

The SAES holds a Successful Annual Conference in Rennes



Organizers of the conference with guest of honor, Jackie Kay.

From June 1st-3rd, 2023, over 500 specialists working in various English studies disciplines gathered in Rennes to discuss the theme of "transmission(s)" using a broad range of lenses, including historical, artistic, cultural, literary, political and scientific perspectives. The event included over 30 [workshops](#), 3 roundtables and 4 interdisciplinary panels. The workshops were broken down into sub-themes, to give the richest possible account of the diversity of ways in which "transmission(s)" are made. For example, there were workshops devoted to childhood studies, dealing with "transmission(s)" through illustration, childhood cultural objects, children's novels and so on.

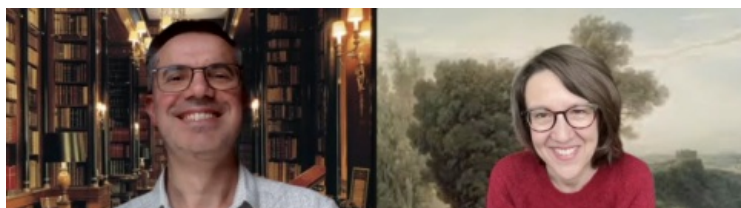
The group also welcomed as [guest of honor and keynote speaker](#), poet Jackie Kay, named "Scotland's National Poet" from 2016 to 2021. Her work describes her experience as an adopted child of mixed race. Her poetry is marked by a variety of voices, in a quest for cultural identity that explores how memory is transmitted. Jackie Kay redefines her genealogy by imagining alternative chains of cultural "transmission(s)".



Poet and guest of honor, Jackie Kay

A number of presentations took place in parallel on Rennes 2's Villejean campus, as well as a ceremony at the Rennes City Hall and a gala dinner at the Couvent des Jacobins in downtown Rennes.

Below, is the abbreviated interview with the organizers of this year's conference, Franck Barbin and Sophie Mesplède (initially written in [French](#)).



Rennes 2 lecturers and organizers of this year's conference, Franck Barbin and Sophie Mesplède

What is the Société des Anglicistes de l'Enseignement Supérieur (SAES)?

The SAES is a learned society of higher education lecturers and researchers in English-language studies. With some 2,400 members, it's one of the largest of its kind. The network enables members to share research news and career-related information (competitive exams, etc.). Every year, the SAES organizes a major congress, a time for exchange and socialization between experts in English studies in France, to which a few international colleagues are also invited.

How long have you been working on the organization of this major event?

We've been working on this since January 2020, as the congress was originally scheduled for 2022, but was postponed due to the pandemic. Together, we are in charge of overall coordination, in liaison with the SAES board, which has provided us with detailed specifications. In fact, this was the first time that the organizing committee has been co-chaired: we wanted to ensure that parity, a notion which is part of the culture of Rennes 2, was respected, and that the university's two English studies research units, [ACE](#) and [LIDILE](#), as well as the different English-related departments of the [Faculty of Languages](#) were involved. We relied on the invaluable support of a team of 15 colleagues from Rennes 2 and the [University of Rennes](#), divided into committees (registration, logistics/reception, scientific committee and communications/webmaster). We also had the very active support of the Faculty of Languages research administration and other local stakeholders at the city-wide level.



Rennes 2 University President Vincent Gouëset and conference participants at the City Hall

Why did you choose the theme of "transmission(s)"?

The host university is encouraged to choose a theme that resonates with its territory, bearing in mind that it must be relevant to all the disciplines of English-language studies. We thought of this theme not least because Brittany has a long history in the field of telecommunications, with the Pleumeur-Bodou site broadcasting the first human steps on the Moon, and the first Minitel tests (see video below). And then, initially, as we were in the midst of a pandemic, we also had the idea of giving a more positive image of "transmission(s)": our primary mission as educators and researchers is to convey knowledge, skills, and a passion for learning and discovery.

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