

Public Engagement Grant Funded Activities 2024/25



Geology of Britannic Repair

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Architecture is an earth project. Every building is an expression of the earth's surface, its texture, its color, its grain and its shape. It is a dialogue between the human and the natural world. A building is not just a structure, it is a living organism, one that has evolved over time and space, responding to the needs of its inhabitants and the forces of nature.

The history of architecture is a story of adaptation. From the simple huts of our ancestors to the grand cathedrals of the Middle Ages, from the industrial revolution to the modernist movement, architecture has always been a reflection of the society it serves. It is a mirror of our values, our beliefs, and our aspirations.

But what happens when the ground beneath us shifts? When the earth trembles and the buildings are thrown into disarray? This is the story of the geology of Britannic Repair, a project that seeks to understand the relationship between the built environment and the natural world.

The exhibition explores the geological and architectural history of the region, from the ancient Roman settlements to the modernist buildings of the 20th century. It examines the impact of the earth's movements on the built environment and the ways in which architects have responded to these challenges.

The exhibition also looks at the ways in which the geology of the region has shaped the local culture and identity. It explores the ways in which the earth's movements have influenced the local architecture and the ways in which the local people have adapted to these challenges.

L'architettura è un progetto sulla terra. Ogni edificio è un'espressione della superficie terrestre, della sua texture, del suo colore, della sua grana e della sua forma. È un dialogo tra il mondo umano e il mondo naturale. Un edificio non è solo una struttura, è un organismo vivente, uno che si è evoluto nel tempo e nello spazio, rispondendo alle esigenze dei suoi abitanti e alle forze della natura.

La storia dell'architettura è una storia di adattamento. Dalle semplici capanne dei nostri antenati alle maestose cattedrali del Medioevo, dalla rivoluzione industriale al movimento modernista, l'architettura ha sempre riflesso la società che serve. È uno specchio dei nostri valori, delle nostre credenze e delle nostre aspirazioni.

Ma cosa succede quando la terra sotto i nostri piedi si muove? Quando la terra trema e gli edifici vengono gettati in disordine? Questa è la storia della geologia di Britannic Repair, un progetto che cerca di comprendere la relazione tra l'ambiente costruito e il mondo naturale.

L'esposizione esplora la storia geologica e architettonica della regione, dalle antiche insediamenti romani agli edifici modernisti del 20° secolo. Esamina l'impatto dei movimenti della terra sull'ambiente costruito e i modi in cui gli architetti hanno risposto a queste sfide.

L'esposizione si occupa anche di come la geologia della regione ha plasmato la cultura e l'identità locali. Esplora i modi in cui i movimenti della terra hanno influenzato l'architettura locale e i modi in cui le persone locali si sono adattate a queste sfide.

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Engagement at Queen Mary

The Engagement Team enable and sustain a wide range of projects and partnerships - from local to national and international collaborations - which evidence Queen Mary's ongoing commitment to public benefit locally and globally. Through public, civic, community and creative engagement, we strengthen Queen Mary's role as an anchor institution in East London.

Since 2012, the Centre for Public Engagement (CPE) has supported Queen Mary staff and students to reach out and engage people outside the university. We have funded a total of **390 projects** over the last 13 years, supporting researchers at all career stages from PhD to professor, as well as professional services staff and students, to engage with the public on Queen Mary's research, education and other core business. CPE funded projects strengthen research outputs and impact across the university, creating more opportunities for patient and public involvement, connecting researchers to communities with lived experience of research topics and providing early support to research projects that go on to win awards.

Over the years the CPE has supported grant recipients to build and sustain **100+ external partners** each year, from local voluntary and community organisations to national and international governments and sector leading businesses. Engagement is now more important than ever, as funders and the government expect universities to evidence their work with partners to deliver clear benefits for the public and the country. This report looks at CPE funded projects in 2024/25, demonstrating the energy and experience across the university for innovative, embedded engagement activities. Through enabling collaborations which wouldn't be possible without CPE support, these projects are examples of Queen Mary's ongoing dedication to the public good.

Grant Funding 2024-25

In the academic year 2024-25, the Centre for Public Engagement awarded a total of 45 grants. This breaks down as 6 Large Grants and 6 Participatory Research Grants (up to £10,000 each) and 33 Small Grants (up to £1000 each).

Across all projects, grant recipients collaborated **with 99 partners** and welcomed **4846 audience members** across **58 in person events**. Views, likes and clicks combined totaled **577,349 online impressions**.



