

11-12 NOVEMBER 2022
ATTENBOROUGH CENTRE FOR THE CREATIVE ARTS

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

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FRIDAY

20.00 / £12/£10 concessions

3 Mina Smallman in conversation with Jude Kelly

DEATH FESTIVAL

12

SATURDAY

11.00-18:30 / £15/£12 concessions

- 5 Welcome
- 6 Giving Death Back to the People
- 6 The Cost of Dying
- 6 Griefcase
- 6 All Deaths Matter
- 7 Pregnancy and Baby Loss
- 7 Cooking, Eating, Healing
- 7 John Troyer: Death Stared Back - Reflections on a Lifetime Studying the Dead
- 8 Death and the Body
- 8 The Grief Gang x The Mother of All Losses
- 8 LGBTQ+ dying, death and bereavement
- 9 Death Euphemism Bingo
- 9 Racism and End of Life Care
- 9 Try Before You Die
- 10 Single Homeless Project: Blue Life Plaques workshop
- 10 Isabelle Farah: Ellipsis
- 11 Rankin: #IRemember
- 11 Uncovering
- 11 1000 Conversations About Death
- 11 Coffin Craft
- 12 Last Dance Disco
- 12 Marketplace

19:30 / £12/£10 concessions

13 Letters to the Lovely Dead

Bookending the lives of every single one of us, birth and death are the core elements of the human condition and something that unites us all. Yet, whilst births are commonly celebrated, we remain reluctant to face up to death and dying.

Respectful and at times irreverent, at Death Festival, share your own stories and hear from academics, artists, undertakers and broadcasters, airing their different perspectives on death.

In the way that a fitting memorial can be revelatory, or the presence of humour in a well-observed wake can lighten the load, Death Festival aims to shed some light on a subject too often consigned to the shadows.

DEATH FESTIVAL

Death Festival is the brainchild of **Jude Kelly**, founder of the WOW - Women of the World Festival and the international charity, The WOW Foundation. This inaugural festival has been programmed by **Jenna Mason**, in collaboration with the writer and activist, **Catherine Mayer**, theatre director, **Michael Attenborough** and artist and social innovator, **Louise Harman** (Louise on Death).

With thanks to **Annie Hartridge** and **Charlotte Rutherford** at **Giant Arc Design** and to **Laura McDermott**, **Jo Finn** and the whole team at the **Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts**.

ALICE BONDY



Our packed programme on Saturday daytime is available with a day ticket. Spend the day exploring a line-up of inspiring and enlightening talks, performances, panel discussions, workshops and more. On Friday and Saturday evenings, join us for stand-alone ticketed events featuring incredible speakers and performers.

Death Festival events will cover a variety of topics, some that may address sensitive themes. We ask that parents/guardians use their discretion when attending with children under the age of 14.

Hospice UK is the charity partner of Death Festival, bringing voices, experience and expertise from its **Dying Matters** campaign to help change the conversation about death and dying. Death Festival is supported by **DeadHappy**, life insurance to die for.



11

FRIDAY / 20:00 / £12/£10 cons

Mina Smallman in conversation with Jude Kelly

In June 2020, sisters **Bibaa Henry** and **Nicole Smallman** were brutally murdered in a north London park. Join Jude Kelly in conversation with their mother **Mina Smallman**, as she shares her journey of grief, rage, faith and activism, and discusses her views on death.

Mina Smallman is a retired Anglican priest and former High School teacher. She studied at the Central School of Speech and Drama. Before being ordained at St Paul's Cathedral, she was a former Assistant Principal of John Kelly Girls' Technology College. She served as the Archdeacon of Southend in the Diocese of Chelmsford from 2013-2016. In recognition of her work, she was awarded the title of Emeritus the Venerable.

In 2020, two of Ms Smallman's daughters, Nicole Smallman and Bibaa Henry, were found murdered in a park in north London. In July 2020, Danyal Hussein was convicted of their murders and sentenced to life imprisonment. Ms Smallman and her husband Chris have criticised the Metropolitan Police Service for being initially dismissive and mishandling the missing persons investigation, questioning whether the murder of women of colour is treated differently by police and society at large. In December 2021, two Metropolitan Police Officers who took photographs of the murdered sisters and shared the images to WhatsApp — conduct described by Ms Smallman as "a betrayal of catastrophic proportions" — were convicted and jailed for 33 months.



