

CHAIR RECRUITMENT PACK 2026

Welcome from the Chair



I can genuinely say that being the Chair of Baltic these past eight years has been an incredibly rewarding experience.

Despite being a Southerner, I have always enjoyed a warm Geordie welcome. I never leave the place without a smile on my face despite some of the challenges of the past few years which included the pandemic, falling public subsidies and an aging building. All these challenges are born by Sarah and the staff with calm, humour and a belief that they will find a creative solution which they always do.

Internationally, Baltic is recognised as a leading contemporary art institution where the best contemporary artists can exhibit at scale and for the people of the North East, it is a much-loved free public space where everyone is welcome. It is a very special place and I feel proud to have been part of it.

I sincerely believe that next few years will provide exciting opportunities for the gallery to expand the work it does with families and young people with plans to refurbish the ground floor and to grow the Endowment Fund launched last year with Sting's support.

We are now seeking to welcome a new Chair to our board. We are looking for someone to bring applicable skills and experience, of course, but who also shares our mission and core values. If you would like to know more, we would love to hear from you.

Kirsty Lang, Chair of Trustees

Welcome from the CEO

Baltic is one of the UK's leading contemporary art institutions and the country's largest dedicated contemporary art centre. Since opening in 2002, we have welcomed more than ten million visitors, providing free opportunities to experience contemporary art, learning and cultural life.

Contemporary art remains central to our purpose, but Baltic is also an evolving civic space where people gather, connect, learn and imagine new possibilities. Through our programmes and partnerships, we build creativity, confidence, belonging and opportunity across Gateshead, the North East and beyond.

This is a decisive moment for Baltic. We are deepening community participation, supporting artistic development, growing strategic partnerships and investing in our long-term future through examples including our Learning Review, Our Shared Futures programme, Endowment Fund and 25th Anniversary.

Working closely with the CEO, Board and executive team, our new Chair will help lead this next phase—protecting artistic ambition while strengthening Baltic's civic role, financial resilience and regional impact. They will provide strategic leadership, champion our mission and strengthen relationships with partners and advocates.

We are seeking someone who believes in contemporary art's power to enrich lives, strengthen communities and contribute to a more creative, connected and just society. We would be delighted to hear from you.

Sarah Munro MBE
Director/CEO

"Baltic are seeking a nationally respected civic champion who can help position Baltic as one of the UK's most important cultural and civic institutions, building philanthropic support, public influence and social impact through contemporary art."








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Our Mission
Our Vision



Mission

Our mission is to create greater understanding of the world through outstanding,experimental and inspiring contemporary art which has power, relevance and meaning for individuals and communities.

Vision

To be a leading contemporary art institution and civic space where artists, young people, communities and partners come together to understand the world, imagine new futures and shape a more creative, connected and just North East.

Through ambitious contemporary art, learning, participation and civic engagement, Baltic will champion artists, support young citizens, widen access to cultural life and create opportunities for people to build confidence, belonging, skills, agency and shared responsibility.

Our Values



We value listening
A listening organisation is a relevant organisation. We create positive impact by understanding and responding to the needs and motivations of our audiences and communities.

We value accountability
An accountable organisation is transparent and rigorous. We build trust by behaving with honesty and integrity.

We value courage
A courageous organisation is bold and takes risks. We platform progressive and thought-provoking ideas and practices.

We value equity
An equitable organisation values equality,inclusion and diversity. We champion equity and challenge racism and prejudice.

We value sustainability
A sustainable organisation is resourceful and environmentally conscious.

Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art is one of the UK's leading cultural institutions and the largest dedicated contemporary art centre and civic space in the country.

Since opening in 2002, Baltic has welcomed more than 10 million visitors and provides free access to contemporary art, learning, participation, artist development and civic engagement.

Contemporary art remains at the heart of Baltic's purpose, but the role of cultural institutions is evolving. Alongside artistic excellence, Baltic increasingly acts as civic infrastructure: a place where people gather, connect, reflect, learn, imagine and participate. Through exhibitions, learning, public programmes, partnerships and civic engagement, Baltic helps build understanding, confidence, belonging and opportunity across Gateshead and the wider North East. We see artists as vital contributors to society: creators, researchers, collaborators and connectors who help people understand the world, work across difference and imagine more just and creative shared futures.



