



***Best viewed on
desktop, laptop or tablet
(or rotate your phone)***

Another edition of London Design Festival is upon us. For 2024, we've expanded and refined our scope, providing a snapshot of the capital's unsurpassed creative scene - and also making serious noises as to where it might lead next.

As you'd expect, our events, interventions and original projects are as variegated as ever, harnessing London's incredible diversity and progressive nous throughout. There are structurally startling and green-fingered pavilions. Flights of community engagement within timeless architectural icons. Everyday spaces thrown open to creative endeavour. Warm welcomes to the city's new arrivals and jovial anniversary events for the great and good.

This year, Visit Greater Palm Springs and Nina Tolstrup bring Barbie's inimitable brand of midcentury modern chic to Strand Aldwych. The drinks behemoth Johnnie Walker and art collective Marshmallow Laser Feast delve deep into the innovative world of glassmaking at The Old Selfridges Hotel, while, at Somerset House, the Dutch solar designer Marjan van Aubel (supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies) gives new meaning to the phrase 'a place in the sun'.

In Greenwich, Melek Zeynep Bulut explores duality and interaction in a suspended installation; AHEC, Diez Office and OMC°C focus on sustainable structures and biodiversity at Chelsea College of Arts; and, at Fortnum & Mason, the polymath designer Jaime Hayon iconoclastically takes up in the storied store's windows and atrium, to eye-popping effect.

Welcome to

Vol. 4

That's merely scratching the surface: from these major landmark projects and starry commissions to the myriad smaller Spotlight events dotted across our citywide Design Districts (11 of them this year), there's something here to pique the interest of design aficionados of all stripes.

What's more, the 2024 Medal Winners - titans of the worlds of cosmetics, fashion, humanitarian engineering and holistic biotechnologies - comprise names ascendent and (very) established, celebrating the creative spirit to a range of holistic, benevolent and aesthetic ends.

As ever, the Global Design Forum raises big questions and forces even bigger answers. This year, the topics under discussion at the V&A include designing for the human experience; building healthier cities; embracing resilience and repair within our industries; exploring the emotional minutiae of shared histories; and traversing the milieu of human- and non-human-centred design.

As with 2023, we've teamed up with Bloomberg Connects' mobile guide to make the Festival easier to navigate - an essential tool when there's so much to discover.

Ben Evans CBE

Director

London Design Festival

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London Design Medals

London Design Medals are an opportunity to recognise the contribution made by leading design figures and emerging talent to London and the global industry, with four accolades awarded:

London Design Medal

The highest accolade, bestowed upon an individual who has distinguished themselves within the industry and demonstrated consistent creative excellence over a number of years.

Lifetime Achievement Medal

Honouring an individual who has made significant and fundamental contributions to the design and creative industries over their career.

Emerging Design Medal

Recognising an individual who has made a recent impact on the design scene and has an emerging practice showing design promise.

Design Innovation Medal

Celebrating entrepreneurship in all its forms, both locally and internationally. It honours an individual who has built one or more businesses where design lies at the core of its development and success.

This year's winners are forces in the world of creativity: in cosmetics, fashion, humanitarian engineering and holistic biotechnologies. They're altering the face of beauty conventions, defining global sartorial expression, affecting profound impact in conflict zones and integrating living systems into solutions to global challenges.

The Festival is delighted to announce Bentley Motors as sponsor of the Design Innovation Medal; Johnnie Walker Blue Label as sponsor of the London Design Medal; and the continuation of the Festival's long-standing partnership with Fortnum & Mason as supporting partner of the London Design Medals 2024.

London Design Medal

Writer: Sam Rogers

Pat

"Innovation only comes from being fearless and seeing beyond what is to what could be."

McGrath

DBE

Photography: Ben Hassett



Fashion can be... fickle. What's in today is out tomorrow. But it is this obsession with what's next that makes the achievements of Dame Pat McGrath – the most influential makeup artist in the world, according to *Vogue*; one of the most influential and powerful people in fashion, per CNN; and the most powerful person in fashion, in the words of *Ebony* magazine – all the more remarkable.

Born and raised in Northampton, McGrath credits her late mother, a devout Jehovah's Witness, for her love and appreciation of style. She fondly recounts their weekly routine of selecting *Vogue* patterns, fabrics and makeup – often DIY concoctions blended at home to match their skin tones – to “bring the story together”. “She'd be in awe of how far our shared love for beauty and fashion has taken me, and how it blossomed into a career that empowers and inspires countless others,” McGrath says.

Having been “discovered” by the fashion editor Kim Bowen in the 1990s, McGrath worked on the most iconic editorial shoots of the era, alongside then *i-D* editor (and future *British Vogue* editor) Edward Enninful and the photographer Steven Meisel – collaborations that continue to this day. “The secret is passion and persistence,” she says of breaking into the industry and staying at the top of her game.

As well as her pioneering editorial work, she has spent the past three decades masterminding the theatrical beauty of thousands of fashion shows, including 20 last season alone. From the haunting displays of the late Alexander McQueen, to Marc Jacobs, Miuccia Prada, John Galliano and more, she has literally put a face on the biggest fashion shows going. (The glazed doll skin looks created for Maison Margiela's haute couture show broke the internet.)



Photography: Selects Biel

Famed for her use of bold hues and material experimentation (feathers, gems, petals and pearls – you name it, she's done it) McGrath has also struck a rare balance between artistry and business. “Innovation only comes from being fearless and seeing beyond what is to what could be,” she says. Having worked as the creative design director behind CoverGirl, Max Factor, and Giorgio Armani’s makeup collection, McGrath launched her own brand, Pat McGrath Labs, in 2015. Inclusivity and innovation were at the brand’s core, long before other beauty brands were catering to an array of skin tones. By 2018, it was valued at \$1 billion. In 2021, McGrath was awarded a damehood by the queen for her services to fashion, beauty and diversity.

The London Design Medal holds special significance, too. “Design is at the core of everything I do as a makeup artist,” she says. “So to have my dedication to design recognised and celebrated with the London Design Medal – and in the city where I got my start, no less – is a complete full-circle moment for me.” That isn’t to say she is happy to rest on laurels. “I’m aware that there’s more work to be done in this industry overall. The beauty world needs to be a mirror of our society, reflecting all the wonderful diversity it holds.”

Photography: Selects Biel



Lifetime Achievement Medal

***"Kawakubo's work is unalloyedly original,
idiosyncratic and free from convention"***

***Rei
Kawakubo***



Rei Kawakubo has defied convention to redefine fashion for nearly five decades. Since founding Comme des Garçons in 1969, Kawakubo's iconoclastic vision has made her one of the most influential garment designers of the 20th century; subverting shape and function, reframing ideas of beauty, and proposing a new relationship between body and dress.

Kawakubo was the first Japanese designer to bring their brand to the Paris Fashion Week schedule and, 40 years in, she continues to set international trends. In 2004, Kawakubo and her husband, Adrian Joffe, opened Dover Street Market in London's Mayfair district – conceived to sell new, conceptual and trendsetting brands, and which later expanded to Ginza, New York, Singapore, Beijing, Los Angeles and Paris. In 2017, she was the focus of a major retrospective at the New York Met, 'Art of the In-Between' – the first living designer to be honoured as such since Yves Saint Laurent in 1983.

Here, four esteemed figures from the world of art, design and architecture reflect on Kawakubo's incredible legacy.



Gus Casely-Hayford
Director, V&A East

'Rei Kawakubo is such a distinctive presence, not just within fashion, but within the design world. A totally unique voice. It's not just her exemplary standards – of cutting, of design, of conception – but her vision, of taking fashion to a different place. Of it not being about tiny, incremental, seasonal steps, but of completely blowing the parameters off of what was possible and then creating something astonishingly beautiful, as well as revolutionary.'

My late brother was a fashion designer and someone who I absolutely adored. One day, he was talking to me about his heroes, about the people who drove him, and the person that he kept coming back to was the almost mythical figure of Rei Kawakubo.

I discovered Rei's work through my brother's love of her; a love for someone who sat on the periphery, but was strong enough in their vision to move the gravity of fashion toward her, rather than gravitating toward it, and then to underwrite that vision with a kind of a moral belief in trying to recalibrate the fashion world as something that was grounded in sustainability, equity, those sorts of things. But then also to create clothes that broke rules, which were exquisite and engineered in ways that asked questions about sartorial possibilities and history. Someone who was the complete tailor, but also an artist.'



Courtesy: Comme des Garçons

Amanda Levete CBE

Architect and director-founder, AL_A

'I met Rei at the end of the 1990s.

She asked if we would design a new façade for a store that she was doing in New York. She had a store in the West Village, but she wanted to move it to a part of the city that only the aficionados would go to.

She took a building in Chelsea. At the time, there were no galleries or shops – it was a rare piece of New York's industrial heritage. And she said, "I'd like you to do something low key, but to re-clad it. I don't want to make a big noise." We went away and thought how rare it was to have an industrial building in New York – it was a good scale, with fantastic graffiti and beautiful signage. So we said to her, "Let's leave everything and just do this fabulous transition between inside and outside." Because of her innate confidence to volte face she trusted us, and that was the beginning of a fantastic relationship where we did a triptych: the store in New York, a store in Tokyo and one in Paris.

Introducing Dover Street Market was a total game changer. It wasn't just about

her clothes; it was about embracing and supporting other designers. As well as being fearless, she's this great mentor to up-and-coming designers, and has the humility and the confidence to give them as much space as she has herself.'

