

More expert panel sessions from the emirates airline festival of literature 2020 added to digital content series curated in collaboration with Dubai Calendar

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Literature fans will have easy access to 11 panel discussions from this year's LitFest online

The Emirates Literature Foundation, organisers of the annual Emirates Airline Festival of Literature (EAFOL) is adding more virtual panel sessions from the event's 2020 edition to its newly launched digital content series. Further enhancing its visibility across the region and around the world, the online series allows literature fans the opportunity to easily access and enjoy insights and ideas shared by literary icons from the event's 12th edition.

The video series, which was curated in collaboration with Dubai Calendar, the city's go-to entertainment and events guide, has been gaining momentum in the online world since it was launched in early April with the full recording of a panel discussion featuring [Sir Ranulph Fiennes & Sir Chris Bonington](#), two of the world's greatest living adventurers, who discuss their extraordinary experiences. A total of 11 such expert sessions from the recent edition of the LitFest, which was held from February 4-9, will be uploaded to its YouTube channel.

In the past few weeks, four more expert panel sessions have been added to the digital series - [Relationships under Strain](#), in which authors Tayari Jones, Esi Edugyan, and Clare Mackintosh discuss the pressure of culture and other aspects in a relationship; [Identity Poetics](#), featuring renowned poets Carlos Andrés Gómez, Afra Atiq, and Farah Chamma; and [Modern History of the UAE](#) that gives viewers an insight into the factors that propelled UAE into global prominence, as the subject is widely discussed by three authors of the country's history, Dr Alamira Reem Bani Hashem, David Heard and Nick Cochrane-Dyett.

Every week, one session in digital format will be released and the first session that was streamed online in May is a panel discussion titled ['Arab writers going global'](#) in which award-winning writers Jokha Alharthi, Hoda Barakat, and translator Marilyn Booth look at what the future holds for writers from the Arab world.

This session is conducted almost entirely in Arabic, and offers insight into the challenges faced by Arab writers. All sessions are subtitled.

The Emirates Airline Festival of Literature 2020 gave book worms and poetry pundits the chance to meet and mingle with a line-up of celebrities such as Jane Goodall, Jo Nesbo, Tayari Jones, Fatima Bhutto and Jokha Alharthi, in addition to Sir Ranulph Fiennes and Sir Chris Bonington. In line with social distancing and the UAE's #stayhome campaign, the festival's limited digital content series is providing literature enthusiasts and all those who missed the popular LitFest in February, an opportunity to further enrich their knowledge from the comfort and safety of their living rooms by browsing through and selecting from a wide collection of videos that reflect the high quality sessions that made the 12th edition of the event an enormous success.

Ahmed Al Khaja, CEO of Dubai Festivals and Retail Establishment (DFRE) said: "As part of DFRE's commitment to encourage reading, learning and sharing of literary ideas, we are happy to play a key role in enlightening those who love literature on some of the most popular activities and events of the Emirates Literature Foundation through our Dubai Calendar platform. The launch of the digital content series from the latest edition of the Emirates Airline Festival of Literature opens an exciting new chapter in our partnership, which aims to further boost the profile of this much-awaited fixture in the international literary calendar. Going digital during this period is not only timely but also falls in line with Dubai's social strategy to leverage modern communications and technology to promote cultural understanding and help safeguard Dubai's global reputation as a city of excellence and intellectual diversity."

Ahlam Bolooki, Festival Director of Emirates Airline Festival of Literature, commented: "The Festival this year was the biggest and best yet. Tens of thousands attended as we explored the world of tomorrow through life's big questions, discussed by local, regional and international superstar authors. Each year the Festival is completely unique and we are delighted to be able to share some of these unforgettable conversations now in this time of social isolation, and hope people who watch them will find something of interest, a moment of inspiration and joy, and hope for a better tomorrow."

Isobel Abulhoul, CEO and Trustee of the Emirates Literature Foundation, said: "There is no greater consolation than literature in times of uncertainty. Throughout the year, we strive to put books into the hands of more people, and the love of stories into their hearts. Not everyone is able to attend the Festival or take part in our year round events, so the chance to watch some of the most popular sessions from the Festival couldn't come at a better time. They bring stories to life and allow everyone in the Emirates and around the world to enjoy the conversations about the topics that matter."

Book recommendations and a curated list of resources for literary entertainment, education and self-improvement including reading lists and other resources for children of all ages will also be published across the Foundation's digital platforms.

