

The British Council presents the UK-Russia Year of Language and Literature 2016 programme

Both the UK and Russia have widely-spoken languages and rich literary traditions. We share a deeply held respect for each other's culture and literature. Therefore, we are proud to announce a joint celebration of written and spoken culture: The UK-Russia Year of Language and Literature 2016. The Year aims to build on the success of the UK-Russia Year of Culture 2014, ensuring meaningful and sustained collaboration in the cultural sphere between the UK and Russia.

The British Council will lead the UK's Year of Language and Literature in Russia and the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs will lead Russia's celebrations in the UK. As part of the programme developed with support from VisitBritain and UKTI (UK Trade and Investment), an ambitious series of events will be held across Russia throughout 2016. The British Council is also pleased to announce BP as the first UK Founder Sponsor of the Year of Language and Literature. As the Year coincides with the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death many events will celebrate the enduring influence of the playwright's works on global and Russian culture, and will increase interest in studying English and British literature among Russian audiences.

"The UK-Russia Year of Language and Literature sets the stage for the British Council to do what it does best – to support a friendly knowledge and understanding between the people of the UK and wider world by making a positive contribution to the countries we work with" - Sir Ciarán Devane, Chief Executive of the British Council.

"The 2016 Year of Language and Literature is a great opportunity for us to build on what we achieved in 2014 through the UK-Russia Year of Culture. Shakespeare's anniversary will be commemorated around the world, but nowhere will it have more resonance than in Russia, where Shakespeare, because of his influence on Russian writers, is practically a Russian writer himself" - Michael Bird, Director of the British Council in Russia.

The Year programme will kick off in January with the launch of a massive open online course (MOOC) based on Shakespeare's works. In February, a new TheatreHD season begins. Cinemas in 40 Russian cities and across the CIS will host live screenings of the most impressive productions performed at the Royal National Theatre, Shakespeare's Globe Theatre and the Barbican.

In April, famous characters from the Bard's works will be brought to life in the interiors of carriages on the Filovskaya line of the Moscow Metro. Spring 2016 will see joint exhibitions at the State Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow and the National Portrait Gallery in London, celebrating the 160th anniversary of the founding of both institutions. Moscow audiences will have an opportunity to see the famous Chandos portrait of Shakespeare for the very first time. At the same time, the British Council will run a competition for Russian translators of British literature and a bursary scheme for Russian publishers, and 150,000 schoolchildren across Russia will take part in a Shakespeare Olympiad. While preparing for the Olympiad they may well take advantage of a new online resource developed by VisitBritain as part of the Year: an interactive literary map of the UK.

In autumn, a series of professional seminars and public lectures for Russian and British literary specialists will be held at Yasnaya Polyana. At the end of October, the 17th New British Film Festival will feature a special programme of Shakespearean screen adaptations. In November, at Moscow's Non/fiction bookfair 2016, visitors will enjoy an extensive cultural programme with the participation of a number of famous British writers.

The British Council is also delighted to announce that in November 2015 regular IELTS examinations re-opened in Moscow, in partnership with BKC-IH. IELTS is the leading international English language proficiency examination.

Announcements of upcoming events, the full programme, photographs and additional information in Russian and English will be available throughout 2016 at www.britishcouncil.ru

Images: goo.gl/pcuXXY

For further information, please contact the British Council at press@britishcouncil.ru or +7 495 287 18 16

Key events in the UK-Russia Year of Language and Literature 2016

TheatreHD: screenings of British productions as part of the Shakespeare Lives festival

In February 2016, the British Council and CoolConnections will launch a new TheatreHD season, with live HD screenings and recordings of performances by leading British theatres to be shown in 50 cities across Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan. Without leaving their home city, viewers will have a chance to see outstanding productions recorded at the Royal National Theatre, Shakespeare's Globe Theatre and the Barbican, featuring international stars such as Tom Hiddleston, Benedict Cumberbatch, Kenneth Branagh, Judi Dench and Steven Fry.

The 17th New British Film Festival

In October-November 2016, the British Council together with CoolConnections will hold the 17th New British Film Festival, with screenings set to take place in 30 cities across Russia for the first time.