Finance, Funding and Development



In 2025 we welcomed our 10 millionth visitor which was a cause for celebration. We coincided this milestone by looking to the future and launching Baltic's first Endowment Fund. The Endowment Fund aims to raise 10 million by 2030 to support Creative Futures in Perpetuity.

Baltic is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation proudly contributing to ACE's 'Let's Create' Mission. Baltic receives £3.241M/annum from ACE, which includes Baltic's first significant uplift in funding in many years.

In addition to Arts Council England funding, Baltic currently continues to receive financial support from Gateshead Council and from Northumbria University. The remainder of the overall running costs is met from a number of other fundraising, trading and other income generating activities.

Finance, Funding and Development



Over the past decade, Baltic has successfully navigated a sustained period of economic uncertainty through disciplined financial management, diversified income generation and careful stewardship of its resources. Despite rising costs, pressure on discretionary spending and a challenging fundraising environment, the organisation has maintained strong liquidity, robust net current assets and continued investment in our building, people, communities and artistic programmes. This resilience reflects Baltic's ability to adapt proactively to changing conditions while preserving its public value, artistic ambition and long-term financial stability.

Our Workforce



Baltic employs around 90 members of staff (69 FTE) and the annual payroll cost is around £3M.

Baltic staff are organised into eight departments;

- Visitor Experience & Crew
- Building Services
- Communications
- Learning
- Programming
- Development & Enterprise
- People and Culture
- Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Directorate

The Directorate team;

- Sarah Munro, CEO/Artistic Director
- Hayley Duff, COO
- Graham Easterlow, CCO/Director of Development and Enterprise

Baltic's Board, Committees and CEO are supported by Leigh Mylchreest, Executive Assistant.

Our Creative Programme

Baltic delivers an ambitious year-round programme of exhibitions, artist commissions, learning activity, public events and civic partnerships. As a leading producer of contemporary visual art, we champion artists at all stages of their careers and create opportunities for people to encounter ideas that help us understand the world and imagine new futures.

Our work extends beyond the gallery. Through participatory projects, schools programmes, community collaborations and partnerships across Gateshead and the wider North East, we create routes for children, young people, families, artists, communities and partners to contribute, learn, connect and take part in cultural life.

We believe artists play a vital civic role as makers, researchers, storytellers, collaborators and connectors. Through exhibitions, public programmes, learning and civic engagement, Baltic supports creative confidence, wellbeing, skills, belonging, youth voice and shared responsibility, contributing to a more creative, connected and just region.



About the Board

Baltic is a charitable company limited by guarantee, registered with the Charity Commission and Companies House. We are governed by a Board of Trustees who are responsible for the strategic direction, financial health and legal compliance of the organisation.

Our board operates under the following principles of public life defined by the Nolan Committee;

- Selflessness
- Integrity
- Objectivity
- Accountability
- Openness
- Honesty
- Leadership

- Baltic currently has 11 Trustees (with two new Trustees starting in the Autumn)with a broad range of skills and experience.
- Board Meetings are held online and in-person to accommodate members that don't live locally to Baltic.
- Baltic also has four sub-committees and working groups, although the Chair is not expected to attend these;
    - Finance & Audit Committee
    - Trading Board
    - Fundraising Committee
    - Search Committee
- We invest in Trustee development, as a member of the Association of Chairs our Trustees can access up to date information and attend essential training regularly.

