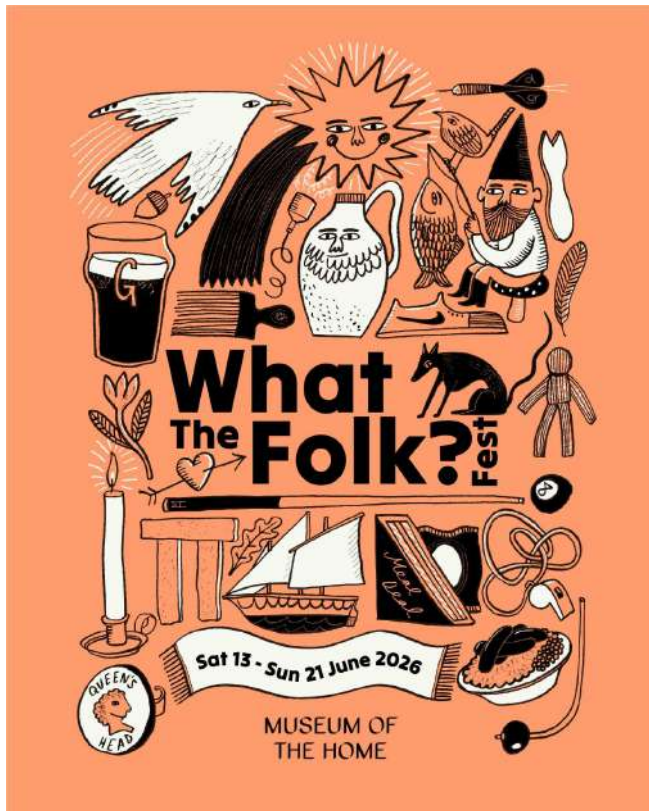


MUSEUM OF THE HOME

‘What the Folk?’

Museum of the Home presents a new festival exploring and celebrating urban folk culture, art and craft



Artwork by Mike Hankin

From 13–21 June 2026, Museum of the Home in East London presents ‘What the Folk?’ a deep dive into the world of folklore with an expansive and inclusive nine-day event, packed with activities, talks, workshops and more.

The festival sets out to explore, consider and celebrate folk traditions, the stories they’ve told through time, and the practices that are woven through our homes, cultures and landscapes. Through a rich and varied programme of storytelling, performance, and visual media, ‘What the Folk?’ will address the many and varied dimensions of folk cultures, including the meaning of folklore in urban and transient contexts such as London.

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From a cello recital taking a round-the-world tour of folk music traditions to a Jabberwocky-inspired embroidery workshop with The Fabled Thread, a foray into the uncanny side of '80s and '90s children's TV to a lesson in talking to trees, the festival will explore every corner of folk's eclectic influence on society, arts and domestic culture and ask – what does folk mean in an urban context today?

'What the Folk?' culminates on the summer solstice, Sunday 21 June, with a Family Day of folk-rooted activities for all ages, and a special Solstice Late full of music and merriment.

Nine days' wonder: festival highlights

Tickets for 'What the Folk?' events are available now – book via the website [here](#).



Folk craft activities (L to R): Jabberwocky embroidery with The Fabled Thread; woodcut workshop with Alex Booker; corn dolly making with Lu Towle; miniature doll making workshop with Cris Prete. Images courtesy of the respective artists.

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On weekdays (Tue–Sun) throughout the festival, Museum of the Home will be delving into its archives to offer visitors the chance to encounter rarely seen folk treasures from the museum collections. Drop in to the Collections Library from 2–4pm to learn the stories of some of the museum’s most fascinating pieces and the communities behind them.

The full programme is available on Museum of the Home’s website and social channels, with more to be announced soon.

Saturday 13 June

Talk: London Lore: Seasonal Customs with Simon Costin

Founder and director of the mobile Museum of British Folklore, and director of the Museum of Witchcraft and Magic, Simon Costin gives an introduction to folk culture in all its diverse manifestations.

Talk: Tales That Dance

Join Performance Storyteller and Author Wendy Shearer for stories of clever tricksters and wise kings from her book of 'African and Caribbean Folktales, Myths and Legends'. With music, dancing and colourful props, everyone is welcome to join in these wonderful stories.

Market: Folk Fair art market

Browse folk art, traditional crafts, and curated pieces rich in storytelling and folkloric tradition.

Workshop: How to Hear What Plants Have to Say

A guided art workshop with tattoo artist and painter Daniel the Gardener, inviting participants into dialogue with the plants they are drawing. Tickets include a copy of Daniel’s book Beyond Botanical, a guide to drawing from nature.

