

Muriel Spark – Centenary year to be la crème de la crème

Muriel Spark 100 will mark the centenary of Dame Muriel Spark one of Scotland's best loved and most internationally respected writers. The year long programme of events is led by Creative Scotland and the National Library of Scotland in collaboration with a host of partner individuals, groups and organisations,.

You can find more details on the new centenary website, murielspark100.com

There will be new funds for artists and groups to develop and present new work as part of the centenary year and *Muriel Spark 100* organisers want anyone with plans to mark the centenary, to get in touch with them.

All 22 of Spark's novels will be republished by Polygon, with an imprint of Birlinn ltd (from Nov '17); the unveiling of Spark's extraordinary archive at a landmark National Library of Scotland exhibition (Dec '17-May '18); leading Scottish writers Ali Smith, Val McDermid, Janice Galloway, Kate Clanchy and Louise Welsh reflecting on Spark's career in a new BBC Radio 3 series (Jan '18); an international conference bringing together fans and academics to explore all aspects of Spark's writing (Jan/Feb '18); Edinburgh Spy Week's spotlight on the ways in which espionage, secrecy and spying play out in her work (Apr '18) and a specially commissioned BBC Scotland/BBC4 documentary about the author's life and work (early '18).

Dame Muriel's great friend, **Penelope Jardine**, said: "Muriel's contribution to Scottish Letters is one of manifest originality, brevity of wit, with the musical composition and rhythms of a poet. Something unforgettable sui generis."

The initiative has been welcomed by **Scotland's Culture Secretary, Fiona Hyslop**: "I'm really excited about the forthcoming celebration of *Muriel Spark 100*. Dame Muriel Spark was one of Scotland's literary giants and, to this day, her work continues to inspire generations of readers and writers and resonates with audiences across the country and beyond.

"I commend Creative Scotland, the National Library of Scotland and all the other partners involved for delivering such an engaging and varied programme of activity and I am looking forward to attending some of these events next year."

Many plans are still being progressed. From book and film festivals, literary and art education institutions to libraries, galleries, museums – big and small – unique collaborations are being forged and new perspectives are being developed in response to Spark's life and work.

As details are confirmed they will be announced through the [website](#), , and posted through the following channels:
@MurielSpark100 / #murielspark100 /
facebook.com/murielspark100



Jenny Niven and Jan Rutherford

Muriel Spark 100 chair and **Creative Scotland head of Literature, Publishing and Languages, Jenny Niven**, said: "The centenary of Dame Muriel Spark's birth is both a landmark moment and an unparalleled opportunity to permanently influence the way in which this leading figure of Scotland's cultural history features in the public imagination.

"There is so much to explore in Ms Spark's work, from her incisive commentary, to her startling poetry, to her ability to effortlessly weave folk tradition with biting satire. It's a particularly interesting time too to consider her legacy, as a Scottish writer who was fiercely international in her approach and who broke through a great many barriers in her

career.

“It’s testament to her range and relevance that so many Scottish organisations will engage with her work and legacy throughout 2018 and we are looking forward enormously to this varied and unusual programme.

“Creating space for contemporary writers and artists to reflect on Muriel Spark’s influence on them is also very important to this project and we hope to see some really exciting and ambitious proposals through the small grants fund in her name.”

National Librarian, Dr John Scally, said: “The opportunity to celebrate the life and work of Dame Muriel Spark is as exciting a prospect as opening one of her books for the very first time.

“She is one of Scotland’s finest ever writers and her reputation extends far beyond these shores. It is fitting therefore that the National Library of Scotland and Creative Scotland are marking the centenary of her birth with *Muriel Spark 100* – a year-long programme of activity that promises to be lively, varied and engaging.”

Small Grants Scheme

Awards of up to £1,500 are available to support people and projects across a range of art forms. The deadline for proposals is Monday 4 December 2017, with selected projects being announced in early 2018. Further details, funding guidelines and application form are available on Creative Scotland’s website here:

www.creativescotland.com/murielspark100fund

More ways to join in...

For those looking to develop events or who would like to mark the centenary in some way – from exhibitions to readings,

talks to screenings – contact *Muriel Spark 100* Project Coordinator Sabrina Leruste at s.leruste@nls.uk who can offer advice on promoting events as part of the *Muriel Spark 100* programme and making connections with relevant counterparts.

Photo by Neil Hanna