

PRESS RELEASE
17 March 2022

Our Time on Earth

Thu 5 May–Mon 29 Aug 2022, The Curve, Barbican Centre

Media View: Wed 4 May 2022, 10am –1pm

www.barbican.org.uk/ourtimeonearth | @barbicancentre

An exhibition conceived and curated by **Barbican International Enterprises**
Co-produced by **Musée de la civilisation, Québec City, Canada**

Opening in May 2022, the Barbican presents ***Our Time on Earth*** – a major exhibition celebrating the power of global creativity to transform the conversation around the climate emergency. Through art, design, science, music and philosophy, the exhibition presents a range of radical visions for the future of all species.

A journey through immersive, interactive installations and digital works, the exhibition invites visitors to experience a range of perspectives of our shared planet, exploring Earth as a community to which we all belong – humans as just one species among millions.

Aiming to reignite respect for our essential and complex biosphere and inspire awe and wonder for our beautiful planet, the exhibition explores different ways of existing on Earth and finding ways to reconnect with them, while also looking at the role technology has to play in deepening our understanding and connection to the natural world. *Our Time on Earth* encourages visitors to take an active role and leave feeling empowered to make positive change.

Our Time on Earth opens a conversation to examine this viewpoint from multiple global perspectives, look at the positive possibilities of an alternative future, and embrace the wonder of the natural world.

Our Time on Earth presents 18 works, including 12 new commissions, from 12 countries around the world to create a series of innovative new collaborations. Bringing together academics, architects, artists, activists, designers, ecologists, engineers, environmental campaigners, researchers, scientists, technologists and writers, the exhibition highlights the need to work in collaboration across disciplines to tackle climate change together.

The exhibition in the Curve takes place across three interconnected sections– **Belong**, **Imagine** and **Engage**, designed to create a shift in consciousness, changing the way we think about the natural world.

BELONG explores our connection to other species and the understanding of our place in the biosphere. In it, we encounter –

- ***Sanctuary of the Unseen Forest*** by digital art collective **Marshmallow Laser Feast** with Bio Leadership Project co-founder Andres Roberts, a unique immersive video installation offering a window into tree time. The piece allows visitors to feel a sense of belonging by reconnecting to the natural world and contemplating our place within the wider systems of nature.

IMAGINE explores positive possibilities in a near-future world based on a new value system

- **Superflux** 's **Refuge for Resurgence** imagines a new kind of home where humans, animals, birds, plants, moss and fungi prosper together with resilience, adaption, and hope. First presented at La Biennale Architettura, La Biennale Di Venezia 2021, this multispecies banquet showcases crockery and cutlery designed for 14 different species, creating a welcoming environment that invites visitors to rethink their position within the natural world.
- Intersectional Indigenous-led collectives **Choose Earth** and **Selvagem** have collaborated on a new film **Wild Arrow #7**, and experiential commission **Smikra Wahikwa**, featuring Indigenous leaders in Brazil. Centred around creationism and re-enchantment the piece explores different ways of knowing and listening; connecting the dots between knowledge, activism, creativity and culture change.
- New commission **Symbiocene** looks at how Indigenous technologies are invaluable to our collective understanding of and response to the climate crisis. Representatives from the **Khasis community** in the North-eastern Indian state of Meghalaya, the **Subak community** of farmers in Bali and the **Ma'dan community** of southern Iraq collaborated with designer and author of *Lo—TEK: Design by Radical Indigenism* by **Julia Watson**, architect and sustainability engineer **Smith Mordak** and **Buro Happold** to look at how urban environments in 2040 could benefit from incorporating Indigenous and local knowledge and technologies.
- **Liam Young's Planet City**, a speculative and provocative film about returning stolen lands and freeing the world for rewilding by housing the world's population in one giant sustainable city that celebrates multiple cultures.
- **Queer Ecology**: In this new commission, Colombian biologist **Brigitte Baptiste** and **Institute of Digital Fashion** have created a shared collective experience, which reflects on Baptiste's assertion 'there is nothing more queer than nature'. As visitors watch their singular identities dissolve into matter, beyond the physical body, leaving society's binary labels, the piece looks at what humans can learn from nature's own gender fluidity.
- In **A Biological Future for Fashion**, sustainability innovators **Biofabricate** supported by environmentalists **Parley for the Oceans** imagine what a biofabricated (materials made by living cells) fashion industry can look like, at scale, in the near future. With garments designed by **Yuima Nakazato** and **ZARA**, amongst others.
- Art direction studio **DVTK** in collaboration with **UCL's Institute of Global Prosperity** explore what the relational economy could look and feel like in 2040. Their new commission **Sharing Prosperity** is an emotional and interactive gaming experience that encourages visitors to reflect on how the planet can flourish through radical solidarity, brought about by humans collaborating innovatively with other beings and sharing wealth equally across species.
- **Where Does Your Building Come From?** Nairobi-based design-build firm, **Build X Studio** has been working with construction innovators **Mycotile** to explore the possibilities of global technology and local materials, which will revolutionise the way buildings are made and how knowledge and skills can be shared through a

global community. Curated by design director **Carolina Larrazabal**, and architectural designer, **Etta Madete**.

