



WRITERS'
CENTRE
NORWICH

Press Release
Embargoed until
Thursday 25th June

Norwich Bids to Become England's first UNESCO City of Literature

The City of Norwich aims to consolidate its position as the foremost literary city in the UK with a bid to become England's first UNESCO City of Literature by 2010.

Led by literature development agency Writers' Centre Norwich, the bid to join Edinburgh, Melbourne and Iowa as a UNESCO City of Literature will be publicly launched on Thursday 25th June at a dinner in the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts on the final night of Writers' Centre Norwich's literary festival, Worlds.

The bid brings together Norwich's readers, writers and libraries, the University of East Anglia, bookshops, printers, museums, media, the city and county councils, Arts Council England and many more.

Norwich's bid states that UNESCO City of Literature status would:

- bring economic benefit to the city region
- bring the best in writing and reading experiences to the city's population
- deliver improved literacy rates for the city and county
- be a platform in the development of a new Creative Economy Hub

Writers' Centre Norwich's Chief Executive Chris Gribble says:

“Writing has changed things here in Norwich, affecting politics, social movements, religion and the artistic world. Norwich is home to the oldest and best Creative Writing course in the country and the world leading British Centre for Literary Translation. It has the busiest public library in the country as well as being England’s only City of Refuge for persecuted writers. This bid will ensure that our amazing literary heritage will be superseded by a future that is even more exciting.”

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Editor’s Notes

CONTACTS

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PHOTOGRAPHS

Photos supporting this release will be sent to picture desks on Wednesday 24th June.

Writers’ Centre Norwich seeks to explore the artistic and social power of creative writing through pioneering and collaborative projects with writers and other partners.

FURTHER INFORMATION ON UNESCO / WORLDS

- Writers’ Centre Norwich’s bid is overseen by a Steering Group that includes:
 - Professor Giles Foden** (Writer, *The Last King of Scotland*, Professor of Creative Writing, University of East Anglia)
 - Liz Calder** (Leading British publisher and founder of Bloomsbury)
 - Robert McCrum** (Associate Editor of *the Observer*, writer and Chair of the Board of Writers’ Centre Norwich)
 - Dr. Ian Gibson** (former Member of Parliament for Norwich North)
 - Professor Jon Cook** (Dean of Faculty of Arts and Humanities, University of East Anglia and Chair, Arts Council England, East)
 - Richard Ellis** (Chair of the Board of Directors, East of England Development Agency)

Dr. Chris Gribble (Chief Executive, Writers' Centre Norwich)
Richard Jewson (Chair, Archant Ltd and Lord Lieutenant of Norfolk)

- The UNESCO City of Literature scheme is part of the Creative Cities Network launched by UNESCO in October 2004. Current Cities of Literature are Edinburgh, Melbourne and Iowa. Vancouver and Kolkata are applying at the moment. Accreditation comes with no financial award and is permanent and non-competitive.
- **The UNESCO bid dinner takes place at Writers' Centre Norwich's Worlds Literary Festival.**
The festival is a celebration of international writing taking place from 20-25th June in Norwich. 30 writers from countries including India, China, the USA and the UK will be gathering for five days of events, readings and workshops, offering readers a great opportunity to appreciate new writing and offering writers an opportunity to discuss new ideas with each other in a roundtable event on the role of Creative Writing.

Worlds Public Events

Writers' Centre Norwich International Readings, Saturday 20th June, Monday 22nd June, Tuesday 23rd June, Thursday 25th June
Norfolk and Norwich Millennium Library, 5pm-6.15pm. Free.
With Carmen Boullosa, Psiche Hughes, Ambai, Lakshmi Holmstrom, John McAuliffe, Priya Sarukkai-Chabria, Becky Swift, Rukmini Nair, Jill Dawson, Sharmistha Mohanty, Chika Unigwe, Vivek Narayanan, Cole Swensen, Zhu Wen and Julia Lovell.

Writers' Centre Norwich: Debut

Tuesday 23rd June, Norwich Arts Centre, 8pm, Tickets: £5 from NAC box office - 01603 660352 - online at www.ueaticketbookings.co.uk
With Joe Dunthorne (Submarine), Jenn Ashworth (A Kind of Intimacy) and Chris Killen (The Bird Room)

Writers' Centre Norwich: Connecting Worlds

Wednesday 24th June, Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts: World Arts and Museology Court, Free, 5.30 – 8.00
With writers Geoff Dyer, Chenjerai Hove, Robin Hemley and Mansur Rajih.

Further information is available on request.

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