

**To:** Institute For Social Futures  
**Subject:** RE: Inter-Futures Newsletter 7

# Inter-Futures 7

## The ISF Newsletter

Welcome to the seventh edition of Inter-Futures, the ISF Newsletter, which reports on ongoing work by ISF'ers, events, news and more.

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## News

### 2019/2020 Annual Call for Fellows

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## News

### **2019/2020 Annual Call for Fellows**

#### ***Putting the social into future-facing research***

Applications are invited from academic staff and researchers at Lancaster University to join the [Institute for Social Futures](#). The ISF is a collaborative environment that fosters intellectual exchange between academics from different departments, research centres and faculties. It brings together experts in humanities and social sciences with others in all faculties across the campus. The focus is on future-facing cross-disciplinary work that builds in the human and social dimension.

We seek individuals who wish to combine their research techniques and skills and build links with colleagues elsewhere with a view to enhancing their research capability and making new funding and teaching

For 2019/20 two major research themes have been identified: **“The Future of the Word”** and **“Everyday Environmental Futures”**. The aim is to develop Lancaster’s research leadership in these areas and share and strengthen wider networks. We encourage not only individual applications but small project teams who can apply collectively.

We also welcome ‘open’ applications from colleagues (individually or collectively) who want to develop any project with a future-facing elements and who seek the time, resources and wider links that we can offer to add value to their research or (M-level) teaching proposals.

As a fellow you will be supported in your enterprise, meet weekly with around a dozen other annual fellows and some senior fellows to discuss your work, and have access to regular events, seedcorn funding and some admin support.

#### ***About the ISF***

The ISF is led by Professor Rebecca Braun (Department of Languages & Cultures), Professor Richard Harper (School of Computing and Communications), and Professor Linda Woodhead (Politics, Philosophy and Religion). Founded in 2015, it has hosted fellows from

FST, FASS, FHM and LUMS.

In addition to the annual team of fellows, some 270 Lancaster academics and researchers are active in ISF events and research activities. The ISF routinely collaborates with researchers in all three other Institutes and a large number of research centres (e.g. CASS, CeMoRe, Imagination, LEC, LUCC, The Pentland Centre, The Ruskin Centre, Lancaster Energy, LIRA, and others). Beyond campus, the ISF has established outreach into the wider region and internationally by way of its weekly Breakfast Briefings, its twice-termly Global Futures Lectures, its project-specific events, and its project plenaries. Its national advisory board comprises leading figures in politics, business and the arts. Its international profile is expanding with formal connections being developed with other futures institutes.

In October 2018, the Institute for Social Futures formed a collaborative partnership with the Material Science Institute to deliver the Lancaster University Leverhulme Doctoral Training Centre in Material Social Futures. This will operate for seven years and is developing a distinctive PGT offering.

### ***Application procedure***

To apply, please send a short (around 2 page) CV and a 250 word summary of your project-in-development and how it would benefit from the kinds future-forming, cross-disciplinary conversations that ISF facilitates.

The fellowship is for one year, beginning in late September (after that fellows can continue to participate in ISF on a voluntary basis). Fellows set aside one day a week in term-time to develop their projects and to meet together every Tuesday morning (in term-time). Fellows should be offered relief from other duties for one day a week by their departments, subject to the approval of the Head of Department or PI.

The benefits of ISF fellowship flow to departments as well as faculties and universities. All research funds and REF outputs obtained or enhanced by ISF flow directly into departments. Prior to applying please discuss this with your head of department, PI or supervisor as applicable.

If you have questions on the application, please contact one of the directors (Rebecca Braun [r.braun@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:r.braun@lancaster.ac.uk); Richard Harper [r.harper@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:r.harper@lancaster.ac.uk); or Linda Woodhead [l.woodhead@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:l.woodhead@lancaster.ac.uk)). If you would like to be kept informed of ISF's activities without becoming a member please subscribe to our newsletter by sending an email to [isf@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:isf@lancaster.ac.uk) with the Subject Title: Newsletter Subscription.

Initial applications should be sent to [isf@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:isf@lancaster.ac.uk) and received no later than **March 22nd, 2019**.

