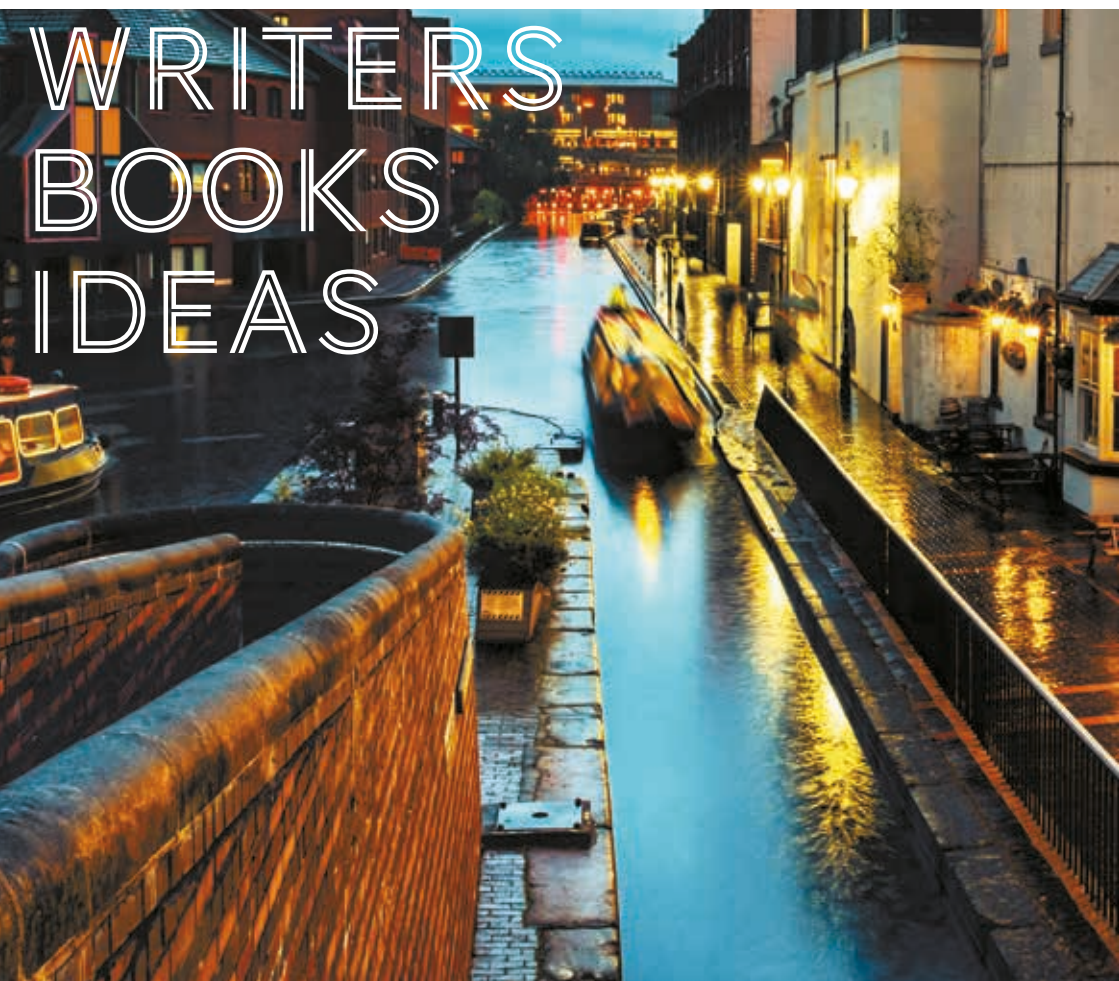




BIRMINGHAM LITERATURE FESTIVAL

27–29th April 2018

birminghamliteraturefestival.org



WRITERS BOOKS IDEAS

In partnership with

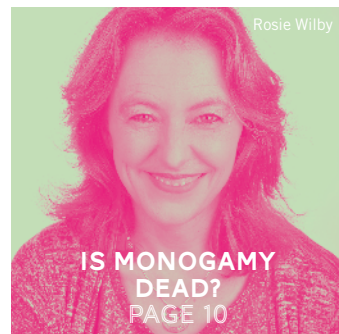
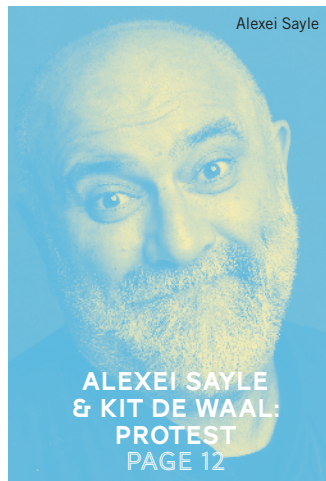


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Supported using public funding by
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ENGLAND**

FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS



WELCOME TO OUR 2018 SPRING EDITION

This is an exciting time for Birmingham. The city is gathering a head of steam and creating a bold new identity for itself. There are extraordinary changes taking place every day and extraordinary opportunities on the horizon.

The Birmingham Literature Festival is proud to play a pivotal role in our city's evolution, promoting open discussion, ideas and the fundamental importance of literature. We've come of age as a festival – we're now 21 – and we're one of the few festivals in the UK where debate, dissenting opinions and first-hand experience take centre stage. Right at the heart of this is our audience: ever engaged, ever questioning.

2018 is shaping up to be the year of women, and our Spring Edition offers a distinct forum for discussions and enquiring minds: a space to learn, challenge and be inspired. From much-needed discussions around the gender bias in publishing, to stories of the secret 'swimming suffragettes', 'A History of Britain in 21 Women' and poetry written in response to the #MeToo movement, this is just the start of another year of important conversations inspired by great writers and great literature.

So come and be part of the conversations, and tell us what you think (look for our social media links on the back page). We look forward to seeing you in April.

ANTONIA BECK, FESTIVAL DIRECTOR



Thank you to our partners, colleagues, supporters, Board of Trustees, and our wonderful team of volunteers for all your work and support in making this festival happen.

WRITING WEST MIDLANDS TEAM

