

artsdepot

Cultural Impact Award 2026

Artistic Commission Call Out

Calling all artists and theatre makers!

artsdepot is excited to launch a commission for the creation of a new/redeveloped performance/theatre piece on the theme of *Light and Flight*, to be staged at artsdepot's Pentland Theatre in Barnet on 22 November 2026.

London Borough of Barnet has been awarded a Cultural Impact Award by the GLA and Barnet Council have awarded funding to artsdepot as the only mid-scale venue in the Borough to commission work as part of a building takeover during the weekend events. The piece will be the culmination of a building takeover at artsdepot and will be performed at least twice on 22 November.

Priority will be given to disabled led companies and/or companies who have a strong record of working with local communities.

About the Cultural Impact Award

In 2024, Barnet won the Mayor of London's Cultural Impact Award – to deliver a year-long programme of arts and heritage projects. With support from Arts Council England and the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Council is building towards a multi-day festival in November 2026. This is a stepping stone to a future Borough of Culture bid – a chance to showcase Barnet's creativity, unite communities, and put Barnet on London's cultural map. 2,000+ residents gave input for the original bid and this builds on that work.

About the building takeover

artsdepot will be running a creative health project alongside this commission which will take its inspiration from the artistic themes of the commissioned work. 5 groups will create work (performance or visual art) to display and perform across the building as part of the event on 22 November. This will be managed by the artsdepot team but we expect close collaboration so that the programme sits together as one.

About the commission

Light and Flight was chosen as a theme that resonated with the communities of Barnet. Light has religious meaning which reaches across the faith communities here, as well as resonating with those of no particular faith group. It provides us with the means of life itself. With a nod to the original Hendon aerodrome based in Barnet, and the possibility of reaching new heights, flight to Barnet which is a borough of Sanctuary also offers up a number of possibilities.

Barnet Council have identified themes that the piece could take inspiration from, including;

- Positivity, ambition, energy, and motion
- Symbolism of light across faiths and cultures
- Stories of migration, innovation, and creative possibility
- Movement - of people, wildlife, and ideas

- Ritual, creativity, and community celebration
- Illuminating Barnet's contemporary heritage and nurturing the next generation of talent

The piece should have a joyous celebratory feel, be accessible for audiences and around 45 minutes to 1 hour long. We are open to different options about how the piece is produced and what it might be. For example, it could be a scripted work or a devised piece, it could be a series of vignettes or one narrative piece that responds to the themes. At this stage, we are interested in the ideas responding to the brief. Ideally, it should be able to be toured after the initial show if appropriate.

Although the full use of Pentland Theatre facilities and space is possible, we do not anticipate that this will be a tech-heavy show so that it is able to be toured after the event, if appropriate.

Pentland Theatre

The Pentland Theatre is a 395 seat theatre with stage dimensions of 9m depth by 13.8 width (not including the forestage). 4 dressings rooms and a backstage workshop are available for use. Further details are available on request.

Audience

This piece is intended for Barnet residents as well as visitors. It should be welcoming and accessible to people of all ages.

The Offer

artsdepot will offer £25,000 commission funds and fundraising support for further funding requirements.

Use of the Pentland Theatre for 1 week (either prior to the show or before and after if there is appetite to perform the show after Sunday 22 November)

Rehearsal space at artsdepot (use of the Creation Space worth £1,800 a week for up to 4 weeks)

Marketing support

Producer support

Success for the overall project

This project is designed to raise the profile of cultural commissioning and the creative industries in Barnet. The professional piece will continue the track record of strongly received productions and collaborations that have been supported by artsdepot.

The development, creation and presentation of the piece is designed to change the perception of Barnet, particularly amongst its young residents. The takeover and creative inspiration from the professional piece will achieve inclusive participation, run by artsdepot, across communities, faith groups and age groups, positioning and recognising that Barnet is a Borough of Sanctuary with a diverse population.

About artsdepot

artsdepot's vision is to be a creative home for everyone. Our mission is to reach all families in Barnet by 2027 and we do this through focusing on artsdepot as a destination, a sector leader and our work across the borough.

artsdepot is a leading multi art form venue and cultural hub in North London. Our venue incorporates a 395 seat main theatre, 150 seat studio theatre, gallery, Creation Space, dance, drama and art studios, café and bar and other public spaces.

Every year, we welcome over 187,000 people to watch, learn or be inspired by our programme of shows and events.

We are host to undergraduate performing arts college London Studio Centre, who have a suite of studios and facilities both on and adjacent to our site. artsdepot is an Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation.

Our values at artsdepot

Creativity	Inclusivity	Collaborative
We believe in creativity. We respond in creative ways and provide the setting for everyone to be creative on their terms	Our work is inclusive. Everyone can access our performances and activities and we reflect our wider community in what we do.	We work collaboratively. Our programme and organisation is better when we work with others to make more than the sum of our parts
Respect		
Our work is underpinned by respect. We work in a way that respects others voices and views and expect the same from others		

How to Apply

If you are interested in applying, please send us:

- A short description of your project idea including how it links to the Cultural Impact Award themes
- Indicative budget
- Evidence of relevant experience and track record
- Roles and biographies of key members of the team for the project

If your idea has already been toured or had an extended run then it will not be considered.

This should be sent in no more than 4 pages of A4 or a 10 minute video or voice note by 26 January 2026 at commissions@artsdepot.co.uk

We will assess all applications and invite those we are interested in to discuss their application further. The award will be made on the basis of ideas presented, track record and adherence to the brief.