

Edinburgh International Book Festival celebrating huge success this year

The Edinburgh International Book Festival has crunched the numbers for the August 2024 festival as it closed its doors to the public last night.

More than 100,000 visitors came to its new home at the Edinburgh Futures Institute (EFI) to attend almost 600 events. Many who popped in were people simply passing by and thousands entered the new EFI for the first time in its new incarnation.

Out of those 100 were completely sold out, 90% of tickets for 200 events were sold and people from 55 countries around the globe watched online. These numbers are significantly up on previous years.



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Future Tense, the first Book Festival programme to unfold under new Director Jenny Niven, tackled topics of global importance ranging from AI to the climate crisis, capitalism to the war in the Middle East, migration to inheritance, and more besides.

Authors, writers, poets, thinkers and entertainers including **Margaret Atwood** and **Salman Rushdie** (who joined down the line), **Richard Osman**, **Dolly Alderton**, **Alan Cumming & Forbes Masson**, **Phillipa Gregory**, **Jackie Kay**, **James O'Brien**, **Lemn Sissay**, **Elif Shafak**, **Louise Welsh**, **Raja Shehadeh**, **Marian Keyes**, **Roger McGough** appeared on stage, alongside **RF Kuang**, **Blindboy**, **Esmie Jikiemi-Pearson**, **Evie Wyld**, **Julius Roberts**, and **Samantha Shannon**. As well as greats from the literary sector, stars of music and film (**Stuart Brathwaite** of Mogwai, **Esther Swift**, **Evelynn Glennie**, **Stuart Murdoch**, **Steven Moffat**, **Anjoa Andoh**), theatre makers (including Grid Iron's **Ben Harrison**), producers, publishers (many appearing as part of the Business of Books strand aimed at those in the industry, and artists (**Ruth Millington**, **Kate Leiper**) and actors also featured, bringing the multi disciplinary magic of the Edinburgh Festivals to life, right at the heart of the city.

Other events took place at Elliott's Studio where there were intimate get togethers with chefs, and audiences gathered in the McEwan Hall in a collaboration with Underbelly.



Photo Mihaela Bodlovic

Clean Money

Audiences debated Clean Money: Can Fundraising Ever Be Ethical discussing modern arts funding. During the festival more than 4,500 school pupils from P1 to S6 attended free events at the festival and received a free book all supported by funding from investment managers, [Baillie Gifford](#). That funding stream has now closed as the book festival reacted to last year's protests about the firm's investments in fossil fuels. [Baillie Gifford](#) has repeatedly said it invests a small portion of its funds in that area.

Events including **ThinkTanks** offered audiences unparalleled access to world-class minds. Literary figures appearing at the festival included **Harold Hongju Koh**, **Ingrid Robeyns**, **Joseph Stiglitz** and **Ken Costa**. Voices from across the political spectrum also joined the conversation, with appearances from **John Swinney**, **Jess Phillips**, **Caroline Lucas**, **Andy**

Burnham and Sadiq Khan.

Jenny Niven, Director of the Edinburgh International Book Festival, said: “We are absolutely thrilled with the success of the Book Festival this year. Audiences have voted with their feet and we’ve seen full houses and brilliant, engaged crowds. Debate and discussion has been relished by audiences and authors alike proving the Festival is a truly important space for people to be inspired and come together.

“Edinburgh Futures Institute as a Book Festival venue has been terrific and we’re already looking at the ways we can build on what we’ve created for next year. We’re looking forward to beginning conversations in the Autumn with everyone who will be part of our story in our next glorious edition.”

Jamie Crawford, incoming Chair of the Edinburgh International Book Festival Board, said: “For the past two weeks, the excitement at this new chapter in the story of the book festival – from authors, staff and audiences – has been palpable. The new space at the Futures Institute has opened up a long-dormant part of the city, and it has clearly demonstrated its value and its huge potential for the future. As for right now, it is crucial to reflect on the great success of this year’s festival to underline the critical importance of literary culture to Edinburgh and Scotland. It is in everyone’s interests to support it and to see it thrive.”

Many of the 2024 events are still available to watch on demand. <https://www.edbookfest.co.uk/>



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