Chief Executive – **Jonathan Davidson**
Birmingham Literature Festival Director – **Antonia Beck**
PR & Communications Manager – **Olivia Chapman**
Learning & Participation Manager – **Emma Boniwell**
Festival Production Assistant – **Fabio Thomas**
Operations Assistant – **Heddwyn Creaney**
Finance Manager – **Peggy Long**

THURSDAY
29 MARCH

FESTIVAL PREVIEW: THE TRICK TO TIME BY KIT DE WAAL

6.30pm - 7.30pm, Waterstones, High Street, Birmingham
Tickets: £3 from www.waterstones.com,
in person or on the phone at 0121 633 4353



Kit de Waal

As a special festival preview event, we are delighted to be supporting the launch of Kit de Waal's new novel *The Trick to Time*.

Birmingham, 1972. Mona is a young Irish girl in a big city, with the thrill of a new job and a room of her own in a busy boarding house. On her first night out in town, she meets William, a charming Irish boy with an easy smile and an open face. They embark upon a dizzying love affair, a whirlwind marriage, an unexpected pregnancy – before a sudden tragedy tears them apart.

Kit will be in conversation with Blake Woodham from Brum Radio.

FRIDAY
27 APRIL



FREE SCREENING: THE BOY WITH THE TOPKNOT

6pm - 7.30pm (90min screening)
The STUDIO, Birmingham REP
Free event but booking required

Join us for a free screening of the BBC adaptation of Sathnam Sanghera's critically-acclaimed memoir *The Boy with the Topknot*.

Born to traditional Punjabi parents and growing up in Wolverhampton, Sathnam moves to London after graduating from Cambridge.

Now a successful columnist for *The Times*, Sathnam is trying to tell his family the news he's been delaying: he wants to marry his English girlfriend, and not enter into an arranged marriage as they expect. As he returns home, he discovers a painful family secret which turns his world upside down and forces him to reevaluate his priorities and choices.

Sathnam realises he must bring his two separate worlds together or risk losing everything.

The Boy with the Topknot was produced by Parti Productions and Kudos for the BBC.

