

# His House Our Home

## Exploring ideas of race and home through literature and visual art

This project took the form of a virtual exhibition, a film, commissioned artwork and poetry, and was led by Maisha Webster, poet and musician Kweku Sackey (aka K.O.G), and Nyara School of Arts, a Sheffield based African-Caribbean and African Diaspora arts and heritage organisation founded in 2018.

The project launch event at Theatre Deli in Sheffield featured entirely artists and academics of colour, bringing together established and emerging creatives to perform in front of a live audience. Follow up events included discussions, creative writing workshops and the creation of online resources.

Alex Mason (Arts and Humanities Knowledge Exchange, University of Sheffield) said of Sheffield's poet laureate, Otis Mensah, who had been part of a Being Human Festival event in 2020: ' [Otis] said that the type of commission we gave him, which was specific in theme but open ended in how he interpreted it, opened his eyes to a different way of working which for him was more productive and creative. It's changed his thinking about the type of work he wants to produce going forward. He now wants to start making more mixed media art, video, audio, and poetry after the process through Being Human, and in response to his Being Human art piece.'

The University of Sheffield have been involved with Being Human since 2015, building partnerships with local heritage organisations, festivals, and community groups as well as with artists and creatives. Events and activities include 'Jolly Good Ale and Old: An Evening of Drink, History, and Song at the Sign of the Sheffield Tap' in 2015, 'Robots and AI: hope or fear' with Sheffield Robotics in 2016, 'The Lost Songs of MGM' in 2017, 'The Sisterhood of the Ring' in 2018 looking at race and gender in the circus, 'Ben Jonson and Bolsover Castle' in 2019 as part of the Myth, Dream, Love series, and a collaboration with The Bare Project to create 'The People's Palace of Possibility' in 2020. This collaboration has given undergraduate students the opportunity to take Knowledge Exchange roles within the organisation.

The success of the 2021 event led to new partnerships and working relationships and increased the confidence of emerging artists and practitioners to seek new performance opportunities. There have also been approaches to the project team about potential collaborations from the Migration Matters festival and other independent festivals.

**“Being able to talk openly about diversity can be difficult... it's testament to the Being Human Festival team they supported that, that they valued it...I feel other funders are not as bold.”**

– Amy Carter Gordon



### People

- Maisha Wester, British Academy Global Professor, School of English, University of Sheffield

### Institution

- University of Sheffield

### Partners

- Kweku Sackey (aka K.O.G.)
- Nyara School of Arts, Sheffield

### Area

- Yorkshire and the Humber

### Being Human Festival year

- Renewal, 2021
- New Worlds, 2020
- Myth, Dream Love, 2019
- Origins and Endings, 2018
- Lost and Found in Sheffield, 2017
- Hope and Fear, 2016
- Seeing Human, 2015

### Learn more

- [hishouseourhome.wordpress.com](https://hishouseourhome.wordpress.com)
- [artspaces.kunstmatrix.com/en/exhibition/8527807/his-house-to-our-home](https://artspaces.kunstmatrix.com/en/exhibition/8527807/his-house-to-our-home)