As part of the UK-Russia Year of Language and Literature and to mark the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death, a special programme of films will be shown, including screenings of Maxine Peake's *Hamlet*, staged at the Royal Exchange Theatre in Manchester. There will be screenings of a range of documentary and short films, and a series of discussions and round tables on the development of the international film industry with the participation of invited experts and Festival guests: *New British Film Festival Talks*.

Details of the programme will be announced in autumn 2016 at www.ukfilms.ru

Literature seminar at Yasnaya Polyana

The British Council together with Russian partners are delighted to announce the launch of a major annual seminar dedicated to contemporary British literature. In autumn 2016, the first seminar will be held at Yasnaya Polyana, the museum estate of Leo Tolstoy. The seminar will involve leading British writers, poets, critics, journalists, literary specialists and translators. Participants will discuss how the UK Publishing industry works, literary trends in prose and poetry alongside academic approaches to the study of literature. This project aims to facilitate the development of professional dialogue between representatives of literary and academic communities in the UK and Russia, encouraging young specialists to conduct independent research and to create platforms for knowledge and experience exchange.

As part of the seminar a series of presentations, discussions and round tables aimed at wider audiences are planned. Translators, publishers, university staff, graduates, journalists, literary critics and those with a professional interest in British literature will be invited to take part.

The Year of Language and Literature at the Non/fiction bookfair

In November 2016, a delegation of British writers and publishers will take part in the 18th Non/fiction bookfair. Stimulating discussions, innovation in British literature, an art installation celebrating the connections between the Russian and English languages and much more will be presented at one of Moscow's biggest literary events.

Literary translation competition

In spring 2016, the British Council will hold an open competition for the best translation of works by contemporary British writers. Competition entrants will be presented with the first chapters of 12 works written by contemporary British authors. The authors of the best translations will receive a cash prize. Both amateur and professional translators are invited to take part in the competition. An expert panel will judge the work of participants, including contributors to literary journals, critics, editors and recognised specialists of literary translation. The translations of the competition winners will be published online and also in one of the Russian periodicals.

The competition will be held with the aim of presenting the best translations of works by contemporary British writers to Russian publishers. The project will increase publishers' and translators' interest in contemporary British literature, presenting new writers to Russian audiences and also helping to continue a professional dialogue between publishers in the UK and in Russia.

Grants for publishers

In parallel with the translation competition, a grant programme will be opened for Russian publishers, which will

allow publishers to purchase the publishing rights for outstanding, contemporary British fiction and non-fiction.

Grants of up to £2,000 will be available and will be paid directly to the UK rightsholders on behalf of the Russian publishers whose applications are supported.

National Shakespeare Schools Olympiad

The British Council, with the support of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, is delighted to announce a National Shakespeare Schools Olympiad. The Olympiad will be held in all schools across Russia for schoolchildren from 1st to 11th class and will begin in March with a special lesson dedicated to the cultural legacy of William Shakespeare. 150,000 schoolchildren and 40,000 teachers are expected to take part in the Olympiad. They will be able to compete for prizes for the best essay in Russian or in English, or prepare a creative team project with classmates. Main prizes for the winners include educational trips to British boarding schools and language schools, while the most active participating schools will receive prizes from British publishing houses.

UK Literary Map

As part of the UK-Russia Year of Language and Literature, VisitBritain is developing an online, interactive literary map of the UK. This map will act as a guide to places linked to the life and works of famous British writers and poets, as well as regions and cities, where events unfold in some of Britain's most well-known literary works. The map will not only enable you to go on a virtual excursion of the UK but also to create a unique literary route whilst journeying digitally through the UK.

From Elizabeth to Victoria. English Portraits from the National Portrait Gallery collection exhibition

In spring 2016, the State Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow and the National Portrait Gallery in London will celebrate the 160th anniversary of the establishment of their institutions. To mark this anniversary both galleries will present joint exhibitions of masterpieces from their collections.

Portraits of some of Russia's greatest cultural figures, including Tolstoy, Tchaikovsky and Mussorgsky will be on display at the National Portrait Gallery in London and visitors to the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow will have a chance to see portraits of Shakespeare, Isaac Newton, Charles Dickens, Elizabeth I and many more famous Britons. As part of the parallel programme to the National Portrait Gallery exhibition in Moscow, the British Council will present an educational programme, including 7 lectures on key figures, instrumental in forming the history of Great Britain.

