

Voiced:



The Festival for Endangered Languages



Taking over the Barbican Centre in October

With half of the world's languages threatened to fall silent by the end of the century comes the first ever UK festival

Voiced: The Festival for Endangered Languages

- The vast creative impact that art has on language and language has on art!
- Ten-day explosion of creative multilingualism across the Barbican Centre!
- **Tickets:** Members Plus on sale **Wednesday 15 August** & on general sale **Friday 15 August** – 3-Day ticket £40.
- **For photography and logos please go to: [HERE](#)**

Lead photo credit: Silent words that bounce around the mind bumping into organs, synthesisers, guitar chords, breaths-breathing, montenegrofisher 2024

The inaugural **Voiced: The Festival for Endangered Languages** takes over London's Barbican Centre in **October 2025**, highlighting endangered global and local languages through a creative festival. The Barbican, London will be filled with an explosion of voices and works highlighting some of the world's most endangered languages and dialects, with new commissions and work by new voices from around the world.

With some languages close to desolation, **Voiced** will also be a joyous, celebration showing how they are being saved.

Through poetry, music, visual art, performance, talks and live events including workshops and free spaces, the festival brings together living and ancient languages, dialects and scripts with a remarkable line-up of global artists; brilliantly highlighting the vast creative impact art has on language and language has on art.

The festival is co-curated by artist **Sam Winston** and poet **Chris McCabe**, "Having worked individually on endangered language projects from establishing the Endangered Poetry Project (National Poetry Library) to writing the picture book *One and Everything* and editing *Poems from the Edge of Extinction*, we asked each other why there wasn't a creative festival for unheard languages in the UK? So, we made Voiced happen! The first UK festival to showcase the incredible creative work of poets, writers, visual and sound artists and musicians who draw power from their indigenous languages to move, surprise and excite audiences throughout our islands and beyond. This festival brings these essential voices together for a ten-day explosion of creative multilingualism across London's Barbican Centre".

Karena Johnson, Head of Creative Collaboration at the Barbican said, "We are excited to collaborate with Sam and Chris to welcome this line-up of incredible artists from around the UK and the world, to share and amplify their voices. We are celebrating the power of language and art to locate who we are, from our history to our culture to dreams for the future. Whether in this country, or on the front line of climate change,

communities are fighting to survive and keep their shared identity alive. The Barbican is holding this vital space and inviting audiences to explore and share their own experiences of connection, home and hope”.

Voiced promises to introduce audiences to new ways of thinking about and engaging with language, with a set of five new poetry commissions about what ‘home’ means at its heart. London-based Filipino poet **Troy Cabida**, the National Poet of Wales **Hanan Issa**, Canadian Inuktitut writer **Norma Dunning**, Belarusian poet **Hanna Komar** and Amajagh poet and painter **Hawad**, who writes in the Tamajaght language, have each created new works in their personal endangered and minority languages, showing how both landscape and language diversity is under tremendous pressure to survive.

FREE HIGHLIGHTS (Level G foyer) Wednesday 1 October - Friday 31 October 2025 include:

- **The Creative Voice Hub** – this immersive area will be at the **Barbican** throughout October, featuring the new poems. The poets’ own words and stories alongside audio and visual designs showing how the decline of biodiversity is intimately linked with language. Also, various **Participation Spaces**.
- **Five Giant Seed Syllable Flags** – created by **Sam Winston** from endangered and minority languages with inks handmade by **Winston** mixing ingredients and materials connected to the poets’ native landscapes showing the bold and strong colours born out of their native landscapes:
- **Troy Cabida** Word: **3V3** (smoke) *ingredients* Marlboro cigarettes, in reference to his memories of buying cigarettes for his parents as a child growing up in the Philippines.
Script: Baybayin Language: Tagalog
- **Norma Dunning** Word: **ᑕᑭ** (veins) *ingredients* wild blueberries.
Script Canadian Syllabics Language: Inuktitut (translation in Pang dialect), Québec, Canada.
- **Hanna Komar** Word: **побязь** (continuity, continuous connection between things) *ingredients* = chokeberries grown and collected in Belarus symbolising protests and state violence.
Script Cyrillic
- **Hawad** Word: **†‡£:† ‡I£** (blood ochre) *ingredients* = red ochre, symbolising his nomad childhood in the Aïr region of Niger.
Script Tifinagh Language: Tamajaght
- **Hanan Issa** Word: **شلونج؟** (how are you?) *ingredients* kohl - the charcoal substance used to line eyes
Language: Arabish
- **The Audio Trail** - perfect for all, including families, to follow hidden languages using a map which takes listeners through the hidden quiet spaces of the **Barbican, London** to discover a sonic experience and audio treasure trove of ‘in the field’ recordings from sound artist **Jamie Perera**, using never before heard recordings.
- **The Endangered Languages Archive** (ELAR) - discover a unique digital repository preserving multimedia collections of endangered languages from all over the world spoken and sung making them available for future generations, with some languages already lost in the living world. Curated by director of the Endangered Languages Archive **Mandana Seyfeddinipur**.