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# Book Launch



## **There is No Planet B: A Handbook for the Make or Break Years, by Mike Berners-Lee**

**Wednesday 6th March, 4:00-6:00pm+  
Training Rooms 1&2, Gordon Manley Building,  
Lancaster Environment Centre**

*Feeding the world, climate change, biodiversity, antibiotics, plastics, inequality, fake news – the list of concerns for the Anthropocene seems endless. But how does it all fit together, and what should we do? And, given the global nature of the challenges we now face, what on Earth can any of us do?*

***There is No Planet B** maps it out in an accessible and entertaining way, filled with astonishing facts and analysis. You'll find big-picture perspective on the environmental and economic challenges of the day laid out in one place and traced through to the underlying roots - questions of how we live and think. You'll find practical and even inspiring ideas for what you can actually do to help humanity thrive on this – our only – planet.*

Please join us on **Wednesday 6th March at 4pm**: Mike will give a seminar on his new book, followed by a discussion & Q&A session over nibbles and drinks. All welcome!

For catering purposes, please email [researchinstitutes@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:researchinstitutes@lancaster.ac.uk) to let us know if you will be attending.



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***Mike Berners-Lee** is the author of **How Bad Are Bananas?** and **The Burning Question**. He is a Professor at Lancaster University, Senior Fellow Institute for Social Futures and is the Director of Small World Consulting.*