Sponsored by the Royal Television Society



BOOK BY PHONE 0121 245 4455



THE BOY WITH THE TOPKNOT: FROM PAGE TO TV SCREEN

8pm - 9pm
The STUDIO, Birmingham REP
Tickets: £10 / £8 (concs)



Following our screening of the BBC2 adaptation of *The Boy with the Topknot*, meet some of the key people involved in the creation of this stirring and topical drama.

Find out what it takes to turn 300 pages into 90 minutes of gripping and moving TV, and what had to be left in the editing room.

This panel discussion will further explore the creative team's approach to adapting the memoir for television. The panel will include director Lynsey Miller, screenwriter Mick Ford and writer Sathnam Sanghera.

There will be an audience Q&A at the end of the discussion.

Chaired by BBC broadcaster Jenny Wilkes.

Sponsored by the Royal Television Society



BOOK ONLINE BIRMINGHAMLITERATUREFESTIVAL.ORG

**SATURDAY
28 APRIL**

HOW TO BE A POET: ONE-TO-ONES

10am, 10:45am, 11:30am, 1pm, 1:45pm, 2:30pm (12 x 30 min sessions). Birmingham & Midland Institute
Tickets: £30 / £15 (concs)



How to be a Poet is a 21st century guide to writing by poet Jo Bell and publisher and poet Jane Commane. Aimed at emerging and professional writers, these practical one-to-one surgeries are a follow-on from the book published by Nine Arches Press in 2017.

As part of the surgeries, Jo and Jane will give feedback on up to three poems. They can also offer advice on what to do next, how to develop your writing and where to seek publication. This is a fantastic opportunity to receive feedback on your poetry, and to examine and discuss both the technical and creative dimensions of being a poet.

There are 12 surgeries available – 6 with Jo and 6 with Jane. Each surgery will last 30 minutes, and you will be asked to submit up to 3 poems for Jane or Jo to read prior to the day.

All those attending one-to-ones will also get a voucher for £5.00 off *How to be a Poet*, which will be available to purchase on the day.



WORKSHOP SCREENWRITING WITH MICK FORD

10am - 12pm. Birmingham & Midland Institute
Tickets: £20 / £16 (concs)

Screenwriter Mick Ford (*The Boy with the Topknot*, *William and Mary* and *Single Father* with David Tennant) will discuss and explore where to start with screenwriting and how to structure, write and craft a compelling story.

Mick will also talk in more detail about his career as a screenwriter, and will share additional insight into the process of adapting Sathnam Sanghera's memoir *The Boy with the Topknot* into a BBC2 television production.

Please note: as part of the workshop Mick will invite participants to take part in some practical exercises around *The Boy with the Topknot*. Please familiarise yourself with the book or TV drama.

Hosted by Andy Conway (novelist, screenwriter and lecturer at Birmingham City University).

MANTLE LANE PRESS: SPRING SHOWCASE

12:30pm - 1:30pm. The DOOR, Birmingham REP
Tickets: £6 / £4.80 (concs)

Based in Coalville, Mantle Lane Press is the publishing arm of Mantle Arts, specialising in fiction and factual historical books, usually with a Midlands connection.

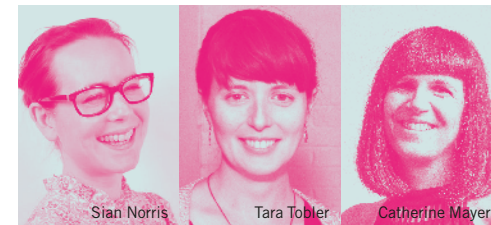
As part of this Spring Showcase event, editor Matthew Pegg will introduce us to Mantle Lane's new and upcoming publications including *The Music Maker* by Liz Kershaw and *Always Another Twist* by Sarah Leavesley.

We will hear extracts from seven Mantle Lane writers – Sue Barsby, Jennifer McLean, Liz Kershaw, Mary Williams, Nick Fogg, Sarah Leavesley and Tim Franks.



2018: THE YEAR OF PUBLISHING WOMEN?

