

GLOBAL

CIRCLE





GLOBAL  
**CIRCLE**

The British Council is first and foremost a people-to-people organisation.

We work with governments and cultural and educational institutions, but above all we seek to build trust between people. We believe people-to-people contacts – whatever the government-to-government relations – make a powerful contribution to a more peaceful, tolerant and prosperous world.

Founded in 1934, the British Council was formed during a time of global crisis as The Great Depression impacted living standards, jobs and trade worldwide. Extreme ideologies were gaining ground, with the rise of Communism in Russia and fascism in Germany, Italy and Spain. The UK government created the British Council as a separate, non-governmental body, whose purpose was to build relationships and promote understanding of other nations over lifetimes, rather than political terms.

We have built trust around the world for 90 years, ensuring the UK is responsive and can engage with countries during times of calm and times of turbulence. We take a long-term approach and remain at arm's length from government, enabling us to foster connections even when official relationships are strained.

From showcasing the best of British art around the world, to supporting young people to access the skills they need to achieve their potential, to delivering on-the-ground English and digital teaching for women and girls from marginalised communities, our work breaks down barriers, opens conversations and paves the way for greater understanding.

We are profoundly grateful to the Global Circle for their commitment to peace and prosperity across the world through their support of the British Council. With government funding reduced in recent years, it is through their generosity that we are able to maintain our meaningful work in arts, culture, language and education across the globe.

Thank you for your advocacy and friendship and a warm welcome to the Global Circle.

Kind regards

Scott  
McDonald  
Chief Executive  
British Council



# ABOUT THE BRITISH COUNCIL

The British Council supports peace and prosperity by building connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and countries worldwide.

We uniquely combine the UK's deep expertise in arts and culture, education and the English language, our global presence, and relationships with young people and influencers. We share our values and explore ideas, have difficult discussions, find common ground, and create mutually beneficial relationships between the people of all four nations of the UK and other countries.

Working directly with individuals, we help them gain the skills, confidence, and connections to transform their lives and shape a better world in partnership with the UK. We support them to build networks and explore creative ideas, to learn English, to get a high-quality education and to gain internationally recognised qualifications.

Through the transformative power of arts and culture, we support the protection and promotion of cultural expression, diversity and heritage. We create inspiring opportunities for people, institutions and places to respond to challenges with local

impact and global relevance. Working together we make a bigger difference, creating benefit for millions of people all over the world. We work in partnership with governments, businesses and NGOs and nurture relationships with government leaders, policymakers, senior advisers, cultural leaders and the wider public, to help us achieve more than we could do alone.

In 2022, we worked in over 200 countries and territories reaching over 600 million people in total and have even greater ambitions for the future.



