

## City of London Corporation Committee Report

<b>Committee(s):</b> Barbican Centre Board	<b>Dated:</b> 20/11/2024
<b>Subject:</b> Report of the CEO	<b>Public report:</b> For Information
<b>This proposal:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes</li> </ul>	Diverse, Engaged Communities; Dynamic Economic Growth; Leading Sustainable Environment; Vibrant Thriving Destination; Providing Excellent Services; Flourishing Public Spaces
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	No
<b>If so, how much?</b>	-
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	-
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	-
<b>Report of: Interim CEO, Barbican Centre</b>	
<b>Report author: David Farnsworth</b>	

### Summary

In this section, please state the purpose of the report and summarise all the key information relating to the recommendation(s). It should be possible for Members to read the summary and understand the issue without reading the main body of the report.

The summary should be concise – ideally no more than 1-2 paragraphs if the matter is straightforward and no more than 1-2 pages if the matter is more complex. Do not number the paragraphs in this section.

## Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to Note the report and Endorse the Managements Approach

### Main Report

#### Background

Our Autumn programme explores the changing and turbulent times we live in, platforming the essential voices of artists and make space for exploration, and the honest, brave, and sometimes difficult, conversations that are needed now more than ever.

In a world of increasing change, the Barbican is a space to explore these complexities through the forefront of artistic practice. Whether through our Artistic Programming, our Audience engagement, our Partnerships or the renewal of our building, we strive to welcome our visitors and have an opportunity to make sense of an ever more polarised world together.

In line with the Barbican Strategic Framework, this report is presented under the headings of our agreed, shared goals.

#### Current Position

### EXCITE AND ENGAGE OUR COMMUNITIES AND AUDIENCES

#### Brand campaigns

In 'Our Screens Bring You Closer', the Cinema brand campaign which runs between September 2024 and January 2025, we have sought to clarify the Barbican Cinema's overall offer, and position it within the London cinema space, rather than focusing on selling tickets to specific events.

The premise of the campaign was that cinemagoers could become closer to their [ir](#) friends, family, and people that they love via the shared experience of visiting the Barbican Cinema, and experiencing our varied film offer.

For the purposes of the campaign, the Barbican Cinema offer was split into three distinct categories:

1. **Closer to the Unmissable:** the epic moments in the year, such as the Outdoor Cinema and ScreenTalks with A List celebrities

2. **Closer to the World:** The Barbican's international film festivals, seasons and new releases
3. **Closer to Each Other:** All of the cinema's ticket concessions, such as Magic Monday £6 tickets, Pay What You Can, Family Film Club and Senior Community Screenings

To promote the campaign, an ambitious film noir-style shoot was staged, which saw several characters make their way across the Barbican Estate before meeting at the Cinema 1 for a screening.

The resulting trailer and stills have been screened before new release titles in the cinema, as well as in a range of formats across social media, and throughout the Barbican Centre.

### **Marketing & Communications Activity: Highlights**

#### Open Gallery: The Imaginary Institution of India

A cross-arts, listings-style press release was issued in mid-August, leading with news of the free gallery offering and collating all activity taking place across the weekend. Targeted pitching commenced in September and we included a Weekender credit line in our main campaign messaging, securing cut-through in various outlets. We released the free tickets for the weekend on Thu 10 Oct at 10am, which had sold out by the end of the day. Our focus is now on promoting the rest of the programme in the centre with all attendees by way of follow up, including a referral code to share with friends and family for the exhibition.

#### Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum

Our press preview on Tues 17 September welcomed approximately 30 attendees – the highest number we have received for a Curve opening in two years. A double-page feature was secured in Frieze Week magazine to capture international audiences in London for the fair. We filmed an interview with Pamela during her time at the Barbican, leaning into film noir tropes to create a visually appealing introduction to the themes of the exhibition.

