

INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS

CHAIR RECRUITMENT PACK

Institute of Contemporary Arts
The Mall, London SW1Y 5AH
ica.art



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JOIN US AS OUR CHAIR

WELCOME LETTER – CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES RECRUITMENT

Thank you for your interest in joining the ICA as Chair of our Board of Trustees.

For nearly eight decades, the ICA has been a home for those who dare to think differently – a space where bold creativity, experimentation, and new ideas can flourish. Today, that mission feels more vital than ever.

We live in extraordinary times – marked by global uncertainty, rapid change, and urgent challenges, but also by remarkable creativity, connection, and possibility. At the ICA, we believe that artists have always been the ones to imagine new worlds – to provoke, to question, to inspire. Our role is to create the conditions for that to happen.

As we look to the future, we are entering an exciting new chapter in the ICA's story. We are evolving how we work – strengthening our business model, deepening our investment in artists, expanding the reach of our programme, and reimagining what a cultural institution can and should be in the 21st century. Central to this journey is our commitment to openness, boldness, and integrity – values that shape everything we do.

We are now seeking a new Chair to lead our Board of Trustees through this next phase. This is a rare and significant opportunity to help shape the future of one of London's most progressive cultural organisations.

We are looking for someone who shares our belief in the power of contemporary culture to create connection and spark change. Someone with the experience, vision, and generosity of spirit to support our Executive team, guide our governance, and champion our mission locally and globally.

As Chair, you will play a crucial role in ensuring the ICA continues to be a space for experimentation, risk-taking, and dialogue – a platform for emerging voices and a catalyst for new ideas. You will lead a talented and committed Board, bringing your own leadership experience, your networks, and your passion for the arts to help secure the ICA's future for generations to come. If that sounds like you, we would love to hear from you.

The ICA has always belonged to those willing to imagine the world anew. We hope you will consider joining us on this extraordinary journey.



Warmest wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bengi Ünsal".

Bengi Ünsal
Director
Institute of Contemporary Arts, London

To apply, please send your CV and a cover letter outlining your suitability for the role to chairrecruitment@ica.art

The closing date for applications is:
19 June, 11:59pm

For an informal discussion about the role, please contact roula.carroll@ica.art

To find out more, please visit:
ica.art/chair-board-of-trustees



INTRODUCTION TO THE ICA

The ICA is London's home for bold, boundary-pushing creativity. We commission, produce, and present contemporary art, film, music, performance, and ideas that challenge perceptions and inspire social change. In a time of rapid transformation, we provide a space for experimentation, dialogue, and discovery — connecting the curious and the courageous, emerging and established artists, and communities across London, the UK, and beyond.

MISSION

To champion the daring and the curious—supporting artists and ideas that challenge perceptions, spark dialogue, and connect with diverse audiences across London, the UK, and beyond.

VISION

To be a fearless, future-facing cultural force—amplifying bold creativity, fostering unexpected connections, and reshaping the boundaries of contemporary culture.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Openness: A free-thinking space where all voices are welcomed, and any idea can be explored.

Innovation: Championing experimentation and embracing technology to shape the future of arts and culture.

Community: Prioritising inclusivity, collaboration, and meaningful engagement with artists and audiences alike.

Integrity: Staying true to our mission while remaining accessible and relevant to the masses.

Boldness: Fearlessly leading the way in contemporary culture and creativity.

The ICA platforms the daring and the curious, supporting artists and ideas that challenge perceptions, inspire social change, and connect with diverse audiences locally and globally. As a space for bold, boundary-pushing creativity, we cultivate connections across disciplines, communities, and cultures. Our cross-disciplinary programming invites audiences to explore beyond the boundaries of individual art forms, fostering experimentation and the discovery of new perspectives. Open to all voices and ideas, we embrace



interplay and interaction across club nights, film festivals, gigs, exhibitions, talks, and digital art. With inclusivity and collaboration at the heart of our work, we remain fearless in shaping contemporary creativity, connecting diverse voices, and making unexpected connections that define the future of arts and culture.

Our history of presenting and promoting visionary new art is unrivalled in London: from Kenneth Anger to Kathy Acker, Kano to Klein, Jackson Pollock to Jean-Michel Basquiat, Gay Sweatshop to Forensic Architecture, David Bowie to Stormzy, Pop Art to queer techno. Today, as ever, our inclusive programme reflects and represents who we are as a disparate and diverse collection of cultures and identities.

Exactly 78 years after a group of artists and poets founded the ICA as an alternative to the mainstream, we are committed more than ever to paving the way for the next generation and to platforming creative voices. The ICA continues to celebrate risk and champion innovation and experimentation across the arts – a playground and a home for today's most vital artists.

We strive to create and maintain an ICA that is a positive environment where the similarities and differences of people are valued—a space where everyone belongs and feels welcome. We hold ourselves accountable through our regularly reviewed Anti-Racism Strategic Plan, Equality and Diversity Policy and Action Plan, and Safety Policy.

Since its inception, the ICA has been the home of future-thinking ideas and urgent cultural discourse. We are committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive environment that encourages dialogue and debate, recognising that differing viewpoints are essential to the advancement of contemporary arts and culture.

The ICA is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation.

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Being Chair of the ICA was a rewarding experience as it gave me deep insight into the workings of London's original multi-disciplinary arts centre, now in its 78th year of spearheading new ideas. To help safeguard a much beloved institution in these challenging times felt good. We get so much from London's vibrant arts organisations, this was a moment for me to give back.

— Wolfgang Tillmans, Former Chair

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ICA IMPACT FRAMEWORK

OUR VISION IN ACTION

At the ICA, we're shaping the future of culture through six strategic pillars. Together, they ensure we remain bold, inclusive, and relevant in a fast-changing world.

I INNOVATE

We champion pioneering, cross-disciplinary art that pushes boundaries and redefines what culture can be.

M MOBILISE

We activate communities across London, the UK, and beyond — inviting diverse audiences to engage, participate, and co-create.

P PATHWAYS

We open doors for the next generation — supporting young people and underrepresented voices to access and shape the arts.

A ADAPT

We're building a resilient future — investing in digital tools, sustainable practices, and new business models to keep the ICA thriving.

C CHALLENGE

We welcome bold ideas and provocative creativity — making space for difficult conversations and fresh perspectives.

T TRANSFORM

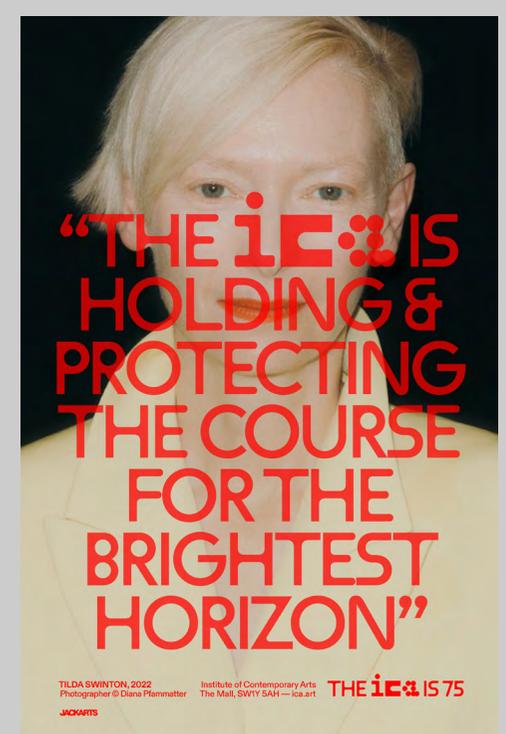
We connect past and future to inspire change — shaping the cultural landscape through fearless creativity and collaboration.

“

The ICA has played a central role in the history of art, providing a platform to artists at times when they needed it most. However, the role of this institution is global and multifaceted, at its heart, that it is also very much about London as a world city and what that means to the entire cultural community. The ICA serves as a beacon to creatives around the world.