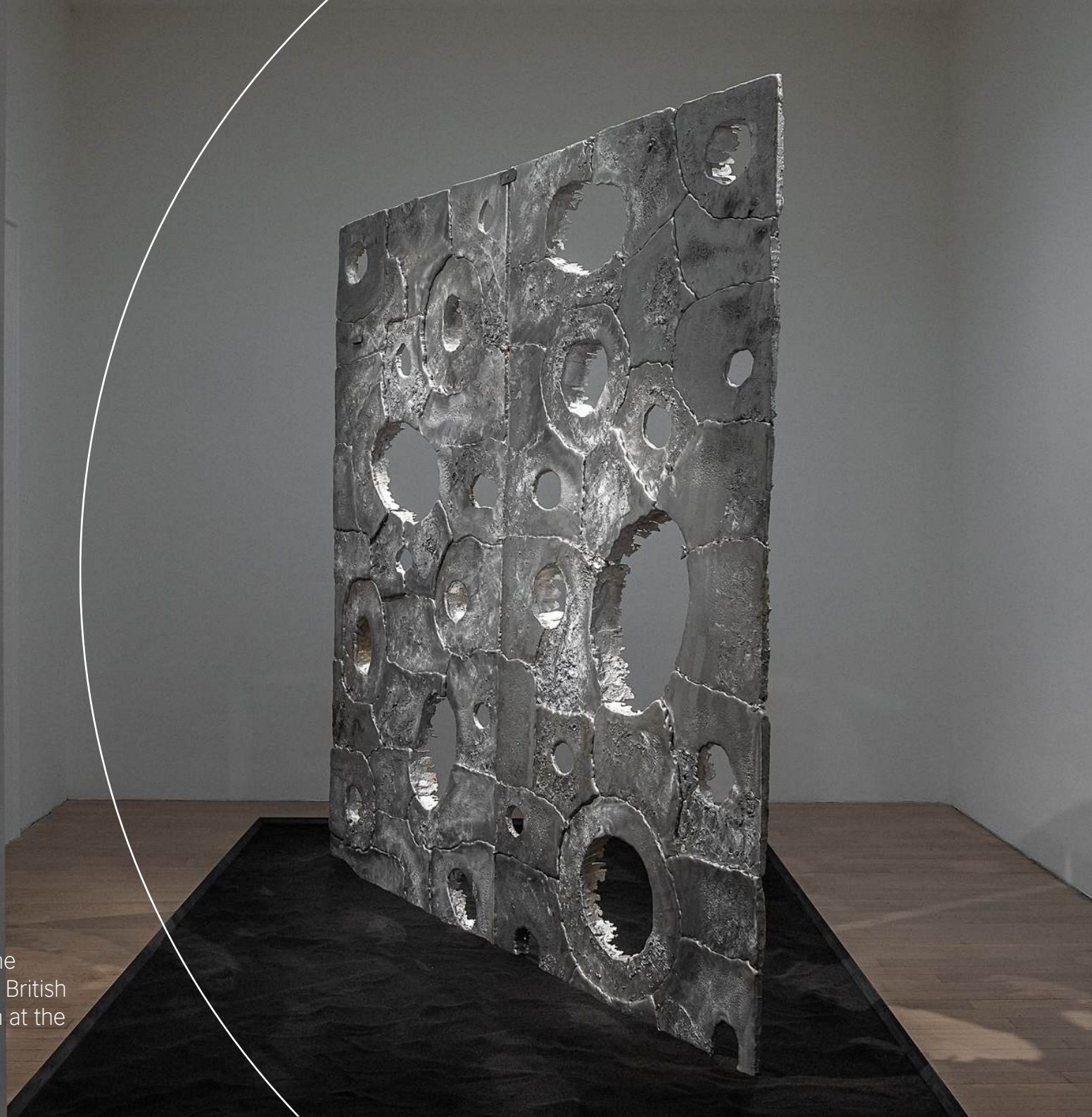
# HOW WE WORK

We support in hundreds of projects around the globe, exploring a diverse array of subjects to promote mutual understanding, support social mobility and address the most crucial global challenges today. Much of our work is achieved in one of these three ways.

**Fund:** We provide grants, scholarships and funding to empower young people, educators, creative professionals and practitioners to foster artistic exploration, expand career prospects and facilitate cross-cultural learning and networking.

**Research:** We examine the impact of rapid change and global markets on national education and skills systems, generating valuable insights shared with institutions, policymakers and international governments to shape informed decision making.

**Showcase:** We offer a platform for talented creatives to showcase their abilities while addressing urgent global challenges on the world stage. Through these initiatives, we build connections between the UK's arts and culture sectors and their international counterparts, drawing attention to our work and enabling mutual learning.



Dancing Before the Moon is the 2023 British Pavilion exhibition at the Venice Biennale.



India/UK Together, a Season of Culture, celebrated the friendship between the UK and India. Marking the 75th anniversary of Indian independence, this cultural exchange showcased a vibrant programme of events across music, theatre, cinema, literature, fashion and visual arts.

With equality, diversity and inclusion at its heart, we celebrated artists, innovators and educators from India and the UK.

The season explored our cultures, our shared planet and our relationship with digital technologies that will shape our future together.