#### Barbican Young Poets (BYP) 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary – Poetry in Practice

The Young Poets exhibition is a foyer show designed to be enjoyed by audiences as they pass through the Centre. Marketing support has included featuring the exhibition on our website and in emails to key distribution lists including Young Barbican subscribers. We furthermore issued a press release to highlight the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the BYP programme. Our social media team filmed content with the Young Poet alumni performing from the anthology. These are being released across our social media channels this month and are displayed as part of the exhibition.

#### Barbican Annual Report 23/24 published

On the 25 September, we published the Barbican's Annual Report for 2023/24. The report showcases many highlights from our inspiring and exciting artistic and educational programme, while also detailing our successes in achieving our organisational Purpose, Values and Shared Goals, which will continue to guide our transformational direction over the coming years. The report was emailed out to key

stakeholders, published on the Barbican [website](#), and print copies have also been made available.

## **Communication and Engagement: Barbican Renewal**

Alongside working on the co-design process for Barbican Renewal (see section below), communications, engagement and marketing preparations are underway for the next milestones and project phases, including:

- Updating local stakeholders, politicians and residents on the programme at meetings and events between now and the end of the year
- Preparing a new website that will be ready to support announcements, consultations, fundraising activities and construction communications
- Planning for public consultation activity early in 2025
- Recruiting a new Project Communications and Engagement Officer to support the programme full time

## **FUEL CREATIVE AMBITION**

Creative Collaboration delivered *Our Street* in the Curve through August. The project was conceived as a counterpoint to the Francis Alys exhibition which in contrast to observation of play made a direct invitation to play. As such an anti-exhibition where the rules were to run, touch and make noise. We extended the relationships we had built with children we have supported to feature in Alys's new films to become creative collaborators in *Our Street*. Our collaborators across the project came from varied practice, some experts and some trying these mediums out for the first time creating a truly London feel. Our collaborators included year 5 students from St Lukes Primary School, Colin Tonks, inventor of our cycle-powered weather tree, and Williamz Omope Photographer, who collaborated with participants from Turning Point a local charity supporting people with recovering from substance misuse. The extensive public program animated the three-week installation including storytelling, debate, mahjong games night. Over 20,500 tickets were booked, with 44% of new attendees coming to the centre.

We delivered another sold out club stage event collaborating with Jamz Supernova to present "Future Bounce". The night celebrating the best of global dance music including Afro-Portuguese DJ Nidia and Indian artist-producer-activist Yaw Evans. In October we presented the Black British Book Festival for the first time attended by over 3,500 attendees across the day. 1,958 tickets were booked, with 38% being new bookers. The line up ranged from 90s hip hop star Eve to poet Caleb Femi and concluded by Paul Brunson who closed the festival.

The Music season kicked off with two sold-out performances of The Magnetic Fields at the end of August followed by a sensational start to Sir Antonio Pappano's new tenure as Chief Conductor of the LSO, featuring the world premiere of James Macmillan's Concerto for Orchestra, *The Times* 4\* "music that brims with joyous hope for the future and the sort of pungent, muscular writing that suits this orchestra so well." a searing Elgar Violin Concerto from Vilde Frang *The Arts Desk* 5\* "But this was a performance to store away and treasure" , as well as two concerts with Yuja Wang. Philip Glass Ensemble brought joy to a packed house *Seen & Heard* 4\* "The performance was superlative – keyboard virtuosity of dizzying agility". A new

relationship with John Wilson's outstanding Sinfonia of London was cemented in a concert featuring Sheku Kanneh-Mason and a roof-raising Rachmaninov's Symphony No. 1 Guardian 5\* *"I can't remember an orchestra in this venue sustaining such a gloriously loud, rich sound"* - The Arts Desk 4\* *"Wilson has done it again."* We also hosted a spell-binding recital by Piotr Anderszewski Guardian 5\* *"Anderszewski is a remarkable pianist – no note is out of place, no chord not perfectly balanced"*

We announced **Darbar** as our new Artistic Associate, and their first festival under the new relationship takes place at the end of October with a host of performance and participation events across the centre, connecting into the Imaginary Institution of India Gallery show and the Cinema programme. This also ties into the celebration of Diwali and Bandi Chhor Divas, and has brought in a range of diverse audiences.