Gregor Muir

Director of collection, International Art, Tate

'When I've spoken to artists who like Rei Kawakubo and Comme des Garçons' approach, they talk about it as an artistic decision that's already been made for them. The American sculptor Ronnie Horn, for instance, only wears Comme des Garçons and said to me once that it was "a decision made for her some time ago". I liked hearing that from someone so precise and challenging, and perhaps anarchistic themselves. So I see that the walking across these areas of fashion, art, design and beyond is really inherent to Kawakubo's practice, because the thought is mobile. The thought is the thing that we need to look at, and that can move freely across a whole range of practices.

I can think of three ways to describe Rei. First, disobey: take the instructions and don't do that. Then, precision: by which I mean the way in which she collages things, the way that things are precisely brought together, both in terms of the idea and in terms of the making. And third, a sense of wonderment. I often look at her works thinking there is a play with the idea of beauty; but there's also a childlike sense at the core of it. The way she makes things comes through memory and what inspired her. It radiates wonderment.'

Alice Rawsthorn, Design critic and author

'Every aspect of Rei Kawakubo's work is steeped in her zest for experimentation, and her determination to reinvent and deconstruct the form and function of her fashion collections – and, critically, their ability to enable the wearer to express their personal identity. As a result, her work is unalloyedly original, idiosyncratic and singular, and free from convention in terms of gender stereotypes. Every aspect of her work reflects her own sensibility,

and also our perceptions of her.

Other designers have done this in the past: Coco Chanel, Cristóbal Balenciaga and Yves Saint Laurent were all brilliant at it, but none of them have done it quite as compellingly and, critically, as audaciously as Rei Kawakubo.

I first encountered her work in the mid-1980s when I was in my mid-20s, when she had just started to show the Comme des Garçons collections in Paris. It's impossible to overstate how thrilling it was: a sort of mash-up of punk influences, but also mingei – the early-20th-century Japanese folk craft movement, which was every bit as subversive at the time. She deconstructed the codes of Japanese workwear to create clothes that made the women who wore them, and young feminists like me, feel strong, powerful, confident and ambitious – everything we weren't supposed to feel at the time.'



Courtesy: Dover Street Market

Emerging Design Medal

Writer: Shawn Adams

Harry Blakiston Houston

“Insulate Ukraine emerged from an approach of focusing on real issues - rather than theoretical problems conceived in England”



Harry Blakiston Houston's interests in engineering and maths stem from his rural upbringing in Yorkshire and the Sperrin Mountains of Northern Ireland. "Growing up on a farm, I had access to a lot of tools," he explains of an environment that fostered his curiosity and passion for engineering. "There was always something to fix."

This mindset eventually led Houston, 27, to read engineering mathematics at the University of Bristol. After graduating, he started a PhD in biotechnology at Hughes Hall, Cambridge. In 2023, he took a break from his studies to start a charity. The idea that has become Insulate Ukraine was born.

Insulate Ukraine – an NGO devised to design and install a pioneering open-source design for triple-glazed windows in bomb-damaged homes – derived from Houston's desire to use his engineering acumen to help people in the war-torn country. He first visited Ukraine in April 2022, "to identify problems that needed solutions", he explains.

With winter approaching, it was clear that shattered windows were going to affect the livability of the area's domestic buildings. "Insulate Ukraine emerged from this approach to focusing on real issues rather than theoretical problems conceived in England."

His concept – initially self-funded, as Houston aimed to create a low-cost, low-resource solution – was ingeniously simple. Constructed from PVC piping, pipe insulation, polyethylene and duct tape, Houston's shatterproof windows cost about \$15 to make and take about 20 minutes to be installed by two people. "We require no manufacturing, no complex machinery and use easy-to-procure materials," he says.

When Houston returned to Ukraine over Christmas 2022, he piloted the window system in the fractious eastern stretches of the country, specifically in the town of Izyum. "It was relatively safe, but still had dangers from landmines and remnants of the occupation," he says. "The destruction was extensive." To date, Insulate Ukraine has installed more than 30,000 windows in Lyman, Izyum, Nikopol and Kherson, protecting people from Ukraine's harsh winters. "I want to see a world in which civilians do not need to freeze due to the oppressive acts of another nation."



Photography: Zachary Tarrant



With the Russia-Ukraine conflict showing no sign of abating, Houston aims to continue his work in the country. “We’ve only just begun. There are 10 million windows that require fixing and we’ve designed a system that can solve that.” After that, he is keen to expand his creative remit to those affected by other wars. The Cambridge Consulting Network has identified Syria as an area of interest, he says.

Houston’s status as a recipient of LDF’s Emerging Design Medal is down to his aspiration to use engineering to help others, which has manifested in work as considered as it is affecting. With Insulate Ukraine, he is showing the profound, practical power of design, eschewing personal kudos in the process. “I see myself as an inventor who uses systems to solve problems,” he says. “When I was told I would be awarded the medal, I asked if it could go to the people on the ground in Ukraine, the civilians who stayed to help their community. They are putting their lives on the line every single day. I didn’t win this award. They did.”

Design Innovation Medal

Writer: Sujata Burman

Natsai

***"How do we communicate what we
do in a world still rooted in linear
thinking?"***

***Audrey
Chieza***



In her first TED Talk in 2017, Natsai Audrey Chieza called herself a material designer. This was a year ahead of launching her first company, Faber Futures, an agency that works at the intersection of design, biotech and society. In the talk, Chieza presented fabric dyes made with non-chemical synthetic biology, which led audiences to think she was working in fashion. These days, Chieza proudly exists between spaces, seeing the power of working “with the best in their field to bring out specific project outcomes”.

Chieza graduated with an MA in architecture from the University of Edinburgh before studying for an MA in materials futures at Central Saint Martins. It was here that she began integrating design with social- and geo-politics, painting outside the lines of the usual course rhetoric. As such, Faber Futures as a collective has been hard to define. “We are weavers,” she says. “We have a borderline outsider status that allows us to weave all these connections.”

Faber Futures breaks beyond the typical way of working in material design, which traditionally involves startups raising venture capital for a new material. “Our incentives are not driven by shareholder returns,” Chieza explains. “They’re driven by curiosity and discovery and bringing different actors together.”

These actors include scientists and policy makers, with Faber Futures joining together stakeholders that don’t usually encounter each other. How? With design as the communicator. The lens of design works as the centrepiece for Chieza, carving out these concepts of climate change. This vision of a future where people and the planet can survive has led to her becoming the LDF24 Innovation Medal winner.

Normal Phenomena of Life campaign / Image: Toby Coulson





For Chieza, it is clear the bigger picture has always been at play. Even when she was deciding on the name for her venture, she was inspired by the German-American historian and philosopher Hannah Arendt's political theories around *Homo faber*: the notion of man mastering his environment through the creation of tools. "I was interested in how the making of our futures was actually aligned with living systems, how this is going to reshape what we think of making and the tools and language that we use."

London Design Festival 2023 was a pinnacle moment for Chieza's ideas taking shape. This is when she co-founded Normal Phenomena of Life, an online marketplace for new biomaterials. "I had this vision over a decade ago," Chieza says of the concept, which is described as the 'first biodesign-native lifestyle brand'. From a jacket made of bacteria to face oil made from fungi, this shoppable platform is also a storytelling space for the journey of biophilic living.

In the evolving information age, Chieza still faces challenges. "How do we communicate what we do in a world that is still rooted in linear thinking?" she asks. Essentially, Chieza knows there is no time to waste with the climate emergency as she gears towards formalising her practice as a research and development institute. And what would she say to the woman speaking in the TED Talk in 2017? "Let's be brave, now."



LDF in Focus

American dream

'Pavilions of Wonder' by Nina Tolstrup of Studiomama

***An imaginative collaboration between
Barbie, Visit Greater Palm Springs
and designer Nina Tolstrup gives an
American icon a midcentury twist.***

Words by Bianca Gidwani

Courtesy: Studiomama



‘Pavilions of Wonder’, a striking fusion of design and playful imagination, blends Greater Palm Springs’ midcentury modern architecture with the iconic Barbie DreamHouse in a triumvirate of toyetic structures at Strand Aldwych.

The collaboration is born from a shared legacy of architectural inspiration and cultural influence. Designed by multidisciplinary designer Nina Tolstrup of Studiomama, known for her distinctive, playful approach, the project merges desert modernism with playful elements in an installation both nostalgic and refreshingly contemporary.

Due to its vast and open desert landscape, Greater Palm Springs became a canvas for visionary architects, earning it the title of the ‘US Capital of Modernism’. The region boasts an unrivalled concentration of midcentury modern structures, shaped by luminaries including E Stewart Williams, Albert Frey and Richard Neutra. This architectural heritage has long inspired designers, including those behind Barbie’s evolving home. “Greater Palm Springs was a fantastic playground for young architects post-World War II to explore cost-effective and quick ways to construct housing,” Tolstrup notes.

The city is more than an architectural haven: it’s a hub for sustainability and wellness; a low-rise retro-urbane oasis in the southern California desert. Its sun-soaked landscape, characterised by geometric lines and vibrant colours, reflects a lifestyle that is sophisticated and playful – aligning perfectly with Barbie’s world. Colleen Pace, chief sales and marketing officer for Visit Greater Palm Springs, says: “The Barbie brand and Greater Palm Springs share a commitment to creativity, inclusivity and iconic design.” She adds: “The Barbie DreamHouse symbolises imaginative play and vibrant aesthetics, resonating with our destination’s spirit of exploration and fun.”

