

SOUTHBANK CENTRE

Press Release

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Contact: press@southbankcentre.co.uk

Press images: [HERE](#)

Southbank Centre announces new initiatives to support emerging artists

As the Southbank Centre prepares to reopen, it turns its focus once again to supporting emerging talent. The schemes set to be launched include:

- 15 up-and-coming poets will be selected to join the **Southbank Centre New Poets Collective**. Centred around the **National Poetry Library**, the poets will hone their skills and expand their knowledge and confidence with support from tutors, guest poets and with access to the library resources and rarities provided by the NPL. The new scheme is national and will take place annually.
- The launch of a brand **new artist commission** in collaboration with **Counterpoints Arts**. The organisations are looking to commission an artist with lived experience of displacement or migration to develop new live work for public spaces.
- In partnership with **Unlimited**, the Southbank Centre has for the first time co-commissioned an award for a new piece of R&D work aimed at a family audience, or that has a participatory element to it. The commission, awarded to Joseph Wilk to develop *Wheel Trails* supports Unlimited's core aim to embed disabled artists within the cultural sector.



Credit: The Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall, home to the National Poetry Library.

Photo India Roper-Evans

Alexandra Brierley, Director of Creative Learning at the Southbank Centre, said: *"We're thrilled to be in a position to renew our focus on supporting emerging and future talent as we prepare our*

reopening. Since its beginning in 1951, the Southbank Centre has always sought to nurture talent and champion high quality and innovative work. Through our relationships with world class artists and our network of partnerships and resident organisations, we offer opportunities for the next generation of creatives and these new initiatives are just some of the ways in which we're creating opportunities. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all who have made these initiatives possible, including the T.S. Eliot Foundation and our partners Counterpoints Arts and Unlimited."

Southbank Centre New Poets Collective 2021/22

From today the Southbank Centre invites up-and-coming poets aged 22+ to apply to become a part of the New Poets Collective, based at the Southbank Centre's National Poetry Library supported by the Creative Learning team and funded by the T.S. Eliot Foundation. The new national scheme will take place on an annual basis.

As home of literature and spoken word events in the UK, the Southbank Centre's programme is brimming with today's acclaimed authors and award-winning poets. The Royal Festival Hall is home to the National Poetry Library, the world's largest public collection of modern poetry, and the beating heart of the Southbank Centre. The library will reopen on 28 May, shortly after the Royal Festival Hall opens on 21 May.

The New Poets Collective programme will be centred around the National Poetry Library. It will help this group of up to 15 poets hone their skills and expand their knowledge and confidence and will kick-off at the London Literature Festival in October 2021. Over the course of a year, the group will develop creatively while drawing on and contributing to the rich and varied artistic life of the Southbank Centre.

The Collective will be able to explore and be inspired by all the art forms and cross-arts events held at the Royal Festival Hall, the Queen Elizabeth Hall and the Hayward Gallery. The group will also have the chance to respond to the Southbank Centre's own unique archive and history.

Lead tutors and special guest poets, including Bristol's City Poet and multi slam winner **Vanessa Kisuule** and Forward Prize winner **Will Harris** will lead monthly sessions for the group, designed to help the collective develop as versatile creative artists with skills and confidence across a range of genres, from page poetry to performative poetry and spoken word.

The programme will culminate in presentations at the London Literature Festival in October 2022 and a published anthology of new work. It also includes industry insight sessions designed to provide tools for this group of emerging poets to build their writing careers in the years ahead.

Ted Hodgkinson, Head of Literature & Spoken Word at the Southbank Centre, said: *"Poetry has always been at the heart of the Southbank Centre, with the National Poetry Library a source of inspiration for countless poets since opening its doors in 1953. Now thanks to the generous support of the T.S. Eliot Foundation, we're able to go further by creating a rigorous and varied artistic development programme to nurture the next generation. Led by the virtuoso duo of Vanessa Kisuule and Will Harris, and drawing deeply on the National Poetry Library's unique collection as well as the*

Southbank Centre's diverse artistic programme, it promises to be a transformative experience for those selected and to make a major contribution to poetry in the UK and beyond."