**1,945 artists**  
**51+ partners**  
**21 cities in India and the UK**

India/UK Together had an exciting line up of arts and cultural events. This included cutting-edge live music events, projects using arts and technology, virtual reality and artificial intelligence, exhibitions that tackled global challenges, and diverse voices in literature and theatre. Plus much, much more throughout the year.

In 2024, the British Council in France will be leading the UK/France Spotlight on Culture, a celebration of Franco-British artistic co-creation and cultural partnerships followed by the UK Poland and UK Kenya Seasons in 2025.



# UK/ INDIA

# SEASON

*Concert of Friendship in Chennai,  
a collaboration between the British  
Council and KM Music Conservatory*



# TAHAWER

Iraq's identity is defined by its history, politics, and ethnic and religious diversity with nearly 7,000 years of written history.

TAHAWER was an EU-funded programme that aimed to create safe spaces for young people from different backgrounds to engage in thoughtful debate and discussion, encouraging respect and tolerance, promoting social cohesion and fostering a positive sense of Iraqi identity.

TAHAWER brought together groups of young Iraqis from diverse backgrounds to better understand one another and find common ground to serve as a foundation for peacebuilding, tolerance and co-existence. The programme was focused on building the confidence of young people to have respectful, self-aware and tolerant debates on challenging topics. It provided young women and men with a platform for discussion on issues that are important to them, allowing them to voice their ideas, concerns and experiences to influential people who make decisions that impact upon their lives in a safe space.

Debates covered subjects such as cultural heritage, traditions and customs, citizenship and identity, gender/ social inequalities, education and opportunities, media, peacebuilding/co-existence, and the role of religion in peacebuilding and development in Iraq.

TAHAWER built a nationwide community of thousands of young men and women, which has brought together the voices of Iraqi Arabs, Kurds, Yazidis, Christians and other religious minorities like the Shabak and Yarsani people. As a result, TAHAWER participants have reported increased agency within their families, communities and public life.





# WOMEN

The gender gap in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) is well documented. Not only do women make up a fraction of the workforce and research teams in STEM, but they are also published less, paid less and are less likely than their male counterparts to reach positions of leadership.

The British Council has established programmes to support women and girls in STEM around the world, designed with a lifecycle approach in mind, from inspiring young girls to stay in STEM to supporting women working in STEM fields to reach positions of leadership and network with their peers in their region and the UK. Access to education is a significant contributing factor leading to the under-representation of women in STEM, so we enable postgraduate education for women who can demonstrate their need for financial support and who wish to inspire future generations of women to pursue careers in STEM.

Now in its third year the British Council has launched our scholarship programme in partnership with 19 UK universities aimed at benefiting women from the Americas, wider Europe, MENA, South Asia and East Asia. In the long term, as alumni, we hope this group of scholars will take a key role in the advocacy of girls and women in STEM in their home country, leading to lasting impact.

# IN STEM







# CULTURAL PROTECTION FUND

Bedouin looking over Wadi Rum;  
Cultural Corridors of Peace

© INHERIT

Cultural heritage is a valuable tool for exploring and celebrating complex pasts; it also helps to inform how we create a better future.

In partnership with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, the Cultural Protection Fund supports organisations to deliver dozens of projects that protect heritage at risk. These organisations are helping local people to identify and value cultural heritage, building skills so that local experts can protect their own cultural assets for future generations, and ensuring that heritage under threat is documented, conserved and restored. A few examples:

Withstanding change: heritage amongst climate uncertainty – in partnership with the International National Trusts Organisation, this project will restore six historic buildings in six countries across the Middle East, North Africa and East Africa, protecting them against the severe impacts of climate change and installing new exhibition spaces to engage local communities. The project will make connections between National Trust properties in the UK and the sites in each country, enabling knowledge sharing around safeguarding the heritage in the face of climate-induced threats.

On the Tracks of Music – this project will preserve and promote the disappearing traditional folk music and musical instruments of marginalised rural communities, in areas severely affected by conflict and climate change, across Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Syria. The rarely documented folk music is specific to each community's history and these traditions are thought to date back to 2500 BCE.

Turath Benghazi – the historic city centre of Benghazi in Libya hosts many important religious and cultural sites and has suffered significant damage due to civil war. In partnership with the World Monuments Fund, the project will provide local architects and officials with training in cultural heritage preservation and urban design, building capacity for conservation and restoration of this ancient city.

**'I can't tell you how impressed I am by the Cultural Protection Fund... it is again of even greater importance to ensure we have something left in the face of all the challenges and disasters around the world.'**

*His Majesty King Charles III*



# LANGUAGE FOR RESILIENCE

There are now over 800 million young people without secondary-level education, equivalent to a global skills crisis. There are also 225 million young people whose education is interrupted or affected by crisis and 100 million displaced people (more than ever). The contribution of the climate crisis to displacement, as well as an interconnected set of conflicts, is worsening the situation.

Interrupted education and displacement always have a disproportionately negative effect on disabled children, girls, and children from disadvantaged communities. There is an increasing global understanding that resourcing and improving education in crisis is imperative to give individuals, communities and countries the resilience to recover and to fulfil their potential for prosperous lives in equitable communities.

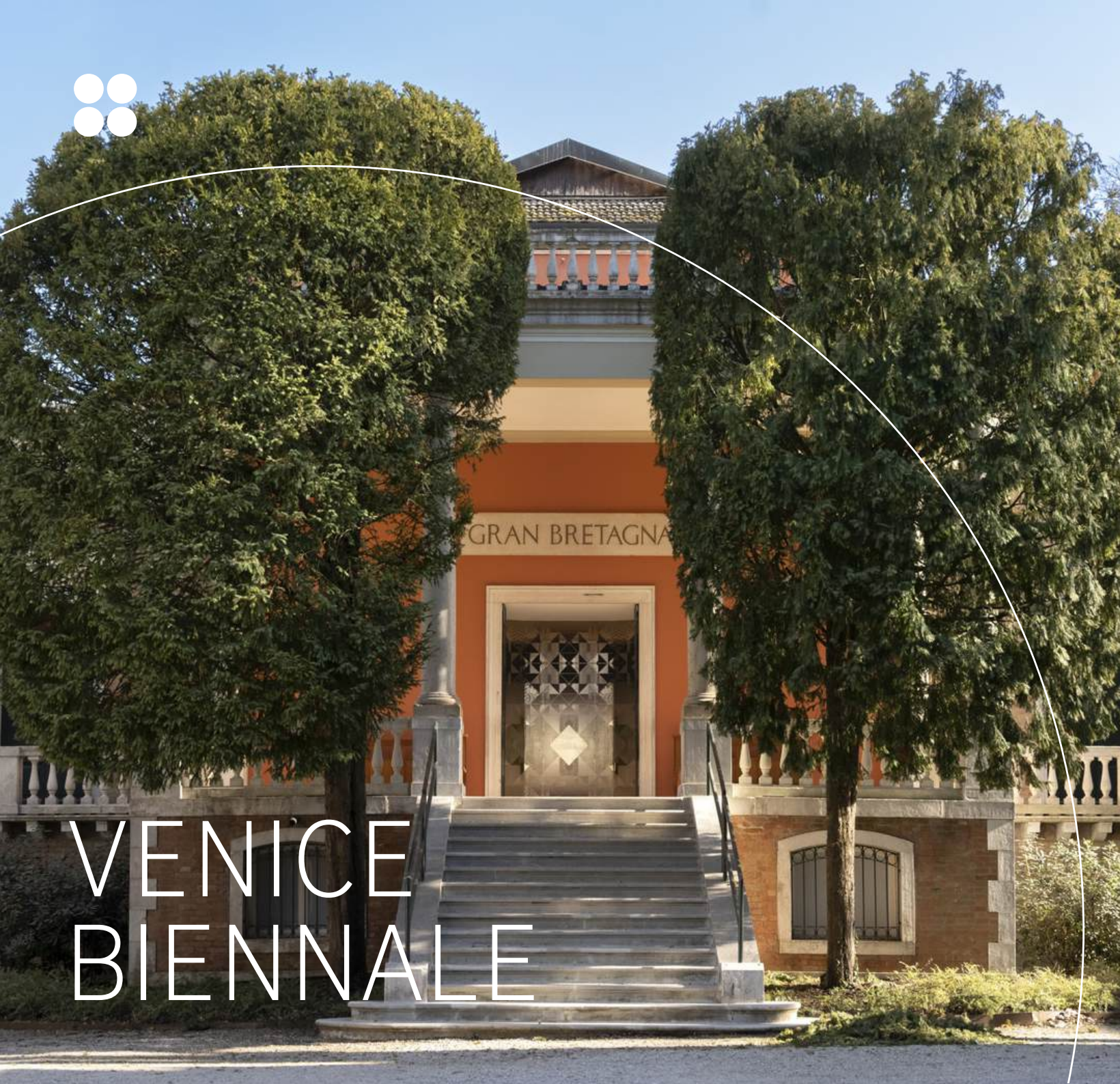
Language for Resilience began as part of the British Council's English Programmes work to respond to the Syrian refugee crisis in Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, during 2013-14.