“Barbie’s DreamHouse is one of the most recognisable homes in the world,” says Kim Culmone, senior vice president and global head of Barbie, American Girl and dolls design at Mattel. “Based in southern California, where indoor and outdoor living fuse, it naturally takes nods from iconic Greater Palm Springs styles.”

“The Barbie DreamHouse symbolises imaginative play and vibrant aesthetics, resonating with Greater Palm Springs’ spirit of exploration and fun”

Since 1962, the DreamHouse has evolved with societal shifts and design trends – from the early modernist cardboard house and 1970s A-frame to the 1990s mansions and today’s tech-savvy playsets. Evolving from a time when women could not get mortgages independently, the DreamHouse has become a symbol of empowerment, possibility and aspiration.



Courtesy: Studiomama

Tolstrup’s design process began with a trip to Greater Palm Springs and a deep dive into the history of Barbie’s DreamHouse. “We looked at the evolution of the DreamHouse, informed by Greater Palm Springs architecture. We examined the visual language and iconic elements common to both,” she explains.

The resulting installation features three distinct pavilions. ‘Dream: Infinity Garden’ recreates a California oasis with an airy, open structure. Featuring cacti and palms alongside playful features, the pavilion draws on the colonnade of E Stewart Williams’ Coachella Valley Savings and Loan bank and blends the expansive feel of desert modernism with Barbie’s interactive, imaginative play.

With its curvilinear form and roof inspired by Barbie’s slide and swimming pool, ‘Discover: Design Stories’ features peepholes that reveal vignettes charting the design connections between the DreamHouse and Greater Palm Springs’ architecture. Inspired by Albert Frey’s geometric grid design and the 2023 Barbie DreamHouse, ‘Reflect: Playful Pauses’ features a butterfly roof and creates a kaleidoscopic effect with patterned breeze blocks and a mirrored underside. At night, it illuminates, adding whimsy to the London cityscape.

Tolstrup views this project as a natural extension of her studio’s practice. “We strive to bring elements of playfulness and joy, whether it be objects, spaces or experiences. This installation is a continuity of our work and links our thinking about spaces and joyful experiences.”

The installation creates a dialogue about the power of play in shaping our built environment and invites visitors to explore the pavilions with imagination, curiosity and a sense of limitless potential.

14–22 September
Strand Aldwych, WC2R 1ES

Sunrise, sunset

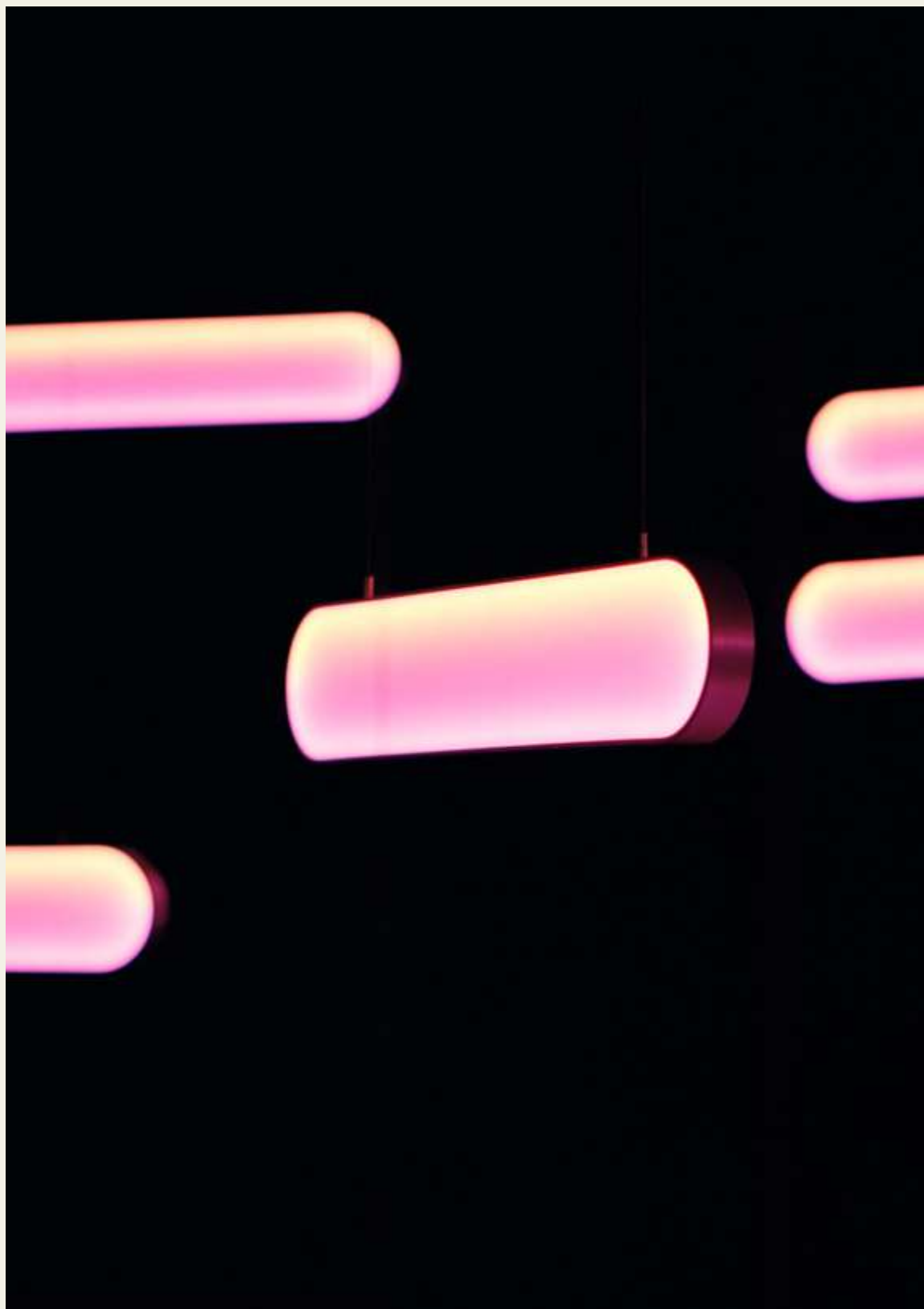
'The Sun, My Heart' by Marjan van Aubel

***An affecting installation draws
the viewer through a day's worth
of beatific solar energy***

Words by Tom Howells



***“The Sun is
something holistic;
we can feel it”***



Courtesy: Marjan van Aubel Studio

Marjan van Aubel has long been obsessed with the Sun. Back in 2012, the Dutch designer – now established and wildly feted for her pioneering work in solar design – was working on her graduation project at London's RCA when she came across a batch of vividly hued solar cells. "They were transparent and coloured," she explains. "It was the first time I saw that solar energy could be beautiful. From that moment, I started implementing it into different objects: glassware, tables, light installations, buildings. Now, I see all surfaces as a potential to harvest energy." Following more than a decade's worth of increasingly compelling design work channelling solar energy's transformative socio-cultural potential, 'The Sun, My Heart' sees a natural progression for Van Aubel's practice. A celestial installation within Somerset House's New Wing, the piece – one of LDF24's Landmark Projects, supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies – comprises 77 of the designer's self-powering, pill-shaped Sunne lamps, suspended in space and evoking the Sun's daily journey. Of these, 24 represent the burning orb itself, the remainder its emanating rays.

On one side of each lamp is a solar panel, powering a light source on the other, mimicking the Sun's three settings of sunrise, sunlight and sunset, in tones of pink, yellow and orange. Over eight minutes and 20 seconds, the installation moves through the Sun's cycle.

A carefully crafted soundscape based on Nasa's recordings of the Sun's natural vibrations – a surprisingly immersive ambient mono-drone – accompanies the shifting patterns, designed to trigger theta brain waves and induce a profound state of meditative relaxation. (The name 'The Sun, My Heart', Van Aubel explains, was derived from a text by the Vietnamese Thiền Buddhist monk, activist and writer Thích Nhất Hạnh; it's a prompt to "open up one's heart to this new connection".)

Visitors can more fully embed themselves in the work via a tactile sensor on a pedestal that registers pressure and presence, triggering a personal sun experience that changes colour. “Depending on the touch, the connection one makes, it’s going to be unique,” says Van Aubel.

“We get the sun in so much abundance,” she continues of the deeper context behind ‘The Sun, My Heart’. “It’s very clear that we need to move to solar energy, but the way it’s going now is a very technical approach. We shouldn’t only talk about numbers and efficiency. The Sun is something holistic; we can feel it. We need beauty and design to make us want to change things. We need to feel it inside.”

While objectively beautiful and not a little ruminative in its sensory heft, this piece is also intended to be a catalyst for change, tonally chiming with LDF24’s wider theme of prompting answers to global challenges through the emotional connections inherently generated through meticulous, innovative design.

Therein lies the crux for Van Aubel. “Solar energy should become more emotional, more human, more social, more aesthetic,” she says, emphatically. “That’s the aim of my work.”

14–22 September
G16, New Wing, Somerset House,
Strand, WC2R 1LA



Photography: Renée de Groot for *Disegno Journal*

Heart of

***'Liquid Light' by Johnnie Walker
and Marshmallow Laser Feast***

***The iconic drinks brand and London
art collective envision the future
face of sustainable luxury***

Words by Bianca Gidwani



glass



Courtesy: Marshmallow Laser Feast

On visiting ‘Liquid Light’, a collaboration between Johnnie Walker and the artist collective Marshmallow Laser Feast at The Old Selfridges Hotel, visitors are transported into a world where glass, light and sound converge in a celebration of materiality and bold experimentation.