A number of free bursary places and travel stipends are available and the Southbank Centre especially welcomes applications from Black, Asian and Ethnically Diverse poets, disabled or neuro-diverse poets, LGBTQ+ and working-class poets. Full details on how to apply can be found [here](#).

Counterpoints Arts and Southbank Centre – Artist Open Call

Long-standing partner of the Southbank Centre, Counterpoints Arts is collaborating once again, this time to commission an artist with lived experience of displacement or migration to develop new live work for public spaces. The new work is to be presented as part of the Southbank Centre outdoor public programme, either in the indoor foyer spaces of the Southbank Centre, or the outdoor areas across its site famously situated next to the River Thames.

The new scheme aims to commission and support artists to re-imagine how we look at public space and human interaction. The artist can be making work in any art form such as music, dance, spoken word, performance, live art, cabaret and comedy, and will receive a development fee and creative producer support from both organisations. The development process begins in June 2021 with the aim to present the work in 2022. To apply, an expression of interest must be submitted by Wednesday 5 May. More information can be found [here](#).

Almir Koldzic, Counterpoints Arts Director, said: *"Now more than ever we need organisations to share resources and ensure that diverse artists get support and opportunities to work. We are delighted that our collaboration with the Southbank Centre has evolved into this exciting and unique opportunity for artists with lived experience of displacement and migration, offering them meaningful support to develop and profile their work widely."*

Unlimited partnership commissioning awards

The Southbank Centre is proud to continue its partnership with **Unlimited**, and for the first time co-commission a partner award.

One of Unlimited's core aims is 'to embed disabled artists within the cultural sector' and working directly with established organisations provides a bridge between artists, their work and crucially the audiences for that work.

The award is one in a series that has been recently announced by Unlimited, and the Southbank Centre's Partner Award welcomed entries from any art form, with a requirement that the artist focuses on public space or outdoor space (non-theatre space). Unlimited and the Southbank Centre are delighted that the commission has been awarded to Joseph Wilk for a project, *Wheel Trails*, and will be available to view publicly on site at the Southbank Centre in 2022.

Ruth Hardie, Senior Producer, the Southbank Centre, said: *"We're excited to be developing our partnership with this co-commission and we're thrilled that it's been awarded to Joseph Wilk to*

develop Wheel Trails. The Southbank Centre is committed to embedding work by disabled artists across its programme, reaching new audiences and shifting perceptions, and the Unlimited commissions and our partnership are a vital part of that work. We're looking forward to supporting Joseph as this work takes shape and develops, and we can't wait to see it come to life in our public spaces in 2022."

For full details on Unlimited's commissions please see their recent announcement [here](#).

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Note to Editors

Supporting Emerging Artists

The Southbank Centre is dedicated to using its position as a premier UK multi-arts centre to support the wider arts and culture sector. Pre-Covid it worked with over 100,000 artists and creatives. The Southbank Centre is committed to developing emerging talent through its artist development partnerships, as well as hosting a wide array of talent development networks and events including *futuretense*, *Friday Lunch and Tonic* and the *Women in Music breakfast*.

The Southbank Centre also provides regular platforms for emerging performers through an array of community and youth groups in residence. For example, partners in developing younger talent include *Tomorrow's Warriors*, *Chineke! Juniors* and *Octavia Poetry Collective*, whilst the *National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain* is an Associate Orchestra and works with teenage musicians of all abilities. Similarly, the *Women in Music* programme provides opportunities for emerging female DJs, conductor's masterclasses, coaching for orchestra and jazz musicians and a women's orchestra.

For further press information please contact:

press@southbankcentre.co.uk

Join the Conversation:

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About the Southbank Centre

The Southbank Centre is the UK's largest arts centre and one of the UK's top five visitor attractions, 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).