Since then, Language for Resilience programming has been applied in almost 20 countries, sometimes in partnership with ministries of education, more often in partnership with International NGOs which deliver

and co-ordinate education in crisis contexts. These include UNHCR, UNICEF, UNESCO, IOM, UNRWA, DAAD, Care International, Relief International and Save the Children.

Recent examples of the success of these partnerships include:

- the Conference in a Camp, in Zaatari, Jordan, the world's first teacher conference in a refugee camp, with attendees from around the region
- the LASER project in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, teaching English language and academic skills to 3,000 refugees and young people in host communities, preparing them for higher Education.
- Language for Resilience in Uganda, where 2,000 teachers of refugee children are receiving professional development, in particular in the language supportive strategies necessary for classrooms with multiple languages.
- Teaching and Learning in Difficult Times, in Ukraine, Poland and Romania, providing over 15,000 Ukrainian English teachers with the skills to teach children in conflict zones.



GRAN BRETAGNA

# VENICE BIENNALE

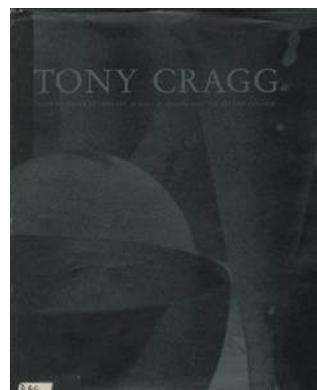
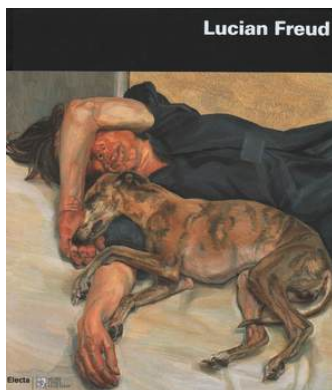
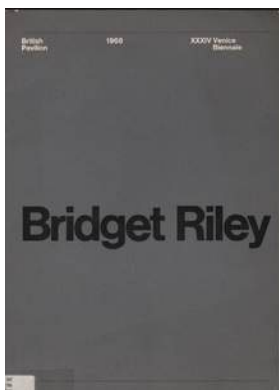
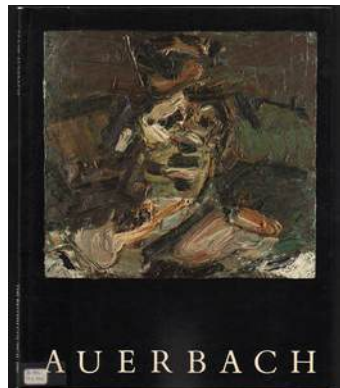
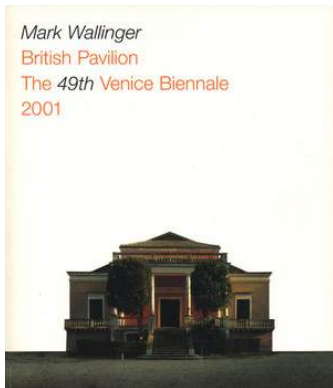
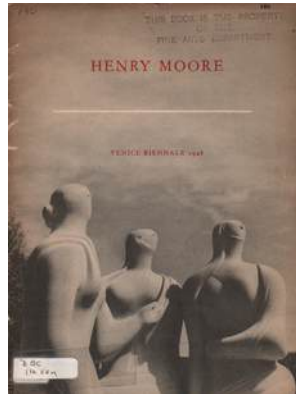
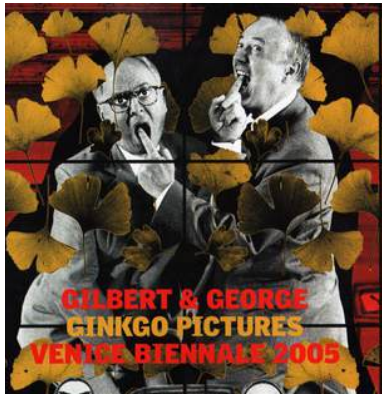
Since 1937, the British Council has been the commissioner of the British Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, presenting work by groundbreaking artists and pioneering architects.