Pedagogy in the Park (credit Nigel Brundson)

Large Grants

The Big Mouth Project

This oral health project empowered Tower Hamlets residents through events, surveys, a mural, and the “Big Mouth” booklet. Led by Vanessa Muirhead, Institute of Dentistry, it gave communities a voice in oral health research and is achieving sustained impact through securing further funding from Bart’s Charity and collaborating with the Northeast London Integrated Care Board to include more consideration on the social, cultural, and emotional factors that define how people actually experience oral health service provision.



Big Mouth community conversation workshop

Engaging New Audiences with the Art of Hamad Butt

Public events at Whitechapel Gallery introduced British Pakistani artist Hamad Butt’s work through film, performance, and tours for HIV service user groups. Led by Dominic Johnson, School of the Arts, the project explored Butt’s identity and challenged stigma, creating cultural dialogue around sexuality, HIV, and British South Asian heritage while engaging diverse audiences in meaningful conversations. It built impactful partnerships between the university, gallery and local charity Positive East, and changed the way local people think about HIV by connecting them to cultural spaces and sharing research in engaging and accessible ways with the public.



Pedagogy in the Park (photo credit Nigel Brunson)

Pedagogy in the Park

Twenty Queen Mary students and alumni trained with third sector organisations to develop dialogue on Harm Reduction and Debt Justice, culminating in action days in parks and at parliament. Led by Jennifer Randall, Wolfson Institute of Population Health, in partnership with Debt Justice, Release, and Anyone’s Child, the project built advocacy skills and confidence, enabling participants to influence social justice debates and policymaking.

Housing the Commons: Where There’s Wool There’s a Way

Crafting workshops in the UK and Holland explored rural-urban relations and ‘commoning’ traditions through wool felting. Led by Jessica Jacobs, School of Society & Environment, with farmers, artists and local artisans, the project connected cultural heritage with climate-responsive practices and fostered cross-border networks, producing creative outputs like portraits, maps, and short films to inspire sustainable approaches.

The Wildlife Photo-ID Game: Can You Do Better Than AI?

An interactive digital game was developed to teach wildlife photo-identification, engaging conservationists, ecotourists, and students. Led by Kostas Papafitsoros, School of Mathematical Sciences, it raised awareness of biodiversity and endangered species while showcasing AI's role in ecological research and conservation, creating an innovative educational tool that is helping to protect marine life for future generations.

Planetary Repair & Reparations

Alongside the British Pavilion at the Venice Architecture Biennale, this project delivered film screenings, performances, and workshops visited by over 200,000 people. Led by Kathryn Yusoff, School of Society and Environment, with the British Council and Royal Geographical Society (with IBG), it explored repair, restitution, and reparations, sparking global conversations that shaped visions for decolonial and decarbonised futures through creative engagement.



British Pavillion Venice Biennale (credit Chris Lane, British Council)

Participatory Research Grants

“They Don’t Believe You”

This participatory project worked with neurodivergent adults to explore diagnostic challenges and test computer-aided techniques. Inclusive workshops encouraged discussion, and participants trailed robotic systems in a user-centred lab setting. Led by Ekaterina Ivanova, School of Electronic Engineering and Computer Science, it focused on improving trust in alternative diagnostic tools and laid foundations for future systems shaped by lived experience.

Bridging the Gap

This study co-produced approaches to identify and support mental health challenges in neurodivergent young people. Workshops evaluated assessment tools and designed a follow-on project for a new diagnostic system. Led by Giorgia Michellini, School of Behavioural and Biological Sciences in collaboration with other Queen Mary researchers Emma Hayashibara, Chiara Caserini, Georgina Hosang, and Laura Havers. The project has strengthened awareness among professionals and influenced future policy and clinical guidelines for early intervention.

“Voices” – Co-Produced Psychosis Sound World

This creative project co-produced an artistic sound world to reduce stigma and raise awareness of psychosis symptoms. Short and long versions were designed for social media, festivals, and radio. Led by Viet-Xuan (Elen) Williams, a GP and researcher, working with Natalie Shoham, Wolfson Institute of Population Health, and CoreArts, a charity running creative projects with people who experience symptoms including hearing voices. The sound world was designed to foster empathy for voice-hearers and through raising awareness, aims to improve diagnosis and reduce the time that psychosis goes untreated.

Co-Developing Patient and Public Activities on Large Language Models

This interdisciplinary project co-produced an animated resource explaining large language models (LLMs) in health research. It was led by Mel Ramasawmy, Wolfson Institute of Population Health, with collaborators from Queen Mary, Kings College London and Brighton & Sussex Medical School. Working in partnership with Social Action for Health, the animation is designed to improve AI literacy and foster trust in LLM use for healthcare. Workshops with communities across Tower Hamlets shaped the animation, supporting safe use of LLMs and promoting meaningful patient involvement.