Sunday 14 June

Workshop: Miniature doll making

Textile and embroidery artist Cris Prete leads a beginner-friendly, hands-on introduction to the process of doll making, inspired by poppets from around the world and the museum’s own collection.

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Tuesday 16 June

Talk: Wildman, Monster, Messenger: The Woodwose in Art & Literature
Writer and cultural historian Dr Mary Wellesley takes a whistle-stop tour of the woodwose – ‘the wild man of the woods’ – that fascinated people in the mediæval period, and considers what meaning it might hold for us today.

Talk: Formative Folklore with the Broom Cupboard – Folk Culture and Magic in Children’s TV and Fiction
Duo Matthew Hughes and Blue Firth take a nostalgic ramble through the folklore influences that shaped kids’ TV and books in the ’80s and ’90s – and the generation that grew up with them.

Wednesday 17 June

Talk: From Folktale to Exhibition: Bringing Vietnamese Stories to Life
In parallel with their series of Vietnamese lacquer paintings on display at Museum of the Home until July, Major Books present a lively panel exploring the journey of Vietnamese folk tales – from generations of storytelling in homes and communities, to the creative process behind transforming heritage stories into contemporary cultural experiences.

Thursday 18 June

Workshop: Jabberwocky Embroidery Workshop
Join colourful craft-kit specialists [The Fabled Thread](#) and learn the hand-stitching techniques to create a design inspired by Lewis Carroll’s much-loved tale, Jabberwocky.

Talk: Hauntings: English Folk and its Ancestors
Professor of Writing and Folklore Matthew Cheeseman asks whether English folk in the context of a diverse and ever-changing urban borough like Hackney might offer a way of rejoining the conversation of what folk is and to whom it belongs.

Workshop: Corn Dolly
Discover the rich history of corn-dolly making hands-on with third-generation straw worker Lu Towle.

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Friday 19 June

Talks series: [Selvedge Quilt Jamboree](#)

Selvedge magazine leads a thoughtful and celebratory full-day gathering around the traditions and possibilities of the quilt, bringing together leading contemporary quiltmakers from around the world.

Saturday 20 June

Workshop: Folk Woodcuts with Alex Booker

Artist and printmaker Alex Booker leads an introduction into the ancient art of woodblock printing, inspired by the Museum of the Home's collection of folk and craft objects.

Performance: Ezra Escobar

From Hindustani raga and Baroque dance to 16th-century English sacred music and East Asian folk, journey through global sounds and folk traditions in a performance that stretches the boundaries of the cello.

Sunday 21 June – Summer Solstice

Kids' activities: Family Day

A full day's programme of free family-friendly fun, including film, song, and a variety of folk-themed play and nature-based activities.

Talk: Celebrating Caribbean Folktales & Windrush histories

Join Wendy Shearer, for a reading and talk about her book, 'Caribbean Folktales: stories from the Islands and the Windrush Generation'. Journey with Wendy across the Caribbean Sea to meet tricksters, shapeshifters and protectors of the islands listen to first-hand accounts from children of the Windrush generation, sharing their storytelling memories and experiences of arriving and settling in the UK.

Discussion: Folk moot

[The Folk Union](#) leads a participatory conversation exploring London as a folk landscape.

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Performance: Cecil Sharp House Choir

Known for its spirited and moving renditions, Cecil Sharp House Choir presents a capella and traditional songs from Britain and beyond.

More events will be added to the festival programme in the coming weeks. Visit museumofthehome.org.uk to stay up to date.

For more information about What the Folk? and what's on at Museum of the Home or expert commentary, please contact museumofthehome@zetteler.co.uk.

Notes for editors

Museum of the Home

Museum of the Home's purpose is to reveal and rethink the ways we live, in order to live better together. Through its collections, exhibitions, events, performances and debates, the museum reveals diverse, thought-provoking and personal stories of the home from the last 400 years to the present, and looks into the homes of the future.

museumofthehome.org.uk

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Sonia Solicari

Sonia Solicari is a British curator, writer, and museum leader driving cultural transformation. Since 2017, she has served as CEO of Museum of the Home, heading a landmark redevelopment that doubled public space, launching new galleries, and expanding bold, issues-led public programmes. She led the institution's full reinvention from the Geffrye Museum and has embedded a vision that champions creative practice as a force for social change.

Previously, Sonia was Head of Guildhall Art Gallery and London's Roman Amphitheatre, and Curator at the V&A. She sits on the National Museum Directors' Council, serves on the Museum Association's Ethics Committee, and is a Trustee of Bethlem Gallery. Her book *Real Rooms: Creating, Recreating and Visiting Home* will be published by Lund Humphries in November 2026.