



Embargoed until 10am on Monday 26 August 2025

## **100k visitors, almost 600 events, 100 sold out and 55 countries watching online - Edinburgh International Book Festival celebrates huge success in first year in new home with new Director Jenny Niven**

- Over 100k visits were made to the Book Festival's new home at Edinburgh Futures Institute from 10-25 August for first programme from new Director Jenny Niven
- Authors, poets, politicians, musicians, thinkers and illustrators including Margaret Atwood, Richard Osman, Salman Rushdie, Blindboy, Sarah Pascoe, RF Kuang, Naomi Alderman, Jess Phillips took to stage and screen for almost 600 events
- Over 200 events sold to 90% capacity or more
- Audiences from 55 countries joined online for pay what you can events - many of which are still available to watch
- Over 4,500 school children from 89 schools across Scotland were transported to the Festival (31 groups free of charge), to attend free events and take home a free book each
- EIBF authors took part in 12 visits to hospitals and prisons across Scotland
- Thousands of local residents were introduced to Edinburgh Futures Institute for the first time

Photograph selection: [Press photos](#)

**Over 100k visits** were made to **Edinburgh International Book Festival's** new home at the newly opened Edinburgh Futures Institute from 10-25 August 2024, with ticket and book sales significantly up on previous years, and thousands of curious passers-by exploring and enjoying the new site, amongst the heart of Edinburgh's festival action.

**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. Legendary 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.

This year saw a number of brand new types of events unfold, many celebrating cross-discipline collaboration, including the ambitious digital experience, *Perambulations of a Justified Sinner* and the intimate **Have Lunch With...** series at Elliott's Studio, featuring chef-writers (**Asma Khan**, **Sami Tamimi** and **Rachel Roddy**). **Clean Money: Can Fundraising Ever Be Ethical** brought in audience members with a variety of views to discuss the detail and nuance of modern arts funding in a safe and supported space, and events including **ThinkTanks** offered audiences unparalleled access to world-class minds including **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."*

Over the course of the Festival, more than 4,500 school children from P1 to S6 were transported to the Festival, to attend free events and claim their very own free book, supported by the final instalment of Baillie Gifford's funding. Also during August authors including Andrew O'Hagan, Amy Liptrot, Jenni Fagan and Joseph Coelho attended schools, prisons and local Reading Centres as part of the Book Festival's year-round Communities programme.

**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.”*

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The 2024 Edinburgh International Book Festival ran from 10 – 25 August, and took place for the first time at its new home at the Edinburgh Futures Institute on Lauriston Place, made possible by a partnership with Edinburgh University.

This was the first year the Book Festival worked with Underbelly at the McEwan Hall to bring audiences the Front List strand of showstopper events.

Many of the 2024 events are still available to watch on demand. To do so, and for more information on Edinburgh International Book Festival, visit: <https://www.edbookfest.co.uk/>

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## **Notes to Editor**

### **About Edinburgh International Book Festival**

**We are Edinburgh International Book Festival: the world-leading festival of words, literature, and ideas.**

We believe in the power of words and ideas to ignite imaginations, foster human connection, and challenge the status quo. Committed to innovation, inclusivity and accessibility, we platform voices who are often overlooked, and aim to break down barriers to access for those who might not typically see themselves as a book festival audience.

Since 1983, we've welcomed hundreds of thousands of visitors to engage with the world's greatest and emerging writers, thinkers, artists, and performers. Iconic figures such as Margaret Atwood, Alain de Botton, Oliver Burkeman, Noam Chomsky, Seamus Heaney, Kazuo Ishiguro, Toni Morrison, Arundhati Roy, Salman Rushdie and Benjamin Zephaniah have appeared on our stages over the years, alongside a wide range of debut and early career authors.

Each year, we programme hundreds of events that capture the hearts and minds of audiences, both in Edinburgh and online. Whether they take the form of on-stage conversations, workshops, creative masterclasses, think tanks, or more, they are all informed by a culture of open dialogue. Our programme is designed not just to spark new conversations amongst audiences, but to broaden them too: existing as a space where nuanced discussion happens, and ideas can settle.

As the world around us changes at pace, the Book Festival continues to transform too. 2024 is the beginning of an exciting new chapter under the leadership of our new director, Jenny Niven, as we also move to our new home at the Edinburgh Futures Institute.

More than just a summer festival, we work year-round with partners in the local community – with schools, libraries, prisons, hospitals, and other community hubs – to foster a lifelong love of reading and develop engaged, knowledgeable audiences of all backgrounds and ages. We also stream hundreds of events online via a Pay What You Can model, offering audiences who cannot attend in person the opportunity to take part and experience the excitement of the Festival wherever and whenever suits them best.

### **About Jenny Niven**

Jenny took up the role of Director of Edinburgh International Book Festival in September 2023, taking over from Nick Barley who had been in post since 2010. A leading cultural producer and director, she was Founder and Director of the award-winning Push the Boat Out, a festival of poetry, spoken word and language; Executive Producer of Dandelion, an epic programme of sowing, growing and sharing across

Scotland, and was previously the Head of Literature at Creative Scotland. She also came in at number six on The List's 'Hot 100' people influencing Scotland's arts and cultural landscape in 2022.