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barbican

Barbican announces weekend of free entry to landmark exhibition *The Imaginary Institution of India: Art 1975-1998* as part of a Centre-wide celebration of Indian arts, music and culture
Saturday 26 and Sunday 27 October



L-R: Madhvi Parekh, *Village Opera 2*, 1975 © Madhvi Parekh, courtesy DAG // *Memories of Milk City*, India 1991, Dir. Ruchir Joshi // Anindo and Anubratta Chatterjee credit: Sana Sohoni

As tickets go on sale today for *The Imaginary Institution of India: Art 1975-1998* and its accompanying film programme, *Rewriting the Rules: Pioneering Indian Cinema after 1970*, the Barbican is delighted to announce a special weekend of free entry to this landmark exhibition on **Saturday 26 and Sunday 27 October**. Coinciding with the widely-celebrated **Darbar Festival** of Indian classical music (24 – 27 October), visitors can enjoy Indian arts and culture from across the Barbican's diverse programme on the eve of the Hindu Festival of Lights, Diwali, and the Sikh celebration Bandi Chor Divas.

The Imaginary Institution of India: Art 1975-1998 is the world's first exhibition to explore and chart a period of profound cultural and political change in India. Through the multidisciplinary work of 30 artists and 150 pieces of art, many of which have never been shown in the UK before, visitors across 26 and 27 October can delve into this rich and complex history as the Barbican opens its doors for free access to this blockbuster exhibition. General tickets are on sale now, and booking for this special weekend of free entry will open on Thursday 10 October 2024.

Over the same weekend, in the Cinemas, curator Shai Heredia will introduce a programme of experimental shorts, *This Bit of India*, which explores youth culture, feminism and urbanisation. This programme is part of the wider 3-month season *Rewriting the Rules: Pioneering Indian Cinema after 1970* which has been specially curated by Dr Omar Ahmed in dialogue with the Gallery exhibition. The season spotlights the innovative work of a new wave of filmmakers in the 1970s, 80s and 90s, whose films were socially minded and politically committed.

Meanwhile, the **Darbar Festival** of Indian classical music – now in its 19th year – takes over the Barbican Hall and Milton Court Concert Hall and spills out into the Foyers and public spaces from

24 to 27 October. From emerging talent to world-class icons, audiences will discover an enchanting world of Indian melody and rhythm.

The festival will also reprise its much-loved **pop-up market**, with stalls hosted by a wide range of independent businesses, as well as offering a variety of free concerts, transforming the Barbican into an immersive celebration of Indian culture. Audiences can participate in a selection of wellbeing sessions, from yoga accompanied by live music, to breathwork, sacred sound baths and mantra and guided meditation sessions.

Full listings information available below:

Visual Arts

[The Imaginary Institution of India: Art 1975-1998](#)

5 October 2024 – 5 January 2025

Barbican Art Gallery

The world's first exhibition to explore and chart a period of significant cultural and political change in India through the work of 30 artists. Featuring nearly 150 works of art across painting, sculpture, photography, installation and film, this landmark group show examines the ways in which Indian artists have distilled significant episodes of the late 20th century and reflected intimate moments of life during this time. A specially curated film season, *Rewriting the Rules: Pioneering Indian Cinema after 1970*, will run alongside the exhibition.

[Open Gallery: A Free Art Gallery Weekend](#)

Saturday 26 – Sunday 27 October 2024

Barbican Art Gallery

During this special weekend, we will open the doors to our blockbuster exhibition *The Imaginary Institution of India: Art 1975 – 1998* with free exhibition entry. Tickets for this weekend will be released on Thursday 10 October.

