

For immediate release

Barbican welcomes External Review and sets out new appointments to drive change

- Barbican welcomes External Review into staff experiences of racism
- **Nina Bhagwat** announced to join organisation as Interim Director of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion from August 2021
- **Sandeep Dwesar** and **Will Gompertz** to share leadership as Joint Interim Managing Directors from September 2021
- Barbican sets out anti-racism action plan for cultural change

The **City of London Corporation**, the founder, principal funder and employer of the Barbican, has announced that **Lewis Silkin LLP** will conduct an external review into staff experiences of racism at the Barbican, as promised in June. The leading employment and equalities law specialists will support a highly experienced and respected Queen's Counsel who will undertake the review, and details of this appointment will be announced in due course. You can read the full press release here:

<https://news.cityoflondon.gov.uk/external-review-launched-into-experiences-of-racism-at-the-barbican/>

It is announced today that **Nina Bhagwat** will join the Barbican's senior leadership team from August as Interim Director of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion to drive the Barbican's anti-racism work, and to ensure the Barbican's Inclusion agenda progresses at pace. Nina has a wealth of experience in diversity and inclusion roles throughout the creative sector, most recently as Head of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at Warner Music UK, and prior to this as Off Screen Diversity Executive for Channel 4's Creative Diversity team. The role will be recruited for on a permanent basis in the coming months.

When **Sir Nicholas Kenyon** steps down as managing director in September, the City of London Corporation has asked Director of Arts and Learning **Will Gompertz** and Chief Operating and Financial Officer **Sandeep Dwesar** to share leadership as joint interim managing directors. They will lead a programme of cultural change, including taking steps towards the Barbican's anti-racism objectives.

They are already leading on the Barbican's anti-racism action plan, to which all staff were invited to contribute before it was approved by the Barbican Board, which includes providing individual and group support structures and networks for staff who have been affected by racism in the organisation; reviewing recruitment processes; setting inclusivity targets for ethnicity, gender and other protected characteristics; further investing in training and development; creating more robust policies and practices for reporting both microaggressions and racism; updating the Barbican's Equality and Inclusion strategy; and developing new ways of working to ensure the casual staff are part of the Barbican's community.

Nicholas Kenyon said:

'We very much welcome the External Review into staff experiences of racism at the Barbican. The Barbican must be a place where everyone feels safe to work free from racism or discrimination and we will fully support both the review process and the implementation of recommendations for change. We are grateful to our Board and the City of London Corporation for their work on this so far.'

'I'm delighted to welcome Nina Bhagwat to the Barbican, who brings significant experience of leading, advocating and delivering change in diversity, equity and inclusion in the cultural sector. I look forward to working with her.'

'As I leave the Barbican in September, I am very pleased that Sandeep Dwesar and Will Gompertz will share the post of interim managing director to continue the programme of change with energy and continuity. It's been a huge privilege to be part of the Barbican community for the past 14 years and I wish Sandeep and Will the very best.'

Sandeep Dwesar and Will Gompertz said:

'The Barbican is an ever-evolving international arts and learning centre with contemporary artists and a broad range of audiences at its heart. We are delighted that from September we will be leading the Barbican through its next phase, during which we will drive the steps agreed in our current action plan to ensure that the Centre can move forward confidently, inclusively and with a renewed focus. Our immediate priority is those colleagues who have suffered racism from within the organisation, and advancing our anti-racism action plan. We are really looking forward to working with Nina Bhagwat who will bring a huge wealth of expertise and creativity to the Barbican as we progress our diversity agenda at pace.'

Nina Bhagwat said:

'I'm excited to be joining the Barbican at such a key moment in time for the organisation and the Arts, where culture is placed at the heart of our post-Covid recovery. It's significant to note that an organisation with the impact and influence of the Barbican are now placing inclusivity and accessibility centre-stage. The team's commitment to bringing about the necessary meaningful change to create a truly inclusive culture, where all talent can flourish, is clear, and I am delighted to be part of this pivotal moment.'

Ends

Notes to Editors

Press Information

For further information/images or to arrange an interview, please contact:

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About Nina Bhagwat

Nina believes she's got the most interesting job in the world and feels incredibly fortunate to be working on an agenda she is so committed to and continues to learn from. Starting her DE&I career in TV and segueing into the Music Industry, she's known for being a passionate advocate for talent. She remains a firm believer in our inherent desire and ability to connect and harness the value of difference. At Warner Music, as their first DE&I hire globally, she was responsible for devising and delivering Warner's DE&I 5 year strategy for the UK. Prior to joining Warner Music, Nina was Off Screen Diversity Executive at C4, where she was responsible for delivering projects including Spotlight on Directors, the Year of Disability and Lived Experience. In a former life, a TV Creative, her approach is to use Creativity to drive the Inclusion agenda.

About Sandeep Dwesar

After qualification as a Chartered Accountant, Sandeep moved from professional practice into industry working for British and American multi-national companies in the UK and Europe. Following this he worked as a consultant within local government on business process engineering and privatisation initiatives.

He is now Chief Operating and Financial Officer of the Barbican Centre and Guildhall School of Music & Drama with oversight of strategic planning and operational leadership.

Sandeep has held a variety of non-executive roles for many years including the *Bernie Grant Arts Centre*, the theatre company, *Punchdrunk*, and the *Design Council*, and he currently sits on the Board of *Help Musicians UK* and the *London Transport Museum*.

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.

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