Renowned for their unique approach combining art, science and technology, the London-based Marshmallow Laser Feast create immersive experiences that expand human perception. Employing a wealth of creative disciplines and underpinned by research, they invite participants to navigate with a sensory perception beyond the everyday. “A lot of our work is about drawing attention to the richness of our everyday existence,” says creative director Barnaby Steel, “Our aim is to create experiences that make people think differently.”

The installation delves into the craftsmanship of glassmaking, exploring how human breath meets molten glass to create forms that are at once fragile and resilient. “Glass blowing has its own language, where gravity, liquid glass and human breath meet in a frozen form, like words suspended in time and space,” Steel explains. This idea underpins the installation, which features delicate glass forms suspended in mid-air, each representing the search for strength within fragility. “We incorporated failed

experiments into a collage of hundreds of individual pieces,” says Steel.

As visitors move through the space, an interplay of light and shadow unfolds, in a profound exploration of form. A slowly orbiting single light source casts undulations across the white walls, while a bespoke soundscape by the composer James Bulley adds a layer of sensory immersion.

However, the installation is more than just a stunning visual experience – it represents the Johnnie Walker commitment to design innovation and years of research. “As a brand, we’re not afraid to try new things, even if it means we sometimes might not get it right first time,” says Jeremy Lindley, global design director at Diageo.

The installation offers a tantalising glimpse into the brand’s vision for the future of luxury design. “We’re proud of our more than 200-year history and are striding confidently into the next two centuries,” Lindley adds.

But ‘Liquid Light’ is not just a celebration of glass. At its core lies a first-of-its-kind design innovation that Johnnie Walker will unveil at the beginning of the festival. Lindley notes: “We are set to unveil a design innovation that has been years in the making, one that we hope will drive progress for years to come.”

The collaboration with Marshmallow Laser Feast is central to this vision. “They share our desire as a brand to push boundaries,” Lindley explains. “Their approach of inviting audiences to navigate with a sensory perception beyond the everyday perfectly complements our values and vision for the future.”

This forward-thinking ethos is reflected in the installation, which explores failure as a catalyst for progress and makes a bold statement on the future of luxury, rethinking and embracing sustainability as a cornerstone. “Our approach to innovation is about experimenting boldly, looking ahead and committing to a more sustainable future,” Lindley says.

Beyond the installation, Johnnie Walker will open the Global Design Forum. A day of talks centred around the theme ‘Please Design Responsibly’ underscores this commitment to responsible progress. “Consumers can count on us to continue pushing boundaries with new approaches to luxury and design,” says Jennifer English, Johnnie Walker’s global brand director, “We’re staying true to the Johnnie Walker legacy of crafting iconic Scotch whisky while looking to the future.”

Over the day, discussions will explore strategies for innovating in luxury through sustainable, collaborative approaches.

“Johnnie Walker’s approach to innovation is about experimenting boldly, looking ahead and committing to a more sustainable future”

Conversations will centre around barriers to alternative materials and creative solutions for reducing waste – principles embodied within the brand’s own design innovation. The future of luxury and the role of the designer is critically examined, exploring how the field must evolve to meet environmental, social and technological challenges.

In closing, Lindley says: “We’re always challenging ourselves to look ahead to what our next steps could be. It’s about being part of a larger movement that promotes innovation and is a brilliant way for us to both inspire and be inspired as we continue to drive progress.”

**14–22 September
The Old Selfridges Hotel,
1 Orchard Street, W1H 6HJ**

Mind and

'Duo' by Melek Zeynep Bulut

A vivid construction of magnets, sensors and perception-altering surfaces evokes ancient thresholds and duality

Words by Charlotte Jansen

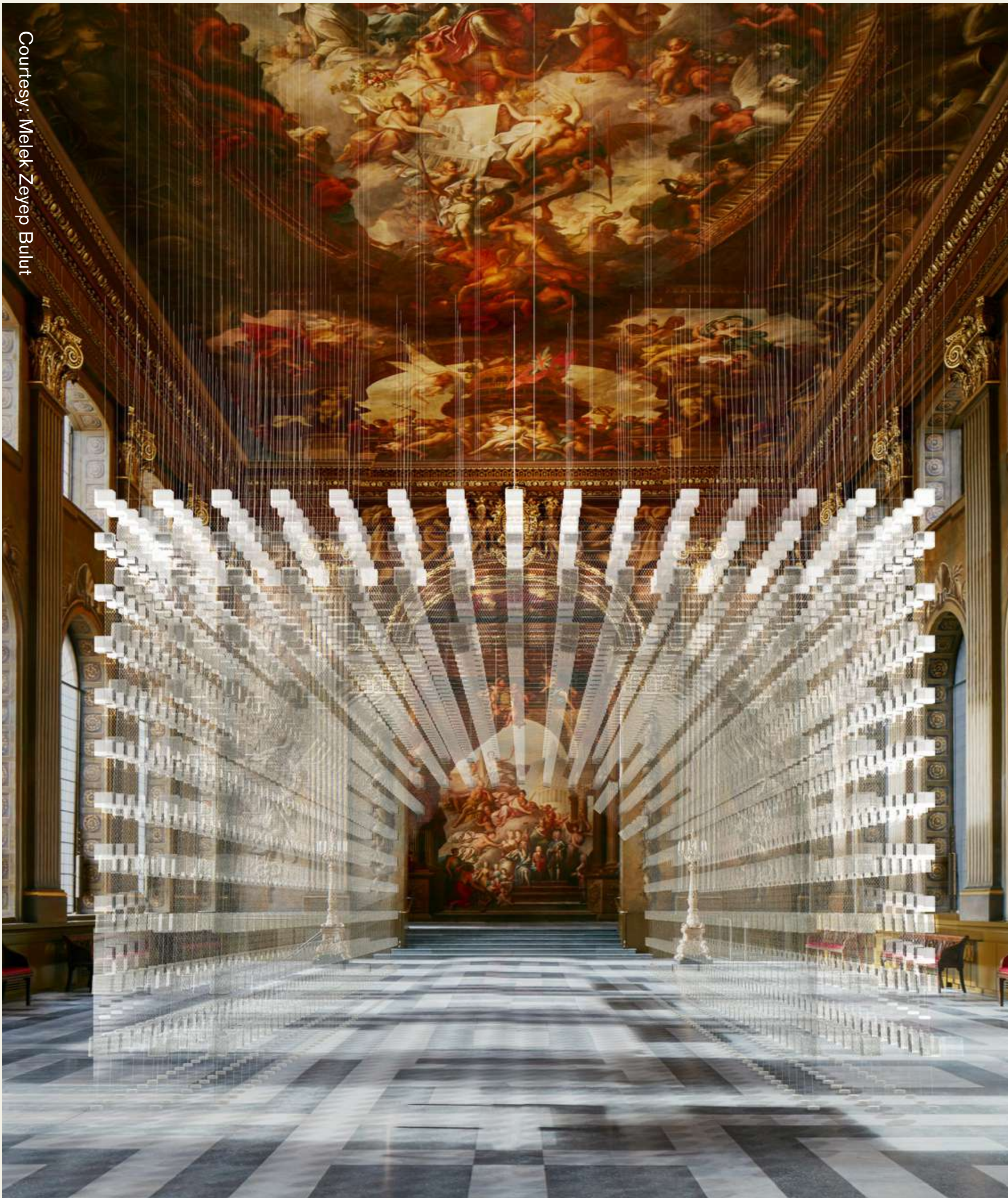
Courtesy: Melek Zeynep Bulut



Melek Zeynep Bulut's process cannot be easily replicated. "First, I perceive an abstract energy field, then I find myself shaping it," explains the Istanbul-born designer. A unique creator and capacious thinker with a background in visual arts and architectural design, Bulut, the founder of Melekzeynepstudio, has been exploring the interplay between mind and matter "for as long as I can remember". It comes naturally to someone with synesthesia, a condition that causes sensory and cognitive crossovers (such as 'tasting' sounds): "It wasn't an interest in my profession that directed me here, but rather I naturally found myself doing it." Her works often transform grand, metaphysical concepts – time, space, bodies – into tangible, sensory forms and experiences. Her award-winning OpenWork, presented at LDF23, comprised massive, moveable metal gates that produced sounds as visitors moved through them – a metaphor to boldly, materially reimagine what it means to transition through doors or thresholds.

For the 2024 edition of LDF, an equally audacious and ambitious new work, 'Duo', has been situated in the Painted Hall at Greenwich's Old Royal Naval College. The giant rectangular prism evokes the form of ancient architectural thresholds. Conceptually inspired by notions of duality and oppositional forces – centre and periphery, inside and outside, night and day, time and space, two people in conversation – 'Duo' comes to life through an interdependent mechanical system of magnets, sensors, perception-altering surfaces and acoustic reflectors that are altered by a visitor's presence; the intensity, balance and oscillation through the space and its parts depend on whoever enters it. Bulut sees it as a "game of perception" that turns visitors into participants – or, as she puts it, "game-changers".

matter



Courtesy: Melek Zeynep Bulut

“Imagine it like our body – fundamentally not a solid mass, but a sensor. It perceives and responds to stimuli by producing sounds. We have sensory receptors in our fingertips that allow us to feel textures, heat and cold. Similarly, ‘Duo’ conceptually treats ‘space’ as a mechanical body.” The human presence will be amplified through miniature microphones and reflectors, their physical responses animating and completing the work. “Essentially, ‘Duo’ is a portal and all my works are portals, offering spaces for dimensional transition and equilibrium.” ‘Duo’ also responds to the charged, cavernous setting of the Painted Hall – designed in the 18th century by Sir James Thornhill as a dining hall for the Greenwich Pensioners, it is adorned with 3,700 sq m of Baroque paintings of 200 kings, queens and mythological figures. “Energetically, I believe it serves as a space for dimensional transition with a very high aura,” Bulut explains.