About the Southbank Centre – Creative Learning

The Southbank Centre runs a year-round music, literature, visual art and performance programme of participatory learning experiences for children, families, young people and adults. We aim to create arts experiences that are accessible to everyone with more than 36,000 people taking part each year. Our activities

range from in depth project work and resources for schools and teachers to inspire a love of the arts and support creative learning, to programmes and initiatives that develop and nurture diverse young artists, providing them with the skills and knowledge to thrive. We also deliver a significant Arts and Wellbeing programme because we believe that arts and creativity play a vital role in improving people's quality of life and mental health. Our projects respond to both our local community needs, as well as champion on a national level the positive health benefits of the arts.

About the Southbank Centre's National Poetry Library

The Southbank Centre's National Poetry Library is the largest public collection of modern poetry in the world and is housed at the Southbank Centre in London. Founded by the Arts Council in 1953 and opened by poets T.S. Eliot and Herbert Read, the library contains over 200,000 items spanning from 1912 to the present day, extensive resources for poets, academics, schools and families. Hosting exhibitions and events, as well as offering an extensive catalogue and ebook service accessible online, the library is free to use www.nationalpoetrylibrary.org.uk

About Counterpoints Arts

Counterpoints Arts engages with refugee and migrant experiences through arts and cultural programmes. Their mission is to support and produce the arts by and about migrants and refugees, seeking to ensure that their contributions are recognized and welcomed within British arts, history and culture.

Counterpoints Arts is a national organisation working across all art forms, collaborating with a range of people and partners. Refugee Week, which is produced by Counterpoints, is the main national arts Festival celebrating the creativity, resilience and contributions by refugees. This year the theme of Refugee Week is 'We Cannot Walk Alone' which is a call to all of us to reach outside our circles and build connections and solidarities between our different movements, networks and causes.

About Unlimited

Unlimited is an arts commissioning programme that aims to embed work by disabled artists within the UK and international cultural sectors, reach new audiences and shift perceptions of disabled people. Unlimited has been delivered by the disability-led arts organisation Shape Arts and arts-producing organisation Artsadmin since 2013, and is currently funded by Arts Council England, Arts Council of Wales, Creative Scotland and the British Council. Unlimited is transitioning into being an independent organisation from 2022.

Since 2013, Unlimited has awarded more than £4.7 million to over 400 ambitious disabled artists and companies, through commissions, awards and support, which have been seen by or engaged with more than 3.8 million people globally and online, making it the largest supporter of disabled artists worldwide. www.weareunlimited.org.uk

Unlimited Twitter Unlimited Facebook #UnlimitedCommissions

Will Harris biography

Will Harris is a writer of Chinese Indonesian and British heritage, born and based in London. His debut poetry book RENDANG is published by Granta in the UK. It was a Poetry Book Society Choice, shortlisted for the T.S. Eliot Prize and won the Forward Prize for Best First Collection 2020.

Vanessa Kisuule biography

Vanessa Kisuule is a writer and performer based in Bristol. She has won over ten slam titles including The Roundhouse Slam 2014, Hammer and Tongue National Slam 2014 and the Nuoryican Poetry Slam. She has been featured on BBC iPlayer, Radio 1, and Radio 4's Woman's Hour, Blue Peter, Don't Flop and TEDx in Vienna. She has appeared at an array of festivals and was Glastonbury Festival's Resident Poet in 2019. She has been invited to perform all over the world, from Belgium to Brazil to Bangladesh. Her poem on the historic toppling of Edward Colston's statue 'Hollow' gained over 600,000 views on Twitter in three days. She has two poetry collections published by Burning Eye Books and her work was Highly Commended in the Forward Poetry Prize Anthology 2019. She has written for publications including The Guardian, NME and

Lonely Planet and toured her one woman theatre show 'SEXY' in 2017. She is currently the Bristol City Poet for 2018 – 2020.