2:15pm - 3:30pm, The STUDIO, Birmingham REP
Tickets: £8 / £6.40 (concs)



In 2015, novelist Kamila Shamsie published a provocation in *The Guardian* newspaper addressing the gender bias in publishing. In her article she also referenced the institutional tendencies privileging male authors and reviewers in the press, the imbalance between male and female writers submitted for the Man Booker Prize for Fiction, and the greater number of male protagonists in award-winning novels. In concluding the provocation, Kamila proposed something radical - make 2018 the Year of Publishing Women, in which no new titles should be written by men.

Fast forward 3 years and independent publisher And Other Stories is the only publishing house in the UK to have taken up the challenge.

So what will it take to radically transform the gender bias in publishing? How can we change the status quo? What would you like to happen? Join the debate and put your questions and ideas to the panel.

Join Catherine Mayer (writer and co-founder of the Women's Equality Party) as she discusses with Tara Tobler (Fiction Editor at And Other Stories) and Sian Norris (writer, founder and director of the Bristol Women's Literature Festival) the lack of female voices in UK publishing.

Chaired by novelist Helen Cross.

**SATURDAY
28 APRIL**

**COME ON IN THE
WATER'S LOVELY:
SECRET SWIMMING
WITH JENNY LANDRETH
AND ELIZABETH-JANE BURNETT**



Jenny Landreth



4:15pm - 5:15pm, The DOOR, Birmingham REP
Tickets: £8 / £6.40 (concs)

Writers Jenny Landreth and Elizabeth-Jane Burnett share their 'waterbiographies' and discuss the transformative and life-affirming power of swimming.

Jenny Landreth's book *Swell: A Waterbiography* is part memoir, part social history. The book uncovers a world of secret swimming and focusses on the 'swimming suffragettes'. It's a story of the pioneering women who fought their way into the water, and of what they did once they got there. It is also the story of how Jenny eventually came to be a keen swimmer herself.

Elizabeth-Jane Burnett's book *Swims* is a compelling poem, that follows the author as she dives into open waters across England and Wales. Plunging into rivers, lakes and seas in a watery circuit that takes in the Ouse, the Teign, the Channel, Grasmere and King's Cross Pond in London. A sinuous, innovative debut, *Swims* reminds us of the power of swimming to transform the human spirit, registering what water gives to us and what it takes away.

Come and dip a toe in the water. Dive in if you dare!

Chaired by writer and performer Francesca Millican-Slater.



Elizabeth-Jane Burnett

**#METOO:
A MOVEMENT IN POETRY**

6.00pm - 7:15pm. The STUDIO, Birmingham REP
Tickets: £8 / £6.40 (concs)

Spartaca

in the room/ in the street/ on the stair/ where some men make free
in plain sight or in secret as if we were sweetmeat/to dip
fingers in and then forget - it is the being alone
afterwards that numbs and maims, utterly
alone in the silence of it/where shame creeps in/
stuns dead/but now we rise, all women
fondled and hurt and licked in acid jokery and in hate,
pets, sweethearts, loves, darlings, humourless bitches -
we stand together, each one a Spartaca
no longer silent or alone: each voice stronger,
massing, alive, a wild murmur of
me too/me too/ me too

by Pippa Little

2017 will be remembered as the year of #MeToo, the start of a historic movement where women have come together to support each other in breaking the silence around the normalisation of sexual harassment and assault.

This year, Fair Acre Press published a new poetry anthology featuring 80 of our finest female poets. The anthology, which rose up directly out of the collective rage from the #MeToo campaign, was conceived and edited by poet Deborah Alma.

Poets featured in this anthology include Jill Abram, Helen Mort, Pascale Petit, Jacqueline Saphra, Sabrina Mahfouz, Kim Moore, Katrina Naomi, Emma Simon, Abigail Morley, Bethany W Pope, Kaddy Benyon, and includes a forward by Jess Phillips MP.

We are delighted to showcase this anthology as part of our festival, and poems from the anthology will be read by poets and audience members.

We would like to invite 12 women (age 16+) to read a poem as part of this event. If you would like to read a poem from the anthology, please email info@writingwestmidlands.org for more information.