WORKSHOPS on Saturday 11 and Sunday 12 October in the Fountain Room, Level G

There will be a series of **WORKSHOPS** which will be full of creativity and finding exciting ways of visualising and hearing endangered languages including:

- **Seed Syllables / An Alphabet for Home with Sam Winston - Saturday 11 October, 11am-1pm**
With artist and co-curator of **Voiced**, **Sam Winston**, participants will explore the theme of home through drawing, writing, and colour-making exercises.
- **Macaronic Poetry with Chris McCabe – Saturday 11 October, 1.30pm-3.30pm**
A form of poetry that uses more than one language and is everywhere in literature, from the seven languages of TS Eliot’s *The Waste Land* to the polyphonic river song of James Joyce’s *Finnegans Wake*. Led by poet and co-curator of **Voiced**, **Chris McCabe**, it’s time to explode the parameters of your poems. Bring a poem of your own or find text at the workshop and end up with your own multilingual piece.
- **Translation Circle with Shamim Azad and Mike Raggett – Saturday 11 October, 4pm-6pm**
A poetry translation workshop (conducted in English), fostering a sense of community and cultural exchange through the power of poetry. **Translation Circle** provides an exciting and enriching opportunity for those interested in poetry, language, and culture to come together and share their experiences and perspectives. Led by poet **Shamim Azad** and translator **Mike Raggett** (BBPC).
- **Swirl of Words with Stephen Watts - Sunday 12 October, 11am-1pm**
A workshop celebrating the multiple languages spoken in London. In 2021 poet **Stephen Watts** edited *Swirl of Words / Swirl of Worlds*, gathering over 100 poems in 94 languages spoken across Hackney. Take part in a shared immersion in key poems from the anthology. Perhaps you speak one of the 94 languages in the book or want to bring other poems of your own from the wider language body to share.

- **Create Your Own Alphabet with Tim Brookes – Sunday 12 October, 1.30pm-3.30pm**

The way language has left its mark in the world is truly unique, with the letterforms that have created a global picture of language with over 300 scripts, alphabets, abjads, and abugidas in the world - get creative and design your own writing system, following just a few simple rules that **Tim Brookes** will explain. Bring paper, pencil, markers, tablet - whatever you like to write on.

Works created during the **Voiced** workshops will go on display around **The Creative Voice Hub** – and workshop participants will be welcomed to join and perform in the **Open Mix Closing Event** of the Festival in **The Pit** on **Saturday 18 October, 7.15pm** - let your voice and creativity be part of **Voiced**.

LIVE PERFORMANCE & PANEL DISCUSSIONS from Thursday 16 – Saturday 18 October in The Pit

LIVE PERFORMANCE and **PANEL DISCUSSIONS** in **The Pit**, the **Barbican's** award-winning space for experimental new performance from **Thursday 16 – Saturday 18 October** with top artists performing and discussing languages close to desolation with a joyous, celebration of how they are being saved.

- **Opening Event - Thursday 16 October, 7.15pm-8.15pm**

Voiced, the UK's first creative festival celebrating the vast impact art has on language and language has on art. Hear from curators **Chris McCabe** and **Sam Winston**, along with special guest **Raymond Antrobus** whose poetry has won the Ted Hughes Award, the Somerset Maugham Awards and Rathbone Folio Prize - his poems will be simultaneously performed live in British Sign Language.

- **The Art of Language: Panel Discussion - Thursday 16 October, 8.30pm-9.30pm**

Half of the world's languages are threatened to fall silent by the end of the century. Join speakers and artists of these languages who are activating new audiences with their work. What is the link between the words we use and the landscape we live in? How do indigenous speakers see the future of their languages? Speakers include Director of the Endangered Languages Archive, **Mandana Seyfeddinipur**; author of *An Atlas of Endangered Alphabets* **Tim Brookes**, and award-winning poet **Raymond Antrobus**. Hosted by **Bidisha**.

- **Global Poems from Home - Friday 17th October, 7.15pm-8.15pm**

The five newly commissioned poems exploring what home means around the world and how language shapes our relationship with place, performed live in their original endangered languages and an English version with poets **Troy Cabida**, **Hanan Issa**, and **Hanna Komar**, followed by an in conversation.

- **Without an Army and a Navy Dialect Poetry - Friday 17 October, 8.30pm-9.30pm**

A live extravaganza of dialect poetry including **Forward Prize-winning poet Liz Berry** (Black Country), Scouse from **Chris McCabe**, and poems in Sylheti from the winner of a Bangladesh national literary award, Bangladeshi British bilingual poet **Shamim Azad**.

- **Yiddish Poetry of the East End - Saturday 18 October, 3pm-4pm**

The East End of London contains more than 90 languages including the once widely spoken Jewish minority language of Yiddish. Performance and conversation from author **Rachel Lichtenstein** and poet **Stephen Watts**; exploring the hidden life and work of the legendary East End Yiddish poet, A.N. Stencl (1897-1983).

- **Say Again: The Poetry of Invented Languages – Saturday 18 October 4.15pm-5.15pm**

Today's poets who go beyond the confines of their mother tongues to create poems in languages that communicate before they are understood. Poet **Stephen Watts** presents poems with echoes of Gaelic/Italian, and artists **montenegrofischer** present a soundscape poetry performance. Also, performance poetry in **Polari**, a UK language invented amongst the queer subculture as a form of resistance and which is now experiencing a renewed interest amongst today's LGBTQI+ communities.

- **Language as a Political Act - Saturday 18 October, 6pm-7pm**

With passionate vocal performances including Palestinian poet **Batool Abu Akleen** and her translator **Cristina Vita** reading works in their mother tongue and discussing how their language provides a home as well as offering a form of resistance. **Batool** started writing at the age of ten, and at fifteen won the Barjeel Poetry Prize for *It Wasn't Me Who Stole the Cloud*.

- **Open Mix Closing Event – Saturday 18 October, 7.15pm-9pm**

Whether you took part in a workshop as part of **Voiced** or simply have a poem or work of your own to share, it's time to bring this to a **Barbican** audience. Poems written in your mother tongue or a mix of languages or invented languages! Hear new work from speakers from the hundreds of languages spoken across the UK. To sign up to read, reserve a spot when booking your ticket.

The line up of global talent creating and performing at **Voiced: The Festival for Endangered Languages** includes: **Liz Berry**, **Raymond Antrobus**, **Hanan Issa**, **Hanna Komar**, **British Bilingual Poetry Collective**, **Mandana Seyfeddinipur**, **Tim Brookes**, **Troy Cabida**, **Batool Abu Akleen**, **Hawad**, **Norma Dunning**, **Jamie Perera**, **Cristina Viti**, **Shamin Azad**, **Rachel Lichtenstein**, **montenegrofischer**, **Stephen Watts**, **Chris McCabe** and **Sam Winston** – to name but a few with more names to be announced.

Voiced: The Festival for Endangered Languages is a brand-new festival with voices being heard loud and clear in a celebration of **LANGUAGE**.



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Voiced: The Festival for Endangered Languages

**LONDON'S BARBICAN CENTRE
OCTOBER 2025**

- **Tickets:** Members Plus on sale **Wednesday 15 August** & on general sale **Friday 15 August. 3-Day ticket £40.**
- The vast creative impact that art has on language and language has on art!
- Ten-day explosion of creative multilingualism across the Barbican!
- **Live Performance & Panel Discussions**
 - Thursday evening, 16 October ticket - £15.
 - Friday evening, 17 October ticket - £15.
 - Saturday afternoon, 18 October ticket - £15.
 - Saturday evening, 18 October ticket - £15.
 - 3-Day ticket £40.
- **Workshops**
 - £10 each.
 - £24 for 3 on Saturday 18 October.
 - £15 for 2 on Sunday 19 October.

