Litfest 2021

Autumn Weekend
7th - 12th October

Season of Mists and Mellow Fruitfulness
Letter from the Chair

Hello and welcome to the first Litfest Autumn Weekend!

After taking Litfest 2021 online in March, we found that a number of our local writers who had contributed to our previous festivals – Sarah Hall, Polly Atkin, Kim Moore and Karen Lloyd – all had books coming out in September and October. So we were delighted when they accepted our invitation to launch them at our ‘Autumn Weekend’.

We are particularly pleased to announce the creation of The Lancaster International Fiction Lecture, a new joint venture with Lancaster University’s Departments of European Languages & Cultures and English Literature & Creative Writing. And we are thrilled that the first lecture will be given by acclaimed Colombian author, Juan Gabriel Vásquez, winner of Spain’s Alfaguara Prize, Italy’s Gregor von Rezzori Prize, France’s Prix Roger Cailloix and Ireland’s Dublin Literary Award.

Having heard from many of you, we are conscious there is still a hesitancy about returning to live in-person events. So, as in the spring, all our events will be online and there will be plenty of opportunities for you to get involved, whether in the National Poetry Day ‘Litfest Poetry Mosaic’, or by putting your questions to our authors, or by interacting in the ‘chat’ at each online event.

As a charity with irregular project funding, Litfest relies on our audiences and partners. We are particularly grateful to Lancaster City Council for their continued support and to you for your generous donations which together mean that once again we can, in this second Covid year, make all of the Autumn Weekend’s events free to access.

We look forward to welcoming you in October, and very much hope to be able to welcome you safely in person next March at Litfest 2022.

Julie Bell

Chair of Litfest
Litfest Fundraising Drive

Litfest is a UK registered charity and is passionate about bringing world-class books, ideas and illustration to the Northwest and making them accessible to all. We are also committed to encouraging new writing and the co-creation of events with our audiences. In this challenging year we will not charge for tickets, but to be able to continue our work in the community in the future, we rely on the generosity of your donations.

What could a donation help to enable? For example:

- £10 could enable Litfest to give two books to a local school
- £20 could enable one child to take part in the Litfest Big Read 2022
- £30 could cover the cost of an online Q&A at Litfest 2022
- £50 could enable an emerging writer to attend a future workshop
- £100 could cover the cost of hiring a room to host a Litfest 2022 event

However big or small, your donation plays a part in the festival's future. Thank you for supporting us.

You can now give to Litfest (with Gift Aid where applicable) by going to on our website at www.litfest.org. Your donation can be a regular payment or a one-off amount.

Lancaster Litfest would like to thank Lancaster City Council for their continued support.

Our event partners for this programme are the Department of European Cultures & Languages and the Department of English Literature & Creative Writing at Lancaster University.

With thanks to the publishers of the books featured in this Litfest autumn programme: Bloomsbury, Faber, MacLehose Press and Seren.
How to watch Litfest
Autumn Weekend 2021

Once again, Litfest is going digital! All of our events will be accessible via the website, and once again we will be using the online events streaming platform Crowdcast.

Events will first be livestreamed at the times indicated, then they will be available on our YouTube channel for a limited time. The period of time will vary for each event so please check out website. More information can be found at www.litfest.org

How You Can Get Involved

Whilst you cannot attend our programme of events in person at The Storey, or The Dukes or any of our other wonderful partner venues this time, you can still be involved in Litfest’s Autumn Weekend.

Here are a few ideas on how you could be a part of the festival:

- Sign up to the Litfest International Fiction Book Club
- Register your interest for our new Litfest English-Language Fiction Book Club by emailing info@litfest.org
- Contribute up to 3 poems to our Litfest Poetry Mosaic
- Make a donation to the Litfest Fundraising drive
- Add a suggestion to one of our reading lists
- Tell us which authors and what kind of events you would like to see at future festivals
- Support Litfest by buying the books launched at our Autumn Weekend and other listed titles direct from our online bookshop at https://litfest.org/shop/. Orders received by 30 September will be supplied with a book plate signed by the author and sent post-free, representing a saving of £3.20.

And of course... you can come to the festival!

Also, make sure to keep your eye on the Litfest website for exciting extras on our new blog!
Following the success of the Litfest International Fiction (Zoom) Book Club, we plan to start a new venture – the Litfest Fiction Book Club – for the best fiction originally written in English from anywhere in the world. The books might be titles shortlisted for the major prizes like the Booker or the Women's Prize for Fiction, they might be overlooked classics, or they might be favourites from or about the Northwest. Whatever happens, the book club's members will choose what to read each month and decide how to shape the discussions. Our aim is to share our passion for reading and we hope you will want to join us.

The Litfest International Fiction (Zoom) Book Club, convened by Litfest trustee Bill Swainson and Lancaster University Lecturer Sam O'Donoghue, will continue as before. Since April 2020 this book club has discussed — in a highly congenial way — a book every month, often with the author, translator or editor as our guest. The members propose and vote on the books they want to read (see https://litfest.org/internationalfiction/) and in this isolated time the book club provides an opportunity to broaden horizons and share our enthusiasms.