All profits from the book will go to Women's Aid UK.

Please note: some of the event content may be distressing.

Spartacus was a rebel slave hunted down by the Romans to be crucified. Asked to identify himself by soldiers, everyone in the crowd around him stepped forward and said 'I am Spartacus'.

SATURDAY
28 APRIL

IS MONOGAMY DEAD?

RETHINKING
RELATIONSHIPS IN
THE 21ST CENTURY



Rosie Wilby

8pm - 9:15pm. The DOOR, Birmingham REP
Tickets: £10 / £8 (concs)

Comedian, writer and broadcaster Rosie Wilby presents a revamped edition of her comedy science show *Is Monogamy Dead?* which eventually became her award-shortlisted book of the same name (Accent Press, 2017).

A mix of memoir and humorous sociological study, *Is Monogamy Dead?* details Rosie's very personal quest – from performing stand-up at a sex party to celebrating and re-evaluating her deepest platonic friendships – to find out why Western society is clinging to a concept that is laden with assumption and ambiguity.

Through the results of her online survey asking 'What counts as "cheating"?', Rosie reveals how diverse our definitions of infidelity are and calls for more language, such as the term 'love affair friendship', to describe the huge variety of connections that we experience. She also looks at the insights we gain about instinctive male and female behaviours from studying same-sex partnerships.

Includes a Q&A.

SUNDAY
29 APRIL

POETRY BRUNCH

WITH ROMALYN ANTE,
SARALA ESTRUCH AND
AVIVA DAUTCH

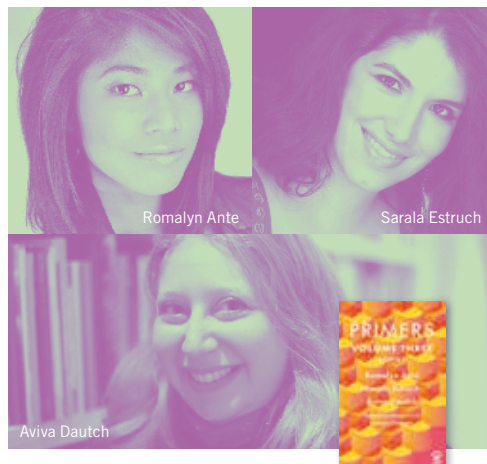
11am - 12pm. The DOOR, Birmingham REP. Tickets: £3

Join us for a special Sunday morning 'Poetry Brunch' with poets Romalyn Ante, Sarala Estruch and Aviva Dautch.

In 2017 Romalyn, Sarala and Aviva were selected to take part in Primers Volume 3 – a nationwide scheme set up by The Poetry School and Nine Arches Press to support talented, emerging poets to develop their writing and build towards a full collection of poems.

Our Sunday morning 'Poetry Brunch' will offer a taster of poems from Romalyn, Sarala and Aviva and a great introduction to new voices in poetry.

The event will be hosted by the Primers selecting editor Jane Commane.



Romalyn Ante

Sarala Estruch

Aviva Dautch

WORKSHOP

MEMOIR AND AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL WRITING WITH PATRICK MCGUINNESS



Patrick McGuinness

10:30am - 12:30pm
Central Birmingham
Tickets: £20 / £16 (concs)

Autobiography and memoir are two of the most widely read and fastest-evolving forms of literature. From confessional letters and diary entries to prize-winning non-fiction and celebrity tell-alls, these genres of literature are pouring off the shelves every year and attracting both new writers and readers.

As a popular form with a dazzlingly broad range, how do you begin to tell your story and make it memorable?

Led by novelist and poet Patrick McGuinness, this workshop will explore a non-traditional approach to autobiographical writing inspired by Patrick's award-winning memoir *Other People's Countries*. There will be readings and discussions surrounding existing works, and exercises to help you develop your own writing style and techniques.

STORIES IN TRANSLATION: WHERE ARE THE WOMEN?

1pm - 2:15pm. The DOOR, Birmingham REP
£6 / £4.80 (concs)

In the UK, just 1 in 3 books published in translation are written by women.

