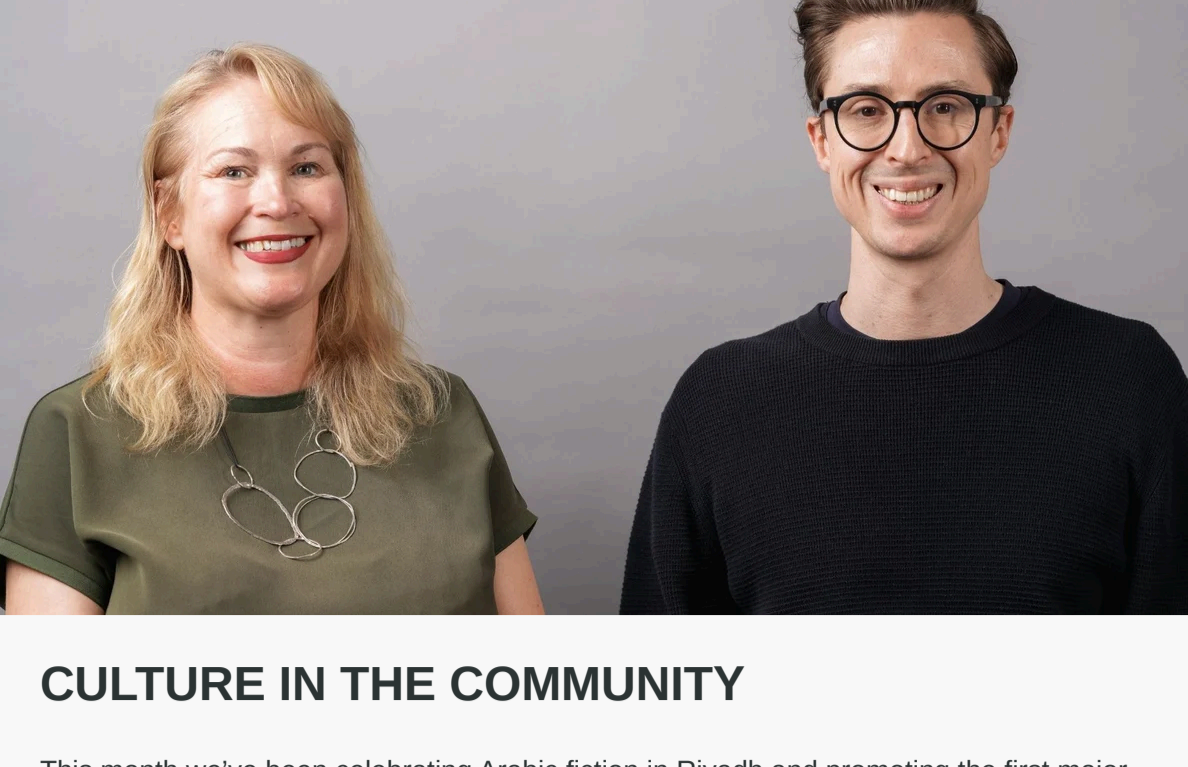


# CULTURE NEWSLETTER

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## CULTURE IN THE COMMUNITY

This month we've been celebrating Arabic fiction in Riyadh and promoting the first major survey of Pia Arke outside of Kalaallit Nunaat and the Nordic countries, but closer to home the theme has been the power of involving communities in creativity and culture. From the comprehensive Creative Assembly initiative at Norwich Theatre to the new strategy at The Albany in Deptford, cultural venues are increasingly embracing the power of communities.

The Albany's creative strategy builds on its role as lead producer for We Are Lewisham, the Mayor's London Borough of Culture. This year's London Borough of Culture, Croydon is celebrating the importance of music to its communities, from its rich history to the vibrant talent of the future.

Right at the end of February we announced something for royal watchers to look forward to, just round the corner from our offices. Princess Diana: Accredited Access Exhibition will be making its London debut at Docksider Vaults following successful runs in Los Angeles and Melbourne.

