

Babylon ARTS

Recruitment Pack: Director

Welcome

Hello and welcome to Babylon Arts. Thank you for your interest in becoming our new Director.

East Cambridgeshire is an inspiring, diverse and creative place, and is culturally, socially, environmentally and economically ambitious. Babylon Arts plays an important role in maintaining and developing East Cambridgeshire's cultural identity. We support creative and cultural engagement, artistic and creative practice development, and community voice, promoting the cultural values of communities through strong partnerships, creative practices and innovation.

Among our strengths is our approach to creative practice development, including supporting young people into creative careers. Our inclusive community-based cultural engagement is underpinned by consulting, co-creating and collaborating with partners and communities.

Through development opportunities and working alongside arts professionals, we support artists and creative practitioners who are currently underrepresented in the sector. In turn, these artists and creative practitioners support us in our ambition to engage more people in creativity and culture through our gallery, independent cinema and cultural work in the community. Conceived in 2020, Babylon Young Curators is a movement addressing the lack of diversity and opportunity in the creative and cultural industries.

Babylon Arts has experienced a lot of change and challenge and I'm excited for what the future brings. Our plan is to recruit a Director to work with me alongside our trustees and talented team to drive the strategic direction of the organisation into financial resilience towards artistic and financial sustainability. The work we do is vital and we're looking for a cultural leader who will collaborate to make Babylon Arts thrive.

We're particularly interested in hearing from people with artistic vision, bold ambition and entrepreneurial flair. Working at Babylon Arts is something special. It's a place with care, challenge and creative potential. I'd be more than happy to talk to you more about the role, our work and culture, and the important role the new Director will play in exploring the relationship between our values and our capacity to adapt, flex and realise change. Get in touch and we can arrange an informal chat.

It's an exciting time to join the Babylon Arts team. We hope you think so too.

Linda McCord, Chair of Trustees

About us

Babylon Arts is a combined-arts organisation based in East Cambridgeshire. Established in 1995 by local residents to enhance the arts in the area, we are now a registered charity and limited company. Operating from the Babylon Gallery in Ely, we collaborate with cultural organisations, local authorities, educational institutions, and communities across Cambridgeshire and the Fens.

Our Vision

Our vision is to be the creative hub of the Fens. We support local artists in creating and showcasing their work while engaging local communities in shaping cultural activities. We strive to connect communities and foster a sense of belonging through creativity, culture and the arts.

Our Objectives

We aim to promote and encourage the arts in various forms, including drama, dance, music, visual art, literature, and film, to enhance education and public understanding in the Eastern region of England. Our work is dedicated to delivering social, cultural, environmental and economic benefits for communities and places.

Our Aims

1. Create and present inspiring arts and culture with and for the people of East Cambridgeshire, Fenland, and Cambridgeshire.
2. Build creative networks and partnerships to expand arts and culture across the Fens and beyond.
3. Support early and mid-career artists in developing their skills and sustaining creative careers.
4. Ensure our work has a lasting social, cultural, and economic impact, while also being environmentally responsible and financially sustainable.

Our Values

- **Resourceful:** We seek new partnerships and opportunities to help arts and creativity thrive.
- **Passionate:** We care deeply about our communities and are committed to creating exciting creative opportunities.
- **Curious:** We are open to new ideas and ways of working, taking risks to reach new audiences.
- **Inclusive:** We value diversity, promote equality, and provide a supportive environment for everyone involved in the arts.

What we do

- **Creative Spaces:** We host exhibitions and events at Babylon Gallery and offer film and live performances at Babylon Cinema. We work with partners to produce new art and cultural experiences, support artist development, and bring cultural activities to outdoor and community settings.
- **Creative Communities:** We collaborate with local communities to enhance the cultural offer in their areas, inspired by local people and places. Our partnerships with Wicken Fen and The Library Presents are good examples.
- **Creative Learning:** We provide resources like Creative Briefs and The Culture Catalogue to help young people and schools develop creative skills and explore careers in the arts.
- **MarketPlace:** Babylon Arts is the lead organisation for MarketPlace, an action research and audience development project, where local people decide the creative and cultural activity that happens in Fenland and West Suffolk.

Our future

In 2025, Babylon Arts will celebrate 30 years of arts and creative development in East Cambridgeshire and beyond. We excel in audience engagement and collaboration, aligning resources to help local communities live the creative lives they value.

Looking ahead, we plan to:

- Develop a business model that reinvests profits into our charitable activities, focusing on supporting local artists through our gallery in Ely.
- By 2027, establish a sustainable gallery and creative hub in Ely, offering studio spaces, exhibitions, and events.
- By 2034, co-create an arts centre in Ely that reflects the identity of the Fens, driven by community and sustainable approaches.

Who we're looking for

We are seeking a cultural leader with a strong vision, entrepreneurial flair, and creative ability to guide our organisation toward financial stability and sustainable growth. The ideal candidate will have strong leadership skills, experience in business and financial planning, fundraising, and managing a community-focused arts organisation. An understanding of place-based cultural work is essential. You thrive on the challenge of working with a small team to achieve big goals and are excited by the opportunity to lead our organisation into a dynamic and sustainable future.

