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barbican

Barbican announces Theatre & Dance productions for autumn-winter 2025

- Images + video can be downloaded here: [AUTUMN 2025](#)

The Barbican Centre today announces its Theatre & Dance programme running over autumn-winter this year, presenting international work for all ages across its theatres. The line-up features UK premieres of epic-scale multidisciplinary work from two of Europe's most sought-after directors; the return of Dance Umbrella spotlighting choreographers making their London debuts and challenging expectations of dance; award-winning artists transforming The Pit into radical spaces of belonging with experimental blends of physical theatre, storytelling and sound; and over the festive period, under-2s join Catalan artists on an immersive sensory journey in outer space.

Two major UK premieres start off the season in the Barbican Theatre: French-Vietnamese theatre and filmmaker **Caroline Guiela Nguyen** making her UK debut with **LACRIMA** (25 – 27 Sept), a hauntingly beautiful, multi-lingual drama shedding light on the hidden personal cost behind the luxury fashion industry; followed by Polish director **Łukasz Twarkowski**'s electrifying exploration of art and legacy, **ROHTKO** (2 – 5 Oct).

In The Pit, the programme continues with a vibrant mix of premieres, cross-genre storytelling, and intimate encounters. **Dance Umbrella** introduces distinctive artists from Australia and Spain in **Change Tempo** (8-9 Oct), a double bill challenging expectations of dance, as well as previously announced **Gesualdo Passione** (16 Oct) in the Hall in collaboration with the Barbican's Music department. Award-winning company **KISS WITNESS** premieres the darkly comedic **Prayers for a Hungry Ghost** (29 Oct – 1 Nov), created through the Barbican's prestigious Open Lab talent development programme. **CN Lester** returns with a sixth edition of their **Transpose Pit Party; Subverse** (12 - 15 Nov) celebrates non-conforming work and features some of the UK's most exciting trans artists, curated by **ILĀ** and directed by **Jamie Hale**. As the festive season gets underway, female-led Catalan company **Engruna Teatre** make their London debut with **Univers** (3 – 13 Dec), a magical sensory experience for 0-2 year olds.

Tickets are now on sale to Barbican Premier Patrons, Principal Patrons, Director's Circle Patrons, Barbican Patrons, and Barbican Members Plus, with tickets available tomorrow at 10am for Barbican Members and general sale on Sat 10 May from 10am via barbican.org.uk.

Toni Racklin, Barbican Head of Theatre & Dance, said:

"We are so pleased to announce a striking Theatre & Dance line-up for autumn-winter 2025, presenting work that embodies the breadth and ambition of the Barbican's boundary-pushing international programme. This season invites audiences to experience the power of live performance to connect, provoke and inspire. We continue to champion cross-disciplinary experimentation to bring together a programme of extraordinary artists from around the world who challenge convention and shed light on our lives in all their complexity."

Full programme information:

<https://www.barbican.org.uk/whats-on/2025/series/theatre-and-dance-autumnwinter-2025>

Caroline Guiela Nguyen: *LACRIMA*

UK premiere

Thursday 25 – Saturday 27 September 2025

Barbican Theatre

Press Performance: Thursday 25 September, 7pm

Kicking off the autumn season, the Barbican will introduce acclaimed French-Vietnamese writer, director and filmmaker **Caroline Guiela Nguyen** to the UK with ***LACRIMA***, her thrilling, large-scale production which spans continents to reveal the dramatic and dangerous world behind couture fashion.

LACRIMA cinematically stages myriad gripping narratives unraveling around a dress that will spend mere minutes in the spotlight, uncovering the institutional and private violence in the creation of one royal bridal gown.

Performed in French sign-language, French, English and Tamil, *LACRIMA* unfolds against a hyper-realistic set design incorporating split-screen and live-captured video projection. The extraordinary piece exposes the weight of closely-guarded secrets carried by the often-invisible workers who sustain the global fashion industry.