# What we do:

## New Partnership with The Knotted Project Theatre Company

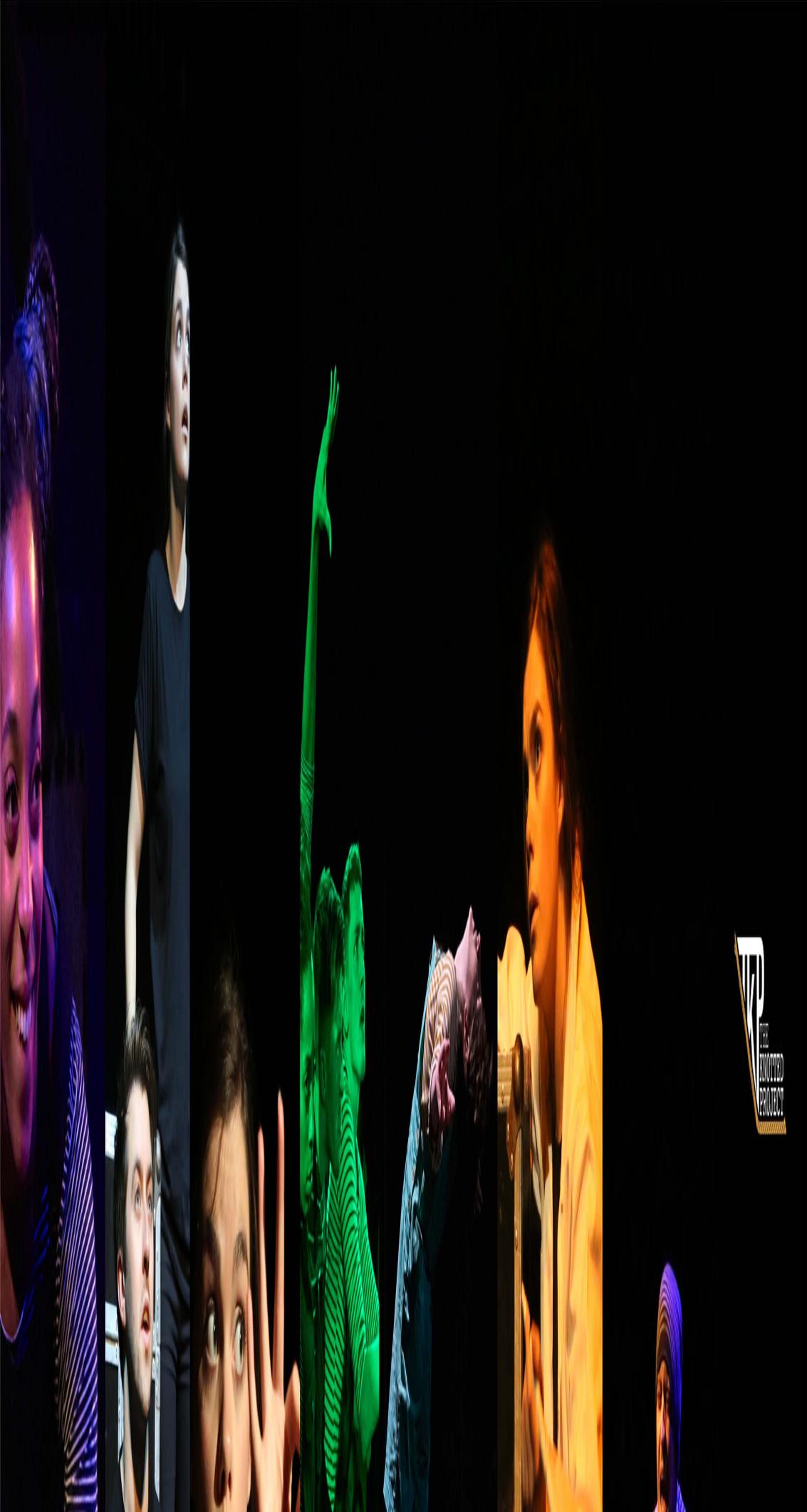


*"We are so excited by this new partnership with ISF. Together, we will create a space to explore futures in a new way, challenging traditional methods through using theatre and arts based practices. This collaboration has such huge potential!" **Simon McElligott, Co-Founder at The Knotted Project.***

ISF are delighted to have agreed a programme of mutual support with local theatre company, [The Knotted Project](#) that extends to the end of 2020. The Knotted Project is a physical theatre company, established and directed by Simon McElligott and Natalie Morrell, that delivers workshops and produces shows particularly aimed at inspiring young people and disadvantaged groups to imagine different and better worlds. In 2018, the company ran a successful series of shared workshops with ISF researchers and LU students on the topics of work and friendship, leading to the production of [The Commuters](#). Over the coming two years, the company will work with LU researchers to explore new ways of developing research ideas, using creative techniques both to think differently about the research design process and to involve different stakeholders in our work.

ISF Co-Director and theme lead for Creative Futures, Professor Rebecca Braun said, 'This is a hugely exciting opportunity for researchers to break out of traditional habits of writing and presenting in lecture style and find new ways of connecting with people in disciplines, professions, or other sectors of society that might at first feel quite remote. Simon and Natalie have done some fabulous work in bringing people together to articulate some of the challenges we are all facing. We are delighted to be able to support more of this by providing direct access to some of the top research expertise in the broad area of social futures gathered here on campus and mixing things up a little!'

Shared workshops on the topics of Hope and Identity are currently being developed and delivered across the lent and summer terms. If you are interested in getting involved, either



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Shared workshops on the topics of Hope and Identity are currently being developed and delivered across the lent and summer terms. If you are interested in getting involved, either with these topics or with developing methods in creative futures more broadly, please drop a line to [isf@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:isf@lancaster.ac.uk).

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## **The Genesis of 'Hope'**



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## Report on the last Global Futures event, and where this could go next...

Hope haunts contemporary culture: the term is invoked by politicians (Barack Obama's *The Audacity of Hope*), literary critics (Professor Terry Eagleton's *Hope Against Optimism*) and, perhaps with bitter irony, by rock stars (Bruce Springsteen's album *High Hopes*). Yet, like many richly evocative words, its meanings are widely contested. The ISF's exploration of this theme began with a single comment. Laura Premack, Lecturer in Global Religion & Politics, described her work on Global Pentecostalism as 'way of studying the lived experience of hope'. This sparked a conversation about the ambiguities of hope and the ways in which it prompts richly ambivalent responses. We explored, for example, whether it was possible to live an ethical life without a concept of hope and how the concept connects with practices of community, belonging and inclusion. Laura and Mike Berners-Lee (LEC / ISF) developed this focus by bringing together academics from a diverse range of disciplines, including Plant Science, Sociology, Astrophysics and Literary Studies, for a Global Futures event, 'Hope and the Future'.