Like many of Bulut’s projects, ‘Duo’ is ancient yet contemporary in tenor, tracing a trajectory through our bodies back to our existential core. It chimes with London Design Festival’s continued commitment to championing inclusivity and its role in broadening the scope of design to reveal the profound impact it can have on society.

“Creating here is immensely valuable,” Bulut says of London, the city she now calls home, splitting her time between the UK and Istanbul. “London itself is like my works: a series of spaces within spaces, stories within stories. I am delighted to be here.”

14–22 September
Painted Hall, Old Royal Naval College,
Greenwich, SE10 9NN

“London is like my works: a series of spaces within spaces, stories within stories”

Top of

'Vert' by AHEC, Diez Office and OMC°C

A verdant and monolithic pavilion suggests wild new ways to use the cityscape

Words by TF Chan

Courtesy: AHEC and Diez Office



‘Vert’, as befits its title, brings a welcome infusion of greenery to the Parade Ground at Chelsea College of Arts, a cobblestoned courtyard surrounded by imposing Edwardian façades. This landmark project for LDF24 is a collaboration between the American Hardwood Export Council (AHEC), Munich’s Diez Office, and Frankfurt’s Office for Micro Climate Cultivation (OMC°C). It comprises a series of triangular timber sails, 10m tall and covered with climbing plants, intended to remove carbon from the atmosphere, offer cooling shade, and bringing fresh energy to a cherished patch of public space.

Introducing vegetation into urban environments is a common strategy to mitigate the effects of environmental destruction and climate change. But it’s difficult to scale: “It can’t be achieved just by planting trees, or by individual façade and rooftop greening projects, so additional solutions are urgently needed,” explains Nicola Stattmann, co-founder of OMC°C. “We need fairly large structures to generate the necessary amount of shade and biomass.”

While large structures are usually the remit of architects, OMC°C developed its vertical greening system in partnership with design studio Diez Office, usually known for its elegantly functional furniture. “The solution needs to be modular, suited for serial production, and easy to use and maintain – this is the expertise of the product designer,” Stattmann says. Working together for two years, the two offices had done a few experiments, but were still in search of a suitable material for a low-carbon, sustainable structure.

Enter AHEC, the trade association that champions the virtues of American hardwoods worldwide, often through ambitious design commissions. It has been on a mission to promote the use of red oak, an underutilised species which represents 18% of overall timber resource in the US. For ‘Vert’, AHEC teamed up with Swiss timber construction experts Neue Holzbau to develop red oak ‘glulam’ – an engineered material made from multiple grain-aligned layers of timber, finger-jointed and laminated together for greater strength and stability.

the tree

As David Venables, AHEC's European director, describes, glulam made from hardwood, such as red oak, is expensive and requires care in manufacturing, but it is stronger than softwood equivalents and offers the opportunity to reduce the size of construction elements. To establish red oak glulam's suitability for practical applications, Neue Holzbau conducted a series of delamination tests and tension tests on finger joints. "Our red oak glulam passed these tests with flying colours, and is now being pitched as a new construction material," he says. Diez Office founder Stefan Diez adds: "Red oak glulam's natural beauty, combined with its structural capabilities, makes it a promising choice both functionally and aesthetically."

The material's qualities certainly enable 'Vert's triangular form, which minimises material use while withstanding heavy winds and bearing the weight of the plants. The structure also includes hammock-like seating, made from red oak glulam and biodegradable netting, while the deck floor underneath is lined with red oak planks, thermally modified to enhance durability and attain a rich brown hue.

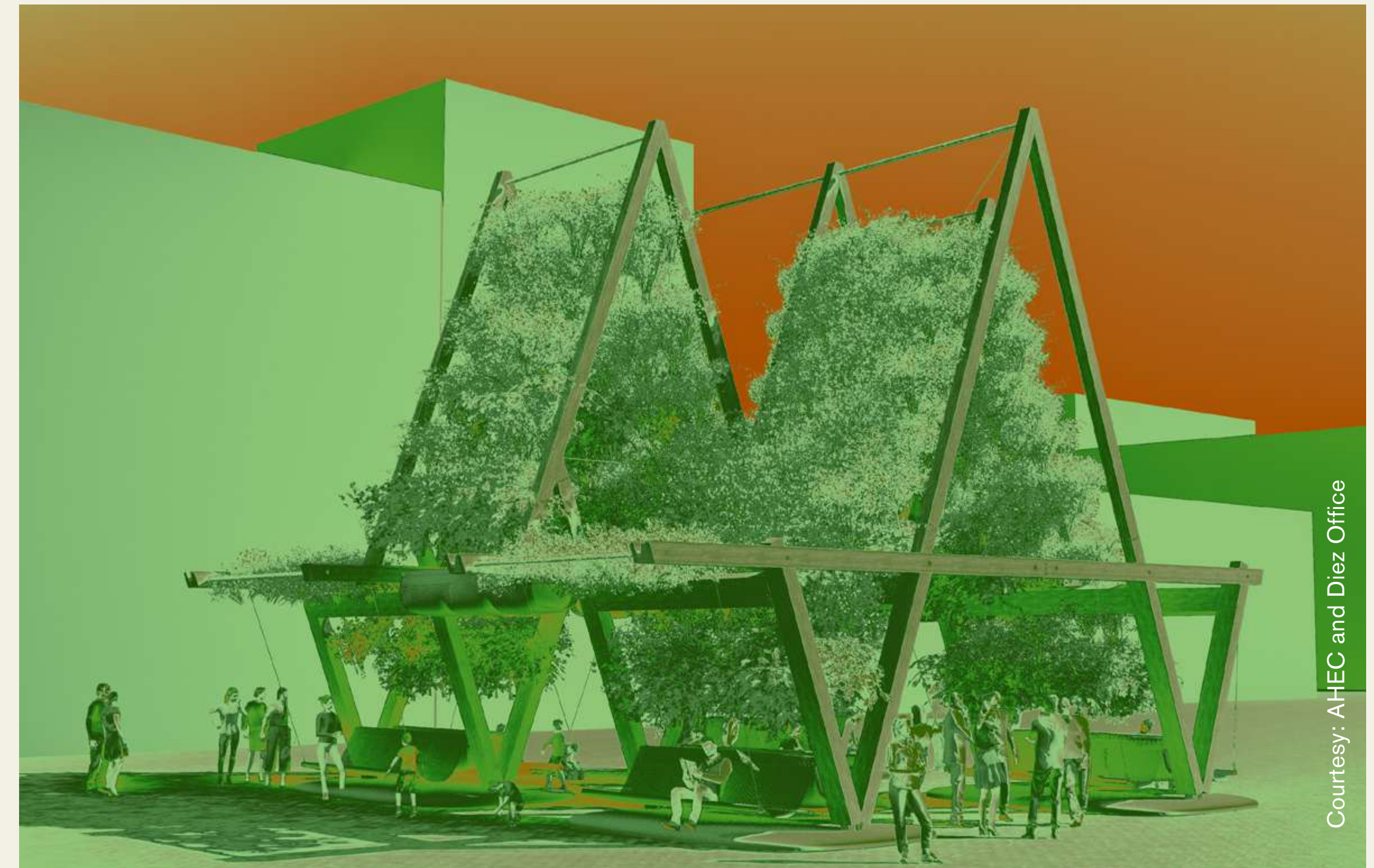
The 20-ish plant species within 'Vert' include morning glory, cheese plants, black-eyed Susan and night blooming moonflower. All are locally-sourced and selected according to three criteria: they grow quickly, can survive intense sunlight and high temperatures, and produce nectar or pollen for the benefit of insects. The project partners estimate that 'Vert' will cool its surrounding air by as much as 8°C, and cast four times more shade than a 20-year-old tree.

"I hope the installation shows how thoughtful design can enhance our interaction with the built environment"

They are already considering 'Vert's afterlife. "It's a continuing experiment, and we would love to put it up again for a number of years," says Venables. "Due to the very short installation window at Chelsea, the plants have to be pre-grown, but perhaps in future we can grow them in situ, which allows for greater biodiversity."

"I hope this installation provides a sense of wonder, and an understanding of how thoughtful design can enhance our interaction with the built environment," Diez concludes. "Ultimately, I want to encourage people to embrace new ways to use the cityscape."

14–22 September
Parade Ground, Chelsea College
of Arts, 16 John Islip Street, SW1P 4JU



Courtesy: AHEC and Diez Office

People

'Together in Battersea' by POoR

POoR Collective channels the youth of Wandsworth in a multifaceted show at an industrial icon

Words by Gianfranco Chicco

Photography: Charlie Round Turner



“The ambition of all of our projects is to challenge what design is, what design can be, what the designer is and what a designer can be,” says Larry Botchway, architect and co-founder of London's POoR Collective. This spirit animates ‘Together in Battersea’, one of LDF’s 2024 Festival Commissions, designed by POoR and hosted at the Battersea Power Station. The goal is to explore the essence of community and connection within this area of Wandsworth since the site’s reopening almost two years ago.

POoR, which stands for Power Out of Restriction, was founded in 2019 by Botchway along with fellow architects Shawn Adams and Ben Spry, and accountant Matt Harvey-Agyemang. Their work aims to foster new skills and provide access to the design industry for young people, especially those from underrepresented backgrounds. For many participants, these projects represent their first exposure to disciplines like design and architecture, and allow them to imagine being part of that community.

“We're really keen for these young people to understand that they're the designers of the future, even if the future doesn't currently look like them,” says Botchway. This approach earned POoR the 2023 LDF Emerging Design Medal.

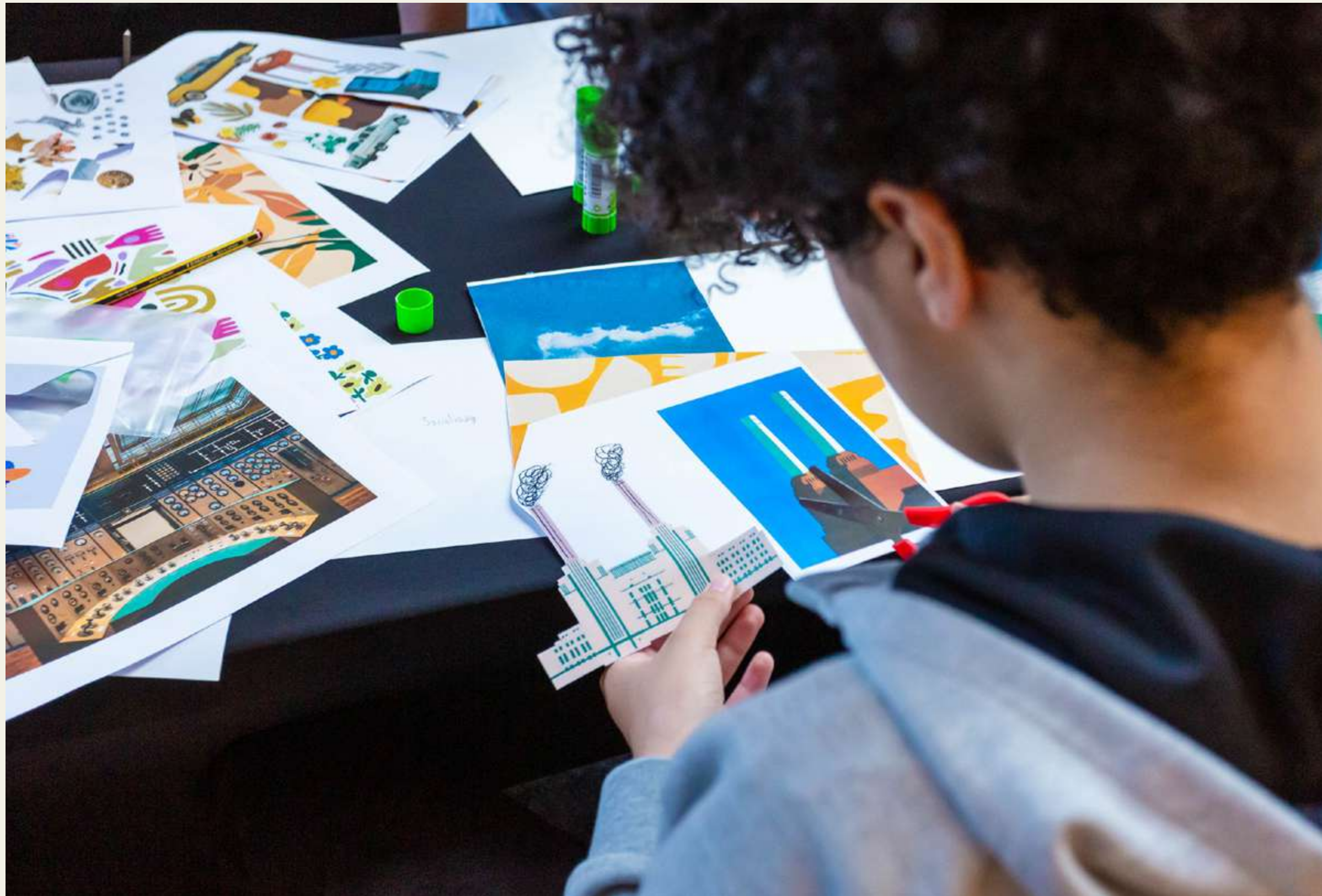
‘Together In Battersea’ is inspired by the ideas and designs of Wandsworth residents under the age of 18 who attended a series of workshops in August 2024 themed around the question: “What does Battersea Power Station mean to you?”

The first workshop focused on upskilling, from looking behind the scenes to what architecture and design are to learning basic orthographic drawing. The second session involved applying these new skills to envision what togetherness meant to the participants. Some spoke about family, others about friendship or what a community space should offer.

power

“We're always interested in the tangible, because we think that when you've created something, it's almost spiritual”

Photography: Charlie Round Turner



Their creations, which included collages, patterns and models, were then translated into a physical manifestation with POoR's guidance. Botchway explains: “We're always interested in the tangible, because we think that when you've created something, it's almost spiritual, right? It's a reward for the effort. You can see it. You can touch it.”

For POoR, the significance of this project is multilayered. Three of the founders were born and are based in south London; Botchway recalls the feeling of seeing Battersea's iconic structure on his journey to work from Mitcham to Victoria. It also represents a full-circle return to the collective's origins, as one of their first projects was a mural done with Carney's Community Centre on the opposite side of Battersea Park.

The Battersea Power Station, a Grade II* listed structure, has often been an inspiration to artists, from musicians to film-makers. The final installation will be revealed in September during LDF, hosted inside the bright Art Deco space of Turbine Hall A, designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, who went on to design another London landmark, Tate Modern. “I'm hoping that this installation demonstrates that this is a space that can be freely accessed and is for everyone,” says Botchway. “That it encourages people to actually take ownership and that it acknowledges the sense of agency of the young people involved.”

**20–22 September
Level 1, Turbine Hall A,
Battersea Power Station, SW11 8DD**



Windows of

Jaime Hayon at Fortnum & Mason

Courtesy: Hayon Studio



Spanish designer Jaime Hayon takes to the apertures of Fortnum & Mason to celebrate a quarter-century of creative wizardry

Words by Rebecca Mitchell

A self-proclaimed artistic polymath, designer Jaime Hayon is no stranger to blending his whimsical artistry with luxury craftsmanship. Designing the atrium and window installations for Fortnum & Mason for this year's LDF was no exception. "I see myself as a juggler, constantly balancing materials and histories to craft beauty in motion," Hayon muses. This spirit of playful experimentation is peppered throughout the installations housed by the iconic Piccadilly landmark, which chart the rich tapestry of Hayon Studio's 25-year creative evolution. "The collaboration with Fortnum & Mason is a true honour, as their dedication to craftsmanship mirrors my own commitment to artistry. Together, with the installations, I want to celebrate my creativity at its finest," says Hayon.

opportunity



Courtesy: Hayon Studio

Location counts, but this collaboration is a tribute to shared values. “I will always remember my first day at Fortnum & Mason,” says Ange Loftus, head of brand and creative production. “Our deputy archivist said to me: ‘Everything at Fortnum & Mason is done with pride, knowing that it will become part of our future archive.’” This guiding principle set the standard for creating exceptional brand experiences – and this joint venture for LDF24 follows suit. Loftus continues: “We’re introducing something a little unexpected, a ‘made you look’ moment or a sensory experience that leaves a lasting impression on visitors.”

Who better than Hayon to meld historic craftsmanship with contemporary design? Like Fortnum & Mason, he believes that, “to embrace the future of luxury, it’s essential to look to the past”. If the future hallmarks of luxury lie in human artistry, a defining aspect of Hayon’s work is its handcrafted, illustrative nature. In designing the window and atrium installations, Hayon relied on intuition: “Rather than overthinking, I allow my instinct to form a direct connection between my feelings and my art.”

This approach, which draws from travel, folklore and daily life, fosters a sense of wonder. Each silhouette and form on display at Fortnum & Mason celebrates the infinite possibilities of imagination, transformed into tangible objects. ‘Malabarista’ – an intricate laser-cut panel, depicting a figure juggling images from the cosmos – takes over the store’s impressive atrium; whilst the window installation ‘Celebration I’ flaunts a spectrum of odd shapes in motion, bright hues and friendly beasts. Crafted from ceramics, bronze, crystal and wood, each piece has been chosen to exemplify Hayon’s creative virtuosity.



It's hard to pick a favourite, but Hayon highlights the golden cactus: a symbol of his early work and imagination, it was a piece that helped establish his career during a 2003 David Gill gallery installation.

As a result, "London holds significant importance for my artistic journey", Hayon says, his approach to design having been shaped by the city's vibrant creative energy and rich history. Recent London projects include the interiors for Art'otel Battersea, which draw on his signature blend of craftsmanship and innovation. "The project speaks for itself," he says, with every corner of the new hotel harnessing the Studio's philosophy of infusing spaces with exclusive elements and harmonious palettes.

Ultimately, Hayon hopes that visitors to the Fortnum & Mason x Jaime Hayon vitrines walk away inspired. "I want people to be captivated by the dynamic energy and vivid colours in my works," he says. Windows of wonder, to inspire and delight – it's a chance for Londoners to experience the care, creativity and sophistication of Hayon's work firsthand.

