

SOUTHBANK CENTRE

Press Release

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Contact: southbankcentre@brunswickgroup.com

Press image: [HERE](#)

Misan Harriman appointed Chair of Southbank Centre



Misan Harriman © Camilla Holmstroem

The Board of Trustees of the Southbank Centre, London's iconic multi-arts centre, are pleased to announce the appointment of their new Chair, Misan Harriman. The appointment has been approved by the Secretary of State, Oliver Dowden MP, following the recommendation of the Southbank Centre Board and after consultation with Arts Council England.

Mr Harriman's appointment follows a comprehensive search process for a visionary leader with a deep passion for the potential of multi-arts programming, and a proven commitment to the power of culture in bringing diverse communities together. He succeeds Susan Gilchrist, the first female Chair of the Board, who will reach the end of her board term on 1 July.

Misan is the founder of What We See, a media content, tech and commerce company that inspires millions around the world, and is a highly successful entrepreneur, artist, photographer and social commentator.

The appointment of Board member Luke Mayhew as Deputy Chair, replacing David Kershaw, has also been confirmed. Luke Mayhew has held senior roles in travel and retail, including 13 years as a Director of John Lewis, and has over 15 years' experience as a Non-Exec Director and Trustee in the not-for-profit sector.

Elaine Bedell, CEO of the Southbank Centre, said: *"On behalf of everyone at the Southbank Centre, I'd like to thank our outgoing Chair, Susan Gilchrist, for her immense drive and hard work, her dedication and her passion for the Southbank Centre. I'm delighted that Misan – a truly inspirational leader who's entirely aligned to the vision and values of the Southbank Centre – is following in her footsteps. I look forward to working closely with Misan and Luke, who have the perfect mix of creative and business experience. These appointments come just as we reopen and revitalise our site and, together with support from the Cultural Recovery Fund, mean we can be confident about the next exciting chapter in our history."*

Susan Gilchrist, said: *"The combined knowledge and networks experience of Misan and Luke will bring an exciting new fresh energy to the Southbank Centre, as it enters a new era. I have seen first hand Luke's exceptional business acumen, and his commitment to the Southbank Centre. Misan's understanding of contemporary culture and his obvious passion for the breadth of the Southbank Centre's offer will make them a powerful and dynamic team."*

Misan Harriman, said: *"We have a great opportunity to project all aspects of the Southbank Centre's vision and I am hugely excited to be taking up this new post. Working with Elaine, Luke and the team, I'm looking forward to playing my part in the life of an inspiring institution that I have known almost all my life. I believe the incredible mix of arts voices that Southbank Centre offers has never been more important, and has huge potential as we develop a modern, post-lockdown cultural institution, and explore new ways to innovate and bring arts to our communities."*

Sir Nicholas Serota, Chair of Arts Council England, said: *"Misan Harriman joins Southbank Centre at a time of national recovery, when access to the arts is vital. His proven commitment to innovation and to the diverse voices of the UK will be especially valuable to an iconic institution which was conceived as a beacon for culture of all kinds as the nation emerged from the trauma of world war. This is an exciting appointment for Southbank Centre as it welcomes the return of visitors to its concert halls, exhibition spaces and outdoor programme. I also want to pay tribute to the commitment of the departing Chair, Susan Gilchrist, who has so successfully steered the board over the last five years."*

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NOTE TO EDITORS

About the Southbank Centre's *Summer Reunion*

From 19 May - 30 August, the Southbank Centre presents *Summer Reunion*, a four-month season of art, culture and entertainment providing opportunities for people to reconnect and reunite across the site following the venue's year-long closure. On 30 April the popular weekly street food market returns, alongside riverside pop ups; the Hayward Gallery welcomes visitors back on 19 May for two major exhibitions with social-distancing in place in line with government guidance; the Royal Festival Hall reopens on 28 May alongside the National Poetry Library; and the Queen Elizabeth Hall and Purcell Room reopen later this summer. 15 consecutive weekends of free programming on the Riverside Stage Terrace platform diverse, home-grown talent, while free public art and poetry from the likes of Samson Kambalu, Ilke Gers and Linton Kwesi Johnson bring the outside spaces to life, alongside the popular Queen Elizabeth Hall Roof Garden. The reopening of the Southbank Centre and *Summer Reunion* programme is made possible thanks to the repayable loan from the government's Culture Recovery Fund.

About the Southbank Centre

The Southbank Centre is the UK's largest arts centre occupying a prominent riverside location that sits in the midst of London's most vibrant cultural quarter on the South Bank of the Thames. We exist to present great cultural experiences that bring people together and we achieve this by providing the space for artists to create and present their best work and by creating a place where as many people as possible can come together to experience bold, unusual and eye-opening work. We want to take people out of the everyday, every day. The site has an extraordinary creative and architectural history stretching back to the 1951 Festival of Britain. The Southbank Centre is made up of the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room and Hayward Gallery as well as being home to the National Poetry Library and the Arts Council Collection. It is also home to four Resident Orchestras (London Philharmonic Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra, London Sinfonietta and Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment) and four Associate Orchestras (Aurora Orchestra, BBC Concert Orchestra, Chineke! Orchestra and National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain).



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