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Reimagining old age: free Barbican installation investigates what it means to grow old today

Unclaimed, opening 11 February, will blend academic research, personal stories and public engagement to explore what it means to grow old in today's society. Visitors will find themselves in a surreal lost property office filled with everyday objects that tell the story of ageing today, from talking shoes to books that read to you. The installation forms part of the Barbican's 2019 season, *Life Rewired*, which explores what it means to be human when technology is changing everything.

Commissioned by the Barbican and led by creative public engagement specialists **The Liminal Space**, the project began in spring 2018 with a series of interviews with 2,000 people aged over 70 from Camden, conducted by University College London's gerontology research team. The Liminal Space team then went on to engage over 150 people from the research cohort and a diverse range of London communities through a series of creative workshops. The personal and philosophical insights of the interviewees and workshop participants uncovered a wide range of narratives about our ageing society.

The free installation opens on the Barbican's Level G in February 2019 and allows visitors to engage with the topic creatively through an engaging variety of multimedia stories and objects featuring text and audio recordings from the interviews.

Sarah Douglas, Director at The Liminal Space said: 'At a time when one in three people will live to 100, *Unclaimed* examines how our childhoods, jobs, health, wealth, families and technology will impact our experience of getting old. It engages people in crucial and essential topics like the inequality of ageing and explores how we experience and view ageing in relation to our sense of self, each other and our wider society.'

Louise Jeffreys, Artistic Director at the Barbican said: 'By 2040, nearly one in four people in the UK will be aged 65 or over; as technological and scientific advances change the ways we both view and experience old-age, it's essential that we tackle the topic head-on. *Unclaimed* attempts to spark conversation and to heal inter-generational divides by bringing to life the memories and perspectives of an older population. We hope that visitors to the Barbican will come away with a greater understanding of what it means to grow old today, bringing people of different ages closer together.'

This project was made possible through a partnership with the UCL's gerontology research team, specifically the LINKAGE (Long-term Information and Knowledge on Ageing) project. LINKAGE followed the journeys of around 2000 over-70 year olds in Camden, from their first contact with the social care system over a period of two years.

Unclaimed is funded by the Wellcome Trust and supported in an advisory capacity by Centre for Ageing Better, Flourishing Lives, Age UK and Professor Molly Andrews from the University of East London and The Centre for Narrative Research.

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Press Information

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All Barbican Centre press releases, news announcements and the Communications team's contact details are listed on our website at www.barbican.org.uk/news/home

About the Barbican

A world-class arts and learning organisation, the [Barbican](http://www.barbican.org.uk) pushes the boundaries of all major art forms including dance, film, music, theatre and visual arts. Its creative learning programme further underpins everything it does. Over 1.1 million people attend events annually, hundreds of artists and performers are featured, and more than 300 [staff](#) work onsite. The architecturally renowned centre opened in 1982 and comprises the Barbican Hall, the Barbican Theatre, The Pit, Cinemas 1, 2 and 3, Barbican Art Gallery, a second gallery the Curve, foyers and public spaces, a library, Lakeside Terrace, [a glasshouse conservatory](#), conference facilities and three restaurants. The City of London Corporation is the founder and principal funder of the Barbican Centre.

The Barbican is home to Resident Orchestra, [London Symphony Orchestra](#); Associate Orchestra, [BBC Symphony Orchestra](#); Associate Ensembles the [Academy of Ancient Music](#) and [Britten Sinfonia](#), Associate Producer [Serious](#), and Artistic Partner [Create](#). Our Artistic Associates include [Boy Blue](#), [Cheek by Jowl](#), Deborah Warner, [Drum Works](#) and [Michael Clark Company](#). The [Los Angeles Philharmonic](#) are the Barbican's International Orchestral Partner, the [Australian Chamber Orchestra](#) are International Associate Ensemble at Milton Court and [Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra](#) are International Associate Ensemble.

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About *Life Rewired*

Life Rewired is the Barbican's year-long arts and learning season exploring what it means to be human when technology is changing everything. Running throughout 2019, the season investigates the impact of the pace and extent of technological change on our culture and society, looking at how we can grasp and respond to the seismic shifts these advances will bring about.

Life Rewired demonstrates how artists are finding imaginative ways to communicate the human impact of unprecedented technological shifts and scientific advances, as well as finding creative new uses for Artificial Intelligence, big data, algorithms and virtual reality.

barbican.org.uk/liferewired

About The Liminal Space

The Liminal Space uses art and design to create ground-breaking experiences that transform what people think, feel and do. A unique consultancy that brings together the rigour of a think tank with the creativity of a cross-disciplinary design studio. Their projects translate complex social issues into tangible objects and spaces that people can immerse themselves to deepen their understanding and inspire action.

www.the-liminal-space.com