

Press release
8 November 2022

Being Human Festival: Building literary bridges from Kyiv to Wolverhampton

In some ways, the industrial cities of Wolverhampton and Kyiv are worlds apart. One is a peaceful part of the West Midlands where the other is the capital of a country at war, and which in recent weeks has once again come under bombardment.

Nevertheless, these two great cities have much in common. Both have a proud industrial heritage – and both are participating in a unique event **on 18 November** when poets and writers create a “literary bridge” as part of the Being Human Festival 2022.

Ukrainian poet Halyna Kruk and writer Lisa Blower, along with staff and students from Berdyansk State Pedagogical University and the University of Wolverhampton, will come together for performances of Ukrainian and English literature. Contributors will read from significant locations in Ukraine - such as a bomb shelter in Kyiv, a volunteer centre in Zaporyzhya, and the streets and squares of Kyiv, Dnipro and Lviv - reflecting on the realities of war. The event creates a literary bridge between the two countries to unite cultures, whilst supporting and inspiring people in times of crisis.

This event intervenes creatively in the war, with alternative imaginations for our troubled world and affirms the importance of artful creation as a means for resisting the destructive forces of war. Readings will be in original and in translation to stress the need for transcultural dialogue. The audience will be able to contribute with their suggestions for readings and/or their own poetry.

Professor Sofiya Filonenko, Doctor of Philological Sciences at Berdyansk State Pedagogical University in Ukraine, said:

“In our difficult time, poetry is a magical salvation for suffering souls, it is an attempt to contrast the cruelty of war with that which helps us to remain human and compassionate, courageous and strong. Classic and modern texts of British and Ukrainian literature acquire a new sound, and our transcultural literary dialogue proves that there are values that unite all people on the Earth, in our desire to live in peace, to be free, to love our countries and appreciate the support of friends. We are deeply grateful to colleagues from the University of Wolverhampton for their help and solidarity in our struggle.”

Author and Lecturer in creative writing at the University of Wolverhampton, Lisa Blower said:

“It is so very important for us to remember that despite the conflict, destruction and tension, universities in Ukraine, their academics, and their students, are still very much working. This event brings necessary attention to their tenacity, courage, and resilience, their realities and experience whilst reminding us of the importance of the arts as a resistance force. It is an utter privilege to read alongside these inspirational and brave people.”

[‘Resonating Hearts Between Ukraine and the Black Country’](#) will take place online on 18 November, 13:00-14:00.

This special event highlights the international reach of the UK’s **Being Human Festival**, the annual celebration of all things humanities. Other contributions from across the globe include two live-streamed literary events taking place at Tokyo’s [Haruki Murakami Library](#) and LOVOT Museum, as well as a series of events in Melbourne, Australia, led by the University of Melbourne.

In the UK itself, over 200 free events will be taking place in 52 towns and cities nationwide over the duration of the festival, which takes place between **10-19 November**. Events include rebuilding Hadrian’s Wall with Lego, Ossianic [poetry and photography in the Scottish](#)

[Highlands](#), an exhibition and activities [exploring the science of psychedelic experience](#), and much, much more. [Browse all events on the Being Human festival website.](#)

The festival will launch on 8 November, with a [showcase event taking place at the Museum of the Home in London.](#)

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Notes to editors

The 2022 Being Human Festival runs from 10-19 November in 52 towns and cities across the UK.

For more information go to: www.beinghumanfestival.org/2022

The Festival is led by the School of Advanced Study, University of London, with generous support from Research England, in partnership with the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the British Academy. In 2022, the partnership awarded 30 grants to researchers at 29 universities and research organisations, enabling these free activities to take place, as well as supporting events from a further 35 universities and organisations nationwide. Festival Hubs, made up of programmes of events led by one university, are being led by Bangor University, Robert Gordon University, Northumbria University, the University of Bradford, the University of Dundee and the University of Wolverhampton.

1. 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 996 research fellows and associates, held 1,500 events highlighting the latest research in the humanities, received 31.6 million online visits to its research resources and platforms, and hosted 100,119 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](#).

2. 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 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](#).

3. The [British Academy](#) is the UK's national academy for the humanities and social sciences. We mobilise these disciplines to understand the world and shape a brighter future. We invest in researchers and projects across the UK and overseas, engage the public with fresh thinking and debates, and bring together scholars, government, business and civil society to influence policy for the benefit of everyone. www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk [@BritishAcademy](#). For further information please contact Joe Christmas at the British Academy Press Office on j.christmas@thebritishacademy.ac.uk or +44 (0)20 7969 5248.

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