Caroline Guiela Nguyen (*SAIGON* and *FRATERNITÉ, Conte fantastique*) is founder of the theatre company Les Hommes Approximatifs and Artistic Director of Théâtre national de Strasbourg. *LACRIMA* premiered at the Avignon Festival 2024 before embarking on an international tour including performances in Germany (FIND festival, Schaubühne Berlin, part of a season celebrating her body of work), Japan and Canada.

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Łukasz Twarkowski / Anka Herbut / Dailes Theatre: *ROHTKO*

UK premiere

Thursday 2 – Sunday 5 October 2025

Barbican Theatre

Press performance: Thursday 2 October, 6.30pm

Following his sold-out production of *The Employees* (Southbank Centre), trailblazing Polish director **Łukasz Twarkowski** returns to London with the UK premiere of *ROHTKO*, a four-hour fusion of event theatre, live cinema and pumping techno beats navigating one of the art world's biggest forgery scandals. From Latvian-American artist Mark Rothko and the abstract expressionists to Chinese "decreation" philosophy and NFTs, dramatist **Anka Herbut**'s text explores authenticity and how we define value in a fast-changing world.

One of Europe's most in-demand theatre makers, Twarkowski's monumental spectacle is brought to life in collaboration with a creative team and crew of nearly 40, and features actors from Latvia, Poland and China. Produced by Latvia's **Dailes Theatre**, the largest professional theatre in the Baltics, *ROHTKO* premiered in 2022 in Riga, Latvia and has since won numerous awards on its tour around Europe.

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Presented by Dance Umbrella and the Barbican: *Change Tempo* double bill

Lilian Steiner: *Siren Dance*

María del Mar Suárez (La Chachi): *Random Taranto*

UK premieres

Wednesday 8 – Thursday 9 October 2025

The Pit

Press performance: Wednesday 8 October, 7.45pm

For the first time, the Barbican will host *Change Tempo*, Dance Umbrella festival's signature mixed bill to introduce distinctive international artists to London. In The Pit, the vibrant and complementary programme will feature two UK premieres. Both artists challenge expectations of dance, pushing boundaries with their contemporary approaches to classical forms.

Lilian Steiner is a Stockholm-based Australian artist and dancer with Sweden's leading contemporary ballet company, Cullberg. In her latest solo work, ***Siren Dance***, she plays with seduction, illusion and shifting truths in a mesmerising exploration of power, transformation, and the fine line between authenticity and disguise.

Random Taranto by Spanish flamenco dancer **María del Mar Suárez (La Chachi)**, turns the everyday into something extraordinary. Two women share a moment – eating sunflower seeds, exchanging glances – until flamenco erupts, raw and electric. Stripped back to voice and movement, this playful take on the Taranto form pulses with irreverence and unexpected humour.

Presented by Dance Umbrella and the Barbican:

Les Arts Florissants & Amala Dianor Company: *Gesualdo Passione*

UK premiere

Thursday 16 October 2025

Barbican Hall

Press performance: Thursday 16 October, 7.30pm

Combining a cappella singing with the emotional power of the body, **Gesualdo Passione** marks the culmination of conductor **Paul Agnew** and **Les Arts Florissants'** work on the music of Carlo Gesualdo, transforming his 1611 Responsories for Holy Week into a contemporary creation by choreographer **Amala Dianor**, performed with dancers from **Amala Dianor Compagnie**. Uniting past and present *Gesualdo Passione* also forms part of the wider international dance festival Dance Umbrella.

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KISS WITNESS: *Prayers for a Hungry Ghost*

World premiere

Wednesday 29 October – Saturday 1 November 2025

The Pit

Press performance: Wednesday 29 October, 7.45pm

Led by award-winning theatre maker **Elisabeth Gunawan** (*Unforgettable Girl*), **KISS WITNESS'** latest production is a mesmerising family drama set in the underworld, exploring the intergenerational trauma born from the pressure of meeting society's impossible standards. The show combines horror, physical performance, live cinema, dark comedy and Chinese mythology (in which 'hungry ghosts' are reincarnated souls of those who were selfish, envious or greedy). This sardonic yet tender ensemble production follows Father, Big Sister and Little Sister's lives as they spiral in opposite directions.