Role Description and Person Specification

Position: Director

Hours: Full-time, 37.5 hours per week

Location: Babylon Gallery, Waterside, Ely CB7 4AU

Salary: £40,000

Benefits: 25 days holiday, workplace pension

Contract: Permanent

Reports to: Babylon Arts Board of Trustees

Direct Reports: General Manager (0.8 FTE), Programme Manager (26 hours/week)

Overview

As Director of Babylon Arts, you will lead our small team in delivering our mission to develop creativity and connect communities with arts and culture. You will be responsible for strategic planning, financial sustainability, programme development, and building partnerships. This role requires strong leadership, business acumen, a passion for the arts, and a commitment to community engagement.

Principle Accountabilities

Creative Vision and Bold Ambition

1. **Maximize commercial success:** Optimize the use of the gallery space and enhance the retail and customer experience offer to ensure the gallery's commercial success.
2. **Elevate the creative and artistic programme:** Curate and develop a robust programme of high-quality visual arts and film exhibitions, workshops, and events that resonate with our creative vision.
3. **Uphold excellence and inclusivity:** Ensure that our exhibitions align with best practices, reflecting the highest standards of artistic quality, diversity, accessibility, and environmental responsibility.
4. **Improve shop retail viability:** Collaborate with the General Manager to identify and pursue opportunities that improve the commercial viability of the Babylon Arts Shop.

Key Responsibilities

Leadership and Strategy

- Collaborate with the Board to create and implement strategic plans that ensure financial sustainability, innovative programming, and audience growth.
- Attend and contribute to Board meetings, providing high-quality reports and insights.
- Support the Board in governance, including succession planning with a focus on diversity.
- Deliver our role as lead partner for the MarketPlace Creative People and Places programme, working with partners to ensure its sustainability.

Staff Management and Culture

- Manage and evaluate staff performance, ensuring clear roles, regular feedback, and a supportive work environment.
- Foster a positive, collaborative culture that aligns with our values and mission.

Fundraising and Finance

- Develop and execute a diverse fundraising strategy, including grants, earned income, sponsorships, and donations.
- Manage budgets and financial reports, ensuring transparency and accuracy.
- Prepare and present financial and operational reports to the Board and funders.

Creative Partnership Development

- Shape and implement the Artistic Policy in collaboration with stakeholders.
- Oversee community decision making in visual arts, film, and live programming.
- Build and maintain strategic partnerships with local authorities, funders, and cultural organisations.
- Represent Babylon Arts at public events and conferences.

Place-Based Initiatives

- Lead place-based projects that enhance community well-being and creativity.
- Work with partners and communities to develop sustainable cultural programmes.
- Evaluate and report on the impact of these initiatives.

General Duties

- Ensure compliance with organisational policies, including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, and Data Protection.
- Oversee marketing, communications, and audience development strategies.
- Maintain confidentiality and professional conduct.
- Undertake training and other duties as required.

Person Specification

Essential:

- Experience of working in a management or leadership role in an arts, cultural or creative organisation.
- Strong creative or socially entrepreneurial skills in developing new business models with the ability to create and implement a sustainable business model.
- Strong knowledge and experience in visual, performing arts and or combined arts, with a focus on participatory arts or interactive/immersive arts and culture.
- Proven experience in strategic planning, business modelling, and place-based initiatives.
- Strategic planning in marketing, communications, audience development and or evaluation.
- A broad knowledge of public and private funding for the arts, arts policy and funding systems and expertise in fundraising, including bid writing and sponsorship development.
- Ability to manage budgets and financial reporting at a senior level.
- Demonstrable experience in initiating, managing and sustaining effective partnerships with a diverse range of cross sector organisations and individuals.
- Strong leadership skills with experience in driving values-led organisational culture and ability to inspire and motivate a team.
- Excellent collaborative, communication, listening, and decision-making skills.
- Good networking, negotiation and advocacy skills.
- Highly motivated, organised, and IT literate.

Desirable:

- Experience in creative or social enterprise development, especially in community-based models.
- Experience and skills working with and reporting to voluntary Board of Trustees.
- Knowledge of East Cambridgeshire, Fenland, and Cambridgeshire and regional network in the arts sector.
- Experience in property and facilities management.
- Understanding of relevant policy legislation.

How to apply

To apply for this position please submit your CV together with a cover letter that sets out:

1. Why you are interested in this role and why now?
2. How your skills, knowledge and experience meet the criteria for this post.

Your cover letter should not exceed any more than 2 sides of A4.

You will also be asked to fill in an Equal Opportunities Form which we will email to you when we acknowledge your application. This form is for monitoring purposes only and is not treated as part of your application.

Your application should be sent to Karen Birch, Interim Chief Executive Officer using the email karen@babylonarts.org.uk. Please inform us if you have any particular access requirements or need us to make any reasonable adjustments.

If you have any questions or would like to have an informal conversation before making an application, please email Karen Birch karen@babylonarts.org.uk to arrange a call with the Chair of Trustees, Linda McCord.

Timeline

The closing date for applications is Monday 23 September at 12 noon. Interviews will take place on 7 October in person in Ely.

Additional Information

- Evening and weekend work required; TOIL system in place.
- Occasional regional travel; expenses reimbursed.
- Role subject to enhanced DBS disclosure.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Babylon Arts is committed to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion. However you identify, we actively celebrate the knowledge, experience and talents each person brings. We are particularly interested to hear from applicants underrepresented in the creative and cultural industries who help us be more reflective of our local communities.

We look forward to hearing from you.