

Unique Ted Hughes works acquired by the University of Huddersfield

A leading poet of his generation

Edward James Hughes (1930-1998) was an English poet, translator and children's author, born and raised in Yorkshire. Poet Laureate from 1984 until his death, he is widely regarded as one of the most talented English poets of the 20th century. He was married to American poet Sylvia Plath from 1956 until her death in 1963.

Five unique items

These five works form part of a collection of 170 Ted Hughes items owned by Mark Hinchliffe, who died in 2019. Hinchliffe was a great admirer and collector of Hughes' work, and the two engaged in regular and friendly correspondence.

The remainder of the 170 items have already been acquired by the University of Huddersfield's [Heritage Quay archive](#). These final five items are considered the most unique:

- A holograph manuscript of the children's play **Orpheus**, broadcast on the BBC in 1997. This version contains corrections and several additional stanzas.
- A signed copy of the deluxe limited edition book **Howls & Whispers** – poems by Ted Hughes and artwork by American artist Leonard Baskin. One of only three copies with additional extras, including a copper engraving plate portrait of Sylvia Plath.
- A **handmade, clay, black jaguar statue** measuring 6 by 3 inches, made by Hughes for his brother.
- A copy of the one-issue student publication **Saint Botolph's Review** (1956), featuring the work of Hughes whilst at the University of Cambridge.
- Over **200 photographs** featuring Hughes and his family, including some of Hughes and Plath together.

At risk

The seller offered the University of Huddersfield first refusal on the sale. If the items had gone to auction, there was a risk they would have been purchased by a buyer outside the UK.

Available to the UK public

The collection will now be preserved and used in the archive's community engagement work, including children's workshops and creative writing activities.

Other funders

To acquire the entire Mack Hinchliffe collection, the archive also received funding from the [ACE/V&A Purchase Grant Fund](#) and [Friends of the National Libraries](#).

Nation/region

Yorkshire and the Humber

Grant awarded

£35,000

Award date

14/12/2021