

Institute of Ideas

<http://www.instituteofideas.com>

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7th Battle of Ideas Festival Programme Announced

The Institute of Ideas today unveils the 7th BATTLE OF IDEAS FESTIVAL programme, featuring a line-up of 350 speakers participating in 75 debates on society's big issues and unresolved questions (see: <http://www.battleofideas.org.uk/index.php/2011/overview/>).

The main weekend festival, held at the Royal College of Art, London on October 29-30, showcases keynote debates entitled:

Battle against the fates; Profiting Responsibly? Business in the Big Society; Creativity and Curiosity: do we make stuff up or find it out? Has tolerance gone too far? Loyalty in an age of whistle-blowing and Wikileaks; Is individualism bad for society?

Seven strands run through the format of the festival weekend, allowing in-depth examination of a subject. They are entitled:

Battle for the World, Battle for Morality, Food Fight, Society Wars, Battle for our Brains, Reassessing... Politics and Sporting Contests.

In addition there are a large number of standalone discussions on subjects including:

The Tea Party – defenders of the American Dream? Life off Earth: are the aliens out there?
Burlesque: female empowerment or posh stripping? Islamophobia: the new racism or liberal angst?
Ain't misbehaving - do British children need the army to sort them out? Smart drugs: magic bullet or cheating ourselves? Olympic expectations: can't see the games for the legacy? Through a glass darkly: why do atheists love the King James Bible?

Commenting on the launch of the festival programme, **Claire Fox, Institute of Ideas director**, said:

'In a period in which we are seeing hugely important cultural shifts, from nihilistic rioters looting and burning up their own communities to many longstanding institutions – including the police, media and political parties – hollowing out and being called into question, never has the need for rational debate been more important.'

'The Battle of ideas festival 2011 will provide two days of the kind of high-level, thought provoking public debate that is currently urgently needed. We aim to avoid lazy platitudes and to interrogate what is really happening in society both in the UK and internationally. Free speech is allowed!'

Confirmed speakers at the **Battle of Ideas festival 2011** include:

David Aaronovitch, columnist, *The Times*; author, *Voodoo Histories*; **Anne Atkins** novelist, columnist and broadcaster; regular contributor to Radio 4's *Thought for the Day*; **Simon Baron-Cohen**, director, Autism Research Centre, University of Cambridge; author, *Zero Degrees of Empathy*; **Daniel Ben-Ami**, finance and economics journalist; author *Ferraris for All: in defence of economic progress and Cowardly Capitalism*; **Melvin Burgess**, award winning children's author, novels include *Nicholas Dane, Junk and Kill All Enemies*; **John Cooper**, leading criminal and human rights barrister; regular columnist, *The Times* and *Observer*; editor, *Criminal Bar Quarterly*; **Claire Fox**, director, Institute of Ideas; panellist, BBC Radio 4's *Moral Maze*; **Frank Furedi**, professor of sociology, University of Kent, Canterbury; author, *Wasted, Politics of Fear* and *On Tolerance: in defence of moral independence*; **Clare Gerada**, GP; chair, Royal College of General Practitioners; **Tom Holland**, award-winning historian; author, *Rubicon: the triumph and tragedy of the Roman Republic*; winner, 2007 Classical Association Prize; **Simon Jenkins**, columnist, *Guardian*; chairman, National Trust; author, *A short history of England*; **Irma Kurtz**, writer; broadcaster; agony aunt, *Cosmopolitan Magazine*; author, *About Time: growing old disgracefully*; **Philippe Legrain**, advisor to José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission; author, *Aftershock: reshaping the world economy after the crisis*; **Kenan Malik**, writer and broadcaster; presenter of *Analysis*, BBC Radio 4; author, *The Quest for the Moral Compass* (forthcoming); **Paul Mason**, broadcaster; author, *Financial Meltdown and the End of the Age of Greed*; **Andy Miah**, director, Creative Futures Research Centre, University of West Scotland; **Tim Montgomerie**, co-editor, *Conservative Home*; co-founder, ConservativeIntelligence.com; member, advisory board, Centre for Social Justice; **Ruth Padel**, poet and writer; author *Darwin - A Life in Poems*; **Tariq Ramadan**, professor of contemporary Islamic studies, University of Oxford; author, *The Quest for Meaning: developing a philosophy of pluralism*; **Jeffrey Rosen**, professor of law, George Washington University; legal affairs editor, *The New Republic*; author, *The Supreme Court: The Personalities and Rivalries that Defined America*; **Brendan O'Neill**, editor, *spiked*; **William Saletan**, journalist, *Slate*; author, *Bearing Right: how conservatives won the abortion war*; **John Sutherland**, Emeritus Lord Northcliffe Professor of English Literature, University College London; author, *The Lives of the Novelists*; **George Szirtes**, reader in creative writing, UEA; poet; editor; translator; author, *The Burning of the Books and Other Poems*; **Raymond Tallis**, author, thirty medical and non-medical books including *Aping Mankind: Neuromania, Darwinitis and the Misrepresentation of Humanity*; **Gáspár Miklos Tamás**, visiting professor, Central European University; president, Green Left; author, *Les Idoles de la Tribu*; **Tom Watt**, actor, writer and broadcaster: best known as Lofty from *EastEnders*, David Beckham's ghostwriter and *Fighting Talk's* Champion of Champions 2011; **Martin Wolf**, associate editor and chief economics commentator, *Financial Times*; author, *Fixing Global Finance*; **Zoe Williams**, columnist, *The Guardian*; **Cathy Young**, contributing editor *Reason*; and many more.

Press passes for the weekend are available and a wide range of Battle of Ideas speakers are available for comment. Contact: Patrick Hayes 07782 133399 patrickhayes@instituteofideas.com

Notes to editors:

1) The 7th Battle of Ideas festival weekend is taking place on the weekend of 29-30 October at the Royal College of Art, London. For the full programme and list of confirmed speakers, visit: www.battleofideas.org.uk

2) Battle Satellite events are organised with a range of national and international partners taking place throughout October and November. Full details of the programme can be viewed online here: <http://www.battleofideas.org.uk/index.php/2011/satellites/>

3) Press passes for all events are available and a wide range of festival speakers are available for media comment on issues being discussed at the Battle of Ideas before and during the event. Contact: patrickhayes@instituteofideas.com 07782 133399 / 020 7269 9222