- Author, journalist and environmental activist **George Monbiot** and creative innovation studio **Holition** believe that the soil beneath our feet should be as revered as the Great Barrier Reef. In the immersive piece ***The World Beneath Our Feet***, which draws on research from Monbiot's forthcoming book *Regenesis: Feeding the World Without Devouring the Planet*, visitors are transported underground to experience the wealth of amazing organisms first-hand.
- **2040 - Sensible Zone** by **Territorial Agency** analyses the zone where the biosphere interacts with ocean, atmosphere and land to maintain Earth in *homeostasis* (the state of steady internal, physical, and chemical conditions maintained by living systems) and allow inhabitation.

ENGAGE encourages us and shares how we can take collective action for widespread systemic change.

- Keralan architecture firm **Wallmakers** have designed an immersive space in which to present ***Stories of Change*** for visitors to explore action, looking at grassroots organisations and change-makers around the world to find out what is happening on the ground right now.
- ***Stories of Change*** by The Earth Issue is a series of video interviews featuring global voices spearheading grassroots environmentalist initiatives. Presented across 10 screens and focussing on the global south, with each storyteller creating positive change through direct activism or by amplifying the actions of their communities. Through stories of change and accountability, each video has the power to ignite hope and courage while inspiring viewers to discuss, reflect, and consider their own power to protect the natural world.
- ***Sonic Waterfall*** is a sound and light installation by **Silent Studios** (Nathan Prince and Liam Paton) inspired by their work with **Damon Albarn** on his solo album *The Nearer The Fountain, More Pure The Stream Flows*. Set in The Curve, the installation is a time for reflection and a therapeutic journey into awareness, creating a sense of wonder at the natural world and nourishing our innate biophilia (the tendency for humans to seek connections with nature and other forms of life).

Alongside the main exhibition, *Our Time on Earth* will extend all over the Centre, including an installation in The Pit and free interactive and digital exhibits presented in the Barbican's public spaces across the summer and will be accompanied by a live events programme to be announced soon.

In the Pit

- ***Noise Aquarium***, by US artist **Victoria Vesna** and Austrian scientific visualisation collaborators presents a 3D Audio Visual Experience of Plankton in Noise Pollution.

On Barbican's **Level G**, a series of pieces will be on display for free to the public, with the theme of raising awareness, including:

- ***Eyes as Big as Plates***: a photography series about belonging to nature by Finnish-Norwegian artist duo **Riitta Ikonen and Karoline Hjorth**.

- Sculptural work **Wither** illustrates a slice of rainforest disappearing at the Amazon deforestation rate, developed in collaboration with UNESCO on Barbican's Level G by Dutch artist **Thijs Biersteker**.
- **Life Forces**: a digital art installation in the Barbican's Silk Street Entrance, providing a portal to an interactive living landscape by Australian art duo **Tin & Ed**.
- A new commission, **The Ideal City 2040** from research and design lab SPACE10 in partnership with Modem, invites visitors to experience how our cities could tackle the climate crisis while creating a better everyday life for people, viewed through virtual reality binoculars, exhibited openly to the public on Barbican's Level G.

Luke Kemp, Barbican International Enterprises, said: *'It is an essential moment for the Barbican to contribute to this urgent issue and showcase how unique collaborations across a range of disciplines can create a vision of hope and possibility, that will aim to shift perspectives and immerse visitors in the wonder of our planet. Culture has a key role to play in accelerating the response to the climate emergency. It provides a platform to challenge the way we engage our communities to respond.'*

Kate Franklin and Caroline Till, guest curators said: *'There is more scientific evidence than ever demonstrating the amplitude of the climate emergency. And the science is essential – there's no doubt about that. But art, design and culture have the power to move us, and creative propositions of the sort we have gathered within Our Time on Earth aim to seduce the visitor into another way of seeing – another way of being. They invite us to listen, to feel, to really see, what it could be like to live and thrive in an alternative and positive future'.*

