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Barbican announces 2021 Level G programme

In 2021, the Barbican's Level G programme will present ***How We Live Now: Reimagining Spaces with the Matrix Feminist Design Co-operative***, a programme exploring who our buildings and shared spaces are for; the third edition of the annual feminist literary festival ***New Suns***; an online series investigating the impact of power on our brains and behaviour, ***Can we talk about Power?***; and ***Unclaimed Conversations***, an audio project rooted in the importance of intergenerational dialogue.

Siddharth Khajuria, Senior Producer, Barbican, said: *'Our Level G programme is a platform for projects which ask crucial social and cultural questions, spark conversations and bring people together. One of the things we're committed to is holding space for, and nurturing, new forms of cultural activity. And in that spirit, each of the four projects we're announcing today are the product of rich dialogues between people who work in a range of fields: art, literature, architecture, public policy, design, science, and beyond. The last year has drawn attention to, and magnified, so many of the forces and ideas which shape the world we live in. In their own ways, these projects are each invitations to explore and have a conversation about some of them.'*

The Barbican believes in creating space for people and ideas to connect through its international arts programme, community events and learning activity. To keep its programme accessible to everyone, and to keep investing in the artists it works with, the Barbican needs to raise more than 60% of its income through ticket sales, commercial activities and fundraising every year. Donations can be made here:

barbican.org.uk/donate

Full programme details:

How We Live Now: Reimagining Spaces with the Matrix Feminist Design Co-operative

Mon 22 Feb – Sep 2021, Level G and online

Through an ambitious installation, public programme and publication, ***How We Live Now: Reimagining Spaces with the Matrix Feminist Design Co-operative*** invites the public to explore an important social question: who are our buildings and shared spaces designed for, and how do they affect us? After a sustained period of lockdown and increased time spent in domestic spaces, these questions feel more relevant than ever.

The jumping-off point for considering these questions is a previously unseen archive of work by the radical 1980s feminist architecture cooperative **Matrix**, who addressed the ways in which the design of the built environment excludes particular groups, particularly in relation to gender, race and disability.

The hybrid programme, co-curated with Matrix founding member **Jos Boys**, will consist of an installation on Level G of the Barbican Centre featuring rare films, drawings, photos and architectural models from the Matrix archive; as well as a series of online talks, workshops, film screenings and walking tours. The accompanying exhibition catalogue, ***Revealing Objects***, is an experimental publication that combines archival reproductions of Matrix materials with contemporary responses to the key themes of the project. The installation has been designed by feminist design collective **Edit** and built by **Elouise Farley**, founder of **Lady Wood**, a project which aims to teach and encourage womxn in woodwork.

Contributions include a manual for understanding how the plan and layout of our homes impacts how we live in them, conceived by feminist design collective **Edit**; a map highlighting buildings designed by women in London produced by collective **Part W**; a poster by the research project **Manual Labours** reflecting on ideas of care and support in the workplace, and writing by **Decosm (Decolonise Space Making)** considering how

the legacies of colonialism affect our cities. It will also feature an activity sheet about how senses other than the visual play a role in our experience of space, designed by **DisOrdinary Architecture** which co-develops inclusive design processes with disabled artists; as well as a visual essay exploring how the London borough of Tower Hamlets manifests certain ideas of power and control through built space by **Afterparti**, a platform for underrepresented voices in architecture and design.

How We Live Now is made possible with Art Fund support and more details about the programme will be released closer to the launch.

New Suns: A Feminist Literary Festival
Fri 5 – Sun 7 Mar 2021, online

The literary festival ***New Suns*** will return for a weekend of talks and workshops featuring acclaimed writers, artists, and academics. This year, the event will take place online, and in the run-up to the festival weekend in March 2021, ticket holders will also receive a special merchandise package in the post, containing a limited-edition anthology of poetry, book excerpts, recipes and activities.

The third edition of *New Suns* will directly explore the legacy of eminent science-fiction author **Octavia Butler**, and in particular her prophetic, unfinished Earthseed series, which imagines a prescient Earth in the 2020s ravaged by ecological disaster and violent divisions. The young protagonist Lauren not only survives a journey through a treacherous version of the American west, but also seeds hope with a new community she believes one day will travel to the stars. The festival programme will explore themes that are central to the books, such as the inevitability of change, destruction and rebirth, and humanity's relationship to space exploration and the stars, with workshops focussing on speculative fiction, and the power of journaling practice. *New Suns* aims to be a space for the exchange of ideas on new types of community and societies, and a platform for the creators and feminists who help us to envision these new worlds.

New Suns is a co-production between the Barbican and independent publisher and curator **Sarah Shin**. More details and the full programme will be announced in early 2021.

Can we talk about Power?
A conversation about our relationship with power
Spring/Summer 2021, online

Can we talk about Power? is a partnership between cultural thinker and researcher **Suzanne Alleyne**, the Barbican and **Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity** in Canada. The project, which combines a series of online events with a mail-out package of exercises and new writing, considers how we get power, who has power, who hasn't got power, and why.

Taking the cultural and creative industries as a context, but of interest to a much wider audience, *Can we talk about Power?* is a platform designed to investigate how power operates from neurological and sociological perspectives. How do our preconceptions of 'success' and 'power' affect our mindsets? What is happening in our brains and bodies when we acquire or lose power? How might a conversation about this subject enable participants to build a broader leadership landscape and acquire greater agency to affect change?

Taking place in Spring and Summer 2021, participants will explore three themes: Science, Brain and the Body; Power, Race and Difference; Power, Organisations and Me.

Can we talk about Power? forms part of an ongoing research project by Suzanne Alleyne, titled 'The Neurology of Power'.

Unclaimed Conversations **Spring 2021, online**

An audio project exploring real life-stories and the importance of intergenerational exchange and dialogue at this extraordinary time. ***Unclaimed Conversations*** builds on insights from a major public engagement project by **The Liminal Space**, *Unclaimed*, which took place at the Barbican in 2019. Developed in collaboration with **Linkage** (a long-term study following the health and wellbeing of a group of over 70's in the Camden area) and the **Centre for Ageing Better**, the project uncovered personal stories of how it feels to age in today's society.

This question, of how it feels to age, has taken on a new meaning in 2020, as the generations have become increasingly disconnected due to physical distance and altered lifestyles. Working closely within families and communities to develop *Unclaimed Conversations*, The Liminal Space will create an audio-based digital experience exploring the theme of 'emergence' and ask: do we unfurl slowly or emerge radically changed? What does the process of emergence mean for people and their relationships, and how does it unfold after a period of uncertainty? The project hopes to encourage, catalyse and enable people to connect, support and understand one another in new ways.

Unclaimed Conversations is supported by Wellcome.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

Press Information

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About the Barbican

A world-class arts and learning organisation, the [Barbican](#) 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 a 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, public spaces, a library, the 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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