Theatre's summer musical Kiss Me Kate, produced by Trafalgar, continued to delight audiences and receive critical acclaim right through to mid-September. We then presented four extraordinary weeks of theatre and dance from around the globe; UK's Clod Ensemble, together with Nu Civilisation orchestra, turned our stage into an interactive jazz club; House, featured both Israeli and Palestinian artists, and was a contemporary stage adaptation of three: film documentaries made in the 80s and 90s directed by Amos Gitai; this was followed by an astonishing version of King Lear from South Korea, performed on our stage turned into a watery world, flooded with 20 thousand litres of water. This season of own promotions rounded off with the mesmerising Hatched Ensemble from South Africa.

The RSC have now returned for their winter residency with an enchanting double bill; Buddha of Suburbia opens later in October, and A Midsummer Night's Dream will play over the festive season.

There is also a season of small-scale gems in the Pit including a show designed especially for babies. Music presented the premiere of Rolf Hind's new opera on the life of Rumi with Mahogany Opera, *Sky in a Small Cage*. The Times 2\* *"Elaine Mitchener mesmerised as the narrator."* and the UK premiere of *The Golden Stool*, an Afropera by Ghanian-Belgian composer Gorges Ocloo, attracting 40% of the audience new to the Barbican. *"Extraordinary singing and high-energy dancing bring this biographical AfrOpera to life"* The Stage 3\* *"If only all anti-colonial rants were so entertaining."* The Times 4\*. The Barbican's commitment to ambitious new music theatre work is critical given the depletion of touring and production throughout the UK.

The Theatre and Dance programmed has just launched its Spring 2025 season, with a strong focus on innovative new work in the Pit from Switzerland, Norway, Belarus, France and Singapore. Also recently announced to much acclaim and anticipation is **The Seagull**. Brought to us by Wessex Grove, it will see the return to our main stage of Cate Blanchett, directed by Thomas Ostermeier and will run for 8 weeks from next February.

In the Art Gallery *The Imaginary institution of India: Art 1975- 1998* (5 Oct – 5 Jan 2025) opened with many of the artists present for the press view on 2 Oct and private view on 4 October. It received 4\* from The London Standard (formerly

Evening Standard), The i, TimeOut, Culture Whisper, as well as 3\* in The Telegraph and a glowing write up in FLO London. The exhibition was also recommended in The London Standard (print), Secret London, The World of Interiors, ArtReview, Artlyst, Elephant, Apollo (print) and The Guardian, where it led the art highlights. A lengthy preview ran in The Guardian, and Curator and Head of Visual Arts Shanay Jhaveri gave a tour of the exhibition for The Art Newspaper's podcast The Week in Art (listen here) and spoke about the exhibition on BBC Radio 4's Start the Week (listen here). An image from the exhibition, taken at the photocall, was the leading photo feature in The Times (print). From Monday 4 November this exhibition will be closed to the public on Mondays in response to visitor attendance patterns.

We continue to work in partnership with international venues. *Unravel: The Power and Politics of Textiles in Art* opened at Stedelijk in Amsterdam on 14 September and Francis Alys: Ricochets opened at Serralves in Porto on 18 October. On 17 October the Visual Arts and Immersive teams hosted the annual Museum Network conference (MUSCON24) (in partnership with Vitra Design Museum, V&A and the design museum) which saw over 115 international delegates from museums and galleries sharing programmes, networking, best practice and enjoying the Barbican spaces.

Barbican Immersive collaborated with the Visual Arts Team, The Design Museum and The Victoria and Albert Museum to host one day of the MUSCON conference, founded and co-organised with the Vitra Design Museum, at the Barbican Centre. The aim of this conference is to promote the international exchange of travelling exhibitions and other collaborative initiatives among museum professionals and decision-makers. Outside of Europe, MUSCON is also regularly held in the United States and Asia-Pacific. The MUSCON network has brought together several hundred institutions and contributed significantly to further a productive exchange of travelling exhibitions in the international museum landscape. This year's conference welcomed over 130 delegates from as far afield as Mexico, Australia, and Hong Kong. This all helps to continue to reinforce the Barbican as a huge connector and influencer across arts, culture, museum venues across the world.