Stéphan La Roche, CEO of Musée de la civilisation said: *'This exhibition calls on the power of reflection and imagination of contemporary artists as well as visitors. The Musée de la civilisation, with our vision of 'a museum for a better world' and mission as a museum of society cannot wait to partner with the Barbican Centre to present this one-of-a-kind exhibition in a multidisciplinary approach enveloping a highly relevant subject, having the power to change perceptions and push to action'.*

Curated by **Luke Kemp**, Barbican curator alongside guest curators **Kate Franklin** and **Caroline Till**, the show is created and produced by Barbican International Enterprises (BIE). The Barbican's touring arm, BIE develops and curates exhibitions focused on contemporary culture, emerging technology and digital creativity. Often immersive and experiential, these major shows then travel internationally. Previous shows by the team include **Virtual Realms: Videogames Transformed** (2021), **AI: More than Human** (2019), **Into the Unknown: A Journey through Science Fiction** (2017) and **Digital Revolution** (2014), which became the Barbican's most visited exhibition, attracting 93,000 visitors to the Centre.

Our Time on Earth will open at **Musée de la civilisation in Quebec City, Canada**, co-producers of the exhibition, from 15 June - 17 December 2023, before continuing its international tour.

Our Time on Earth gives us an opportunity to pilot new ways of sustainable working at the Barbican. Initiated and led by Guest Curators Caroline Till and Kate Franklin

with support from Julie's Bicycle, we have developed a set of guidelines for sustainable touring exhibitions and asked all our partners and collaborators to sign up to our sustainability commitment to ensure all involved in delivery of the exhibition are working to the highest possible environmental standards. We are developing this practice in collaboration with other departments in the Barbican Centre as part of our five-year sustainability strategy that will be published in Spring 2022.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

Press images available online from the Barbican Newsroom

A link to the image sheets can be found in the 'Downloads' box on the top right-hand side of the page at: <https://www.barbican.org.uk/our-story/press-room/art-design-press-releases>

For further information, images or to arrange interviews, please contact:

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Public information

Thu 5 May–Mon 29 Aug 2022

The Curve, Barbican Centre, Silk Street, EC2Y 8DS

Box office: 0845 120 7511 www.barbican.org.uk

Opening times: Sun–Wed 10am–6pm; Thu–Fri 10am–8pm; Bank Holiday 12pm–6pm

Tickets: Standard: £18, Concs/Students/14-17/Art Fund from £9; Young Barbican £5, Under 14s go free.

Exhibition

The exhibition is created and produced by Barbican International Enterprises, co-produced by Musée de la civilisation, curated by Barbican curator Luke Kemp with guest curators Kate Franklin and Caroline Till.

With support from advisors: Nate Agbetu, Creative Strategist and Cultural Producer; Professor Carole Collet, Founder and Co-Director Design & Living Systems Lab, Central Saint Martins UAL; Liz Hosken, Director, The Gaia Foundation; Professor Henrietta L. Moore, Founder and Director of the Institute for Global Prosperity and the Chair in Culture Philosophy and Design at University College London (UCL); Timothy Morton; Rita Shea Guffey, Chair in English at Rice University; and Will Skeaping, Activist, Extinction Rebellion.

The exhibition will be designed by Universal Design Studio, graphic design by HATO, Lighting design by Speirs Major and Sound design by The Sound Agency.

Our Time on Earth is generously supported by donors, corporate supporters, and institutions. Our thanks go to: Professor Henrietta L. Moore, Italian Cultural Institute London, the Finnish Institute in the UK and Ireland, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Ecosia (ecosia.org).

Guest Curators

Guest curators Kate Franklin and Caroline Till are the founders of FranklinTill, a globally renowned research studio working with businesses and organisations to explore and implement design and material innovation for a positive future. Driven by a conviction that sustainable innovation is about possibilities, not constraints, they are also authors of the ground-breaking 2018 publication, *Radical Matter: Rethinking Materials for a Sustainable Future*.

Kate and Caroline believe in the power of design, art and culture to envision a seductive futurescape in which people and planet can prosper. Their work is informed in equal parts by Kate's industry experience in research, future forecasting and design strategy, and by Caroline's academic expertise in sustainable design practices and design innovation – a background that proved instrumental in developing the multidisciplinary MA Material Futures at Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design.

Barbican and Environmental Sustainability

We're committed to creating a better future for everyone by reducing our impact on the environment. Our planet is facing an unprecedented climate crisis that requires urgent and collective action.

The Barbican has a responsibility to mitigate against this crisis and we have ambitious targets to get us there. In line with the City of London Corporation's ambitious [Climate Action Strategy](#), we commit to reducing carbon emissions from our own operations to net zero by 2027, and by 2040, this will also include our supply chain.

