

Empire State of Mind

Just Festival 2017

The impact that the British Empire has had on the world is monumental, from the Balfour agreement to Indian Independence, both of which are reaching significant anniversaries this year, colonial Britain's involvement lies at the heart of recent history. More recently, the influence of our collective past became obvious as some of the rhetoric used to support Brexit harked back to the strength of the British Empire. With the Empire so integral to the way in which our society is shaped, Just Festival will ask the question of whether our education system teaches the population sufficiently about the days in which Britain ruled over one quarter of the world's population.

Our panel, chaired by Dr Rowena Arshad OBE, head of the Moray House School of Education, will bring a wealth of teaching experience and personal insight. Nikhat Yusaf (Additional Support for Learning Service) was born in Lahore, Pakistan, first training as a teacher in Pakistan, where the history of the British Empire in India was a fundamental part of the history curriculum. At 25 she moved to Scotland, and started teaching here 13 years ago, Yusaf's unique experience gives her the perfect viewpoint in which to compare the British approach to our own history. She will be joined by the playwright Annie George, whose work has focused on her own Indian heritage and identity, and is particularly interested in how British people of Indian origin learn about their history.

The conversation programme has been the backbone of Just Festival for many years, offering a relaxed, safe space in which experts, practitioners, community organisations, performers and the public can gather to discuss, debate and dissect the issues that face us as local and global communities. Join us this year as we explore what it means to go Against The Current, from religious leadership to mental health we ask what it will take to challenge the status quo and make the world a fairer and more united place.

Empire State of Mind takes place on the 21st August at 19:30 at The Quaker Meeting House and is one of ten conversations at Just Festival throughout August

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