14–22 September
Fortnum & Mason, 181 Piccadilly,
W1A 1ER

Courtesy: Hayon Studio



Points of view

***London
Design Festival
at the V&A***

***Cultural cross-pollination
and real-world impact
come to west London***

Words by Tom Howells

43



For 2024, the V&A's diverse programme of events for LDF explore how design can shape spaces, foster rituals and bring people together, by way of an enlightening array of installations delving into global cultures.

The programme – led by Meneesha Kellay, senior curator, Contemporary, and devised in collaboration with other V&A curators – sees fascinating throughlines of cultural cross-pollination, explored across a range of themes and the work of a host of multifaceted designers, all drawing on the V&A's holistic purview.

“This year is about exploring global cultures through design practices from around the world,” says contemporary programme curator Carrie Chan. “We have a strong focus on diaspora designers as well in the UK. We were drawn to this idea of exploring origins, rituals and heritage through material investigations.”

Of particular pan-cultural interest are installations by two British Ghanaian creatives. Giles Tettey Nartey's ‘Communion’ explores the making of fufu, a dish of pounded cassava and plantain that's a staple in west African cuisine.

His approach sees the everyday process – undertaken with a large mortar (woduro) and pestle (woma) – reconfigured into an ecstatic, dance-like performance (literally, in the case of the performance happening for the LDF at the V&A preview on 13 September) with an approximation of the communal act of pounding at its core.

‘Un-hide: Reframing Luxury’, meanwhile, is an interactive leather-seating series by Kusheda Mensah's Modular by Mensah brand. It explores the traditional role of this durable material and its sustainable potential, as well as reconceiving it as a playful medium for fostering social connections. “Giles and Kusheda's work is not just about the materiality, but also about shaping spaces for people to come together, to share spaces and to understand the cultures of these two designers,” explains Chan.

Arjun Singh Assa / Photography: Hark1karan

‘Memories in Motion’ – created by The SIM Project for the V&A’s Digital Design Weekend during LDF – embraces the ubiquitous, humble SIM card in a collaboration with refugees that assesses the SIM’s status as a tool for cultural belonging and collecting migration narratives. For the installation, displaced persons from eight countries have created hundreds of SIM-sized glass photographic portraits that “innovatively blend design and photography to transform digital archives into captivating artefacts that celebrate and express identity”, says Marc Barto, senior producer, Digital.

‘Barricade and Beacon’, presented by the V&A+RIBA Architecture Partnership and the London architects Studio Bark, explores the meeting of architecture and activism in lobbying for social progress by way of two structures: ‘Barricade’, fashioned from Studio Bark’s flat-packed construction panels; and ‘Beacon’, made from bamboo in a design by the protest group Extinction Rebellion, evoking the symbiotic crossover of the worlds of design and political engagement.

Finally, the V&A’s Emerging Design Commission sees three young impresarios investigate the concept of origin through their practices. Kenya-born Arjun Singh Assa creates furniture inspired by Sikh architecture and ancestral knowledge through craft; the Taiwanese designer Liang-Jung Chen analyses physical barriers as a design object; and the British Jamaican designer Angela Ford explores raw materials from a decolonial perspective using her family’s DNA.

On the surface, the V&A may appear to be an institution with a strong focus on historical objects. But this year’s contemporary programme squarely brings an affecting, diverse, multicultural vision of design’s future to South Kensington.

Most events

**14 September – 13 October
(check website for details)**

**V&A South Kensington,
Cromwell Road, SW7 2RL**

‘Communion’ by Giles Tettey Narley / Photography: Christian Cassie



Prefecture makes

***Designers, technologists
and artisans breathe new
life into Japanese craft
at the V&A***

Words by Gianfranco Chicco

Photography: Jun Sugawara.



How can centuries-old Japanese craft techniques be preserved for another hundred years? For Hideki Yoshimoto and Maria Cristina Didero of the exhibition 'Craft x Tech', the answer lies in uniting designers, technologists and artisans to create collectible design objects that elevate Japanese craft in the eyes of international audiences. After an initial presentation in Tokyo, 'Craft x Tech' was showcased at Design Miami Basel and now LDF at the V&A.

"Until about five years ago, I didn't know much about Japanese craft. I thought of it as the kind of objects you find at your parents' or grandparents' house or on the seventh floor of a department store in Tokyo, not as something relevant to my job as a designer," says Yoshimoto, founder and creative director of 'Craft x Tech'.

However, a decade spent studying and working in London gave Yoshimoto a newfound appreciation for his country's heritage.

perfect

His urge to breathe new life into Japan's cultural treasures was sparked by a visit to an urushi lacquerware workshop in Akita prefecture, northern Japan. Kawatsura Shikki was originally used to protect samurai sword sheaths and armour about 800 years ago. Today, its main products are wooden bowls and plates covered in multiple layers of high-strength natural lacquer, often decorated with unique designs. "After my first encounter with the Kawatsura lacquerware artisans, my understanding of the craft changed 180 degrees. I found it artistic and alive. Suddenly, a miso soup bowl looked like a sculpture."

The first edition of 'Craft x Tech' features six collaborations with makers based in the Tohoku region of Japan's main island: 'Yōkan' by Kawatsura Shikki and Sabine Marcelis; 'Metropolis. I' by Sendai Tansu and Studio SWINE; 'Artifact #VII' by Tsugaru Nuri and Ini Archibong; 'ヌベルニ庵 / Null-Beni-An / Nouvelle Néant' by Oitama Tsumugi and Yoichi Ochiai; 'Blossom Links' by Nambu Tekki and Michael Young; and 'Rain' by Aizu Hongo Yaki and Hideki Yoshimoto. Didero, the curatorial director of the initiative, explains: "From the start, we wanted a heterogeneous selection of designers. Some were all about high tech, like Michael Young; others preferred

analog solutions, like Ini Archibong, who built a synthesiser into a lacquerware piece, or Yoichi Ochiai, whom I think is a guru of our time, working across so many media with a big following among young people."

According to Didero, the brief was simple. "It was really about collaboration and human exchange, to melt, associate and link their experiences in innovative ways, to rejuvenate Japanese craftsmanship and take it to the next level. Even if most of these people didn't speak a common language, they managed to establish deep, hands-on collaboration on a pretty articulated project." For the artisans, it was exciting to apply techniques honed over such a long period to new challenges that gave them a fresh perspective.

'Craft x Tech' aims to be more than a fleeting success. More one-off collaborations are planned, along with products that could be produced in larger quantities to revitalise these industries. The initiative also has the potential to promote tourism beyond Tokyo, Kyoto and Osaka.

"We learned so much during this first edition. Our goal is to eventually cover all the regions of Japan, so I'd say we have eight or nine years of work ahead of us," concludes Didero.



Courtesy: Craft x Tech

14–22 September
V&A South Kensington,
Cromwell Road, SW7 2RL

One for



Courtesy: Bentley Motors

An artistic savant paints a vision of global inclusivity across Bentley's finest hybrid SUV

Words by Tom Howells

***'Belonging Bentayga'
by Bentley and Stephen Wiltshire***

Artistic canvases come in many forms – but the sweeping planes of a Bentley might be one of the more rarefied. Such is the way with a collaboration between the prestige motoring company and the British architectural artist Stephen Wiltshire MBE.

For 'Belonging Bentayga', Wiltshire visited the marque's Crewe factory, embellishing the surface of a Bentayga Hybrid SUV in situ, reconstituting each side of the car as a different continent and using his outstanding illustration skills to fill each with city skylines and landmarks from around the globe.

the road

Even more impressive than the beautifully intricate images is how they were formulated. Wiltshire is an autistic savant who was mute as a child, communicating his feelings via his nascent artist talents, and segueing from animals to buses to buildings as he got older. “My love for architecture and different designs of buildings helps us, as people, to connect,” the artist explains. “Building is part of our lives: it forms our homes, schools, places of work, museums.”

Now, he is able to recreate an image in precise detail after seeing it only once: in this case, the vertiginous skylines of Kuala Lumpur, Tokyo, Dubai and Manhattan; architectural icons like Rome’s Trevi Fountain, Vatican City and Colosseum; the Gherkin, St Paul’s, Tate Modern, Battersea Power Station and Nelson’s Column in London; Cologne Cathedral, Gaudí’s Sagrada Família in Barcelona and many more – 29 in all – as well as myriad drawings of people of different nationalities the world over. “These cities were places I had visited over the years during my travels,” explains Wiltshire of the locales chosen. “We agreed that it would be a great idea to portray that.”

An Alpine Green Bentayga was chosen for its eco synonymy. “Green is a colour that we all need, that relates back to the earth and to the land,” explains Wayne Bruce, chief communications and D&I officer at Bentley. After the Bentayga was sanded back to the bare paint by the Crewe factory’s craftspeople, Wiltshire set to it with his paint pens over two days, plugging into a cool jazz soundtrack on his AirPods and relaying his memories to the car’s surfaces, before signing the veneer panel on the dashboard. The vehicle was dried and lacquered and lo: the piece was complete. The design has since been repurposed as a wrap for five other Bentaygas (“Stunt cars!” laughs Bruce), deployed across global markets.



Courtesy: Bentley Motors



Courtesy: Bentley Motors

It's a truly eye-catching work, both superficially pristine and indicative of the wider community values and inclusivity ambitions at Bentley – a workforce comprising people from 52 countries, selling across 60 markets – under its Beyond100 initiative, which supports technical sustainability, eco initiatives and self-expression.

Announced in 2020 and inaugurated in 2021, the strategy saw an earlier artistic initiative, helmed by British sculptor, design and painter Rich Morris: the 'Unifying Spur', a Bentley Flying Spur model decorated with every colour in the Progress flag (AKA the Pride rainbow, plus white, brown, pink and white) and kinetically connecting the phrase 'Love is Love' through a single line, in solidarity with minority communities across race, creed and sexuality.