— Alia Al-Senussi, PhD

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JOB DESCRIPTION: CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Position: Chair of the Board
Location: The Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA)
The Mall, London
Reports to: Board of Trustees
Type: Voluntary, Part-time
Term: 3 years



ABOUT THE ICA

The Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) is London's leading space for contemporary culture. We commission, produce, and present new work across film, music, performance, and visual arts, engaging today's most progressive artists. Located on The Mall in central London, the ICA is a hub for exploring what it means to live in our world today through a genre-fluid programme that challenges the past, questions the present, and confronts the future. This is our commitment to the extraordinary legacy that began with our founding in 1946.

Our cross-disciplinary approach fosters new combinations and collaborations, with club nights, film festivals, gigs, exhibitions, talks, and digital art at the core of our work. The ICA has a rich history of promoting visionary art, from Kenneth Anger to Jean-Michel Basquiat, Pop Art to queer techno, and remains committed to celebrating risk and championing innovation across the arts.

The ICA is a registered charity and an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation, dedicated to fostering a diverse and inclusive environment that encourages dialogue and debate.

ROLE OVERVIEW

The Chair of the Board of Trustees will lead the ICA's Board in its governance role, ensuring the organisation fulfils its mission and achieves its strategic goals. The Chair will collaborate closely with the Director/CEO and Executive Leadership Team to provide oversight,

guidance, and support as the ICA navigates contemporary challenges and opportunities. This is a pivotal role that requires a deep commitment to contemporary arts, exceptional leadership qualities, and a strategic mindset.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

- Lead the ICA's Board of Trustees in fulfilling its governance responsibilities, ensuring that the organisation operates within its charitable objectives and complies with legal and regulatory requirements.
- Chair Board meetings, facilitating open and effective discussions, and ensuring decisions are made in the best interest of the ICA.
- Ensure the Board operates as an effective team, with the right balance of skills, experience, and diversity to drive the ICA's mission forward.

STRATEGIC OVERSIGHT

- Collaborate with the Director/CEO to shape and implement the ICA's strategic direction, ensuring alignment with its mission, values, and commitment to diversity and inclusion.



- Oversee the monitoring and evaluation of the ICA's performance against its strategic objectives, driving continuous improvement and innovation.

ADVOCACY & REPRESENTATION

- Act as an ambassador for the ICA, representing its interests to stakeholders, funders, partners, and the wider arts community.
- Engage with key stakeholders, including government bodies, arts organisations, and the media, to enhance the ICA's profile and influence.

SUPPORT & DEVELOPMENT

- Provide mentorship and support to the Director, offering constructive feedback and guidance.
- Lead the Board in succession planning, ensuring the ICA's leadership is sustainable and prepared for future challenges.
- Foster a culture of inclusivity, equity, and transparency within the Board and across the organisation.

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

- Work with the Director/CEO, F&A committee, and the Finance Director to oversee the ICA's financial health, ensuring robust financial management and sustainability.
- Ensure that the ICA has the necessary resources (financial, human, and material) to achieve its objectives and continue its legacy of innovation.

FUNDRAISING & DEVELOPMENT

- Working closely with the Director/CEO, Development & Partnerships Committee and the team to secure funding from a range of sources including individual donors, corporate sponsors, trusts, and foundations.
- Engage with major donors and potential supporters to build and maintain relationships that will enhance the ICA's financial sustainability.
- Drive the development and implementation of a comprehensive fundraising strategy that aligns with the ICA's strategic goals and mission.
- Advocate for the importance of fundraising within the Board and among ICA stakeholders, ensuring that fundraising efforts are integrated into all aspects of the ICA's activities.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

ESSENTIAL

- We are open to candidates with leadership experience from a range of sectors — whether from within arts, culture, and charity, or from other fields where they have developed relevant skills and share our commitment to the ICA's values and mission.
- Strong understanding of governance and the legal responsibilities of trusteeship.
- Demonstrable commitment to contemporary arts and culture, with a deep appreciation for the ICA's mission and history.
- Strategic thinker with the ability to drive organisational change and growth.