Cinema

[Rewriting the Rules: Pioneering Indian Cinema after 1970](#)

3 October – 12 December 2024

Barbican Cinema

The impact of Indian Parallel Cinema, one of South Asia's first post-colonial film movements, is writ large across *Rewriting the Rules: Pioneering Indian Cinema after 1970*, a three-month long cinema season featuring the innovative work of a new wave of filmmakers in the 1970s, 80s and 90s, whose films were socially minded and politically committed. The documentary, narrative and experimental works (including many rarities) showcased in *Rewriting the Rules* are made by filmmakers who were not afraid to make bold aesthetic choices, often opting for a creative hybridity and experimentation that fused together aspects of Indian art and culture. Their works also gave agency to themes, narratives and groups who had often been rendered invisible or marginalised on screen, including women, Muslims, the lower castes, and LGBTQ people.

[This Bit of India 15* + Introduction](#)

Saturday 26 October, 4pm

Cinema 3

A programme of experimental films that map the post-colonial experience through the artist's lens. Exploring youth culture, feminism and urbanisation, the line-up includes the unconventional city film *Memories of Milk City* (Ruchir Joshi, 1991), and a documentary profile of a woman activist, *Sudeshha* (Yugantar Film Collective, 1983), made by an Indian feminist film collective. Programme curated and introduced by curator Shai Heredia.

This Bit of That India

India 1972, Dir. SNS Sastry, 20 min, English

This Bit Of That India is a layered reflection on youth culture, diversity, progress, education, technology and sexuality. The film juxtaposes documentary moments that celebrate individual freedom with a theatrical performance of Federico Garcia Lorca's *The House of Bernarda Alba*, as a metaphor for repression and conformity.

Memory: Record/Erase

India 1996, Dir. Nalini Malani, 10 min

Memory: Record/Erase is pioneering video artist, Nalini Malani's first use of stop-motion animation, a technique that now characterises her practice. Thematically, the animation explores the construction and layering of memory suggested in the film's title, while addressing the social status and roles of women.

Memories of Milk City

India 1991, Dir. Ruchir Joshi, 13 min, English, Bengali & Hindi with English subtitles

A fourteen-minute cine-poem, *Memories of Milk City* catches Ahmedabad at a time of transition, peeling away layers of textures, gestures and sounds, tripping over a culture and a language at war with themselves.

Sudeshha

India 1983, Dir. Yugantar Film Collective, 34 min, Hindi and Garhwali with English subtitles

Sudeshha tells the story of a woman who is a village activist in the Chipko Forest Conservation Movement in the foothills of the Himalayas. In this area, people depend entirely on the forest for their daily needs of firewood, food, and water. But the forests have been destroyed by powerful timber traders—and along with the forest, the livelihood of the people has been threatened.

Music

[Darbar Festival 2024](#)

Thursday 24 – Sunday 27 October 2024

Now in its 19th year, Darbar Festival returns with a magical mix of emerging raw young talent, master performers making their UK debut performances as well as world class legends. Set up in 2005 in memory of Gurmit Singh Ji Virdee, an inspirational tabla player and teacher, Darbar

Festival continues to be the perfect place to discover, in his legacy, the enchanting world of Indian classical music.

Following major concerts on **24 October** ([Dilshad Khan + Jayanthi Kumaresh, 18:30, Milton Court Concert Hall](#)) and **25 October** ([Pandit Anindo and Anubrata Chatterjee, 13:00, Milton Court Concert Hall](#); [Jasdeep Singh Degun + Shalmalee Joshi, 18:30, Milton Court Concert Hall](#)) the Darbar Festival continues across the weekend of 26 and 27 October, outlined in the listings below.

[To find out more about the full programme, click here.](#)

Darbar Festival – Weekend Events

[Yogabliss to Live Music](#)

Saturday 26 – Sunday 27 October 2024, 10am

Frobisher Rooms

This 60-minute hatha yoga class is designed to relax, de-stress, and rejuvenate on every level. Slower than a dynamic practice but still challenging, these sessions emphasise deep stretches, alignment, conscious breathing, and individual attention. The class is accompanied by live Indian classical music. Produced by Darbar in association with the Barbican.