THE DIGITAL CONTENT SERIES WILL ALSO FEATURE THE FOLLOWING SESSIONS:

Let Her Fly: Ziauddin and Toor Pekai Yousafzai

Ziauddin Yousafzai is best known as the father of the youngest Nobel Peace Prize recipient, Malala. But he is also the father who refused to clip his daughter's wings. Ziauddin fought for equality long before he learnt the word feminism. Battling the norms of a patriarchal society he founded a school for his daughter to attend, granting her a privilege only boys enjoyed – education. Toor Pekai Yousafzai rarely speaks publicly about the experiences that brought her and her family to the world's attention. But this is her story too.

Science for Humans: Adam Rutherford, Dr Mohamed Qasem

Two authors and broadcasters who have made science communication their business discuss how scientific literacy can improve society. Adam Rutherford is the author of *How to Argue with a Racist*, *The Book of Humans* and *A Brief History of Everyone Who Ever Lived*. He presents BBC Radio 4's flagship science programme, *Inside Science*. Dr Mohamed Qasem was named one of the top science communicators in the Arab world by *Nature Middle East* for his Arabic science podcast *Sciware*. He is the author of *Things You Cannot Imagine*, selected by the UAE Ministry of Education for use in schools.

Cities of Tomorrow: Tony Juniper, Roma Agrawal, Saeed Al Gergawi

Three experts discuss what is being done now, and what could be done, to build sustainable and resilient cities. Roma Agrawal is the author of *Built: The Hidden Stories Behind Our Structures*. She is an award-winning structural engineer and an advocate for inclusivity in engineering. Saeed Al Gergawi is Director of Dubai Future Academy, an organisation dedicated to preparing industry pioneers in the UAE to create a better future, and Tony Juniper CBE is Chair of Natural England and fellow of the University of Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership. His books include *Rainforest* and *What Has Nature Ever Done for Us*.

Faith in the Modern World: Omar Said Ghobash, Lesley Hazleton, Gelong Thubten

A panel of high-profile writers investigate what we gain from understanding the spiritual side of life. Gelong Thubten is a Buddhist monk and bestselling author of *A Monk's Guide to Happiness*, who teaches meditation and specialises in providing non-religious mindfulness training. Lesley Hazleton is an award-winning journalist, historian, blogger and author of *The First Muslim*. Omar Saif Ghobash is the Assistant Minister for Cultural Affairs, and author of the acclaimed *Letters to a Young Muslim*.

Dispatches from the Wilderness: Miriam Lancewood, Gavin Thurston, Ali Alsloom, Kate Humble

Four writers who have experienced nature under very different circumstances discuss what their travels have taught them. Ali Al Saloom is best known for his Ask Ali TV show, column and books, with more than 1 million copies sold worldwide, but his ongoing exploration of Emirati identity has led him to look at the relationship between the UAE's natural environment and its culture. Winner of five Emmys and two BAFTAs, Gavin Thurston's work as a wildlife cameraman has taken him to every continent while author and presenter Kate Humble's most recent book is *Thinking on My Feet*, a record of her walks and runs across the globe throughout a single year. Miriam Lancewood is the author of *Woman in the Wilderness* that tells the story of her adjustment to a new life in the wild and what she learned.

The Poetryhood Presents: The Poetryhood brings you an evening of powerful and honest performances with a fun, laid-back vibe where Spoken Word artists share their creativity in a safe-haven of vulnerability and truth. Come and experience the joy of this poetry community founded by Jamil Adas, and including poets Ahmad Nizar, Alaa Abu Arshid, Alysia Knowles, Carlos Andrés Gómez, Danabelle Gutierrez, Farah Chamma, Hakeem Kemet, Harry Baker, Maher Gidwani, Namal Siddiqui, Osama Al Hussein, Suhaib Alises and Yazeed Makhlof.

To view the sessions and to keep updated on all of the latest content, subscribe to the EmiratesLitFest [YouTube channel](#), and follow EmiratesLitFest on:

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/emirateslitfest/> and <https://www.instagram.com/elfdubai/>

Twitter: @emirateslitfest and @elfdubai

Facebook: @emiratesliteraturefoundation and @EmiratesLitFest

For more information on citywide entertainment, please visit Dubai Calendar's [website](#) and also tune into its Live From Dubai series via the Dubai Calendar Instagram page.