

# Edinburgh International Book Festival 2021 – Onwards and Upwards

**The Book Festival did happen last year – and most successfully with everything taking place online. This is one festival which actually lends itself to live streaming and recorded events.**

This year the emphasis is on a hybrid event with some authors visiting the new home of the festival at Edinburgh College of Art in Lauriston Place in person. Most online audiences can “mingle” before the event and join a Q & A at some afterwards.




The theme is Onwards and Upwards – Ideas and Stories for a Changing World – and some tickets will be on sale for limited socially distant audiences to attend. The programme will be available online at 10.00am on Tuesday morning for you to browse through.

Our top names to watch out for among the 250 events include Kazuo Ishiguro, Douglas Stuart, Devi Sridhar, Ian Rankin, Val McDermid, Ali Smith, Pat Nevin, Denise Mina, Sara Sheridan, Alison Watt, Andrew O’Hagan, Jackie Kay, Jenni Fagan, Michael Morpurgo, Neil Gaiman, Julia Donaldson, Malorie Blackman and Kate Mosse.



Andrew O’Hagan at the 2020 Edinburgh International Book

## Festival

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Nick Barley Director Edinburgh International Book Festival in an otherwise empty Charlotte Square Garden July 2020 PHOTO John Preece
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It's goodbye to Charlotte Square where the Book Festival has had its home for years
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l-r Karine Polwart, Ali Smith, Nayrouz Qarmout & Val McDermid Edinburgh International Book Festival 2019 PHOTO John Preece

In a novel move the Reading Scotland series teams Scottish writers with new books set in Scotland with six young Scottish filmmakers. Short films have been commissioned evoking the spirit of the setting and mood of each novel. The teams include James Robertson with Anthony Baxter and Graeme Armstrong with James Price. The films will be shown at the start of each author's event.

The New York Times (NYT) remain the main sponsor with panel discussions on the latest advances in journalism on the programme with Matt Thompson editor the NYT's innovative investigations team Headway. War, activism and climate change are also on the agenda.

And as a way of combatting the restrictions whatever they may be in August there are walking tours with Jenni Fagan through the Old Town. Fagan will explain the places which inspired her newest novel Luckenbooth.

Children will be catered for with a play area at the College of Art and a big screen in the open courtyard showing events from the Baillie Gifford Children's Programme.

There will be a bookshop on site as well as online to cater for your every need, along with live online book signings.

Nick Barley, Director of the Edinburgh International Book Festival, said: "We are incredibly excited to produce our first 'hybrid\* festival with authors and audiences joining us both in person and online. We welcome a mix of Scottish and international voices to discuss their ideas, hopes and dreams and we aim to explore together how to move 'Onwards and Upwards\* from this devastating pandemic. In our new home at Edinburgh College of Art we have created three broadcast studios, two of which can accommodate limited audiences. These new facilities enable us to offer author conversations to worldwide audiences and to those closer to home who are unable to join us in person, as well as welcoming a limited In-RealLife audience.

"The Book Festival is at the forefront of the re-emergence of public events, and we have a duty of care to our authors, audiences and staff. It is important that we help rebuild confidence and we have therefore chosen to retain Imetre social distancing for audiences in the studios. This gives us a reduced capacity of 100 in the New York Times Theatre (in Sculpture Court) and 60 in the Baillie Gifford Theatre (in West Court). Outside in the courtyard we are recreating the 'village green\* element of the Book Festival that our audiences enjoy with a bookshop, cafe, family play area, seating spaces and a big screen upon which a number of the Uve events will be shown. The Book Festival has always aimed to be an oasis of calm and, as ever, this will be a space for audiences to chat, relax, read a book and while away the hours in the summer sunshine."

Cllr Donald Wilson, Culture and Communities Convener for the City of Edinburgh Council, said: "We are proud to support the Edinburgh International Book Festival as we look Onwards and Upwards. As the world's first City of Literature, we know how much Edinburgh's book lovers welcome the Festival each year and its new home at Edinburgh College of Art provides excellent studio and theatre facilities for both online events

and activities as well as the planned live programme. Public health and safety will of course remain a priority, and we continue to be impressed by the resourcefulness and resilience displayed by the Festival throughout the last year and in the planning for such an exciting programme for 2021.”

Culture Minister Jenny Gilruth said, “This year’s Book Festival offers excellent online and in-person experiences that will connect audiences all over the world to an impressive line-up of writers and events. This year we are supporting our talented writers in the Reading Scotland series by providing £120,000 from Scottish Government’s Festival’s Expo Fund, a great initiative that will see Scottish writers team up with young Scottish filmmakers to create short films based on their novels. I want to congratulate everyone involved for responding to the many challenges presented by the pandemic and thank you all for the massive amount of work that has gone into arranging the festival again this year.”

The Book Festival runs from 14 to 30 August 2021 and tickets go on sale at noon on 22 July 2021. Some online events will be streamed on a Pay What You Can basis. All details are on the website [www.edbookfest.co.uk](http://www.edbookfest.co.uk)



Photo courtesy of Tom Neff