



For the second year running, Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art will take part in Refugee Week, the world's largest arts and culture festival celebrating the contributions, creativity and resilience of refugees and people seeking sanctuary. Founded in 1998 in the UK and held every year around World Refugee Day on 20 June, Refugee Week 2023 is the initiative's 25th anniversary.

Compassion: Baltic x Refugee Week 2023

Through a series of events, exhibitions and workshops under the title Baltic, a recognised Gallery of Sanctuary, will explore what compassion looks like in action. Baltic will seek to encourage a shared understanding of migration and how everyone can extend a welcome to those who have been displaced or seek sanctuary.

From Monday 14 June – Sunday 2 July 2023:

- Baltic's Level 5 Viewing Box walls will host the group exhibition *Compassion*, including work by nine artists who have each experienced displacement. Created in partnership with **NE Rise**, an organisation that supports refugees in the North East, the display invites you to explore the transformative potential of empathy, kindness, and understanding.
- The artworks by Solomon Gebreyonas / Skekiba Lutfi / Mesgana Estifanos / Filiz Sustam Oylum / Rozita Yusof / Farnaz Taheri / Mina Moradi Kondor / Soheyla Bakhtiyari / Sepideh Hayati will be for sale via Baltic Shop (Ground Floor).
- Each artwork in the exhibition is a testament to the strength and resilience of artists who have experienced displacement. Together, we can challenge the notion of who "deserves" to stay in the UK. The answer is clear: everyone. We are all inherently worthy, deserving of compassion, and capable of creating positive change.
- The Level 5 Viewing Box glass window will also transform with a vinyl artwork by **Migrants in Culture**. This features an orange heart (a symbol for Refugee Week) with a placard displaying "end the hostile environment". The design was originally made for the Solidarity Knows No Borders (SKNB) community of resistance. SKNB is a community of migrant organisations, groups and individuals, working in solidarity, to end hostility and racism against migrants and refugees.

On Monday 19 June from 9pm

- The Millennium Bridge will be specially lit up in orange to mark the start of Refugee Week.

On Wednesday 21 - Sunday 25 June from 10am-6pm

- Discover children's books about moving home, exile and displacement in Baltic Front Room.

On Saturday 24 & Sunday 25 June from 11am-3pm

- Join free creative workshops and activities including yoga, papercrafts and hand massages.

On Thursday 29 June, 4pm-5.30pm

- **Meet the Artists from the Level 5 exhibition with a drop-in, no booking required informal event.**

Refugee Week: 19-25 June 2023

Find out what is happening in your area at refugeeweek.org.uk/events/list

More information about Refugee Week 2023

Compassion is the theme for Refugee Week 2023 and is at the heart of our exhibition on Level 5 and the activities taking place across the building. It invites us to reflect on a simple but profound question: 'What is it like being you?' By embracing empathy and putting ourselves in someone else's shoes, we can create a world where kindness thrives. Compassion is about extending a helping hand, standing up for others, and acknowledging the courage, wisdom, and kindness within each of us.

In the face of a challenging hostile political environment for people seeking sanctuary, which has been described by our Home Secretary as a 'takeover', we choose to celebrate Refugee Week with renewed determination. This type of language stigmatises refugees and fuels racism. By coming together in solidarity, we stand against racism in all forms and do everything in our power to support people seeking sanctuary. www.refugeeweek.org.uk

Baltic's Gallery of Sanctuary status

In February 2022, Baltic proudly became England's first Gallery of Sanctuary, recognised and awarded by City of Sanctuary. The City of Sanctuary movement began as a response to growing hostility in society, seeking to foster inclusivity and compassion. City of Sanctuary UK has worked with partners across all sectors to encourage communities to embrace its principles. Hundreds of institutions, businesses, local authorities and whole cities nationwide have pledged to uphold values of compassion and dignity. Baltic's Neighbourly uses welcoming practices and creative processes to support people seeking sanctuary in the North East. www.baltic.art

Helpful Resources

Find out more about migration and displacement

- This myth buster presents what is true and what is fiction
<https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-we-do/our-work/young-refugees-migrants/mythbusters>
- These videos from The People's History Museum tell the personal stories of people seeking sanctuary
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pm5cFojr7yo&list=PL8yAp_ZVVXlZ1qC2E-L-ppckmDul7553
- Find out about events are happening near you during Refugee Week
<https://refugeeweek.org.uk/events/>

NE Rise (North East Refugee Integration Support and Employment)

We are pleased to collaborate with NE Rise, an invaluable service for newly recognised refugees across the North East. Their mission is to support refugees and their families in establishing stable and happy lives. NE Rise helps secure suitable housing, employment opportunities, and promotes integration into the wider community. Find out more at www.northeastrise.org

Press Contacts

Cat Cox-Field catherinecf@balticmill.com

Notes to Editors

Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art

Baltic is a major international centre for contemporary art situated on the south bank of the River Tyne in Gateshead, England and has welcomed over eight million visitors since opening to the public in July 2002. BALTIC presents a distinctive and ambitious programme of exhibitions and events, and is a world leader in the presentation and commissioning of contemporary visual art.

Housed in a landmark ex-industrial building, BALTIC consists of 2,600 square metres of art space, making it the UK's largest dedicated contemporary art institution. BALTIC has gained an international reputation for its commissioning of cutting-edge temporary exhibitions. It has presented the work of over 460 artists of 60 nationalities in 220 exhibitions to date.

Baltic is supported by Arts Council England, Gateshead Council and Northumbria University.

**www.baltic.art
[#balticgateshead](https://twitter.com/balticgateshead)**



balticgateshead