Shakespeare Lives Summer Festival

One of the main events of the Year will be a large-scale summer festival dedicated to Shakespeare. The Festival will take place in June in one of Moscow's central parks, and the programme will include music concerts, theatre productions, film screenings, lectures, master-classes and much more.

Specially for the Festival, the British Council, with the support of the British Film Institute will prepare a retrospective of screen adaptations of Shakespeare's plays. This will include classic and contemporary productions, as well as the very first archive films on the playwright's works, produced during the silent film era. Audiences will also have access to an extensive educational programme of lectures, discussions and master-classes.

Future of the Word: forum on the future of language and literature in the digital age

In June 2016, the British Council together with Strelka, the Institute of Media, Architecture and Design, will hold the Future of the Word forum, dedicated to the use of digital technology in the development of literature and new ways of relaying information.

The core of the festival will be a wide-ranging Language and Literature hackathon where British and Russian professionals in digital technologies, publishing, media, design, software programming and writers, journalists, literature critics, linguists will work together to develop the ideas of the word and digital innovation.

Alongside the hackathon, which is aimed at a professional audience, a broader educational programme will cater to wider audiences, consisting of a series of lectures, round tables and discussions forums with the participation of Russian and British experts. Live streaming of key programme events and evening film screenings will be available.

Future of the Word isn't the first large-scale project that the British Council has organised with Strelka. As an Institute of Media, Architecture and Design, Strelka is active in international educational projects and offers a research programme on Urban Studies and the impact of technology on urban development for students from all over the world, as well as publishing books on architecture and design. Every year the Institute organises a summer programme open to the general public.

English and Shakespeare. Online Course

On 11 January 2016 a free online educational course on the life and works of William Shakespeare developed by the British Council and the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust will be launched on the FutureLearn platform. This intensive, 6 week course consists of a series of lectures and video lessons featuring British actors. The course is mainly based on five of Shakespeare's plays – *Romeo and Juliet*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Hamlet*, *The Tempest* and *Macbeth*. The course will also examine Shakespeare's contribution to linguistic innovation, with learners discovering which words and linguistic rules appeared in the English language thanks to the works of the great poet and playwright.

For further information: futurelearn.com/courses/explore-english-shakespeare

Beginner's. Intermediate. Advanced. Shakespeare: The British Council announces the re-opening of IELTS examinations

In the lead up to the UK-Russia Year of Language and Literature, the British Council is delighted to announce the re-opening of IELTS exams in Moscow. From December 2015 it will be possible to sit the IELTS exam 3 times a month in the official exam centre, BKC-IH.

IELTS (International English Language Testing System) is the leading international English language testing system. Successfully passing the exam can open the door to living, studying or working in an English-speaking country. Every year, over 2.5 million people sit the IELTS exam. Over 9,000 organisations, including educational institutions and commercial companies recognise the IELTS certificate.

For further information: www.ielts.su

Shakes-tour

The British Embassy and the "Interregional Reading Federation" (a non-commercial partnership) will send a bilingual book of sonnets by William Shakespeare on a journey around a hundred Russian cities. The book will travel all the way from Sakhalin to Kaliningrad as part of the 'Otkroy rot' reading competition. In each city the finalists will recite Shakespeare's poetry. The aim of this participatory project is to emphasise the importance of Shakespeare's heritage not only for Great Britain, but for the whole world, including remote regions of Russia. Details of how to follow the book's journey around Russia via social media will be announced later in the year.

Organisers

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) is the federal executive body responsible for developing and implementing State policy and legal regulation in the field of international relations. The President of the Russian Federation oversees the activity of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The British Council

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities.

We create international opportunities for the people of the UK and other countries and build trust between them worldwide.

We work in more than 100 countries and our 8,000 staff - including 2,000 teachers - work with thousands of professionals and policy makers and millions of young people every year by teaching English, sharing the arts and delivering education and society programmes.

www.britishcouncil.ru