[Jayanthi Kumaresh: Veena Unwrapped](#)

Saturday 26 October 2024, 12pm

Frobisher Auditorium 1

Jayanthi Kumaresh is a world-class virtuoso of the Saraswati veena, who here unravels the nuances of this majestic instrument in a captivating lecture demonstration. The hour-long talk is accompanied by a 30-minute Q&A with the audience. Produced by Darbar in association with the Barbican

[Breathwork by Davel Patel](#)

Saturday 26—Sunday 27 October 2024, 1pm

Frobisher Rooms

Davel Patel is a spirited breathologist, certified as a trauma-informed coach and passionate about the healing power of the breath. This session reveals how six breaths per minute can reduce stress and anxiety, create a better mind-body balance and potentially tap into higher states of consciousness. Produced by Darbar in association with the Barbican.

[Ashwini Bhide-Deshpande: Khayal Unwrapped](#)

Saturday 26 October 2024, 3pm

Frobisher Auditorium 1

Ashwini Bhide-Deshpande is a distinguished maestra renowned for her mastery of the khayal tradition. The word 'khayal' itself means 'imagination' or 'thought' in Urdu, reflecting the improvisatory nature of this form. The hour talk accompanies a 30-minute Q&A with the audience. Produced by Darbar in association with the Barbican.

[Sacred Sound Bath with Aatma Holistic](#)

Saturday 26 – Sunday 27 October 2024, 4pm

Frobisher Rooms

Gong baths are renowned for their numerous benefits, including fostering an inner stillness where deep healing can occur. These sound sessions help to strengthen the nervous system, balance the chakras, and increase energy and vitality, all while alleviating stress. Produced by Darbar in association with the Barbican.

Akash Parekar + Himmet Bahra

Saturday 26 October 2024, 5pm

Level G

This free family-friendly event features the extraordinary talents of Akash Parekar on sitar and Himmet Bahra on tabla, promising an afternoon of enchanting melodies and rhythmic brilliance. Produced by Darbar in association with the Barbican.

Amaan Ali Bangash + Dr L Subramaniam with Ambi Subramaniam

Saturday 26 October 2024, 6.30pm

Barbican Hall

Amaan Ali Bangash (sarod) makes his UK solo debut with ragas from his micro-bending tradition with tabla accompaniment by Anubrata Chatterjee. In the second half, India's foremost violinist, composer and conductor Dr L Subramaniam makes his Darbar Festival debut with his son Ambi and champions of contemporary Carnatic percussion. Produced by Darbar in partnership with the Barbican.

Dhrupad: Kirit Singh and Jasdeep Singh

Saturday 26 October 2024, 7pm

Frobisher Auditorium 1

Kirit Singh's voice carries the weight of centuries-old practices, offering a meditative journey through intricate ragas. Accompanying him is the brilliant Jasdeep Singh on the jori, known for its deep, resonant tones, enhancing the emotive power of the music. Produced by Darbar in partnership with the Barbican.

Raga Wellbeing with Jason Kalidas

Saturday 26 October 2024, 7pm

Frobisher Rooms

Jason Kalidas, a renowned flautist, demonstrates how different ragas can create a harmonious balance within using live tanpuras, a drone instrument which forms the DNA of Indian classical music. Produced by Darbar in partnership with the Barbican.

Genius of Aruna Sairam

Sunday 27 October 2024, 11am

Barbican Hall

Aruna Sairam performs music by Oottukkadu Venkata Kavi (1700–1765), Dikshitar (1775–1835), Shastri (1762–1827) and Tyāgarāja (1767–1847) – in turn exuberant, intense, serene and dramatic. Produced by Darbar in partnership with the Barbican.