#### Barbican Immersive (BI) touring exhibition highlights

*AI: More than Human* has recently completed another successful run, this time at TELUS Spark Science Centre (TSSC) in Calgary, Canada. A clear highlight of the summer, the exhibition gained broad recognition and attracted an impressive 121,287 visitors in 3 months.

Making its American debut, *Asian Comics: Evolution of an Artform (formerly Mangasia: Wonderlands of Asian Comics)* drew in a large number of new Gen Z audiences to the Bowers Museum in California, USA with after-hours access, anime screenings and a live DJ in the galleries.

With an impressive 42,780 visitors during the first two months alone and slots consistently fully booked, *Game On* has proved to be a must-see event at the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh, Scotland. It is approaching its close in November with record figures.

Originally commissioned as a part of the *Our Time on Earth* exhibition, 'The Symbiocene' installation features in a new show, *Design for the Planet* at the Museum in Den Bosch, Netherlands until January 2025.

## **INVEST IN OUR PEOPLE AND CULTURE**

We have continued to work on both our EDI and People agenda and this last period has focused on:

1. Management and Leadership Development
2. Developing an approach around how we gather colleagues' insights (including our casual colleagues)
3. Working with the City of London Corporation on corporate people initiatives, including Ambition 25 and ERP
4. Exploring an apprenticeship programme focused on promoting the Arts and Culture sector to young and disadvantaged people
5. We continue to move forward with our EDI plans and have recently designed our Anti-Racism training as part of our action plan in this space.

Creative Collaboration has welcomed the final members of the senior team for the department including Senior Producer for Learning and Participation, Lead Producer – Public Program. We can now more fully deliver against our strategic objectives across the collaborative continuum of participatory practice and professional program.

Barbican Music announced a new partnership with Serious and Black Lives in Music in October, the Equaliser Mentorship Programme. Our Music tech team will mentor and support a junior sound technician from a Global Majority background across a month of the summer programme, including sessions with other team members, training and hands-on experience on live events.

## **REVITALISE OUR PLACE**

### **Phase 0 works**

Works to the Superloos have been completed and handed over, with work now commencing on the Foyer Level 1 toilets, which will complete in mid-November. Works to the Catering Block toilets will then begin, subject to Listed building consent being granted. Planned works to upgrade the lorry lift are due to complete in mid-January.

## **Design Development**

Design development continues to progress well on the proposed first major phase of Barbican Renewal projects. Productive sessions are being held with internal project groups working with the Renewal team on the Conservatory and Foyer, Lakeside and Catering Block projects. A presentation showing some of the current design direction for these projects was shared at a recent termly meeting with the Barbican Association and was positively received.

Alongside working with internal project groups, we are embarking on a fully embedded co-design process for the first phase Renewal projects to ensure we're centering the needs of future audiences in our plans. We have convened two groups of 12 co-designers for the Conservatory and Foyers & Lakeside projects, who will work between now and April 2025 to inform elements of the design. Beyond the Box CIC has come on board to facilitate this process. In recruiting for the groups we have focused on core targets from our audience strategy (specifically young people aged 18-34 and people from the global ethnic majority) with a mix from neighbourhoods local to the Barbican and across London. The co-designers will work with the Renewal design team to look at a range of elements including the sense of welcome,

wayfinding, inclusivity, look and feel, programming, facilities and catering offer in these spaces.

Sustainability remains central to the development of Barbican Renewal plans, and we have commissioned a pre-refurbishment audit to define reuse opportunities for materials across the site. We have also initiated work on plotting design and monitoring required for BREEAM targets (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Methodology).

