



Manchester
Literature
Festival

Press release: 19 March 2021

MANCHESTER LITERATURE FESTIVAL ADDS MORE CELEBRATED WRITERS TO ITS SPRING LINE UP

Manchester Literature Festival is pleased to announce acclaimed writer Jhumpa Lahiri in conversation with MLF patron and award winning novelist Kamila Shamsie. Also revealed is a third new Festival commission by poet Natalie Diaz.

The Festival launched its other Spring events last month with Kazuo Ishiguro and Jackie Kay in conversation about his new novel, *Klara and The Sun* alongside new writing commissions by poets Roger Robinson and Caleb Femi.

Jhumpa Lahiri & Kamila Shamsie in Conversation 20 May 2021

'I'm both ablaze with energy and sapped of it.' In *Whereabouts*, Jhumpa Lahiri's stunning new novel, an unnamed woman, in an unnamed Italian city, assesses her daily life. Her friends, her work, her lovers, and the shadow of her father's unexpected death. Jhumpa will be in conversation with novelist and MLF Patron Kamila Shamsie discussing her first novel to be written in Italian and translated into English by the author herself.

Jhumpa is the author of four works of fiction, including *Unaccustomed Earth*, *Interpreter of Maladies* and *The Lowland* which was shortlisted for both the Booker Prize and the Women's Prize for Fiction. She is also the editor and one of the translators of *The Penguin Book of Italian Short Stories* which brings together forty writers that reflect over a hundred years of Italy's vibrant and diverse short story tradition. Kamila is the acclaimed author of seven novels including *Home Fire*, which won the Women's Prize for Fiction. The event is presented by Manchester Literature Festival in partnership with the Centre for New Writing and Creative Manchester.

This event will be first broadcast at 7.30pm on Thursday 20 May 2021 and available to watch for seven days. It will be pre-recorded and captioned.

Natalie Diaz
Hosted by Mary Jean Chan
22 April 2021

In a new commission written especially for Manchester Literature Festival, Natalie will present *Radixes and Formations*: a series of poetic sensualities exploring the words ‘origin’, ‘migration’, ‘freedom’ and ‘love’. A deeply lyrical poet, she will create linguistic maps of these words in English and Mojave, diving deep into their roots and the ways in which they echo in physical connection.

Natalie will perform her new poems for the first time, followed by a conversation about her work with poet Mary Jean Chan. Mary Jean is the author of *Flèche*, which was shortlisted for multiple awards and won the 2019 Costa Book Award for Poetry. This is one of a series of New Commissions supported by an award from the DCMS Culture Recovery Fund. Presented by Manchester Literature Festival in partnership with the Centre for New Writing and Creative Manchester.

‘Natalie Diaz is a poet who calls out to us in so many ways, who reaches out to embrace her lover, her people, and her country.’ Her most recent collection *Postcolonial Love Poem* explores body and land as sites of desire and longing, but also pain and erasure. It was shortlisted for the National Book Award and the Forward Prize in Poetry. Born and raised in the Fort Mojave Indian Village in Needles, California, on the banks of the Colorado river, Natalie is Mojave and an enrolled member of the Gila River Indian Tribe. She has received fellowships from The MacArthur Foundation, the Lannan Literary Foundation, the Native Arts Council Foundation, and Princeton University and was recently appointed to Academy of American Poets.

This event will be first broadcast at 7.30pm on Thursday 22 April 2021 and available to watch for seven days. It will be pre-recorded and captioned.

Tickets are on sale at 12 noon, Friday 19 March and can be booked in the following ways:

Jhumpa Lahri: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/jhumpa-lahiri-kamila-shamsie-in-conversation-tickets-144614544997>

Natalie Diaz: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/natalie-diaz-tickets-144612003395>

Via the [Manchester Literature Festival website](#) where all Spring programme events can be booked

Tickets for these events are priced as pay what you can: £6 (low income/concession), £12 (standard ticket) or £20 (per household). There are also some free tickets for Natalie Diaz for those that need them.

Any ticket revenue received will help Manchester Literature Festival survive this challenging time and deliver its annual festival in October 2021.

Jhumpa Lahiri's *Whereabouts* and other #MLF21 Spring titles can be bought directly from MLF's bookshop partner Waterstones. The Festival will receive a commission on every book sold to help support future programming. [Buy HERE](#)

Join the conversation: #MLF21 @McrLitFest

Ends

For press enquiries and review tickets please contact: Catharine Braithwaite cat@we-r-lethal.com 07947 644110 or Shelagh Bourke she@we-r-lethal.com 07971 819 016

Notes to editors:

Now in its 16th year, **Manchester Literature Festival** has been building on its previous success expanding audiences and creating new partnerships across the national and international literary world. Patrons of Manchester Literature Festival include former Poet Laureate Carol Ann Duffy, award-winning journalist and Observer critic Rachel Cooke, poet and Scottish Makar Jackie Kay, broadcaster and anchor of BBC Radio 4's Woman's Hour Dame Jenni Murray, poet and publisher Michael Schmidt, acclaimed novelist Kamila Shamsie and author and broadcaster Erica Wagner.

The Festival has quadrupled in size from 2006 when it featured 30 events attracting an audience of 3,000 to the 2019 Festival which featured 75 events and attracted an audience of 12,000.

In 2020 MLF delivered its first digital festival featuring 17 online events broadcast on Crowdcast over a long weekend. The Festival included 70 writers and four specially commissioned films, and the feedback from authors, audiences, publishers and partner organisations was overwhelmingly positive. #MLF20 also reached a much more geographically dispersed audience than usual with 18% of the audience joining the events from overseas. 10% of the audience were based in the US and the remaining 8% international audience joined from a total of 51 countries including Argentina, Australia, Canada, China, Chile, Mexico, Nigeria and Russia.

Over the past 15 years, the Festival has featured many of the biggest names in literary fiction and spoken word as well as prominent cultural figures from across the globe, including Martin Amis, Tori Amos, Simon Armitage, Margaret Atwood, Kate Atkinson, Malorie Blackman, William Boyd, Jung Chang, Angela Davis, Roddy Doyle, Margaret Drabble, Carol Ann Duffy, Jennifer Egan, Inua Ellams, Anne Enright, Neil Gaiman, Guy Garvey, Seamus Heaney, Alan Hollinghurst, Nick Hornby, Howard Jacobson, Barbara Kingsolver, Hanif Kureishi, Linton Kwesi Johnson, Deborah Levy, Armistead Maupin, Johnny Marr, Val McDermid, David Mitchell, Walter Mosley, Andrew Motion, Jo Nesbo, Patrick Ness, Audrey Niffenegger, Ben Okri, Arundhati Roy, Will Self, Lemn Sissay, Kamila Shamsie, Zadie Smith, Kae Tempest, Colm Toibín, Rose Tremain, Sarah Waters, Vivienne Westwood, Colson Whitehead, Jeanette Winterson and Xinran.

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