

Quentin Blake Centre for Illustration

Our purpose, goals and values

What is illustration and why does it matter?

Illustration is “art with a job to do”: breathing life into stories and ideas. It may involve pencils or pens, paint or inks, collage, digital tools or installation, It can be pictures, diagrams and graphics, still or moving. Its superpower is saying the unsayable, conjuring up joy, anger, nostalgia and curiosity; gasps, tears and laughter.

From cave paintings to Instagram, picture books to packaging, illustration is fundamental to our understanding of one another and drives human progress. It tells stories. It propels activism, propaganda and public information. It captures scientific discoveries and makes sense of statistics. It is an essential component of advertising, animation, fashion, gaming and publishing. Can you imagine a road junction, a medical textbook, a story book or a set of flat-pack instructions without illustration?

Illustration is for everyone. It is part of our everyday lives and we can all create it. If more people were empowered to illustrate then more stories and ideas would be heard.

We exist for illustration.

Our vision and goals

Our vision is a world in which:

- Everyone can communicate through illustration
- Everyone can explore and challenge the imagery around them
- Everyone can use illustration to examine the way we live and work, past, present and future

Our vision in action:

- **Champion** – we find, share and support the development of original, diverse and innovative illustration and illustrators
- **Connect** – we draw people with different backgrounds, ages and interests to the visual arts via illustration's connections to literature, socio-political themes, curriculum learning and hobbies

- **Unlock** – we provide people, especially those who are young and/or marginalised by society, with tools to share stories and ideas, and explore heritage through illustration
- **Strengthen** – to safeguard our future and grow our impact, we have begun a journey to become a sustainable, resilient, outcome-focused organisation

Our legacy for illustration:

- It is celebrated for its artistic and social value
- It is embedded in education, health and social care system
- It is representative of society and innovative in outlook

Our legacy for New River Head:

- People who live and work in and near Clerkenwell
explore it's heritage and feel part of its future
- Londoners recognise its importance to their city and
are drawn to explore its stories

Our values and principles

Our actions and behaviours are underpinned by:

- Curiosity
- Compassion
- Equity
- Relevance
- Rigour

Our values in action:

- We are imaginative and unafraid to think and do things differently
- We are driven by having a positive impact on others and on the world around us
- We meet people on their terms, design our activities with them, value their enjoyment and support them to grow

- We want everyone to know they belong and to feel our organisation belongs to them

Our strategy for 2022-2023

Outputs:

- **Exhibiting exciting and original practice**
 - Exhibitions
 - Touring
 - Digital showcasing

- **Nurturing talent, diversity and innovation in illustration**
 - Commissions and residencies
 - Courses, workshops and talks
 - Professional development and diversity

- **Engaging the local community with the Quentin**

- **Blake Centre**

- Heritage awareness and interpretation
 - Community and family activities
 - Projects with isolated and communities marginalised by society

- **Empowering young illustrators through their schools**

- Local in-school projects
 - Upskilling teachers
 - National resources

underpinned by:

- **Developing a sustainable business and operating model**

- Building a new home at New River Head

- Visitor experience
- Community of supporters
- New commercial opportunities

Change principles:

- **Jeopardy to Sustainability**

Our activities and business model at our previous location in Granary Square were not sustainable; the organisation was unable to generate sufficient earned income and philanthropy to cover its costs.

Relying so heavily on ticket income carries significant risks. Establishing a permanent home at New River Head will remove rent costs from our cost base. At the same time, we must diversify our funding, translating the love for House of Illustration into a community of long-term supporters and realising the potential to monetise current and future assets and activities.

- **One-off to Legacy**

As a young organisation, our planning was short-term and opportunistic; this flexibility was essential as we tested the market but now we need to become more strategic to enable us to build our impact and brand and, with that, sustained audience, funder and partner relations.

- **Exhibition to Destination**

A visit to House of Illustration at Granary Square was a visit to an exhibition, perhaps two. A visit to the Quentin Blake Centre for Illustration should be a day or afternoon out, encompassing a range of exhibition opportunities, a walk or play in landscaped gardens, lunch or a coffee and time browsing in the shop. This will deepen the experience of visitors and participants, encourage

repeat visits for and outside of exhibitions, and open up new revenue streams.

- **London plus to National impact**

We must deepen our national touring and learning networks, and establish a strong sectoral and digital voice in order to grow our impact. Not only is this our responsibility as the only UK organisation championing illustration in an exhibition and learning context, but this will be critical to securing long-term public and philanthropic investment.

Key Performance Indicators

We will monitor and set targets against:

Programme:

- Number of people who have experienced our exhibitions or taken part in our projects
- Views of digitally exhibited content
- Proportion of live and digitally exhibited illustrators who are women
- Proportion of live and digitally exhibited illustrators of heritage that has been under-represented in our programming*
- Proportion of supported illustrators and tutors who are of heritage that has been under-represented in our programming*

- Number of schools in which our projects are taking place
- Proportion of Islington primary schools in which our projects are taking place
- Proportion of teachers and adult learners who rate our projects good or excellent

*African, Caribbean, Central Asian, East Asian, South Asian, South East Asian and West Asian heritage

Sustainability and governance:

- Planning permission secured
- Proportion of funding secured for the Quentin Blake Centre for Illustration
- Positive cashflow balance and limit to P&L balance
- Exhibition and touring income
- Income from adult learning
- Growth in revenue fundraising

- Completion of brand refresh
- Social media engagement