Continuing our women in publishing theme, this event will discuss and explore thoughts and perspectives on why women are still hugely under-represented in the world of literary translation. Our event will also showcase some of the initiatives that are leading the way to promote more awareness such as the 'Warwick Prize for Women in Translation' and 'Women in Translation Month'. Our panel will also discuss how the translation process works and how books in translation are received in the UK.

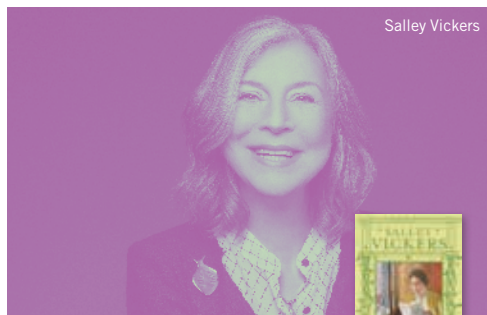
Our panel will include Chantal Wright (Professor at the University of Warwick and co-ordinator of the 'Warwick Prize for Women in Translation'), Rosalind Harvey (award winning literary translator), Chilean writer Alia Trabucco Zerán and Anna Glendenning (Fiction Editor at And Other Stories).

The discussion will be chaired by Olga Castro (Lecturer in Translation Studies at Aston University).



**SUNDAY
29 APRIL**

THE LIBRARIAN BY SALLEY VICKERS



3pm - 4pm. The STUDIO, Birmingham REP
Tickets: £10 / £8 (concs)

Salley Vickers is the author of nine highly acclaimed novels, including *Miss Garnet's Angel*, *The Cleaner of Chartres* and *Cousins*, as well as two short story collections.

The Librarian depicts Sylvia Blackwell, a young woman in her twenties who moves to East Mole, a quaint market town in middle England, to start a new job as a children's librarian. However the apparently pleasant town is not all it seems. Sylvia falls in love with an older man – but it's her connection to his precocious young daughter and her neighbour's son which will change her life and put them, the library and her job under threat.

The character Sylvia Blackwell is based on a children's librarian who radically affected Salley's own childhood, introducing her to the children's authors who in turn, inspired her to become a writer.

Salley will be in conversation with local author Fiona Joseph.

PROTEST: STORIES OF RESISTANCE

WITH ALEXEI SAYLE
AND KIT DE WAAL

5pm - 6:15pm. The STUDIO, Birmingham REP
Tickets: £10 / £8 (concs)

Whatever happened to British protest?

For a nation that brought the world Chartism, the Suffragettes, the Tolpuddle Martyrs, and so many other grassroots social movements, Britain rarely celebrates its long tradition of people power.

A timely and evocative collection, *Protest: Stories of Resistance* includes contributions by 20 authors who have re-imagined key moments of British protest - from the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 to the anti-Iraq war demo of 2003. Written in close consultation with historians, sociologists and eyewitnesses – who also contribute to the afterword – these stories follow fictional characters caught up in real-life struggles, offering a street-level perspective on the noble art of resistance.

We are delighted to bring together Liverpool-born author and comedian Alexei Sayle and Birmingham novelist Kit De Waal to discuss their stories on the anti-Vietnam War demonstration and Malcolm X's visit to Smethwick. Kit will be joined by historical consultant and equal rights activist Avtar Jouhl to discuss her story, and the event will be chaired by the book's editor, Ra Page.



A HISTORY OF BRITAIN IN 21 WOMEN BY JENNI MURRAY

7pm - 8pm. The STUDIO, Birmingham REP
Tickets: £10 / £8 (concs)



They were famous queens, unrecognised visionaries, great artists and trailblazing politicians. They all pushed back boundaries and revolutionised our world.

Jenni Murray, presenter of BBC Radio 4's *Woman's Hour* and champion of women, presents a history of Britain as you've never seen it before. Through the lives of twenty-one women who refused to succumb to the established laws of society, whose lives embodied hope and change, and who still have the power to inspire us today.

Jenni will be in conversation with television journalist and presenter Sue Beardsmore.