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To celebrate National Poetry Day on 7 October Litfest are delighted to launch ‘The Litfest Poetry Mosaic’. We will open for submissions at the beginning of September, and we invite everyone in the Northwest to contribute! The theme for National Poetry Day this year is ‘Choice’ and we are inviting poets of all ages and levels of experience to submit poems that fit this theme.

When you are ready to submit your poem (or poems) go to www.litfest.org/Poetry-Mosaic. On the submission form we will also ask for your poem’s main topic and themes.

This information will help us to create our poetry mosaic which will be revealed on our website on Monday 4th October. All of the poems submitted will remain on the Litfest website after the Autumn Weekend.

We will also be running a separate project for pupils in year 6 in primary schools and years 7 or 8 in secondary schools, and providing supporting materials in the form of examples and ideas for teachers. If you are a teacher and would like to know more, please email info@litfest.org.
Thursday 7th October    7:30pm

Autumn Weekend Launch:
National Poetry Day with
Hannah Hodgson

Many great poems have been written about choice, from Shel Silverstein’s ‘The Voice’ to Julia Donaldson’s ‘I Opened a Book’, and from Robert Frost’s ‘The Road Not Taken’ to Grace Nichols’ ‘Harbour’ – about choosing a human hug over constant digital contact. Many of these poems are available online, others can be found in a book you might have at home or can get at the library.

Hosted by Hannah Hodgson, this event will feature some of the best poems written on the theme of choice from the past. It will also be a showcase for Northwest poets – of all ages – who are writing today.

In the days leading up to National Poetry Day, Hannah Hodgson will curate a selection of outstanding poems from those submitted to the Litfest Poetry Mosaic, and on 2nd October Litfest will contact those poets (or a nominated reader) to invite them to read their work online at this special National Poetry Day showcase event!

After the event, all the submitted poems will remain online in our specially created Litfest Poetry Mosaic.

Hannah Hodgson is a poet living with life-limiting illness. Her work has been published by BBC Arts, The Poetry Society and Magma, amongst other outlets. She is a recipient of a 2020 Northern Writers Award for Poetry. Her first poetry pamphlet, Dear Body, was published by Wayleave Press in 2018; and her second, Where I’d Watch Plastic Trees Not Grow, centred around life with serious illness was published by Verve Poetry Press in 2021. Her first full length poetry collection, 163 Days, is due to be published by Seren in early 2022.

How to Watch: Online via Crowdcast
Tickets: Free and bookable in advance at www.litfest.org
All donations, whether £5 or £100, welcome at the Litfest website!
Signed bookplates are available from www.litfest.org/shop
Acting as a welcome and support network to those refugees who come to Lancaster and Morecambe. We provide destitution grants for Asylum Seekers, we pay for essential travel to solicitors and police stations and new arrivals receive a Welcome pack.

We are made up of a number of individual volunteers as well as various organisations who support and facilitate our work:

- The Bike Project
- Churches Together
- Claver Hill
- CVS
- East Meets West
- English Classes
- Global Link
- Global Village Kitchen
- Lancaster Quakers
- RAIS
- Red Rose Refugees
- The Sewing Circle
- The Tara Centre
- St Thomas Church
- The Violin group

For more information, or to get involved and volunteer, please contact: admin@lancaster.cityofsanctuary.org
Donations welcome.

www.lancasterandmorecambe.cityofsanctuary.org
Sarah Hall is one of the most highly praised novelists writing in Britain today and has twice been winner of the BBC Short Story Award. For this event she will read from and discuss her extraordinary new novel *Burntcoat*, the story of a love affair set during and after a pandemic.

‘You were the last one here before I closed the door of Burntcoat, before we all shut our doors.’

‘Hall’s writing is alchemical, magnificent, divine, bodily. Here are new ways to understand what it feels like to be human… Burntcoat is a masterpiece’
- Daisy Johnson

‘An extraordinary work that will stand as a blazing witness to the age that bore it’ - Sarah Perry

Sarah Hall was born in Cumbria in 1974. Twice nominated for the Man Booker prize, she is the award-winning author of five novels, including *The Electric Michelangelo* (2004) and *The Carhullan Army* (2007), and three short-story collections, including *The Beautiful Indifference* (2012), which won the Edge Hill and Portico prizes, *Madame Zero* (2017), shortlisted for the Edge Hill Prize, and winner of the East Anglian Book Award, and *Sudden Traveller* (2019). She is currently the only author to be four times shortlisted for the BBC National Short Story Award, which she won in 2013 with 'Mrs Fox' and in 2020 with 'The Grotesques'.

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Saturday 9th October        7:30pm
Poetry Double-Bill: Polly Atkin & Kim Moore

Two extraordinary collections of poetry will be launched in this dazzling evening event.

*Much With Body* is Polly Atkin’s startlingly original second collection. The beauty of the Lake District is both balm and mirror, refracting pain and also soothing it with distraction. Much of the landscape is lakescape, giving the book a watery feel, the author’s wild swimming being just one kind of immersion. Here the natural world is revered with an uneasy awe, contingent upon knowledge of our fragility and mortality.