Workshop on co-developing Large Language Models

Experiences of Bengali Women in Trauma Recovery

This participatory project captured narratives of Bengali women recovering from facial trauma to address gaps in care equity. Led by Sharan Sidhu at the Royal London Dental Hospital, working with Ophelia Phillips, Maria Langridge, and Leigh Simpson (Northeast London NHS Foundation Trust), the work strengthened understanding of intersectional experiences and laid foundations for meaningful, culturally sensitive support for future patients.

Mapping Contemporary British South Asian Theatre

This project documented the resurgence of British South Asian theatre through co-produced research with playwrights and audiences. Jaswinder Blackwell-Pal, School of the Arts, worked with playwright and founder of Kali Theatre Rukhsana Ahmed and BBC presenter and broadcaster Shiroma Silva. Together, they explored creative forms and audience interpretations, producing podcasts and long-table discussions. The work enriched cultural scholarship and amplified voices shaping modern British Asian theatre.



Barriers for Young Black Men Seeking Healthcare

This photovoice service evaluation explored barriers to hospital attendance for young Black men in East London. Led by Lucy Johnson, Wolfson Institute of Population Health, collaborating with Barts Health and East London based community partner Coffee Afrik CIC, the project focused on making healthcare access more equitable. After a successful sharing event, the participants have been invited by Bart's NHS Trust to help shape future policy discussions around inclusion and equity in service provision, and have gone on to set up their own research focused community projects to advocate for change called the Young Black Men's Collective and Narratives for Justice.

Small Grants

Small Grants are a way to pilot a new approach to engagement, or to connect with a partner and reach new audiences through small scale projects that can lead to longer term collaborations. In 2024/25, the **Get Tower Hamlets Active** project led by Harry Pape in the Student's Union piloted students delivering free sports sessions in local schools. This has now developed into a partnership with Tower Hamlets Council and is being supported through a Large Grant in 2025/26 to scale up and reach more local people through new locations and partnerships. This will provide vital evidence of positive impacts that can be used for future funding bids to establish a sustainable long-term project where QM students are making a positive difference to local sport provision and population health.

Other examples of projects supported by Small Grants in 2024-25:

- A series of bi-lingual (Spanish and English) embroidery workshops, exploring how Latin American communities in London engage with nature
- A day of talks, activities and displays at the Francis Crick Institute for World Down Syndrome Day for the Down Syndrome community in London
- A 6-week community internship for three UG Engineering students at The Brunel Museum
- A project working in partnership with Tottenham Rights, a grassroots Black men's advocacy group to deliver a focus group exploring historically low uptake in prostate cancer screening amongst Black men

Why run an Engagement Project?

Engagement is all about connecting and collaborating outside of the university, and the process of establishing partners and thinking about how to generate mutual benefit for the people who are engaged really helps with defining what impacts research can have on the wider world. It's a powerful tool for engaging people outside of academia to understand and address key local, national and international challenges. When we asked grant recipients from 2024/25 about their experiences running engagement projects, they highlighted the following outcomes:

- Reaching new audiences
- Supporting future funding bids
- Recruiting participants with lived experience of research areas
- Building strong and equitable external partnerships
- Enabling participants to develop new skills
- Strengthening research impacts through participatory practices
- Co-designing creative outputs with participants
- Increasing cultural awareness amongst Queen Mary staff and students
- Inspiring participants to set up their own activities post project



Helen Woods, Crocheting the Air at Tower Hamlets Family Fun Day

There were a wide range of engagement methods employed by projects. The CPE has a year-round offer of training workshops and advice surgeries to support ambitious and innovative engagement activity, and it was great to see such a variety of approaches to engagement deployed by grant recipients last year.

Projects engaged the public and partner organisations through:

Tours, film screenings, hands-on workshops, talks and discussions, focus groups, parliamentary lobbies, sports sessions, tabletop activities, shared meals and more.

Looking forward to 25/26

There's an exciting range of projects already confirmed for this year, with 11 Large and Participatory Grants already awarded and over 50 partnerships already in place.

Large Grants

Working in partnership with Drapers' Academy and Eastside Community Heritage, the '**Heritage on the Hill**' project led by PhD student Jade Hunter, School of Society and Environment, is working with secondary school students to collect, preserve and present community stories about Harold Hill in Havering. This will be the start of a living archive of the community, aiming to showcase the suburban estate's historical importance and celebrate the community's rich and evolving history.