Alongside reducing our emissions, we believe that the arts have the power to inspire us to collectively imagine a better future and to unite us in this urgent and challenging work. We'll continue to provide a platform for artistic work that responds to the climate crisis and encourages us to shape a positive future for years to come, while exploring new ways to showcase this artistic work in the most sustainable way possible. We recognise we have much further to go, but there is a new urgency to this work in the organisation and we remain dedicated to achieving the goals we've set ourselves. You can find out more about our progress [here](#), and look out for our new Sustainability Strategy published in 2022. This strategy will set out the steps we plan to take to deliver our ambitious carbon reduction targets and improve our overall environmental performance into the future.

Exhibition Catalogue

The exhibition will be accompanied by an illustrated book, designed by Stinsensqueeze. The catalogue will showcase the artists and works within the exhibition and invite a deeper dive into some of the key discussions. Bringing a broad range of voices together, the *Our Time on Earth* catalogue will feature conversations between artists and activists; essays by leading thinkers, including author and columnist George Monbiot; novelist Daisy Hildyard; Black British feminist educator Janine Francoise; writer Jonathan Lедgard; Indigenous educators Sonia Guajajara and Célia Xakriabá; a speculative piece of fiction by artist Wai Kin; a graphic mural by Jacob V Joyce; and poetry by climate activists Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner and Aka Niviana.

Events

A full programme of events accompanying the exhibition will be announced soon and updated on the website as confirmed. The events, which will be programmed by Barbican's Cinema, Music, Visual Arts and Theatre & Dance teams, include a Climate Change Week of talks; an Outdoor Cinema season of movies focusing on the environment; In Conversation events with writers, designers, environmental experts and artists; activities for young people; and more. Check the website for full listings: <https://www.barbican.org.uk/whats-on/art-design>

Outdoor Cinema

Over 6 evenings from 23rd to 28th August, Barbican will present a cross arts line up celebrating the natural world on the big open-air screen, set within the spectacular architecture of Barbican's Sculpture Court.

Barbican Young Visual Arts Group Exhibition

Sat 7 and Sun 8 May 2022

10am-10pm

Level G foyer, Barbican Centre

Young Visual Arts Group is a Barbican learning programme for people aged 16-25. Inspired by *Our Time On Earth*, the group themed their programme on the subject of 'repair'. This exhibition will showcase the work they've made since they met in October 2021, pushing the concept of repair in new ways.

Becoming Climavore x Benugo

The Barbican Kitchen and bars, run by Benugo are taking part in Benugo's collaboration with Turner Prize 2021 nominated collective *Cooking Sections* on a long-term project which develops dishes using ingredients that help regenerate the planet added to menus at cultural institutions across the UK.

The project came from the Serpentine Gallery's long-term interdisciplinary project Back to Earth, which worked alongside Benugo to add CLIMAVORE dishes to the menu. As well as removing farmed salmon from menus, a new range of CLIMAVORE products were developed, using filter-feeders and regenerative coastal ingredients that have a positive effect on marine ecology and proactively respond to the ecological challenges in the waters around the island, including foraged Cornish seaweeds and ocean greens.

The new food items, which are available to purchase at the Barbican – and at participating cultural venues across the UK – include a **CLIMAVORE Ocean Greens Wrap** made with Cornish ocean greens and dulse hummus, grilled carrots, piquant peppers, cabbage, red pepper, cucumber, lemon, spinach in a multigrain wrap and a **CLIMAVORE Grains Salad** made with Cornish ocean greens, barley, quinoa & lentils, beets, grilled carrots, piquant peppers, flaked Cornish dulse, courgetti, spinach, omega seeds with lemon tahini dressing. <https://becoming.climavore.org>

Barbican Shop

In addition to the official exhibition catalogue, the Barbican Shop also features a selection of books, gifts and homewares to help you live sustainably. You can shop the range online: <https://shop.barbican.org.uk/collections/sustainable-living>

Barbican newsroom

All Barbican Centre press releases, news announcements and the Media Relations 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](#) 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 Art Gallery, a second gallery The Curve, Barbican Hall, the Barbican Theatre, The Pit, Cinemas One, Two and Three, 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](#). 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. Find us on [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#) | [YouTube](#) | [Spotify](#)

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

About the Musée de la civilisation

Inaugurated in 1988, the Musée de la civilisation immediately stood out on the international scale thanks to its societal and multidisciplinary approach, which places people at the centre of its activities. A daring bet that breathes new life into the entire museum community. As one of the most important national and international museums, the Museum has engaged over the past 30 years in rich collaborations and partnerships with 30 countries, located on five continents. Always on the lookout for ways to innovate and dream big, the Museum works tirelessly to forge new associations. Our way of erasing the boundaries between sharing expertise, knowledge and bringing the best of ideas to life.