‘This is serious play indeed’ - Vahni Capildeo

*Much With Body*

**Polly Atkin**

*This is serious play indeed.* - Vahni Capildeo

Polly Atkin lives in Cumbria. Her first poetry collection *Basic Nest Architecture* appeared in 2017 and was longlisted for the Michael Murphy Memorial Prize. She is also the author of a number of pamphlets including *Shadow Dispatches* (Seren) which won the Mslexia Pamphlet prize and a biography *Recovering Dorothy: The Hidden Life of Dorothy Wordsworth* (Saraband, 2021). She is working on a memoir exploring place, belonging and disability.
All The Men I Never Married is Kim Moore's eagerly awaited second collection. It is pointedly feminist, challenging and keenly aware of the contradictions and complexities of desire. The numbered poems take us through a gallery of exes and significant others where we encounter rage, pain, guilt and love. A powerful collection of deeply thoughtful and deeply felt poetry.

‘This book is a revolutionary and subversive requisition of the female gaze, and it will be canonical’ - Fiona Benson

Kim Moore lives and works in Cumbria. Her first full-length collection The Art of Falling (Seren, 2015) won the Geoffrey Faber Memorial Prize. She also won a New Writing North Award, an Eric Gregory Award and the Geoffrey Dearmer Prize. In 2020 she was a judge for the National Poetry Competition and the Forward prizes. She is part of Versopolis, a European-funded scheme to promote poets at festivals across Europe. She has a doctorate from Manchester Metropolitan University and is co-director of the Kendal Poetry Festival. Earlier this year she led Litfest’s New Writing Northwest poetry workshop.

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Sunday 10th October   11:30am

Karen Lloyd:
Abundance - Nature in Recovery

In this collection of literary essays, Karen Lloyd explores abundance and loss in the natural world, relating compelling stories of restoration, renewal and repair, describing how those working on the front lines of conservation are challenging the inevitability of biodiversity loss, as well as navigating her own explorations of the meaning of abundance in the Anthropocene.

‘If I was to recommend one book people should read for their well-being it would be this’
-Tim Smit, co-founder of The Eden Project

Karen Lloyd is an award-winning writer and environmental activist based in Cumbria. Her first book, The Gathering Tide: A Journey around the Edgelands of Morecambe Bay (Saraband, 2016) contains writing on land, landscape and memory. The Blackbird Diaries (Saraband, 2017), winner of The Lakeland Arts and Literature Award 2018, is an intimate account of the wildlife in the Northwest of England and Scotland. She led the Litfest New Writing Northwest Nature & Environment Writing Workshop earlier this year and is one of the instigators of The Future Places Environmental Essay and Poetry Prize (https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/future-places/).

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The Litfest International Fiction Book Club was launched in April 2020 with Lars Mytting’s *The Sixteen Trees of the Somme*, for which the author joined us by Zoom from Norway. Since then, the club has discussed a book each month, often with the writer, translator or editor. Among our guests have been authors Delphine de Vigan, Daniel Kehlman and Andrey Kurkov, and translators Antonia Lloyd-Jones (Olga Tokarczuk), Margaret Jull Costa (Javier Marías), Carlos Rojas (Yan Lianke) and Sasha Dugdale (Maria Stepanova).

For this special edition of the book club we are delighted to welcome the acclaimed Colombian writer Juan Gabriel Vásquez and his translator Anne McLean to discuss his novels, his latest story collection, the morally complex *Songs for the Flames*, and the art of translation.

‘Like Bolaño, [he] is a master stylist and a virtuoso of patient pacing and intricate structure’ - Lev Grossman, *Time Magazine*


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Tuesday 12th October    7:30pm

The Lancaster International Fiction Lecture: Juan Gabriel Vásquez

We are delighted to announce the first Lancaster International Fiction Lecture, a joint venture with the Department of European Languages & Cultures and the Department of English Literature & Creative Writing at Lancaster University.

Fiction is an artform shared by almost all languages. Right now, as the English-speaking world – thanks to translators and innovative publishers – has become more aware of the extraordinary fiction that has been and is being written everywhere and in all languages, it seemed to us that a lecture to discuss and celebrate fiction as an international artform could not be more timely.

‘Juan Gabriel Vásquez . . . has succeeded García Márquez as the literary grandmaster of Colombia’ - Ariel Dorfman, New York Review of Books

‘A masterful writer’ - Nicole Krauss

Juan Gabriel Vásquez grew up in the Colombian capital of Bogotá in the shadow of Gabriel García Márquez, the long guerrilla war that has not yet ended, and the shadow of Pablo Escobar and the narcotraficantes. How do you escape that first shadow of the most influential writer in your country, not to mention for a time the world, to write fiction about your own reality and take on and make imaginative sense of those other shadows of violence and corruption? This is the challenge that Vásquez has accepted both in his fiction and in his journalism, and which he will discuss in this first Lancaster International Fiction Lecture.

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Access Information

If you require a large print version of the brochure please contact marketing@litfest.org

For more information on captioning and accessibility please see our website.

All details are correct at the time of going to press. We reserve the right to change the programme if circumstances dictate.

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Programme and Cover Art
by Natalie Sorrell Charlesworth
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