- Experience in fundraising, philanthropy, or securing partnerships within the arts and culture sector.
- Excellent communication, negotiation, and interpersonal skills, with the ability to engage effectively with a wide range of stakeholders.
- Integrity, independence of thought, and sound judgment.

DESIRABLE

- Knowledge of financial management and budgeting in a non-profit context.
- Prior experience serving on a Board, particularly in a Chair or leadership capacity.

TIME COMMITMENT

The Chair is expected to commit to approximately 2 days per month, including attending Board meetings, sub-committee meetings, and representing the ICA at events. There are four quarterly Board meetings and four Finance Sub-Committee meetings each year, with dates arranged in the third quarter of the preceding year. The role may require additional time during periods of significant activity.

TERM

Trustees serve three-year terms, with a maximum of three terms allowed.

Board meetings are held at the ICA. Though remote attendance is possible, it is not encouraged. Occasionally, an additional strategy day may be planned around the third quarter. Board meetings typically last two hours, with papers circulated five days in advance.

In between Board meetings, the Chair may be contacted by Senior Staff for various tasks such as signing time-sensitive documents, reviewing or discussing agenda items in advance, agreeing on meeting dates, contributing to major fundraising plans, following up on trustee action points, or receiving updates on activities or programming.

In the initial months, additional time will be dedicated to induction activities, including meeting with all members of the Board and Senior Management and team of staff.



ICA is incredibly challenging at times because it's responding to what's important in contemporary art, music, film and performance right now. As well as being critical and vital work ICA is nurturing and supporting a future generation through Young ICA Creatives that provides access for young people to not only be consumers of culture but to be producers too. Urgent and pertinent questions fuel the talks bringing leading thinkers into dialogue with each other and the public.

— Sepake Angiama – Artistic Director of Institute of International Visual Arts



APPLICATION PROCESS

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For an informal discussion about the role, please contact roula.carroll@ica.art

ORGANISATIONAL GOVERNANCE

ica.art/organisational-governance

PEOPLE

SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

Director of Audiences and Business Growth – Natalia Fenyoe

Director of Finance and Operations – Serhan Vardarli

Head of Artistic Programme – Steven Cairns

Head of Operations and Visitor Services – Melanie Coles

People & Culture Manager – Moriom Choudhury

Executive & Board Associate – Roula Carroll

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

(Deputy Chair) Reema Selhi – *Head of Policy and International, Design and Artists Copyright Society (DACCS)*

Alia Al-Senussi – *Senior Advisor, International Outreach Art Basel*

Sepake Angiama – *Artistic Director of Institute of International Visual Arts*

Charles Asprey – *Working with artists since the early 1990s*

Michael Clayton – *Director of Finance and Operations, The Geological Society*

Nabihah Iqbal – *Musician, producer, DJ and broadcaster from London.*

David Kolbusz – *Chief Creative Officer at Orchard*

Emily Sheffield – *Global Comms VP and Former Editor of the Evening Standard*

Maria Sukkar – *Founder of ISelf Collection; sits on Tate International Council and Tate's Middle Eastern Acquisition Committee and Photography Acquisition Committee*

Tilda Swinton – *Actor*

Leopold Thun – *Co-Founder and Director, Emalin*

Steve Wills – *Global Account Leader, Former Partner at Ernst and Young*

LIST OF COMMITTEES

- Development & Strategic Partnerships Committee
- Finance & Audit Committee
- Programming & Artistic Strategy Committee
- Marketing & Audience Engagement Committee



- Nominations & Ethics Committee
- Governance People & Culture Committee



At a time when national and global politics often seem to narrow the space for complexity and dissent, institutions like the ICA matter more than ever. Supporting independent art, music, and cinema isn't just cultural—it's civic. It means protecting a space where free thought can thrive, where urgent questions can be raised, and where knowledge is shared rather than withheld. The Chair of Trustees will help guide this vital mission—ensuring the ICA remains a site of possibility, dialogue, and renewal.

— Leopold Thun – Co-Founder and Director, Emalin