Our Trustees; Kirsty Lang, (Chair - Journalist and Broadcaster), Nicola Catterall (Chartered Accountant),Jasmina Cibic (Artist), Anthony Donaldson (Senior Economist), Tina Gray(Senior Leader,Mayborn Organisation),Tania Love,(Architect at Faulkner Browns), Carsten Staehr(Former CEO of Cintra HR& Payroll, Restaurant Owner and Entrepreneur), Professor Dame Janet Beer (Vice-Chair,British Academic and former Vice-Chancellor of University of Liverpool), Professor Kieran Fernandes (Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor Durham University), Dr. Val Barron (Lead Development Worker, Communities Together Durham), Suzie Thompson (Director, Development & Alumni, Manchester University)

Commitments



- Attendance at Trust Board Meetings (four times per year – online and in-person).
- Time commitment: an average of four working hours per week (this is including Board Meetings).
- Attendance at Extraordinary Meetings as and when required.
- Attendance at events on behalf of Baltic as and when required, including around three exhibition previews per year.
- Commitment to at least a three-year term (renewable subject to Board approval for a further three years max).

The Role of the Chair

The Chair leads the board's approach to trustee recruitment and development, ensuring the board has the skills and diversity it needs to govern effectively. The Chair also leads the annual appraisal of the CEO.

The Chair is primarily the point of contact between the board and the executive and plays a central role in ensuring that Baltic is well governed, financially sustainable and true to its mission.

The Trust is looking for an individual who has professional and personal networks to help the executive to access potential supporters and has the skills and interests to help us identify and exploit new opportunities, as well as the ability to support the CEO and senior leadership team to take Baltic to the next stage of its development.

The new Chair will bring strategic leadership, strong communication and influencing skills, sound judgement and a commitment to Baltic's mission and values. They will help the organisation navigate a changing cultural landscape, champion artistic excellence and public value, support long-term financial resilience and strengthen relationships with partners, funders, communities and policymakers regionally and nationally.



Key Responsibilities



The Chair leads the board in setting and reviewing Baltic's strategic direction, ensuring that decisions are made in the best interests of the charity and those it serves.

The Chair facilitates effective board meetings, encourages constructive challenge and open debate, and ensures that the board functions as a cohesive and high-performing body whilst ensuring that the Trustees understand their responsibilities.

Working closely with the CEO, the Chair provides a confidential sounding board on significant decisions, supports the executive team , and acts as an ambassador for Baltic with funders, partners, and the wider cultural sector.

Support Baltic's contribution to cultural participation, learning, inclusion, wellbeing and regional growth through advocacy, partnership development and external representation.

The Charity Commission's guidance for trustees, including CC3 (The Essential Trustee), sets out the legal duties and responsibilities that apply to all trustees of registered charities in England and Wales. The guidance is available at gov.uk/guidance/charity-trustee-whats-involved

Skills







Qualities and Criteria

- Proven experience in a strategic and forward-thinking role;
- Excellent understanding and experience of the legal duties, responsibilities, and liabilities of Trusteeship;
- Excellent, independent judgement and the ability to think creatively in the context of the organisation and external environment;
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills and the ability to respect the confidences of colleagues;
- Commitment to the Trust's objectives, aims and values;
- Balancing tact and diplomacy with willingness to challenge and constructively criticise.
- A genuine commitment to inclusion, diversity, and the transformative power of the arts.
- Sufficient time to fulfil the role with energy and attention.

How to Apply

We want the application process to be as straightforward as possible. If you are unsure whether this role is right for you, please do get in touch before submitting anything formal. We would genuinely love to hear from you.

Stage 1
Expression of interest. Please send us a brief note explaining your interest in joining our Board, along with a CV or current biography. We don't need you to address every point in this pack; we are more interested in understanding a bit more about you and what draws you to this role!

Stage 2
Informal conversation. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to an informal conversation with the CEO. This is an opportunity to explore the fit.

Stage 3
Formal appointment. For those progressing, a meeting with a small panel of Trustees and the CEO will complete the process.






Baltic Centre for Contempo
Open Wed–Sun 10am–6pm









Key Dates

Expression of interest deadline
25 November 2026

Informal conversations
Week commencing
7 December 2026
(suitable date/time to be agreed with candidate)

Panel Meetings
7 & 8 January 2027

Anticipated start date
From April 2027 subject to handover with outgoing Chair

Contact

Enquiries and applications should be sent to

Leigh Mylchreest
Executive Assistant to the CEO/Board of Trustees
leighm@balticmill.com