Mina Smallman has partnered with Stacey Dooley to tell her story in the documentary, *Two Daughters* for BBC Two and iPlayer. She was included in the BBC's 100 Women List for 2021, for her trailblazing work as the first female Church of England archdeacon from a black or ethnic minority background, and for her campaigning to make UK streets safer and to reform the police. In 2022 she became an Honorary Fellow of Murray Edwards College, University of Cambridge.

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SATURDAY / 11.00-18:30 / £15/£12 cons

*All events will be on a first come first served basis, unless noted otherwise.
Full schedule to be announced soon.*

Welcome

Join **Jude Kelly CBE**, Founder and CEO of The WOW Foundation and WOW - Women of the World Festivals, and Death Festival partners, as they welcome you to the inaugural Death Festival.

Learn more about the inspiring events that await you, as you spend the day considering death, dying and bereavement with our incredible speakers, performers and artists — from those challenging the death industry, to those sharing their deeply personal experiences of grief and loss.



Giving Death Back to the People

Artist and social innovator **Louise Harman** (Louise on Death) and **Cara Mair**, founder of Arka Funerals, speak to journalist and broadcaster **Kieran Yates** about their work to empower people around death and funerals. Through conversation and Louise's photography work, consider what choices we have about the body, burial and memorial of a loved one. Find out what happens in the time between a death and the funeral, and hear how Cara has been guiding families through the process for over twenty years.

The Cost of Dying

Dying is an expensive business. Many people experience financial hardship at the end of their life, or financial barriers to dying at home, and the average cost of dying — the total cost of a funeral including professional fees, the funeral service, and gathering afterwards — now stands at around £9,000. In this panel talk, we consider the financial burden of death, and hear from those working to democratise the process.

Griefcase

Join @thegriefcase founder **Poppy Chancellor** for an interactive workshop. As an artist and facilitator, Poppy hosts creative spaces to honour and remember our loved ones. Drop in and draw, journal or document your memories through the selection of worksheets provided. Share on the community boards as we create a communal display of remembrance.

All Deaths Matter

The queue for the Queen's lying-in-state passed the National Covid Memorial Wall — and ignored it. For days, the world's media stationed themselves along this monument to the UK's Covid dead, piling cameras and tripods against it while turning their lenses away from it to interview those waiting in line. Meanwhile the Covid bereaved were denied access to a site that has become a place of pilgrimage for them. This panel discusses the intersections of public and private grief, the tricky politics of memorialisation and the reasons why mass deaths, whether from man-made tragedies or natural disasters, are often accorded less attention than those of prominent individuals. Panellists include author **Catherine Mayer**, whose memoir *Good Grief* tells the story of her husband's death at the start of the pandemic.

Pregnancy and Baby Loss

Why is the grief of losing a baby still a subject that is often avoided, hidden or misunderstood? In this talk, **Jude Kelly** is joined by a panel of people who have been through the experience, including **Pippa Vosper**, who tragically lost her son Axel in 2017, when she was five months pregnant, and has since written about miscarriage and baby loss in her book *Beyond Grief: Navigating the Journey of Pregnancy and Baby Loss*.



Cooking, Eating, Healing

How can food connect us to those we have lost? What is the relationship between food, grief and memory? In this panel, writers, authors and chefs explore the role of cooking and eating in a time of grief. Panellists include award-winning author **Nikesh Shukla**, whose novella *The Time Machine* documents his protagonist's attempts

to cook food like his mum used to make in the wake of her death.

John Troyer: Death Stared Back - Reflections on a Lifetime Studying the Dead

When **John Troyer** says his entire life revolves around death, it's not hyperbole. He is the Death Studies Scholar-at-Large at the Centre for Death and Society at the University of Bath, one of the world's only research centres dedicated to the interdisciplinary study of death, dying and the dead body. His father is also a retired American funeral director, so John and his younger sister spent hours of their youth in funeral homes. But despite this, John's recent experiences of personal loss still floored him. In this talk, John speaks about how his own encounters with death and dying have changed the way he thinks about the everydayness of grief and what it means to live while watching family members die.



Death and the Body

What is the importance of home and place in relation to death and loss? How do we mourn and fulfil cultural or religious rituals without a body to grieve? In this talk, we're joined by a panel of speakers including researcher **George Gumisiriza**, who will discuss his work on death and body repatriation among African diaspora in the UK.



The Grief Gang x The Mother of All Losses

Join **Amber Jeffrey**, founder of *The Grief Gang* podcast, in conversation with **Anna Burtt**, co-host of *The Mother Of All Losses*, a podcast exploring the often unfathomable death of a mother. Amber and Anna discuss how podcasting has enabled them to find a community as they share their experiences of grieving their mothers and maternal figures.



Rites/Rights: LGBTQ+ dying, death and bereavement

How can LGBTQ+ people be sure that their wishes will be respected when they die? How can we ensure that loss is acknowledged legally, institutionally, and within families? What spaces are there to share and grieve as a community? In this talk, hear from a panel of researchers, campaigners, and grief support workers as they discuss LGBTQ+ experiences of dying, death and bereavement.

Ash Hayhurst is a funeral professional currently working in consultation with trans and gender diverse charity GIRES, to resource professionals to ensure respect and dignity for trans and gender diverse people in death and bereavement. **Jackie Engelberg** is Grief Encounters Development Worker at Switchboard, a charity for LGBTQ+ people looking for a sense of community, support or information in Brighton and Hove. **June Bellebono** is a transfeminine Italo-Burmese producer, writer and community organiser and founder of Queer Good Grief: a monthly peer support group for bereaved LGBTQ+ people.



regards to racial and ethnic disparities in access, quality and outcomes of care. In this talk, Jamilla shares how palliative care services, policymakers and researchers can address many of these disparities. Dr Jamilla Hussain is a Palliative Care Consultant and senior research fellow in Bradford.

Death Euphemism Bingo

Join artist duo **YARA + DAVINA** for a playful game of Death Euphemism Bingo. Will BIT THE DUST, CROSSED THE GREAT DIVIDE, or WALKED THE PLANK be the first to be called out? As we look at how euphemisms replace the language of death and dying, we open up conversations around why words such as dead and died feel taboo and empower ourselves to talk about death more openly...and win a fantastic prize! Created by YARA + DAVINA with **Emma Curtis**.

Try Before You Die

DeadHappy is an innovative afterlife planning company currently disrupting the life insurance market with a mobile first service that provides a much easier and cheaper alternative. Instead of asking "How much do you need?", they ask "What do you want to happen when you die?". Look out for the DeadHappy Try Before You Die coffin where you can make your own Deathwishes — whether that's paying off your mortgage or sending your friends to Vegas.



Racism and End of Life Care

How does systemic and structural racism impact people's end-of-life experience? Journalist and broadcaster **Kieran Yates** speaks to **Dr Jamilla Hussain** about racism in palliative and end of life care. Studies have shown that the provision and uptake of palliative care is no exception with

Single Homeless Project: Blue Life Plaques workshop

How can vulnerable communities who are focused on daily survival start to think about their legacies? **Single Homeless Project** support people experiencing homelessness across London to lead a fulfilling life. In this workshop, learn about the contextual issues of death in homelessness with health and social care professionals and make your own Blue Life Plaque, inspired by a workshop used to support people at Single Homeless Project who are at risk of, or experiencing homelessness to reflect on the fragility of life and their own personal legacy. Supported by Dying Matters Community Grants Programme.

Isabelle Farah: Ellipsis

Writer and performer **Isabelle Farah** brings us her critically acclaimed show, *Ellipsis*. In it, she explores grieving, authenticity, and being funny. "Stand-up is the outlet that keeps you sane. The nature of the game is to turn everything into punchlines. Can you do it if you feel all-consuming sadness?" Previously at Edinburgh Fringe, Soho Theatre, Pleasance London, and commended for the Screenshot Award in 2020.



Rankin: #IRemember

An installation of portrait photography by world-renowned photographer **Rankin**, capturing the universal — but often unique experience — of grief. Across the world, different people, cultures and faiths have ways to remember the dead, all different but all with their roots in memory and the importance of not forgetting those we knew and loved. This installation, commissioned as part of Dying Matters #IRemember campaign, shares memories of those we have lost to open up conversations around death and grief.

Uncovering

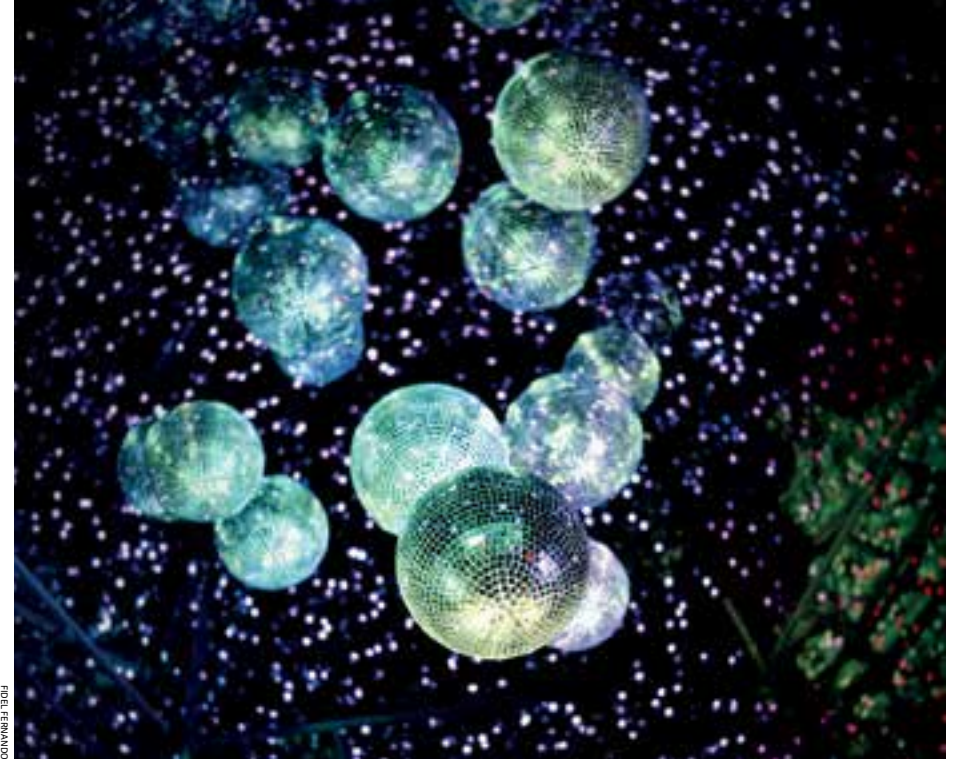
Pakistani women often provide hands on end of life care, yet outside of the community, little is understood about their experiences. In this installation, see reflections of Pakistani women's experience of caring for people at the end of life through a banner made with Bradford based community centre, WomenZone. The banner was made during a workshop series led by poet **Sharena Lee Satti** and **Dr Jamilla Hussain**, using oral poetry to explore experiences of death, dying, bereavement and caring. Supported by Dying Matters Community Grants Programme.

1000 Conversations About Death

Take part in a conversation with two virtual beings to consider how we, collectively, feel about death. In this interactive one-to-one live installation, step into a beautiful virtual space for an intimate experience to help you consider your relationship with dying. **BRiGHTBLACK** are artists **Myra Appannah** and **Simon Wilkinson**, who experiment with technologies like VR, AR and real-time engines to create live performance works, which grow to become full-scale shows. Their work has featured at Tate Modern and toured to 36 nations on 5 continents. Supported by Dying Matters Community Grants Programme.

Coffin Craft

What do you want to be buried in? Do you want your coffin to reflect you and your life? Get inspired with a display of Arka's unique hand painted coffins and try your hand at decorating one together in this collective craft activity.



LAST DANCE DISCO

Do you love to dance? What song defines how you want to be remembered? Over the course of the festival, and via social media, you are invited to submit a song you would want played at your funeral. By thinking about what song defines your life and legacy, we reflect on our one universal truth — our impending death — as a way to live more fully in the present. For the closing event, as we dance the night away to our collective **LAST DANCE DISCO**, celebrate the here and now. Created by **YARA + DAVINA**.

Marketplace

Pick up some further reading in our marketplace, where **Kemptown Bookshop**, Brighton's award-winning independent bookshop, will have a selection of titles for sale. Plus explore the work of brilliant campaign groups, charities and organisations working with death, dying and bereavement. Samaritans will also be on hand to offer in-person support and mental health services.

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SATURDAY / 19:30 / £12/£10 cons

Letters to the Lovely Dead

A widespread misconception sees grief as a series of defined stages that must be conquered to reach an end goal: recovery. Anyone who has lost a loved one will know this is untrue. Grief really is the price of love, and it endures because love does too. The dead remain part of our lives, not just as memories of the past but in the textures and interactions of the present. We talk to them. Sometimes we tell them things we wish we had said to them in life.

This evening of performance consists of letters to the lovely and beloved dead by those mourning them:

Author **Catherine Mayer** writes to her close friend, TV presenter Paula Yates, whose death in 2000 was treated, like her life, as a tabloid sensation.

Novelist and screenwriter **Nikesh Shukla** writes to his mother, whose death coincided with the launch of Shukla's career as a writer.

Monika Radojevic, inaugural winner of Stormzy and Penguin Random House's #Merky Books New Writers' Prize, writes to the grandparents she didn't have the chance to know, like so many children of immigrants.



JO FARMLEY



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