



PRESS RELEASE

Immediate release

Winterson, Macdonald, Smith open first ever International Literature Showcase in Norwich

18 – 21 March

Writers' Centre Norwich welcomes delegates from over twenty countries to the first International Literature Showcase, held in partnership with the British Council and supported by Arts Council England. As England's only UNESCO City of Literature Norwich is fast gaining a reputation as a world leader for literary innovation.

Twenty-four UK writers will take part in the four-day programme including writer and broadcaster Jeanette Winterson and three 2014 COSTA Book Award winners; Novel Award Winner Ali Smith for *How to be both*, First Novel Award winner Emma Healey for *Elizabeth is Missing* and Biography Award winner Helen Macdonald for *H is for Hawk*. Delegates also include 2014 Baileys Women's Prize for Fiction winner Eimear McBride for *A Girl is a Half-Formed Thing*.

It says something of the literary climate and support available, that all have connections to the Eastern Region. Smith & Macdonald both studied and live in Cambridge and McBride lives in Norwich as does Healey, a graduate of UEA's MA Creative Writing.

The international and national writers will meet with over fifty literature development practitioners from around the world to explore new ideas and plan future collaborations.

Chris Gribble, CEO of Writers' Centre Norwich says:

"Norwich is fast becoming synonymous with literary innovation. We've invited writers keen to develop their international connections. We're delighted that this

also includes writers from our region who've had such success over the last year."

Cortina Butler, British Council Director of Literature says:

"The International Showcase taking place in Norwich will help shape the global literature sector, fostering meaningful working relationships between writers and literature organisations for many years to come".

Emma Healey, whose debut *Elizabeth is Missing*, was described by *The Observer* as 'every bit as compelling as the hype suggests' says:

"I'm really looking forward to taking part in the International Showcase in Norwich. It is a fantastic opportunity for me as an emerging writer to make valuable connections and discuss possible collaborations with writers on the world stage".

The four-day programme will be live-streamed by Writers' Centre Norwich enabling everyone to follow proceedings online at:

www.internationalliteratureshowcase.org.uk with questions and comment encouraged via twitter (#ILShowcase).

The headline public event; Wild Words with Janette Winterson and Helen Macdonald takes place at Norwich Playhouse on Friday 20 March with just a handful of tickets still available.

/ENDS

Editor's Notes

1. For comment and photos please contact: Alice Kent, Director of Communications, Writer's Centre Norwich at alice.kent@writerscentrenorwich.org.uk or 01603 877168
2. International Literature Showcase (ILS) is a partnership between Writers' Centre Norwich and British Council and supported by Arts Council England. It takes place from 18 – 21 March 2015 at the Norwich Cathedral Hostry, UEA and Norwich Playhouse.
3. **Writers' Centre Norwich** is a literature development organisation based in England's first UNESCO City of Literature, Norwich. We are interested in both the artistic and social impact of creative writing, and work with writers, readers and diverse communities on a wide range of ongoing and one-off projects and events.

Writers' Centre Norwich recently announced plans to move into Dragon Hall, a medieval merchant's hall, in April 2015. The building will open as a specialist venue for literature – the National Centre for Writing - in 2017.

www.writerscentrenorwich.org.uk

4. **British Council** The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations. We work in more than 100 countries to create international opportunities for the people of the United Kingdom and other countries, and build trust between them worldwide, connecting millions of people with the UK through programmes and services in English language, the Arts, Education and Society.

In our arts work we engage with writers, publishers, producers, translators and other sector professionals across literature, publishing and education. We collaborate with our offices overseas to broker relationships with international writers and literature organisations. Our partners and platforms include literature houses and festivals, book fairs, conferences, literature development agencies, schools and universities. Together we develop innovative, high quality, long-term programmes and collaborations that provide opportunities for cultural exchange with the UK and offer creative artists, participants and audiences around the world life-changing and life-enhancing experiences.

INTERNATIONAL LITEARTURE SHOWCASE PROGRAMME

Wednesday 18th March

Ali Smith, UEA Spring Literary Festival. 7pm - 8pm

Leading novelist Ali Smith discusses her most recent novel *How to be Both* (shortlisted for the 2014 Man Booker Prize, the Goldsmiths Prize and the Costa Book Award) in conversation with Philip Langeskov. *This event will not be live streamed but will be available as a podcast*

Thursday 19th March

All events below (apart from Wild Words) take place at Norwich Cathedral Hostry

5 x 30 Introductions, 9am - 12 Midday.

Each delegate will introduce themselves for exactly two and a half minutes, accompanied by 5 slides to illustrate their talk, which will each show for 30 seconds. A fast-paced

Eimear McBride and Stella Duffy, 12.30pm - 1pm

Eimear McBride author of *A Girl is a Half-Formed Thing* (winner of the 2013 Goldsmith's Prize and 2014 Bailey's Prize) and Stella Duffy writer, actor and co-founder of the Fun Palaces campaign will be reading from their work.

Digital Literatures with Bill Thompson, 2pm - 3.15pm

Digital guru Bill Thompson leads a discussion on how literature's intersection with the digital world has changed, what it means to be 'a writer' and examines the artistic and creative implications for readers, writers and arts programmers of the information age.

Next Generation Poets: Rebecca Goss, Luke Kennard and Zaffar Kunial, 3.45pm - 5pm
Rebecca Goss, Luke Kennard and Zaffar Kunial, hosted by Patience Agbabi (readings and discussion).

Friday 20th March

Hannah Silva, 9am - 9.30am (reading and performing from Schlock!)

Literary Communities, 10am -11.15am

The strength of a literary culture is dependent on the diversity, literacy and confidence of its readers, and yet to many people the arts as a whole can seem closed off, at worst exclusive and elitist. Stella Duffy, co-founder of Fun Palaces, discusses ways in which organisations can develop successful outreach programmes. Chaired by Stella Duffy

New Fiction: Kirsty Logan, James Scudamore and Kerry Young, 11.45am - 1pm
(readings and discussion). Hosted by Kate Griffin (International Programme Director, the British Centre for Literary Translation).

Alex Preston and Diriye Osman, 2pm-2.30pm
(readings)

Shock of the New, 3pm - 4.15pm

The artistic mainstream is continually refreshed and invigorated by encounters with new artistic models, outside voices and emergent forms. Geraldine Collinge leads a conversation on literature from outside the mainstream: be it experimental, in translation or simply deemed other.

New Fiction: Cynan Jones, Emma Healey, Selma Dabbagh, 4.45pm-6pm
(readings and discussion). Hosted by Swithun Cooper, British Council Literature.

Wild Words with Jeanette Winterson and Helen Macdonald , 7.30pm - 9pm Norwich Playhouse
An evening considering nature, memoir and writing with two of Britain's finest authors. *This event will not be live streamed but will be available as a podcast*

Saturday 21st March

Daljit Nagra, 9am-9.30am
(reading and performance from *The Retold Ramayana*)

Nonfiction and Memoir: Charlotte Higgins, Patrick Barkham and Bidisha, 9.45am - 11am
Readings and discussion, hosted by Jonathan Morley (Programme Director, Writers' Centre Norwich).

Short Stories: Philip Langeskov, Francesca Rhydderch and Clare Wigfall , 11.30am - 12.45pm
Readings and discussions hosted by Sophie Wardell, British Council Literature.

Find out more: www.internationalliteratureshowcase.org.uk

