thought provoking, entertaining and enriching.

One example is the number [29 Routemaster](#) bus journey, which traces the 50-year movement of London's Greek Cypriot community, through their voices and stories, from the city's West End through Camden Town, Finsbury Park and on to Enfield Town. It's a tale that chimes closely with the 'origins and endings' theme of Being Human.

If you are looking for suspense, mystery and horror, the [University of Dundee](#) will certainly not disappoint. It is running a programme exploring Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* blockbuster and other connotations of 'monsters' including the creation of a *Frankenstein Returns* comic, full of fantastic artworks by local artists and competition winners. And they are publishing a new Dundee edition of *Frankenstein* celebrating Shelley's links to the city which will be distributed free to local schoolchildren.

Transforming complex ideas into sound-only can be a massive challenge. So how can anyone turn data on police violence into a sound installation? Well, that's exactly what Queen Mary University of London will be attempting with [Other Registers](#), an immersive sound installation that uses software to transform official data about police violence in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, into sound. Visitors will be able to listen to the statistics played through eight loudspeakers arranged in a circle.

With more than 250 UK-wide events suitable for all ages and all walks of life, the vitality and relevance of this ten-day festival knows no bounds.

Other programme highlights include:

- [Feminists Eat Your Greens!](#) from the University of Strathclyde and Glasgow's Women's Library. Visitors are invited to join researchers for a feast at a recreated Edwardian vegetarian restaurant and conversations about the untold history of non-meat-eating suffragettes. They will discover why so many feminists identify as vegetarians and what lentils have to do with the vote.
- [Once Upon a Time, The End](#) – organised by the University of Swansea, this creative writing workshop for children aged 8–12 (and parents) look at the shape of stories, how to open a door on to a new world and how to draw the curtain in a dramatic fashion.
- An invitation from [The Historical Death Café](#) and experts from Northumbria University to examine how we preserve family memories through stories and objects. And in

Glasgow, [Drawing to a Close](#), provides the first public exhibition of Norman Gilbert's drawings of his wife at the end of her life. It will demonstrate how the humanities help us to tackle difficult subjects and explore death and terminal illness in a way that the sciences cannot.

- [A Bloody Good Show! Adventures in Menstruating](#) with researchers from Liverpool John Moores University who will deconstruct menstrual taboos through humour, science and craftivism (a discussion with menstrual activists and experts follows a performance by comedian, [Chella Quint](#)).
- [The Sisterhood of the Ring](#)'s perusal of the role of race and gender in the circus and the rise of contemporary circus art. Talks will be interspersed with performances from contemporary female artistes.
- The University of the West of England's [End of Gender?](#) with its mixed reality exploration of 'genderqueer' clothing and cosmetics will ask if gender binaries are coming to an end.

'It's hard to believe that this is already the festival's fifth iteration, and that in such a short time we've spread so far – not only across the UK, but now internationally as well,' said Professor Sarah Churchwell, the festival's director. 'We are enormously excited about our new collaborations with Princeton and Melbourne Universities, as well as our returning partnerships in Singapore, Paris and Rome, not least because it's a testament to the appetite for presenting humanities research to engaged audiences around the globe.'

Find out more about the festival at <https://beinghumanfestival.org/> and follow the latest news on Twitter at [@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](#).
4. **The Arts and 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. Follow the AHRC on Twitter at twitter.com/ahrcpress and Facebook facebook.com/artsandhumanitiesresearchcouncil/

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](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>.