All the best,

Truda and Matt



## CROYDON EMBRACES MUSICAL HISTORY

This month saw the launch of Rewind: This is Croydon, a new and exciting exhibition at the Museum of Croydon which celebrates the borough's rich musical history. From Samuel Coleridge Taylor to Captain Sensible, and Kirsty MacColl to rapper Nadia Rose, the show explores different music genres from punk, dubstep, grime and drill through objects, images and stories collected within the local community.

The exhibition launch included live music, a set by dubstep pioneer DJ Hatcha, and speeches by the Mayor of Croydon Jason Perry and curator Jen Kavanagh. Coverage secured included two interviews for BBC Radio London with Jen Kavanagh, Desrene Dacres (daughter of Desmond Dekker) and Nadia Rose. Previews ran on *London on the Inside*, *East London Lines*, and *Croydonist* and ITVX ran a 10-minute featurette on the exhibition, featuring interviews with musicians discussing their connection to Croydon and their musical inspirations. *The Londonist* ran 'Five Big Moments from Croydon's Musical History' in their newsletter and *East London Lines* filmed a feature for their website interviewing musicians, guest and the mayor whilst attending the launch party.

As Croydon's year of London Borough of Culture comes to a close this March, an exciting programme of events including a performance from 70's punk band Johnny Moped, Croydon Gospel and the big closing weekend running from 22nd-24th March featuring various events for all ages. Head to [This is Croydon](#) to find out more.



## NORWICH THEATRE LAUNCHES CREATIVE ASSEMBLY

This month, we announced Norwich Theatre's flagship initiative, **Creative Assembly**, a programme designed to drive the creative direction within the organisation. With many arts organisations focusing on strategies to connect with community, Norwich Theatre's programme seeks to become one of the most comprehensive strategies across co-creation and communities.

Norwich Theatre already has a history of programmes where participants really do make tangible change. Creative Assembly will recruit members across four areas: performance, people, place and prosperity, whilst enhancing communities' integration into the life and love of theatre by involving them in the creative direction. It will respond to the needs of the audiences, artists, participants, and visitors, while also expanding its reach to connect with new audiences.

The team has secured coverage about the new strategy in trade publications *Arts Professional*, *The Stage* and *Broadway World*.



## A NEW VISION FOR COMMUNITY ARTS AT THE ALBANY

Earlier in the month, the team announced the new creative strategy behind South East London's leading arts centre, The Albany. New methods deployed by the much-loved centre aims to prioritise and encourage more community engagement than ever. A site that sees over 60,000 people attending its events each year, the Albany is now taking a bold leap in its new strategy, shifting its model to more distributed leadership, sharing decision making with local people and increasing transparency about ways to get involved with the organisation.

The strategy is one way in which The Albany intends to build on its role as Lead Producer for We Are Lewisham, the Mayor's London Borough of Culture 2022, which saw over 400,000 audience members attending over 600 events.

The team has so far secured coverage of the news in *The Stage*, *Arts Industry*, *South London Press* and on the Lewisham Council social media platforms. *Arts Industry* also covered the news in a larger story, featuring an interview with Gavin Barlow, chief executive of The Albany.



## THE SIX BOOKS ON THE INTERNATIONAL PRIZE FOR ARABIC FICTION SHORTLIST ARE...

This month, we worked with our colleagues in MENA to announce the 2024 shortlist for the International Prize for Arabic Fiction (IPAF), comprising titles by two Palestinian authors alongside one each from Egypt, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and Syria. The full list of books and authors is as follows: *Bahbel: Makkah Multiverse 1945-2009* by Raja Alem (former joint winner of the Prize), *Suleima's Ring* by Rima Bali, *The Seventh Heaven of Jerusalem* by Osama Al-Eissa, *A Mask, the Colour of the Sky* by Basim Khandaqi, *Gambling on the Honour of Lady Mitsy* by Ahmed Al-Morsi, and *The Mosaicist* by Eissa Nasir.