Developed through the Barbican's Open Lab programme in 2023, ***Prayers for a Hungry Ghost*** makes its world premiere at The Pit this autumn.

Chinese-Indonesian writer and performer Elisabeth Gunawan 吳金蘭 founded the company KISS WITNESS (formerly Saksi Bisou) to decolonise the imagination, empower people and create spaces of belonging. Awards include The Stage Debut Award for Best Performer in a Play (2022), OffFest Award (2022) and The Pleasance's Charlie Hartill Award (2023). Gunawan will be presenting her immersive headphone theatre piece *Stampin' in the Graveyard* at Summerhall, Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2025.

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CN Lester's Transpose Pit Party: *Subverse*

Wed 12 - Sat 15 November 2025

The Pit

Press performance: Thu 13 Nov 2025

CN Lester's Transpose festival returns with a new edition of their legendary Pit Party takeovers, celebrating and platforming some of the UK's most exciting trans artists in four powerful evenings of live music and performance. Curated by **ILĀ** (producer, creative director and co-founder of Trans Voices, the UK's first professional Trans+ choir) and directed by **Jamie**

Hale (artistic director and founder of CRIPtic Arts), **Subverse** invites artists and audiences to look at things differently, challenge dominant narratives and defy binary expectations.

Inspired by ILĀ's prolific career breaking down artificial boundaries, showcasing diverse voices, and more recently composing using DNA sequencing and the world's first quantum synth, there will be a focus on sound, with the featured artists being encouraged to draw on disciplines beyond their core practice to create unexpected results. Full line-up to be announced soon.

Both ILĀ and CN Lester are contributors in the Barbican's upcoming Immersive exhibition, *Feel The Sound*.

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Engruna Teatre: *Univers*

London premiere

Wednesday 3 – Saturday 13 December 2025

The Pit

Press performances: Fri 5 Dec, 10am, 12noon, 3pm

Performing for the first time in London, the award-winning **Engruna Teatre**'s endearing, internationally touring sensory experience has been created especially to give 0-2 year-olds the space to explore in magical and unexpected ways. Inspired by the fragile balance of the universe, this evocative and immersive journey combines playful movement from two performers and live music by an onstage musician. **Univers** invites babies and toddlers to explore, reflect, and interact with beautiful objects of different textures and shapes that are scattered and rearranged.

Catalonia-based, women-led company **Engruna Teatre** have over fifteen years of experience charming and thrilling audiences of all ages at festivals and theatres across Spain, Catalonia, France, Portugal, the Netherlands, Denmark, Ireland, UK and Czech Republic. **Univers** arrives in London following highly praised performances at Edinburgh International Children's Festival in 2024 and Baboró Festival in Galway, 2023.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

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

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Images + Video

Images + video can be downloaded here:

[AUTUMN 2025](#)

LISTINGS

Barbican Centre

London, EC2Y 8DS

Box Office: 020 7870 2500 (Monday-Friday 12noon - 5.30pm)

Barbican Centre's ticket sales team can also now help via [WhatsApp](#), or send a text on 07380 975000

Accessible ticketing line: [020 7101 1188](#) (Monday–Sunday 10am–4pm), via [WhatsApp](#), or send a text on [07710 854085](#)

Full programme here:

<https://www.barbican.org.uk/whats-on/2025/series/theatre-and-dance-autumnwinter-2025>

Caroline Guiela Nguyen: *LACRIMA*

UK premiere

Barbican Theatre

Thu 25 – Sat 27 Sep 2025 (3 performances)

Thu 25 - Fri 26 Sep at 7pm, Sat 27 Sept at 3pm

Press performance: Thu 25 Sep at 7pm

Running time: 2hrs 55mins (inc 5min pause). Readmittance is allowed throughout.

Age guidance: 14+

Content guidance: Contains depictions of psychological and physical violence as well as suicide

Performed in French, with scenes in French Sign Language, Tamil and English with English surtitles

Tickets from £16 plus booking fee; £12 Young Barbican tickets available

<https://www.barbican.org.uk/whats-on/2025/event/caroline-guiela-nguyen-lacrime>

Presented by the Barbican

Łukasz Twarkowski / Anka Herbut / Dailes Theatre: *ROHTKO*

UK premiere

Barbican Theatre

Thu 2 – Sun 5 Oct 2025 (4 performances)

Thu 2 - Fri 3 Oct at 6.30pm, Sat 4 – Sun 5 Oct at 3pm

Press performance: Thu 2 Oct at 6.30pm

Running time: 3hrs 55mins (inc 25min interval)

Age guidance: 14+

Content guidance: Contains smoking, loud and occasionally sudden music, haze, strobe lighting and flashing lights

Performed in Latvian, English, Chinese and Polish with English surtitles

Tickets from £25 plus booking fee; £18 Young Barbican tickets available

<https://www.barbican.org.uk/whats-on/2025/event/lukasz-twarkowski-dailes-theatre-anka-herbut-rohtko>

Presented by the Barbican with the support of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute and Polish Cultural Institute in London. Part of the UK/Poland Season 2025

Production Dailes Theatre, Riga – Latvia. In co-production with JK Opole Theatre - Poland and the Adam Mickiewicz Institute

Co-financed by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland and the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia

Presented by Dance Umbrella and the Barbican: *Change Tempo* double bill

Lilian Steiner: *Siren Dance*

María del Mar Suárez (La Chachi): *Random Taranto*

Two UK premieres

The Pit

Wed 8 – Thu 9 Oct 2025, 7.45pm (2 performances)

Press performance: Wed 8 Oct at 7.45pm

Running time: Approx 1hr 40mins (inc 20min interval)

Age guidance: 12+

Content guidance: *Siren Dance* includes a small amount of nudity and one loud scream (approximately 20 minutes into the show). In *Random Taranto*, sunflower seeds are eaten on stage.

Tickets £20 plus booking fee; £10 Young Barbican tickets available

<https://www.barbican.org.uk/whats-on/2025/event/dance-umbrella-change-tempo>

Presented by Dance Umbrella and the Barbican

The early research and premiere of *Siren Dance* was supported by Deltebre Dansa & B.Motion (Operaestate Veneto, Bassano del Grappa), Dancehouse Melbourne, Besen Foundation and Lucy Guerin Inc.

Part of Dance Umbrella festival 2025

Presented by Dance Umbrella and the Barbican:

Les Arts Florissants & Amala Dianor Company: *Gesualdo Passione*

UK premiere

Barbican Hall

Thu 16 Oct 2025, 7.30pm

Press performance: Thu 16 Oct at 7.30pm

Running time: tbc

Tickets from £15 plus booking fee; £12 Young Barbican tickets available

<https://www.barbican.org.uk/whats-on/2025/event/les-arts-florissants-amala-dianor-company>

Presented by Dance Umbrella and the Barbican

Part of Dance Umbrella festival 2025

KISS WITNESS: *Prayers for a Hungry Ghost*

World premiere

The Pit

Wed 29 Oct – Sat 1 Nov 2025 (5 performances)

Wed 29 Oct – Sat 1 Nov at 7.45pm, Sat 1 Nov at 2.30pm

Press performance: Wed 29 Oct at 7.45pm

Captioned performance: Fri 31 Oct at 7.45pm

Running time: Approx 70mins (no interval)

Age guidance: 14+

Content guidance: Contains a haze effect, coarse language, sexually suggestive scenes, depictions of violence, themes of bereavement and complex family dynamics, as well as horror imagery that some viewers may find distressing

Performed in English, Mandarin, Cantonese and Malay with English surtitles

Tickets £20 plus booking fee; £10 Young Barbican tickets available

<https://www.barbican.org.uk/whats-on/2025/event/kiss-witnesselisabeth-gunawan-prayers-for-a-hungry-ghost>

Presented by the Barbican

Commissioned by Kakilang, with support from ArtsAdmin, Barbican Open Lab and curious directive's HYPOTHESIS retreat.