FESTIVAL PLANNER

THURSDAY 29 MARCH

Book Launch:
The Trick to Time
by Kit de Waal
6:30pm - 7:30pm
Waterstones, High Street, Birmingham
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FRIDAY 27 APRIL



Free screening of The Boy with the Topknot
6pm - 7:30pm (90min screening)
The STUDIO, Birmingham REP
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The Boy with the Topknot:
From Page to TV screen
8pm - 9pm, The STUDIO, Birmingham REP
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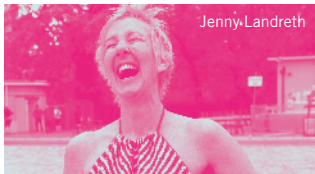
SATURDAY 28 APRIL

How to be a Poet: one-to one
surgeries
10am, 10:45am, 11:30am, 1pm, 1:45pm,
2:30pm (12 x 30 min sessions),
Birmingham & Midland Institute
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Workshop: Screenwriting
with Mick Ford
10am - 12pm, Birmingham & Midland
Institute
PAGE 6

Mantle Lane Press:
Spring Showcase
12:30pm - 1:30pm,
The DOOR, Birmingham REP
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2018: the Year of
Publishing Women?
2:15pm - 3:30pm,
The STUDIO, Birmingham REP
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Come On In The Water's
Lovely: Secret Swimming
with Jenny Landreth and
Elizabeth-Jane Burnett
4:15pm - 5:15pm, The DOOR, Birmingham REP
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#MeToo: A Movement in Poetry
6:00pm - 7:15pm, The STUDIO,
Birmingham REP
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Is Monogamy Dead?
Rethinking Relationships
in the 21st Century with
Rosie Wilby
8pm - 9:15pm, The DOOR, Birmingham REP
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SUNDAY 29 APRIL

Poetry Brunch with Romalyn
Ante, Sarala Estruch and
Aviva Dautch
11am - 12pm, The DOOR, Birmingham REP
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Workshop: Memoir and
Autobiographical writing with
Patrick McGuinness
Sunday 29 April, 10:30am - 12:30pm
Central Birmingham
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Stories in Translation:
Where are the women?
1pm - 2:15pm,
The DOOR, Birmingham REP
PAGE 11

The Librarian
by Salley Vickers
3pm - 4pm, The STUDIO, Birmingham REP
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Protest: Stories of
Resistance
with Alexei Sayle and
Kit de Waal
5pm - 6:15pm,
The STUDIO, Birmingham REP
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A History of Britain in 21
Women by Jenni Murray
7pm - 8pm, The STUDIO, Birmingham REP
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Spark Young Writers

Creative writing groups for
children and young people
in the West Midlands



Aged 8-16? Learn new creative writing skills, be inspired and develop confidence at the Saturday Spark Young Writers groups. Led by professional writers, groups meet monthly from September to June at various West Midlands locations.

Find out more via the Young Writers' tab at **writingwestmidlands.org**. Places limited.

£6 per session

BOOKING INFORMATION

Booking for our events is via The Box at Birmingham Repertory Theatre unless otherwise stated.

BY PHONE: 0121 245 4455

ONLINE: BIRMINGHAMLITERATUREFESTIVAL.ORG

IN PERSON: THE BOX, BIRMINGHAM REPERTORY THEATRE,
CENTENARY SQUARE, BROAD STREET, BIRMINGHAM, B1 2EP

VENUES

The full addresses of our event locations are:

THE STUDIO, BIRMINGHAM REPERTORY THEATRE,
BROAD ST, BIRMINGHAM B1 2EP

THE DOOR, BIRMINGHAM REPERTORY THEATRE,
BROAD ST, BIRMINGHAM B1 2EP

BIRMINGHAM AND MIDLAND INSTITUTE,
9 MARGARET STREET, BIRMINGHAM B3 3BS

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Birmingham Literature Festival
is a project of Writing West Midlands.

Writing West Midlands is the literature development agency for the region.
Charity no. 1147710. Supported by Arts Council England.
www.writingwestmidlands.org.

Events are suitable for adults and children 14+ unless otherwise stated.



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