In Southeastern India, Niranjana Ramesh, School of Society and Environment, is working with a team of local artists and photographers, to address stigmatisation and marginalisation of fish-work, and to empower local fisherwomen as part of the '**Kitchen Fragrance: sensory politics of making food and home on an Indian Ocean coastline**' project. The fisherwomen will take part in art and photography training, with the project culminating in interactive exhibitions taking place in fisher community centres in villages and towns, as well as exhibitions in Chennai and Puducherry.

'**In Living Memory**' is a project led by Adam Elliot-Cooper, Sharri Plonski, School of Society and Environment, and Tanzil Chowdhury, School of Law, in collaboration with arts centre Rich Mix, exploring and archiving histories of community-based organising against racism and fascism in East London. Student researchers will be trained in community outreach and will work with grassroots collectives and multi-generational movements to collect stories, photographs and objects for a living archive.

Spanning South and East London, Rio de Janeiro and Fortaleza, the '**Creative Resilience**' project led by People's Palace Projects, School of the Arts, is bringing together young people, researchers and artists to shape community action on mental health and climate change – through "Long Table" performance events, rap and slam poetry workshops, and film screenings.

And in Tower Hamlets, the '**Active Communities**' project led by Harry Pape in the Student's Union is enabling free community sports and activity sessions in local schools and community settings to be delivered by Queen Mary students, with students also receiving a professional sports qualification. Activity sessions include hockey, football, volleyball, combat sports and women's basketball – with the project aiming to fill gaps in local sports provision, provide equipment, revitalise a culture of volunteering within student Sports Clubs, and upskill students.

Participatory Research Grants

Working in partnership with Queen Mary academics and community-based organisations, the **Black People's Health Co-Creation Panel**, led by Sara Paparini, Wolfson Institute of Population Health, is establishing a dedicated panel to organise workshops that co-create new research or adapt existing projects on Black health. This initiative aims to strengthen collaboration and drive systemic change in research practices, improving health outcomes for Black communities.

In Tower Hamlets, the **HeART Project – Health, Art and Young People**, led by Spotlight Creative Youth Service with Heather McMullen, Wolfson Institute of Population Health, and youth charity Kazzum Arts, is exploring young people's health experiences through arts-based methods. Funded by Arts Council England, the project will amplify youth voices and reshape how health services and policies respond to under-represented issues affecting young people, with outputs informing health and policy actors.

The **Illumination** project, led by Stephen Hibbs, Wolfson Institute of Population Health, uses participatory methods to reimagine hospital care for people living with sickle cell disease during crises. By fostering dialogue between patients and professionals, the project aims to create lasting improvements in crisis care and influence healthcare training for sickle cell disease.

In Shurugwi, Zimbabwe, the **Community-Led Research for Congenital CMV** project, led by Harsita Patel, is setting maternal-child health research priorities and co-designing methods for future studies on congenital cytomegalovirus. This participatory pilot will build local research capacity, ensure community ownership, and lay the groundwork for culturally appropriate prevention and screening strategies in low-resource settings.

Spanning Rio's urban peripheries, **Youth in Motion**, led by Pedro Gabriel Ferreira Faria at People's Palace Projects, is engaging 10 young artists, producers, and cultural researchers to co-develop a participatory project on cultural rights. The initiative will influence cultural planning, expand public understanding of cultural rights, and embed youth perspectives in policymaking.

Finally, the **Co-Created Film on Solitary Confinement** project, led by Katharine Round, School of Languages, Linguistics and Film, is creating a film based on the lived experience of Keith Thomas, who spent 25 years in isolation. This work will restore agency to survivors, challenge marginalisation in the prison system, and inspire new approaches to justice reform.

Small Grants

The first two rounds of Small Grant funding for the year received 58 applications, and there is one more round opening on March 4th 2026.

We will also be piloting a new funding scheme for Queen Mary staff and students to collaborate with local partners on ways to generate inclusive economic growth. This opportunity aligns with the next [East London Civic Action Network](#) meeting on growth and skills in partnership with Queen Mary, the East London Business Alliance and Canary Wharf Group.

New faces in the Engagement Team include Public Engagement Manager Rose de Lara, who joined in March 2025, Rachel Wornell who started as Strategic Engagement Officer in July 2025, and Alex Mehta Brown who is on secondment this academic year as Public Engagement Lead.

Find out more about the [CPE team](#) and how to [get in touch](#)

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Public Engagement Grant Funding 2024-25
Centre for Public Engagement

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