Following Arup's extensive Inclusivity audit, we continue to explore ways in which we can make our building meaningfully inclusive, and to bring forward work that supports access for all. We plan to set up an Access Advisory Group for the project over the coming months to help us achieve the programme's inclusive design ambitions. We recognise that there are fundamental opportunities to support our Audience Strategy, EDI and People Plans.

## **BUILDING AN ENTERPRISING BUSINESS**

The team had an exciting summer delivering our new Outdoor Cinema partnerships with Mastercard and Culture Mile BID. Building on the success of the new Brand Activation offer, the team have confirmed our third Brand Activation partnership with Apple TV for the new Steve McQueen film Blitz. Apple will host an exhibition connected in the Level G Hub space between 25 October and 22 November. In Philanthropy we're continuing to witness steady growth, welcoming 26 new Patrons so far this year. Our thanks to everyone who continues to generously support the work of the Barbican by making a donation.

## **WORKING IN LINE WITH OUR VALUES**

Our cultural transformation activities span a number of areas with interventions already in play as a consequence of the work around EDI, Zero Tolerance, Network engagement, communication, Ethics and our Learning and Development plans. More recently, we have invited colleagues to "The Barbican Way" workshops, aimed at defining a culture blueprint and the behaviours that bring our values to life. Using Appreciative Inquiry, these workshops engage colleagues in sharing positive experiences and envisioning the ideal future culture, which will guide the development of the Barbican's culture blueprint, behaviors framework, and the broader People, Culture, and Inclusion strategy over the next four years. Creative Collaboration continue to centralise the audience strategy objectives to develop younger and more diverse audiences. The diverse audiences achieved through our intentional and purposeful public programming is building on the historically strong performance in this area through the participatory practice across education, Young Creatives and communities. The department has been developing a framework to measure the impact of our work on these all important new attendees to the Barbican.

Music continued to nurture their partnership with young South London promoter Touching Bass, presenting an evening with emerging soul artist Lynda Dawn in Milton Court, and collaborating on the Jamz Supernova Club Stage event with



Creative Collaborations. We also created an opportunity for the young female Her Ensemble to collaborate with Bille Marten in a memorable Hall show. These projects speak to our Purposeful Programming principles of offering artists creative development, nurturing talent from under-represented backgrounds and building a diverse programme.

#### Ethical and Transparent Business with Appropriate Governance

"Navigating Ethical Practice" training has been delivered to the Ethics Working Group and Management Team to build understanding and confidence in using the new Code of Ethics for decision-making. We received positive feedback and the next step will be to engage the wider Barbican community with the Code, in recognition that all our colleagues have a role to play around ethical sensitivity and understanding.

#### Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

We have launched a diversity monitoring completion campaign across the Centre, encouraging staff to update their diversity information on their City People account. We are seeing the response rates increase week by week and already four directorates have achieved the target of over 75% completion.

A new Parents, Carers and Guardians network for staff has been launched, who will be holding their first large event at the end of October. We have also arranged ongoing coaching sessions for network co-chairs and a coaching programme for all executive sponsors of the networks.

In October, we introduced the Access and Adjustments Action plan at the Town Hall and supported the Disability Network in launching a live document they created, titled '*A Peer Resource: Working at the Barbican with a Disability*' which shares their experiences and offers support to disabled colleagues. Additionally, we secured a quiet room for disabled staff, neurodivergent staff and those with long term conditions.

Anti-Racism training will be delivered in the first week of December 2024. We have also been establishing relationships with organisations across the arts and heritage sector and creating a report on how the Barbican compares to the sector in its audience planning. We are building our reputation in EDI by attending conferences such as the Black History Month conference put on by Core Recruitment and the D

### **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

Strategic implications – The Barbican Strategic Framework aligns and supports the six outcomes of the Corporate Plan.

Financial implications – none new

Resource implications – none new

Legal implications - none

Risk implications – none new

Equalities implications – none new

Climate implications – none new

Security implications – none new

## **Appendices**

None

**[Insert Name]**

[Insert job title and/or department]

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