

From the Chief Executive

June 2022

Dear Applicant

Thank you for your interest in contributing to the success of Bishopsgate Institute. We welcome your application and will look forward to assessing your suitability for the role(s) for which you apply.

Perhaps you already know us well, as one of our regular students, performers, tutors, researchers or partners. Perhaps you know of us from a visit during Open House weekend, or you came to see our *Out and About!* exhibition at the Barbican earlier this year, or perhaps you've heard of our special collections and archives. You might have even danced, sung or rehearsed here.

We're a very small organisation, which means everyone plays a role beyond the strict boundaries of their job description. Our team is passionate, feisty, highly skilled and collaborative, so you'll fit right in if you're interested in everything we do, and in supporting colleagues across the organisation.

Our special collections and archives are at the heart of what we do, and whatever the role is that you are considering with us, I'd encourage you to take the time to look into what we collect and why, and how we celebrate the stories of those perhaps ignored or left behind by the mainstream and establishment. There's a wealth of information on our website.

My vision for the organisation

For 127 years, Bishopsgate Institute has been providing opportunities for people to come together to learn and discover in extraordinary spaces. The nature of those opportunities continues to evolve over time, but we remain true to the motto our founder William Rogers chose for us: *senesco non segnesco*, which loosely translates as *I never stop learning*. I see this statement of intent applying equally to the staff team, our Board and our programming.

I hope it also motivates our students, participants and partners. I see Bishopsgate Institute, therefore, as an independent and energetic creative hub where the City of London meets the East End: an incubator for talent and skills development, a place that welcomes all sorts of people to explore their subject of interest with like-minded people. That means classes and rehearsals and workshops and social dances and study days and performances and archive research and orchestra play-throughs and talks and walks and debates and salons and concerts and new writing development and... things we probably haven't even thought of yet. I want there to be an energy around the building as this activity usually goes on in our various spaces through the weekday daytimes, evenings and weekends.

During the pandemic, we had to learn and adapt quickly to ensure we continued to serve our audiences, and this included developing livestream and hybrid event formats that have helped us reach people that might never come to the building. We look forward to continuing to welcome them online, even as we have re-opened our building to in-person activity.

We are financially independent, although Covid hit us hard. Eventually, I would like us to generate sufficient surplus from our activities to plough back into the programme, enabling us to invest in new and exciting projects and ideas. I want our profile and reputation to be an excellent and valued contributor to the cultural life of London and the world.

You'll find much more about who we are and what we do on our website, which I strongly encourage you to explore and enjoy before you submit your application.

Life “after” Covid

We closed our building in mid-March 2020 and, like most other organisations working with the public, had to suspend most of our in-person activity. Most of our team worked from home.

Now restrictions have been lifted and our building has re-opened fully, including the drop-in study space in the Reading Room. Our programme of courses, walks, talks and events is fully back in person, with some online options also available. Because ours is a venue-based team that relies on creative collaboration and stimulation, everyone is now back in the office, albeit working flexibly (up to one-third of a week's working hours can be worked from home, subject to the requirements of the role and the business).

Although the City of London workforce is not back in the numbers we were used to before the pandemic, we are seeing strong interest in our offer, but cannot be complacent. With our trustees, we are refreshing our strategy and our business model, considering where we can add the most value and with whom we can work to deliver the most impact to the people we want to serve. This means we are in a transition year, with a new business plan due to be signed off by March 2023.

I'm glad to say that we're welcoming new audiences and welcoming back our existing ones. But I'd be lying if I said these were ordinary times. The pandemic isn't over, and the shocks and after-effects are still very obvious. We are having to adapt and prioritise those projects that are the most urgent and which can help replenish the lost income of the past 6 months and beyond. More than ever, we rely on having talented and committed people in our team. Perhaps you could be one of them?



Francesca Canty Chief Executive & Artistic Director