CN Lester's Transpose Pit Party: *Subverse*

The Pit

Wed 12 - Sat 15 Nov 2025, 7.30pm (4 performances)

Press performance: Thu 13 Nov 2025 at 7.30pm

All performances will be Relaxed

Post-show talk: Fri 14 Nov, free to ticketholders for that evening's performance

Running time: 90mins

Age guidance: 14+

Content guidance: Contains references to adult themes and adult language

Tickets £20 plus booking fee; £10 Young Barbican tickets available

<https://www.barbican.org.uk/whats-on/2025/event/transpose-pit-party-subverse>

Produced by the Barbican

Engruna Teatre: *Univers*

London premiere

The Pit

Wed 3 – Sat 13 Dec 2025 (27 performances)

Wednesdays - Saturdays at 10am, 12noon and 3pm; Sun 7 Dec at 10am, 12noon and 3pm

Press performances: Fri 5 Dec at 10am, 12noon and 3pm

Running time: approx 40mins

Age guidance: 0-2yrs

Content guidance: this event is a multi-sensory experience made specifically for babies and young toddlers (under 2yrs)

Tickets are £13 (adults and 2+yrs) and £11 (0-2yrs) plus booking fee
<https://www.barbican.org.uk/whats-on/2025/event/engruna-teatre-univers>

Presented by the Barbican

Co-produced by Engruna Teatre, laSala and elPetit. With the support of Institut Català de les Empreses Culturals, L'Estruch, Associació de Teatre per a Tots els Públics, Auditori Miquel Pont (Castellar del Vallès), La Tombarella

Barbican press room

All Barbican Centre press releases, news announcements and the Communications team's contact details are listed on our website at www.barbican.org.uk/our-story/press-room

About Pit Parties

Fluid in its format, the Barbican's Pit Parties invite a guest artist, producer or organisation to curate a programme of work by multiple artists that interest them, and offers time for audiences and artists to socially interact in a relaxed environment. The inaugural Pit Party took place in 2016, curated by nitroBEAT. Since then the Barbican has presented Pit Parties in collaboration with Touretteshero, Studio 3 Arts, Transform Festival, Jamie Hale, Inua Ellams and CN Lester's Transpose.

About Open Lab

The Barbican's Open Lab programme supports the development of emerging and practicing artists, giving artists the chance to experiment in a working theatrical space without the expectation of a final product. Alumni include Rhiannon Faith Company, Krishna Isha, Malik Nashad Sharpe, Louise Orwin, Bullyache and The PappyShow.

About the Barbican

The Barbican is a catalyst for creativity, sparking possibilities for artists, audiences, and communities. We showcase the most exciting art from around the world, pushing traditional artistic boundaries to entertain and inspire millions of people, create connections, provoke debate, and reflect the world we live in.

We are an international arts and events centre rooted firmly in our own neighbourhood, collaborating with local communities and putting the City of London on the map as a destination for everybody. Central to our purpose is supporting emerging talent and shaping opportunities that will accelerate the next generation of creatives.

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.

Opened in 1982, the Barbican is a unique and audacious building, recognised globally as an architectural icon. As well as our theatres, galleries, concert halls and cinemas, we have 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 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 associates and partners including the [Academy of Ancient Music](#), [BBC Symphony Orchestra](#), [Boy Blue](#),

[Darbar Festival](#), [Doc'n Roll Film Festival](#), [Drum Works](#), [EFG London Jazz Festival](#), [London Palestine Film Festival](#), [Serious](#), and [Trafalgar Theatre Productions](#).

For more information, visit our [website](#) or connect with us on [Instagram](#) | [Facebook](#) | [YouTube](#) | [Spotify](#) | [LinkedIn](#)