Continuing the prize's longstanding practice of celebrating the shortlist in key centres of Arabic literary culture, this year the announcement was made in Riyadh, with a press conference and panel discussion with participation from the 2024 judges: Syrian writer Nabil Suleiman (chair), Palestinian writer, researcher and academic Sonia Nimr, Czech academic František Ondráš, Egyptian critic and journalist Mohamed Shoair, and Sudanese writer and journalist Hammour Ziada.

The shortlist has so far accumulated an overall reach of 26,261 people, with 4,903 people liking, commenting on and sharing the news on the social media platforms X, Instagram and Facebook. Across both English and Arabic media coverage has been secured in trade publications including *The Bookseller* (UK), *BookBrunch* (UK), and *Publishing Perspectives* (USA); and *The National* (UAE), *Arab News* (Saudi Arabia), *Al Khaleej* newspaper (UAE).

You can read more about this year's diverse selection of works [here](#).



## UNVEILING ART ACROSS TIME AND SPACE

This month we have been working hard on a press trip and coverage for John Hansard's newly opened exhibitions *Silences and Stories* and *A Pocket Full of Sand*.

*Silences and Stories* is the first major survey of Danish-Greenlandic artist Pia Arke (1958-2007) outside of Kalaallit Nunaat (Greenland) and the Nordic countries. The exhibition includes photography, film, sculpture, performance, writing and rare archival material amassed from a range of key collections, archives and individuals throughout Scandinavia and Greenland. Questions of nationhood, identity and female representation are highlighted alongside the impact climate change and global economics on indigenous communities throughout the arctic regions.

Exploring colonial histories, geology and ecological deep time, *A Pocket Full of Sand* unearths both historic and contemporary connections between Mauritius and the Isle of Wight. Gayle Chong Kwan connects her research of the islands with political and physical structures of power, labour, leisure, childhood and play.

The team secured a range coverage for the exhibitions including a *State of the Art* feature on Gayle Chong Kwan in *Reader's Digest*, a piece on the growing recognition for Inuit and Sámi art which included Pia Arke's exhibition in *The Art Newspaper*, as well as both exhibitions being featured in *Art Monthly*'s February newsletter and being listed on *The Art Newspaper*'s 2024 guide and *Airmail*.

There is still coverage to come, including an *EMPIRE LINES* podcast episode, focusing on *Silences and Stories*, as well as a review to be published in *Art Monthly*. *Studio International* will also be publishing an interview with Gayle Chong Kwan.

## A YEAR OF ELECTIONS

Make sure you tune into the [latest episode](#) of the Baillie Gifford Read Smart podcast, which is also the first episode of 2024. With more than two billion voters in 50 countries heading to the polls, 2024 is set to be the biggest election year in history. Join host Razia Iqbal, as she delves into the topic with author and journalist, Samantha Subramanian and associate editor of The Financial Times, Stephen Bush. Hear more about how the political landscape is changing, as well as what the health of democracy is looking like.

The podcast is generously supported by the Blavatnik Family Foundation. For more podcasts from The Baillie Gifford Prize, click here. Follow @BGPrize on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [TikTok](#) and [YouTube](#).



## PHOTOGRAPHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON PRINCESS DIANA

Tickets have just gone on sale for an exhibition of iconic photos of the People's Princess, taken by world-famous royal photographers, Anwar Hussein and his sons Samir and Zak. In *Princess Diana: Accredited Access Exhibition*, visitors will hear first-hand accounts of the stories behind moments such as Diana sitting alone outside the Taj Mahal, the unforgettable revenge dress which dared to break royal protocol and the princess's simple handshake with an AIDS patient that showed the world how to be human. Tickets are available to pre-order now at [PrincessDianaLondon](#). Coverage has already appeared in *The Times* and *Daily Express*, with much more to come.

TOGETHER WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE

