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Barbican appoints Will Gompertz as new Director of Arts and Learning

The Barbican today announces that Will Gompertz will join the international arts centre in the newly designed role of Director of Arts and Learning.

This key role for the Centre brings together the arts and creative learning departments for the first time, and working with the art form and learning leads, Gompertz will lead the creation and delivery of the next phase of the Barbican's artistic vision.

Will Gompertz joins the Barbican from the BBC where he has been Arts Editor since 2009, and prior to that was a Director of the Tate Galleries for seven years. During his tenure in these internationally renowned media and cultural organisations, he brought a focus on driving innovation and change, opening up the arts to the widest public with dynamic and strategic leadership.

Gompertz joins the Barbican at a pivotal time as it looks to its 40th anniversary next year and embarks on a major renewal of the building which aims to ensure the Centre will be the creative home for the next generation. He will lead the organisation in renewing its vision and purpose as a civic space for the widest inclusive community, especially in light of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Supporting and collaborating with the team of artistic and organisational leaders across the arts, creative learning, marketing and communications teams, the role will refocus the Barbican's work in response to the different future we now face. He will take up the position on 1 June 2021.

Nicholas Kenyon, Managing Director, Barbican said:

"With his pioneering work on digital innovation at Tate, his unrivalled knowledge across the arts at the BBC, and his constant commitment to diversity and inclusivity, Will Gompertz is the ideal person to bring together the Barbican's outstanding arts and learning programmes for a new generation. Working with our leaders in the art forms and creative learning, he will reinvent the Barbican's commitment to 'arts without boundaries' in the radically changed environment after the pandemic. We look forward to working with him."

Will Gompertz said:

"I am absolutely delighted to be joining the Barbican as its Director of Arts and Learning after eleven very happy years as the BBC's Arts Editor. I look forward to leading the superb art form and creative learning teams, at this hugely significant time for both the institution and the broad audiences it serves. As we all adjust to the major cultural, ecological, scientific, technological and political changes that are defining the early decades of the 21st century, the arts in general, and the Barbican in particular, have a vital role in helping shape our future, providing an inclusive platform for discovery and discussion, and a diverse environment for ideas and exchange. I am greatly looking forward to playing a part in the next chapter of the Barbican's life as one of the world's leading arts centres."

Fran Unsworth, Director of BBC News and Current Affairs said:

"Will will be greatly missed. He has brought character, flair and a great depth of knowledge to his role at the BBC, but I wish him every success in his new role at the Barbican."

Led by Saxton Bampfylde, a wide-ranging recruitment process involving members of the Barbican Centre Board and Directors led to the appointment of the Director of Arts and Learning.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

Press information

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About Will Gompertz

Will Gompertz became the BBC's first Arts Editor in 2009, a role in which he reported extensively on the arts across the globe. He has interviewed countless artists, actors, writers, musicians and directors, as well as writing and presenting documentaries for BBC One and Two, and hosting shows on Radio 2, Radio 4, and BBC 5-Live. Before joining the BBC, Will spent 7 years as a Director of the Tate Galleries where he was responsible for its BAFTA-winning website, creative direction, and the launching of the UK's first Performance Art festival. Will has written two internationally best-selling non-fiction books (published by Penguin in the UK). *What Are You Looking At?* – a history of modern art in 2012, and *Think Like an Artist (2015)* about creativity. Both books have been translated into more than twenty languages. Will was voted one of the World's Top 50 Creative Thinkers by New York's Creativity magazine and is a Supernumerary Fellow of Harris Manchester College, Oxford University.

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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