

Terry Pratchett events lead lively ‘museums’ theme of Being Human 2020 festival

The late Sir Terry Pratchett, English humourist, satirist, and author of wildly imaginative fantasy novels built a fiercely loyal following. And they won't be disappointed by the inclusion of two fascinating events celebrating the popular writer in the 2020 [programme](#) for Being Human, the annual humanities festival led by the School of Advanced Study (SAS) at the University of London (12–22 November).

Senate House Library's [Magical Mind: The World of Terry Pratchett](#) (17 November, 6–7pm online, [book tickets here](#)) and [Stories of Imagination: Exploring Terry Pratchett's Archive](#) (19 November, 6–7pm, online), while essential viewing for Pratchett fans, will also prove compelling for those who have not yet encountered the beguiling creator of the *Discworld* series of 41 novels.

His novels created a new world where fantasy, science-fiction, humour and satire co-existed, firing the imagination of millions of readers worldwide. Our 'Magical Mind' event is a live conversation with Neil Gaiman, Rhianna Pratchett and Rob Wilkins as they explore the fantastical *Discworld* universe where magical and mechanical technology go hand in hand.

Neil Gaiman is an international bestselling writer and co-author with Pratchett of *Good Omens*. Rob Wilkins is the producer of *Good Omens* and Pratchett's long-term friend, assistant and manager of his estate, and Rhianna Pratchett, a BAFTA nominated scriptwriter and story designer, and Terry Pratchett's daughter.

Come along to enjoy Pratchett's legacy which, despite his death in 2015, is very much alive.

Our 'Stories of Imagination' event, also organised by Senate House Library (SHL) and the Institute of English Studies (IES), is a live workshop (requires separate booking) in which participants are invited to experiment with digital technology to add knowledge and stories to the library's fascinating and unique Terry Pratchett Archive. Explore rare letters, books, illustrations, objects and other items from the digitised collection while you tag and describe them.

The workshop will be led by digital humanities experts Christopher Ohge (IES) and James Cummings (Newcastle University) along with Maria Castrillo, SHL's head of special collections.

These two events are part of Being Human's 'Museums and collections' sub-theme (the four others are: Culture and politics; Urban decay and regeneration; Social inclusivity and equalities; Open spaces, landscapes and health).

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic, the Being Human festival features an impressive 220 events exploring this year's 'New Worlds' theme from 12 to 22 November. Luckily for its fans, Being Human has proved itself an event that Covid-19 simply couldn't cancel.

'Throughout 2020, the work people worldwide have long been doing to address the complex cultural histories of museum collections and archives was emphatically brought to public attention. Much of that work has radically accelerated this year, and researchers in the humanities have been at its forefront,' said Professor Sarah Churchwell, the festival's director.

'This project is the opposite of erasing history: rather, it's about widening our understandings of history, in all its different forms. The Being Human festival celebrates the plurality of human history this year with a programme delving into museums, archives and collections across the UK and beyond.'

Other 'Museums and collections' highlights include:

- [Rethinking Museums and the Stories they Tell](#) (organised by the University of Glasgow in partnership with The Hunterian Museum). Throughout the festival 'Rethinking museums' will post videos, images, prompts and provocations on its social media channels to form an online heritage tour of The Hunterian Museum. By calling attention to the hidden histories of empire embedded in its collections, new ways of seeing and understanding museum objects will be proposed, taking a fuller view of the stories they tell. Follow the digital tour on Twitter @UofGArts, @hunterian and @BeingHumanFest.
- [Museumable – Home Objects Reimagined](#) (organised by Goldsmiths, University of London) is an online workshop where participants will be encouraged to choose an object from home, and to draw, map and share its story. How do we live alongside these objects? And how might they connect to each other? Open to all – no prior experience required.
- [Memory is a Weapon](#) (organised by the University of Glasgow). Drawing inspiration from the Adinkra symbol of the Sankofa bird, which means 'reach back and get it', this event invites Black female artists and activists to reimagine new futures during and post-Covid-19. Hosted in partnership with Africa in Motion and Glasgow Women's Library, this is a unique, collaborative video essay intertwined with spoken word, storytelling and musical performances.
- [The Politics of Display](#) (organised by the University of Sheffield). Why are some objects chosen for display in galleries and museums and others relegated to storage? How do exhibited objects reveal or conceal painful or violent histories? How will galleries and museums continue to be shaped by the many challenges of our time? Join Dr Carmen Levick and curator Angelica Sule for a digital in-conversation piece to explore the 'politics of display' and the challenges that emerge from the power dynamics of public exhibition spaces.

Now in its seventh year, this multi-city festival is run in partnership with the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the British Academy. These are just samples of some of the free public online and socially distanced face-to-face activities taking place across the UK.

The full Being Human 2020 festival programme is available at <https://beinghumanfestival.org/events/>

Find out more about the festival at <https://beinghumanfestival.org/> and follow the latest news on Twitter at @BeingHumanFest.

Ends

Notes to Editors

1. **For all enquiries**, please contact Maureen McTaggart, Media and Public Relations Officer, School of Advanced Study, University of London, maureen.mctaggart@sas.ac.uk / +44 (0)20 7862 8859
2. **Being Human**: the UK's only national festival of the humanities, 12-22 November 2020. 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 highlights the ways in which the humanities can inspire and enrich our everyday lives. For more information, please visit www.beinghumanfestival.org or follow the festival on social media 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. 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 892 research fellows and associates, held 1,903 events highlighting the latest research in the humanities, received 25.9 million online visits to its research resources and platforms, and hosted 173,493 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** is part of UK Research and Innovation. We're the UK's largest funder of arts and humanities research and training, investing over £100 million every year. We fund independent researchers in a wide range of subjects, including history, archaeology, digital content, philosophy, languages, design, heritage, area studies, the creative and performing arts, and many more. The research we fund provides social and cultural and benefits that contribute to the economic success of the UK, as well as to the culture and welfare of societies around the world. Find out more about us at ahrc.ukri.org, or on Twitter at @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. www.britishacademy.ac.uk, @BritishAcademy. For further information, please contact Sean Canty at the

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