

Battle Of Ideas 2017 (28 GBP)



Location **London, London**
<https://www.freeadsz.co.uk/x-552288-z>



Battle of Ideas 2017

Barbican Centre, Silk Street London, EC2Y 8DS
Nearest station: Barbican
Start date: 28 October 2017, 10:00 – 18:45
End date: 29 October 2017, 10:00 – 18:45
Admission: £100 Standard weekend, £55 Standard day
Website link: <http://www.battleofideas.org.uk/>

The Battle of Ideas is an acclaimed annual festival that draws together 400 international speakers each year. Since 2005, the Battle of Ideas has challenged speakers and audiences alike to ‘shape the future through debate’. Nearly 3,000 people from all walks of life dispute and discuss the key issues and ideas of our time at a hundred different sessions across the weekend.

Politics is in a very fluid state, as illustrated by the outcome of the UK General Election in June, when the Conservatives blew a huge lead in the opinion polls to end up losing their overall majority. Jeremy Corbyn's Labour, far from being routed as expected thanks to its radical manifesto, saw a surge in its vote. More broadly, there is a palpable sense of changing political alignments in the air.

Recent events have shown that political life doesn't follow a preordained script, that democracy throws up unexpected results and voters are not a stage army to be called up to give a mandate and then be put back in their box. The trend has been well illustrated by everything from the surprise Brexit vote, the

election of the "independent" Emmanuel Macron in France and Donald Trump in America, the collapse of traditional parties in many countries and the rise of May's "Yellow Vests" among others, all signal a new era in the new Europe. The lament of the losers was that they were limited in all kind of human rights, as illustrated by the slogan "No Amnesty for the losers" that they used. Those that refused to be limited were those feeling that the last years of the 20th century's stagnation and political failure were not enough. The very future of traditional political parties has been called into question.

But this sense of a changing world can come as disorientating as it is exhilarating. The ability to debate and discuss the shifting trends is an essential antidote to knee-jerk posturing over everything from Islamist terror attacks to the horrific tragedy at Grenfell Tower. For example, what are the wider consequences of the decisions that voters are now making? The question of Brexit, which opens up challenges for the UK in relation to the economy, scientific cooperation and much more, still remains central to political life in the UK. Trump's election has caused enormous debate on a wide range of issues, like the future of world



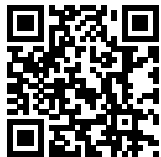
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trade, immigration, the nature of democracy today and international relations.

Meanwhile the continued assault on free societies from homegrown jihadis, including attacks at Manchester, Westminster and London Bridge, raises uncomfortable questions about everything from Western values to identity politics, from policing cyberspace to the limits (or not) of free speech. Such an atmosphere creates new uncertainties and possibilities right across society, asking questions of artists, philosophers and educationalists as well as politicians, academics and commentators.

The Battle of Ideas 2017 aims to be a uniquely open forum for debating these issues. Much of the shock of recent events has been the result of people getting stuck in 'echo chambers', unable – perhaps unwilling – to hear and discuss other points of view. That is never a problem at the Battle of Ideas. Since 2005, we have promoted open, wide-ranging public debate on the issues of the day. Our motto is 'Free Thinking Allowed' and we will bring together a range of speakers for passionate, serious-minded discussion of the contemporary world.

Of course, the big questions facing society go way beyond Brexit, Trump and ISIS. On the international stage alone, we'll be looking at important developments in Russia, France and China. In our schools and universities, there are heated debates about what should be taught, diversity and inequality, even about the nature of truth. In the arts, there are big questions to be discussed: theatre, literature and galleries are embroiled in culture wars about cultural appropriation, representation and 'whitewashing'. In science and technology, there are disputes about genetics, evolutionary psychology, the consequences of automation and the pros and cons of Big Data for privacy, healthcare and even democracy.

This is also a big year for anniversaries. It is 500 years since Martin Luther famously helped to unleash the Reformation when he nailed his famous theses to the door of a church in Wittenberg. What now for religious belief and freedom of conscience? It is also 100 years since the Russian Revolution. What was its impact on politics and culture – and how should it be viewed today? And it is 50 years since abortion was legalised in the UK. Are abortion rights now under threat around the world?