

barbican

About the Barbican

The Barbican is an internationally-renowned arts, learning, and conference centre in the heart of the City of London. Each year we present hundreds of different performances, events and exhibitions that entertain and inspire millions of people, create connections, provoke debate, and reflect the world we live in.

Opened in 1982, the Barbican is a unique building, recognised globally as an architectural icon. As well as its theatres, galleries, concert hall and cinemas, the Barbican is home to a large conservatory with over 1,500 species of plants and trees, a library, conference facilities, public and community spaces, restaurants, bars, and a picturesque lakeside oasis.

We're passionate about showcasing the most exciting art from around the world, pushing traditional artistic boundaries and helping us understand our lives in new and unexpected ways. Our commitment to supporting emerging talent has seen the centre run over 250 learning activities and events to over 49,000 participants in 2022/23, providing the resources needed for more young people to develop their artistic practice and access jobs in the creative industry.

As a not-for-profit, we rely on the generosity of individuals and organisations, including our principal funder the City of London Corporation. Every ticket purchased, donation made, and pound earned supports our arts and learning programme and enables the widest possible range of people to experience the joy of the arts.

We're proud to be the home of the London Symphony Orchestra, and a London base of the Royal Shakespeare Company. We regularly co-commission, produce and showcase the work of our other partners and associates: the Academy of Ancient Music, the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Boy Blue, Britten Sinfonia, Cheek by Jowl, Drum Works, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Serious and We Are Parable.





Our Purpose

We are London's Creative Catalyst for arts, curiosity, and enterprise. We spark creative possibilities and transformation for artists, audiences, and communities – to inspire, connect and provoke debate.

We are the place to be in this Destination City, where everyone is welcome. Our impact is felt far outside our walls and ripples beyond the experiences we offer – locally, nationally, and internationally.

Our Values

We want to ensure that creativity, inclusion, community, and enterprise are an essential part of the Barbican's future development. By underpinning everything we do with our organisational values, by being **inclusive, connected, sustainable, and daring**, and by approaching our work in a **joyful** way, we hope that being part of the Barbican community will become a positive, life-enhancing experience for everyone.

Our Creative Vision

Our eclectic programme features the most exciting, relevant and varied performers and artists in music, theatre, dance, the visual arts, cinema, and beyond.

Through our creative vision, we aim to create better access to the arts, increase representation and ensure the Barbican uses its unique position and platform to unleash the power of creativity in everyone.

We're striving to combine our exceptional arts programme with a sector-leading education programme for young people; provide the resources needed to support creative enterprises to flourish from within our building; and take artists on a journey from studio space to main stage, creating a talent pipeline that will help produce the next generation of UK artists.



Our Strategy

Our organisation-wide strategy enables us to deliver our purpose and values. It sets out the areas we want to transform over the next 3-5 years. These shared goals also unify us as an organisation and ensures clarity around what we're all collectively trying to achieve.

Our Strategic Goals are:

- Excite and engage audiences and communities
- Fuel creative ambition
- Invest in our people and culture
- Revitalise our place
- Build an enterprising business
- Work in line with our values

Our Audience Strategy

In September 2023, we launched our new Audience Strategy which will deliver on the Barbican's purpose by better enabling us to connect with our audiences, increase our reach and measure our impact.

The strategy provides a holistic and targeted approach to audiences at the Barbican, enabling us to work collaboratively to:

- increase, diversify and retain our audiences
- being always data informed in our audience related decision making.
- building the capability and culture of the Barbican to ensure audiences are at the heart of what we do and why we do it
- being enterprising in our approach and build revenues from our venues and customer businesses to reinvest in our programme and customer experiences





We are changing

Focused firmly on the future, we're working on ambitious plans to transform our building, reimagining what an arts centre can be and doing our part to address the climate crisis. Through our work on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, we will ensure the Barbican becomes a place where everyone belongs – where creativity, enterprise, and learning coexist, and everybody can achieve their fullest potential.

Barbican Renewal

Barbican Renewal is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to radically reimagine what an arts centre can be. Through it, we'll unlock the potential of this area of the Square Mile for generations to come. At forty years, our building is beginning to show its age, and needs investment to future proof our spaces so they meet the expectations of audiences and artists for the next forty and beyond.

Our goal is to care for the things people love about the Barbican, while delivering improved public and creative spaces and facilities. We're working with an award-winning design team to deliver a sustainable development that will bring underused spaces into new creative use, all without adding a single square metre of extra building.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

We're on a journey to becoming a more diverse and inclusive organisation, spurred on in part by the publication of *Barbican Stories* in 2021. We're clear that we want to be a place where everyone belongs, a place of fairness and equity; and to be an organisation that reflects the diversity of our community.

We have an **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy** and a clear action plan focused on creating change, and a dedicated team that will support the organisation to get us there. This is an all-encompassing programme that touches every aspect of our organisation, including our arts programme. We have developed a Zero Tolerance statement and bespoke training has been provided to over 700 of our staff.

Updates on our EDI work are published every 6 months on the [our website](#).

We recognise that culture change is a long journey, but we are confident of the foundational steps we have made so far.



Sustainability

We believe that the arts have the power to inspire us to collectively imagine a better future and to unite us in tackling the climate crisis. We provide a platform for artistic work that responds to the ongoing breakdown of our climate, to highlight its importance and encourage us to shape a positive future.

We take our responsibility to reduce our impact on the environment seriously and have established clear targets to achieve this. Our **Sustainability Strategy** sets out the actions we are taking to reduce carbon emissions from our own operations to net zero by 2027. By 2040 this will also include our supply chain.



City of London Corporation & Governance

The Barbican was founded by the City of London Corporation, who remain our principal funder today. It is also the employer of all our staff. The Barbican is governed by the Barbican Centre Board, consisting of City of London Corporation and external members. Our charitable arm, the Barbican Centre Trust is led by a cross-section of corporate and cultural leaders.

Further Reading

[Our Programme](#)

[Our People](#)

[Barbican Board](#)

[Our Digital Archive](#)

[Latest news](#)

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Our social media channels:

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The City of London Corporation is the founder and principal funder of the Barbican Centre