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Box office: 020 7870 2500 (the lines are open 12 noon to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday) + barbican.org.uk

Barbican Centre, Silk St, Barbican, London EC2Y 8DS

For full listings information please go to:

<https://www.barbican.org.uk/whats-on/event/voiced-the-festival-for-endangered-languages>

For photography and logos please go to: [HERE](#)

- **Lead photo credit:** Silent words that bounce around the mind bumping into organs, synthesisers, guitar chords, breaths-breathing, [montenegrofischer](#), 2024.

For further information, interviews, tickets, access please contact Deborah Goodman at DGPR on +44 (0)7958 611218 / +44 (0)208 959 9980 / publicity@dgpr.co.uk

Notes to Editors:

- **Languages involved in Voiced** – Tagalog, Inuktitut, Belarusian, Tamajaght, Arabic, British Sign Language, Welsh, Cornish, Sylheti, Iraqi dialect, Yiddish, Scottish Gaelic, Polari.
- Thank you to Arts Council England for funding to make ***Voiced: The Festival for Endangered Languages*** happen.
- **Voiced** will also take place in **Manchester** around International Mother Language Day, February 2026. Details to be announced soon.

CO-CURATORS of Voiced: The Festival for Endangered Languages

Chris McCabe - poet, novelist, artist and librarian at the National Poetry Library. Chris McCabe's work spans artforms and genres including poetry, fiction, non-fiction, drama and visual art. His work has been shortlisted for the Ted Hughes Award and the Republic of Consciousness Prize. His most recent poetry collection, *The Triumph of*

Cancer, is a Poetry Book Society Recommendation and he is the editor of several anthologies including *Poems from the Edge of Extinction: An Anthology of Poetry in Endangered Languages* and *The New Concrete: Visual Poetry in the 21st Century* (with Victoria Bean). His novels are *Dedalus* and *Mud*. He is working on an epic series of psych geographical prose books documenting the lost poets buried in London's Victorian cemeteries, the most recent of which is *Buried Garden*, which was chosen as a *White Review* Book of the Year in 2022. His latest books are *Dreamt by Ghosts*, published by Tenement Press, and *Hedonism*, published by Nine Arches in September 2025. He has been commissioned by the BBC, Wellcome Collection, BFI and British Library, and has appeared on BBC Newsnight Review and BBC Radio 4 several times with a newly commissioned poem appearing on The Verb in the Autumn of 2020. His work has been reviewed in *The Guardian*, *Telegraph*, *Observer* and the TLS. He has appeared at numerous festivals including Edinburgh, Stanza and Ledbury. He was a judge for the 2018 Forward Prize and in his role as the Head of the National Poetry at Southbank Centre he has curated over 50 exhibitions for the National Poetry Library's exhibition space, working with artists such as Liliane Lijn and Cerith Wyn Evans, and has programmed poetry events for Yoko Ono's and David Byrne's Meltdown festivals.

Sam Winston - artist whose interdisciplinary practice explores language not only as a carrier of messages but also as a visual form in and of itself. Sam Winston's practice is concerned with language not only as a carrier of messages but also as a visual form in and of itself. Initially known for his typography and artist's books he employs a variety of different approaches including drawing, performance and poetry. Operating, at the intersection of visual culture and literature, he has exhibited his work in museums and galleries around the world. Tate Britain, the British Library, the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C and J. Paul Getty Museum, among others, hold his artist's books in their permanent collections. Projects involving drawings, and installations have taken place at institutes such as The Victoria and Albert Museum, the Barbican Centre, and The Whitechapel Gallery. His first mass-market book in collaboration with Oliver Jeffers won the Bologna Ragazzi Award for fiction, debuted at no.5 on the New York Times Bestseller List and has been translated into 24 languages. All Winston's projects look to introduce audiences to new ways of thinking about and engaging with language.

Raymond Antrobus Raymond's *Heightened Lyric*, currently featuring on the Barbican's Lakeside Terrace as part of Immersive exhibition *Feel The Sound*.

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](#), our Resident Orchestra, and a London base for the [Royal Shakespeare Company](#). We regularly co-commission, produce and showcase the work of our Artistic Associates the [Academy of Ancient Music](#), [BBC Symphony Orchestra](#), [Boy Blue](#), [Darbar Arts](#), [Cultural and Heritage Trust](#), and [Serious](#), who produce the [EFG London Jazz Festival](#), alongside other associates and partners including [Doc'n Roll Film Festival](#), [London Palestine Film Festival](#), and [Trafalgar Theatre Productions](#).

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