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Barbican Guildhall Creative Learning marks decade of transforming lives through the arts

Today, Barbican Guildhall Creative Learning marks ten years of supporting more than 100,000 people of all ages and backgrounds to develop creative skills for life by announcing a range of pioneering new partnerships.

These include a collaboration with **Headway East London**, a charity supporting people affected by brain injury; three new Associate Schools including a Pupil Referral Unit and one of the largest Special Educational Needs and Disabilities trusts in the country; and learning partnerships with **HOME** in Manchester, **Harlow Playhouse** in Essex and the **PEACH West Norfolk LCEP** via **Creative Arts East**.

Also published today is *Barbican Guildhall Creative Learning: 10 Years in Review*, featuring highlights of Creative Learning's extensive work plus an exclusive essay on the importance of arts education from children's author **Michael Rosen** and a new poem from Young Poet **Kareem Parkins-Brown**.

Since 2009, when international arts centre the Barbican and world-leading conservatoire the Guildhall School of Music & Drama came together to form Barbican Guildhall Creative Learning, groundbreaking projects such as Young Poets, Barbican Box and the Chronic Youth film festival have helped thousands of people to access and engage with the arts for free.

Jenny Mollica, Director of Creative Learning at the Barbican and Guildhall School of Music & Drama said: *'We know the arts have the power to transform lives, and that there is – and will continue to be – global demand for creative people in the workplace. At a time when, conversely, arts learning in schools is on the decline, our work is more important than ever in ensuring that art is a human right for all. Our team now delivers more than 40 programmes and events alongside 150 partners to over 22,000 participants every year, giving people who may otherwise struggle to access the arts the opportunity to do so. These numbers are testament to the demand for our work, the generous support of our funders and to all those who continue to support us on our journey, and to whom we are very grateful.'*

Catherine McGuinness, Policy Chair at the City of London Corporation said: *'Culture is very important to the City, and Barbican Guildhall Creative Learning demonstrates the real and lasting impact that engagement with the arts can have on people's lives. The unique partnership between the Barbican and the Guildhall School of Music & Drama has resulted in new and imaginative ways to engage people with the arts through learning here in the City and we look forward to the next ten years of pioneering creative and cultural learning.'*

Michael Rosen, children's author and long-term collaborator with Barbican Guildhall Creative Learning said: *'For the last 45 years or so I've been lucky enough to have had the pleasure of helping children make and do the kinds of things that I've been doing. I've seen them discover possibilities about themselves and my work with Barbican Guildhall Creative Learning has been a huge part of that. It has affected what I write, how I write and how I work with children.'*

Kareem Parkins-Brown, Young Poets alumnus said: *'It's really important for everyone to have access to arts and culture, which shouldn't only be for the elite – it's everyone's right to create and enjoy the art they love. I realised this during my time in Creative Learning's Young Poets programme which empowered me in a way that I hadn't experienced before.'*

Going to Young Poets was like having a confidence transplant; I left as a much better Kareem.'

Earlier this year, Barbican Guildhall Creative Learning were also proud to accept the SEND Achievement (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) at the National Creative Learning Awards for their work with The Garden School in Hackney, a school for learners with autism aged 4–16.

For more information on Barbican Guildhall Creative Learning, visit:

<https://www.barbican.org.uk/take-part>

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Press Information

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About Barbican Guildhall Creative Learning

Barbican Guildhall Creative Learning believes the arts have the power to transform lives and that people of all ages and backgrounds should have access to world-class music, theatre, dance, visual art, film and spoken word. Since the Barbican and the Guildhall School of Music & Drama launched their creative learning partnership in 2009, thousands of people including children, young people, teachers, families, artists and communities have participated in their programmes, activities and events. Ranging from those that give people their first taste of the arts through to those that enable existing artists to push the boundaries of their practice, all projects inspire and bring people together giving them new skills and confidence and raising aspirations.