Amaan Ali Bangash: Sarod Unwrapped

Sunday 27 October 2024, 12pm

Frobisher Auditorium 1

In this lecture demonstration, Amaan Ali Bangash will delve into the rich history and tradition of the sarod, offering insights into this revered Indian classical instrument and the Bangash legacy. The hour talk accompanies a 30-minute Q&A with the audience. Produced by Darbar in partnership with the Barbican.

Dr L Subramaniam: East West Composition Unwrapped

Sunday 27 October 2024, 3pm

Frobisher Auditorium 1

Virtuoso violinist and composer Dr Subramaniam's illustrious career spans decades and continents. In this exclusive session, he delves into the essence of Indian classical music. The hour talk accompanies a 30-minute Q&A with the audience. Produced by Darbar in partnership with the Barbican.

Jason Kalidas + Harkiret Bahra

Sunday 27 October 2024, 3.30pm

Level G

Jason Kalidas, a virtuoso flautist, captivates audiences with his expressive and evocative performances. Accompanying him is Harkiret Bahra, whose expert tabla playing adds a vibrant and rhythmic foundation to the music. Produced by Darbar in partnership with the Barbican.

Ashwini Bhide-Deshpande + Pandit Kushal Das

Sunday 27 October 2024, 5pm

Barbican Hall

Pandit Kushal Das returns to Darbar Festival with his spellbinding signature sitar sound. In this concert he presents his music with the legendary tabla genius Pandit Anindo Chatterjee. India's foremost female vocalist, Deshpande, closes the final concert of the festival. Produced by Darbar in partnership with the Barbican.

Music, Mantra and Guided Meditation with Qi-Rattan

Sunday 27 October 2024, 7pm

Frobisher Auditorium 1

Jagdeep Kaur combines the sacred power of mantras with guided meditation set to the enchanting backdrop of live music. Kaur's melodic guitar strings intertwine seamlessly with Amritpal Singh's rhythmic tabla grooves, creating a harmonious blend that soothes the soul. Produced by Darbar in partnership with the Barbican.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

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Barbican Press Room

All Barbican Centre press releases, news announcements and the Communication team's contact details are listed on our website at <https://www.barbican.org.uk/our-story/press-room/>

Press Tickets

All press tickets will need to be booked 48 hours in advance by contacting a member of the Barbican's Communications team on press@barbican.org.uk. Our inbox is monitored Monday to Friday, 10am-6pm. Please let us know if you have any access requirements.

About the Barbican

The Barbican is a catalyst for creativity, sparking possibilities for artists, audiences, and communities. We showcase the most exciting art from around the world, pushing traditional artistic boundaries to entertain and inspire millions of people, create connections, provoke debate, and reflect the world we live in.

We are an international arts and events centre rooted firmly in our own neighbourhood, collaborating with local communities and putting the City of London on the map as a destination for everybody. Central to our purpose is supporting emerging talent and shaping opportunities that will accelerate the next generation of creatives.

As a not-for-profit, we rely on the generosity of individuals and organisations, including our principal funder the City of London Corporation. Every ticket purchased, donation made, and pound earned supports our arts and learning programme and enables the widest possible range of people to experience the joy of the arts.

Opened in 1982, the Barbican is a unique and audacious building, recognised globally as an architectural icon. As well as our theatres, galleries, concert halls and cinemas, we have a large conservatory with over 1,500 species of plants and trees, a library, conference facilities, public and community spaces, restaurants, bars, and a picturesque lakeside oasis.

We're proud to be the home of the [London Symphony Orchestra](#), and a London base of the [Royal Shakespeare Company](#). We regularly co-commission, produce and showcase the work of our other associates and partners including the [Academy of Ancient Music](#), [the BBC Symphony Orchestra](#), [Boy Blue](#), [Britten Sinfonia](#), [Cheek by Jowl](#), [Darbar Festival](#), [Doc'n Roll Film Festival](#), [Drum Works](#), [EFG London Jazz Festival](#), [London Palestine Film Festival](#), [Serious](#), and [Trafalgar Theatre Productions](#).

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