

Manchester City of Literature

আন্তর্জাতিক
মাতৃভাষা
দিবস

اليوم الدولي للغة الأم

Día
Internacional
De La Lengua
Materna

আন্তর্জাতিক
মাতৃভাষা
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Journée Internationale
De La Langue Maternelle

International Mother Language Day 2024

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A UNESCO City
of Literature



MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL



Manchester
Metropolitan
University

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1824

the University of Manchester

#MCRIMLD24

12th Feb – 23rd Mar 2024

manchestercityofliterature.com

Welcome to International Mother Language Day 2024!

Manchester is a city full of languages – we have the densest multilingual population for a city of our size in the UK. Every year on 21st February, we recognise and celebrate all these languages for UNESCO’s International Mother Language Day.

“Multilingual and multicultural societies exist through their languages, which transmit and preserve traditional knowledge and cultures in a sustainable way.”
– UNESCO

This year the events taking place in Manchester showcase a huge variety of languages in libraries, museums, language centres, galleries and a variety of community spaces too, allowing people in Manchester to engage with languages all over the world. We have a number of new organisations to the IMLD programme for 2024, which shows Manchester’s ongoing commitment to language diversity and multiculturalism.

With thanks to the international UNESCO Cities of Literature network for their participation in our celebrations, too. As a UNESCO City of Literature we are able to bring hundreds of languages to the fore of our celebrations from around the world and share a vital part of Manchester in return.

Enjoy the celebrations!



Councillor Luthfur Rahman OBE,
Deputy Leader,
Manchester
City Council

List of featured languages:

Arabic
Bengali
Estonian
French
Frisian
German
Greek
Icelandic
Mandarin
Polish
Russian
Shona
Spanish
Swedish
Turkish
Ukrainian
Urdu

Exhibitions

Material Power: Palestinian Embroidery



The Whitworth
24th November 2023 – 7th April
Subject to gallery opening times
Whitworth Art Gallery
Free

Embroidery is the most important cultural material of Palestine. This ancient practice, called *tatreez* in Arabic, is characterised by remarkable beauty and complexity. Historically, each area of Palestine was known for different motifs, techniques and textiles. Embroidery constituted a visual language among rural women, and their clothing reflected their origins and identity.

Material Power charts the evolution of embroidery in Palestine over the past century: from rich village tradition, transformed by modernity, to its politicisation in the 1970s and commodification in the present.



Over the last 75 years, embroidery has become a powerful symbol of resistance, and the embodiment of resilience on personal and national scales.

On display in the UK for the first time in over 30 years, historical dresses sit alongside the voices of women who continue to embroider today, and the work of contemporary artists critically reinterpreting the practice. Material Power seeks to unfold an intimate, human history of Palestine through clothing.

Material Power: Palestinian Embroidery was organised by The Whitworth, The University of Manchester in collaboration with Kettle's Yard where it travelled from 8 July – 29 October 2023.

Threads: A multilingual exhibition by UNESCO Cities of Literature

Manchester City of Literature
12th February – 23rd March
Subject to Library opening times
Manchester Central Library
Histories Hub
Free

Threads is a new physical and digital exhibition of multilingual writing and material from UNESCO Cities of Literature. Local Manchester writers Keisha Thompson and Hafsa Aneela Bashir have contributed work to the exhibition.

Cotton-spinning is part of Manchester's heritage as the world's first industrial city and as a result is inextricably linked through history to slavery, social reform and protest. Manchester City of Literature are exploring these threads and more through literature, as well as opening the discussion around the world, inviting UNESCO Cities of Literature to look at their own links to textiles and follow these threads as they are interwoven into cultural identities.

The exhibition features creative materials, textiles and writing from Odessa in Ukraine including camouflage nets of the Ukrainian defender created using a technique called "Kikimora". Kikimora is also a character in Slavic fairy tales and can be good or evil depending on whom she is dealing with. To these nets creators tie in symbolic lines of poetry, woven hearts and ribbons before they are sent to be used to protect people and equipment.

Materials also featured in the exhibition include embroidered artwork from Sísí Ingólfssdóttir, a feminist artist in Reykjavik, Iceland; traditional dress from Granada in Spain; handkerchiefs with Frisian poetry woven through them which were used to wave to ships at a major cultural event in Leeuwarden, the Netherlands. Exciting new writing and artwork by Angelika Kukioła on the theme has been commissioned by Wrocław in Poland.

Melbourne in Australia and Exeter, Nottingham and Manchester (where the exhibition is physically hosted) in the UK have also contributed poetry and artwork to the exhibition.

This exhibition is a partnership with Manchester's DNA at University of Manchester. With thanks to Manchester Histories for hosting the exhibition.

Catching Breath, 2014, Brook Andrew (Wirudjuri), woven by Pamela Joyce, Chris Cochius and Milena Paplinska, at the Australian Tapestry Workshop, 1.9 x 1.5m, wool, cotton. Collection: The Embassy Collection, currently on loan to the Australian High Commission in Singapore. Photograph: Jeremy Weihrauch



Events

An Evening with Kostya Tsolakis: Greekling

Friday 16th February
From 5:30pm – 7:30pm
House of Books and Friends
£5

Greekling, the much-anticipated debut poetry collection by Kostya Tsolakis, celebrates and commemorates damaged and rejected Greek bodies, be they of flesh and blood, made of marble, or natural bodies. In intertwining Greek culture, history and poetic influences with the contemporary queer experience, this collection is perceptive, lyrical, and deeply evocative of time and place. From an Athenian childhood to a closeted adolescence in the shadow of the AIDS epidemic, towards sexual self-discovery, maturity and freedom – Tsolakis charts the pursuit of unconditional happiness.

This event will feature a Q&A and poetry reading, plus a local poet will perform before a discussion between Kostya and Greg Thorpe, as well as an audience Q&A.

Family Session: Building a Language Manifesto and Open Mic

Saturday 17th February
1pm – 4:30pm
Manchester Poetry Library at
Manchester Metropolitan University
Free

Language is more than just communication. Language connects individuals and communities, builds relationships across time and space, contributes to who we are and how we understand the world around us. It is for this reason that we want to develop a manifesto display that reflects language as a right. And we are keen to hear your thoughts as we celebrate International Mother Language Day.

Join us in the Manchester Poetry Library for a family fun session that aims to build a language manifesto with children and families. This is an engaging and creative activity for the whole family. This session will be led by Dr Khawla Badwan.

After the session, stay for our drop in Family Open Mic. We can help you find poems to read from our collection or you read poems you have written yourselves! We welcome poems in any language and readers of all ages.



Manchester In Translation

Online

Comma Press
Monday 19th –
Wednesday 21st February
Online
Free

Hosted by Comma Press, Manchester in Translation will be a series of free online workshops and panels offering advice and insight into the world of translation.

Taking place over three days, the event will be an opportunity for budding translators – or those with a passion for languages – to develop practical skills for literary translation, learn about the life of the translator and discover paths to publication.

The online conference will begin with a keynote from an award-winning translator, followed by two panel events and three workshops focusing on literary translation from Arabic, German and Bangla/Bengali into



Museum language tours

Language Tours of Manchester Museum

Wednesday 21st February
10:30pm – 2:30pm
Manchester Museum
and Creative Manchester
Free

Join members of the Visitor Team for our 5-minute Lightning Talks to celebrate International Language Day. Our multilingual Visitor Team Assistants will share some of the incredible stories behind the objects and specimens on display in different languages including:

- Urdu 11:05am
- Spanish 11:30am
- Chinese 12:05am
- French 12:30am
- Shona, 13:05pm
- Turkish 13:30pm

You do not need to prebook a ticket to attend the talks. Please ask at the welcome desk for the talk meeting point on the day.

Family Fun Days

Various Manchester Libraries
Wednesday 21st February

Forum Library International Mother Language Day Fun Day

2pm – 4pm
Free

We will be celebrating International Mother Language Day at Forum Library, all ages will be able to enjoy an afternoon of workshops, crafts and performance. This will be a fun packed afternoon with Afro-Tots, Library staff and local artist Lydia all offering craft workshops, you can also enjoy a hand massage and conversation with the Forum Women's group.

Longsight Library International Mother Language Day Fun Day

2pm – 4pm
Free

Artist Aysha Yilmaz will be creating patterns from around the world collages with participants. Yuen Megson from Dragons Voices will be teaching Mandarin phrases, Rethink Rebuild will be hosting our favourite refreshments of Arabic coffee and sweets. Other activities from Anamika Cultural Group, Wei Yin and Abdulah.

North City Library International Mother Language Day Fun Day

1pm – 4pm
Free

Join our Free Family Fun Day to celebrate International Mother Language Day where there will be activities suitable for all ages. We will have crafts for making bookmarks and wooden heart decorations, name writing stations in Arabic, Chinese and Urdu, lots of puzzles and imagination game sessions plus a very special dual language storytime. Booking required - 0161 219 6442.

Manchester Central Library International Mother Language Day Fun Day

1pm – 3pm
Performance Space
Free

In half term join us for a multicultural celebration of language with our local community groups and specialist schools. There will be dance, music, language games, traditional costumes and traditional crafts. Plus, we invite you to sample food and music from around the world! Free family friendly, drop-in, all welcome.

The Language of Life – Biochemical Etymology

Wednesday 21st February
1pm – 2pm
Manchester Museum,
Creative Manchester and
Linguistic Diversity Collective
Free

Come and learn about the origins of scientific vocabulary and where the terms we use for chemicals in the body come from. You will hear a short talk filled with examples from ongoing research at the Manchester Institute of Biotechnology before collaborating on an activity to explore some more well-known names with the help of biochemists and linguists from The University of Manchester.

This session is suitable for the general public (approximately from secondary school age and above), particularly those interested in molecules, life sciences or the meanings and histories of words.

Looking for Languages Trail

Wednesday 21st February
1pm – 4pm
Manchester Museum,
Creative Manchester and
Linguistic Diversity Collective
Free

The Linguistic Diversity Collective invites you to join us for some half-term fun to celebrate International Mother Language Day at Manchester Museum. Grab your activity sheet and follow the language-themed trail around the museum's enchanting collections, thinking about your own language(s) along the way.



The Language of Life

Meet the Multilingual Museum

Wednesday 21st February
3pm – 5pm drop-in
Manchester Museum and
Creative Manchester
Free

This International Mother Language Day come and find out more about the Multilingual Museum website celebrating the language diversity of Manchester. Whether you speak a language fluently, are learning one, or just want to know more about languages, come along!

You could try to translate with us, speak in your own language about the objects, learn more about the languages found around Manchester, or hear from their Multilingual Museum volunteers about the work they've done to make this project possible. Your contribution could go on the website too.



Multilingual museum

'Towards a Multilingual Utopia: How can knowledge lead to action?'

Online

Wednesday 21st February
4pm – 6:30pm
Manchester City of Languages
Online
Free

The conference will feature discussion panels on language teaching, indigenous language rights and the role of language in UNESCO Cities of Culture. Panellists will include language teachers, language activists and UNESCO City of Literature representatives from Gothenburg, Leeuwarden and Manchester. Participants will have the opportunity to rotate between discussion panels.

The conference aims to compare experiences and reflect on how to interrogate language hierarchies in teaching, activism for policy and social change, and cultural events. We will explore how knowledge can lead to action, what we want for languages in cities, and what we envisage as a 'multilingual utopia'.

The conference is organised by Manchester City of Languages in collaboration with the Aston Centre for Applied Linguistics and Macfest.

The Last Pomegranate Tree

Wednesday 21st February
5:30pm – 7pm
Manchester Academy 3
University of Manchester

This mystical retelling of Kurdish stories in Sorani (with translation) will be a journey through Kurdish music and memory with harpist Tara Jaff. Featuring award winning author Bachytar Ali and translator

Kareem Abdulrahman in conversation with Ruth Abou Rached from the Department of Arabic and Middle Eastern Studies at University of Manchester.

This event is a partnership between Landscapes of future memory: creatives, literatures, and cultures of Middle East and North Africa (AMES) and Defiance: Artists at Risk.

Adquirir una Segunda Lengua: ¿Por qué nos parece tan difícil? / Acquiring a Second Language: Why do we find it so difficult?

Wednesday 21st February
6pm
Instituto Cervantes
Online
Free

Online

A forum aimed at teachers, language students, parents and the public which will consider how we learn a second, or a heritage language. Presenters will discuss various elements and difficulties that come with second-language acquisition including: myths and realities surrounding language acquisition and age, the effect of explicit knowledge and how it can affect learning, the use of language according to the context in which it is spoken, and the effect of education on our ability to learn a second language.

storytime

Le Petit Prince Reading and Performance

Le Petit Prince Reading and Performance

Wednesday 21st and
Saturday 24th February
4:15pm – 5:30pm
Alliance Française Manchester
Free

A reading performance around the book "Le Petit Prince" by Saint-Exupéry. As it's his 80th anniversary, this popular tale translated in more than 500 languages is a great way of celebrating International Mother Language Day. The story promotes essential values such as peace, tolerance, friendships, love and even ecology.

It will be read in French (in our French library) and families, young people as well as adult audiences are welcome.

Manchester Poetry Library's Multilingual Open Mic

Thursday 22nd February
6pm – 7:45pm
Manchester Poetry Library at
Manchester Metropolitan University
Free

Manchester Poetry Library is delighted to be hosting its second Multilingual Open Mic night to celebrate International Mother Language Day! We welcome readings in any language. You can choose to read your own poems or a poem by a well-known poet (or not so well-known). If you're still unsure, please just turn up and you can decide whether you want to read on the night. You might want to choose something spontaneously from our collection, or just stay and listen. Places to read will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.

Reading For Odesa

Manchester City of Literature
Saturday 24th February
1pm – 1:35pm
Histories Hub, downstairs in City
Library, Manchester Central Library
Free

On the second anniversary of the invasion of Ukraine, UNESCO Cities of Literature are taking part in a global and simultaneous show of solidarity. Inspired by and in cooperation with the Odesa Literature Museum.

In Manchester we will be holding a reading in the midst of the Threads exhibition in the Histories Hub of Manchester Central Library which continues unique items sent specially to Manchester from Odesa for this exhibition. Readings will be in English and Ukrainian from historic and contemporary authors.

We strongly believe that books can help to connect people, and that the network of the UNESCO Cities of Literature are a symbol of both connection as well as support. The readings will happen in advance of the rally in Piccadilly Gardens in support of Ukraine that starts at 2pm.

Cuéntame un cuento / Tell me a Story

Saturday 24th February
12pm
Instituto Cervantes Manchester
Free

In 2024, Instituto Cervantes in Manchester continued its series to promote children's literacy skills Tell me a Story. We start it with the celebration of International Mother Language Day, where teacher Magaly Flores will read one of the classics authors of children's Spanish literature, Gloria Fuertes and her story "Cangura para todo".

"The doorbell rang. The man opened the door. The staircase was dark. Someone, with a scarf tied around their head, handed him a card that read: 'EXPERIENCED KANGAROO-BABYSITTER AVAILABLE FOR HOUSEHOLD DUTIES.'"

Want to know how the story continues?



Reading For Odesa



Mother Tongue Other Tongue

Mother Tongue Other Tongue 2024 Competition Launch

Online

Tuesday 27th February
6pm – 7:45pm
Manchester Poetry Library
Online
Free

This online event is being held to explain more about 'Mother Tongue Other Tongue', an annual free competition for young people aged from 8-18. The competition invites pupils to share poems or songs from their mother tongue or from a language they are learning.

This event is aimed at anyone wishing to run the project in their school or community setting. It will provide resources and ideas that can be used directly in classrooms, online or in groups.

Celebrating Poetry and International Mother Language Day

MACFEST
Tuesday 27th February
6pm – 7:30pm
Online
Free

Online

Join us for an exciting event with young people from the UK on a literary and poetic journey as we celebrate International Mother Language Day! Young poets will recite or perform their poetry in English or their mother tongue.



Featured young writers:

- Amal Mohammad Yousaf and Donia Fellag from Whalley Range 11-18 High School
- Hopwood Hall College
- Kunza Khan is from the University of Salford
- Sameeha Mahmud is from Woodford County High School in London
- Kaya AskanderDaaniya Faisal from Withington Girls School
- Ayesha Nadeem, Hasna Raza, and Huneza Ali from Levenshulme High School
- Mukhtar Omar Mukhlis, King Edward's School, Birmingham
- Kamal Sddiq from KD grammar school for boys

Hosted by: Miss Donna Johnson and Mr. Neil A. Johnson, co-headteachers of Levenshulme High School, Manchester.

Professor Yaron Matras will introduce the main language communities, with a focus on the language of the city's Muslim populations. He will discuss how information on languages is compiled, what functions languages have, and what multilingual spaces exist in the city. Yaron is a linguist specialising in multilingualism and minority languages. He founded and led the Multilingual Manchester program.



MACFEST
MUSLIM ARTS AND CULTURE FESTIVAL

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