Running from May to November each year and alternating between art and architecture, the Venice Biennale is the longest running international art biennial in the world, founded in 1895. A celebration of art and architecture, the Biennale explores themes of politics and contemporary cultural and social issues through performance, sculpture and installations. The Venice Biennale is one of the most prestigious cultural festivals in the world, attracting half a million visitors each year.

In 2022, Sonia Boyce, OBE RA was selected to represent the UK and was awarded the prestigious Golden Lion for Best National Participation. Sir John Akomfrah has been commissioned for the British Pavilion at the 60th La Biennale di Venezia in 2024.



# VENICE BIENNALE





# WELCOME TO THE GLOBAL CIRCLE

The Global Circle is a community of influencers, thought leaders and philanthropists who share the British Council's vision for a more peaceful and prosperous world.

Through their generous support, we are able to continue our important work that improves the lives of millions of people each year. Whether we're increasing educational opportunities for women and girls in marginalised communities, promoting emerging artists and creative practitioners or supporting the next generation of leaders to tackle the global challenges that face us all – the Global Circle helps to make these projects possible.



# YOUR GLOBAL CIRCLE

In return for their generous support, members of the British Council's Global Circle receive an exclusive programme of international events and trips throughout the year.

The Global Circle programme is designed to share the unique perspective and insights of the British Council in the most enjoyable and sociable of settings.

Accompanied by leading curators and the senior leadership of the British Council, Global Circle members travel the world and see first-hand the impact of their support on local communities across the world.

Programming covers the breadth of our activities, including art, theatre, music, education, architecture, creative tech, fashion and design, and introduces the British Council's international network of world-famous creatives, ambassadors and dignitaries.



Benefits include:

- three international trips per year, led by senior members of the British Council team
- invitations to exclusive moments during the Venice Biennale, and the opportunity to view the British Pavilion before Preview Day
- invitations to exclusive events around the art fair calendar, such as special receptions during Art Basel and Frieze in multiple locations
- invitations to monthly UK Circle, Hong Kong Circle and India Circle events, launching in 2024.

Global Circle membership is by invitation only. For more information, please contact

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A Healing is Coming

SHAWAN...

The year 2020 has been a year of unprecedented challenges for the world. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought a global health crisis, economic downturn, and social unrest. In the face of such adversity, many have turned to art and culture for solace and meaning. This exhibition, 'A Healing is Coming', explores the power of art to heal, to connect, and to inspire hope in the darkest of times. It features a collection of ceramic vessels, each a unique expression of human creativity and resilience. These vessels, with their vibrant colors and textured surfaces, represent a journey of healing and transformation. They are not just objects, but stories of survival and triumph over adversity. The exhibition is a testament to the human spirit's ability to find beauty and meaning even in the most challenging of circumstances. It is a call to action, a reminder that art is not just a luxury, but a necessity for our well-being. It is a healing, and it is coming.