"It celebrates diversity of country, origin and nationality, but also the fact that we all belong to this great planet," Bruce concludes. "We all are brought together by this one car."

Bentley Motors is sponsor of this year's Design Innovation Medal.



Design Districts

From north to south, east to west, our Design Districts lead you on a creative journey through the capital. For LDF24, there are 11 districts. Each has a unique personality reflecting the local community - and all with an individual design story to tell.

Design Districts

Bankside Design District

Established in 2015, Bankside is one of the capital's most visited districts: a hub of landmark commercial and residential developments, and thriving creative industries. This year, its programme showcases the best in design, craft and innovation, from sustainable public activations and exhibitions to workshops and installations (plus LDF's only trade show, Material Matters).

Design District day: 19 September

Battersea Design District

Battersea is an area rich in industrial heritage and cultural history, and has long been a hub of innovation and creativity – seamlessly blending its historical roots with contemporary advancements. For 2024, its Design District programme brims with immersive installations, architectural tours, collaborations with international designers, and interactive workshops that engage the community and spotlight sustainable urban design.

Design District day: 18 September

Brompton Design District

With its engaging mix of global design brands and cultural institutions (such as the V&A), this west London hub offers a programme of exhibits with a reputation for nurturing inventive design by independent designers and collectives. This year's theme, 'The Practice of Learning', explores the fertile grounds of knowledge gathering, experimentation and exchange.

Design District day: 19 September

Chelsea Design District

Established in 2019, the Chelsea Design District has celebrated this rarefied part of London's rich history of free thought and creativity since 2019. Building on the heritage of names such as Vivienne Westwood and Mary Quant, who kickstarted their fashion legacy on King's Road, the programme will reveal its broad mix of ingenious and artistic talent, sparking inspiration and originality across the neighbourhood.

Design District day: 18 September

Dalston to Stoke Design District

Hackney's thriving Dalston and Stoke Newington neighbourhoods are renowned for their designer makers, arts and culture. The district emphasises sustainability and hyper-local focus, with many companies designing and producing locally or sourcing from the Hackney area. During LDF24, it will play host to exhibitions, open studios, workshops, talks, performances and parties.

Design District day: 21 September

Fitzrovia Design District

Design is synonymous with Fitzrovia. The area is known for being home to global leaders in furniture design, as well as being the spiritual home for architecture and the built environment. Its unique personality is reflected in the mix of design-led independent restaurants and shops, world-renowned retailers, universities and organisations.

Design District day: 18 September

Greenwich Design District

The Design District at the heart of Greenwich's modern Peninsula landscape features permanent, purpose-designed creative workspaces across a cluster of 14 eclectic buildings – designed by eight architects – as well as proximity to The Tide, an elevated riverside linear park designed by Diller Scofidio + Renfro. During the festival, the area will come alive with interactive art installations and a host of cultural activities.

Design District day: 18 September

Mayfair Design District

Mayfair Design District – now LDF's third largest, founded in 2017 around a philosophy of collaborative endeavour – harnesses the wealth of collectible art, fashion and design the area has to offer. For 2024, it is yet again set to unite this community – from design galleries and auction houses to cordwainers, gunsmiths, wine merchants et al – through the power of culture and creativity.

Design District day: 16 September

Park Royal Design District

Northwest London's hidden gem, Park Royal Design District is home to a cluster of fresh creative talent, with a unique landscape that's inspired a blend of traditional craftsmanship and hi-tech innovation. This year, the district will offer an engaging programme of exhibitions, open studios, demonstrations, workshops and interactive events across a range of disciplines – leathercraft, millinery, furniture design and glasswork among them.

Design District day: 14 September

Shoreditch Design Triangle

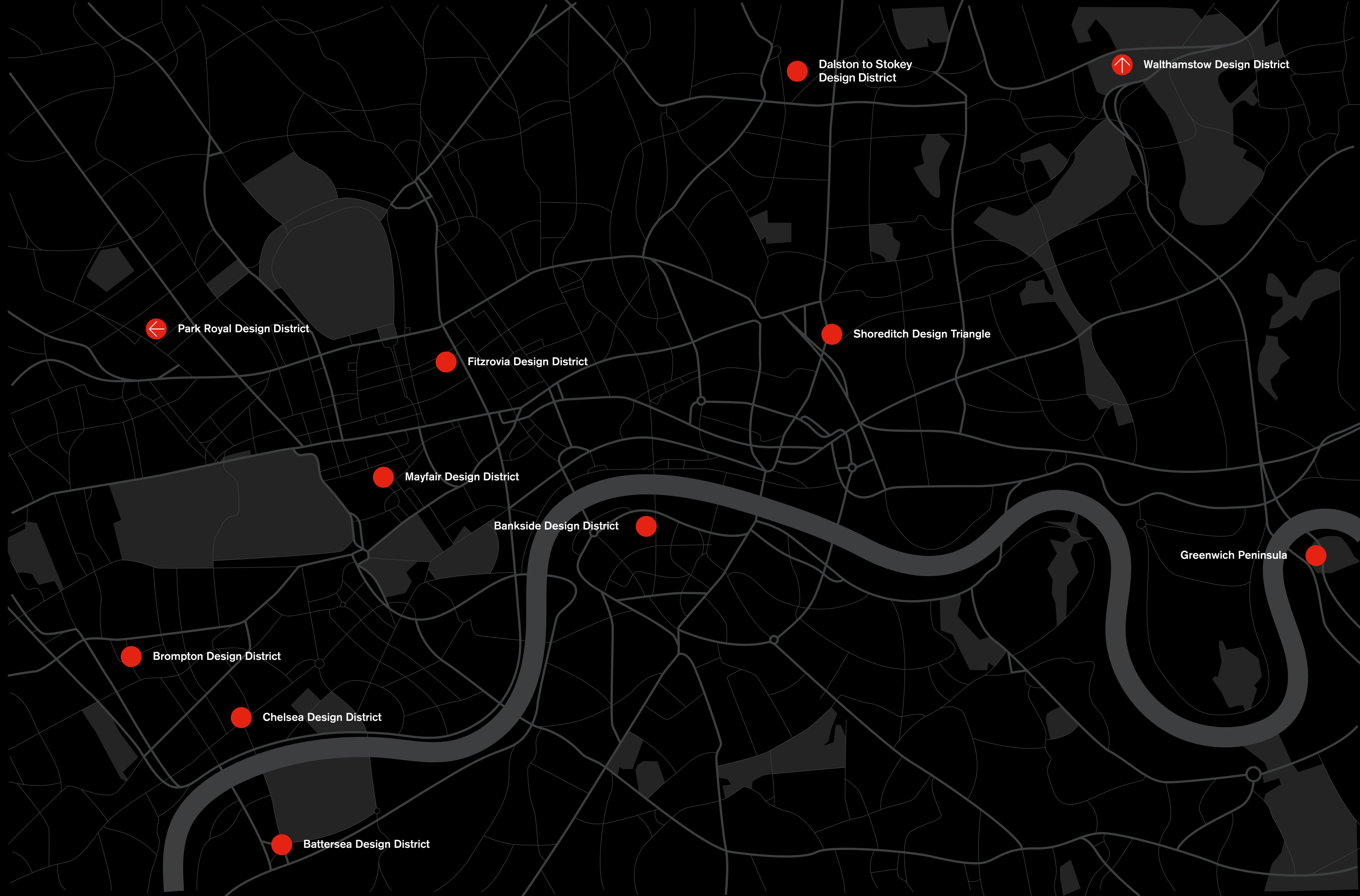
In recent years, a critical mass of design-led companies have descended on Shoreditch's Design Triangle, with over 100 individual events taking place in the area. The long-standing hub was established in 2008 as a vehicle for the designers, companies and institutions situated in the East End to collaborate on the promotion of their activities during LDF – which this year comprises product launches, exhibitions, installations, workshops, talks, tours and culinary delights.

Design District day: 17 September

Walthamstow Design District

The William Morris Design Line shines a light on the richness of Waltham Forest's past and present design community, and encourages visitors to discover, learn and interact with an incredible range of creative activity. Already encompassing the Blackhorse Lane area and the William Morris Gallery, for 2024 it will extend to Lea Bridge for the first time, showcasing designers and makers across the Argall Industrial Area.

Design District day: 21 September



***Riverside
enterprise***

in



Courtesy: Greenwich Peninsula

Greenwich

If you'd played a little 'North Greenwich' word association five years ago, the responses would likely have riffed on 'barren wasteland', 'the O₂' and little else. That's changed, emphatically, with the development of Greenwich Peninsula – a groundbreaking design and creative community in the making, with more than 17,000 homes and 48 acres of open public space due to emerge in the coming years. The Design District is its beating heart: a permanent hub (that also serves as one of LDF's temporary Design Districts) of creative workspaces within 14 eclectic buildings by firms as cosmopolitan as 6a, SelgasCano and David Kohn.

It's all bolstered by The Tide – an elevated riverside park by Diller Scofidio + Renfro, dotted with public works by Studio Morison, Marwan Kaabour, Ian Davenport, Allen Jones, Morag Myerscough and more. Launched in 2021, the Design District (and the Peninsula at large) can make an effusive claim to be one of London's pre-eminent creative areas – a notion only cemented by its annual LDF events.

Broaching the area's industrial past and contemporary ethos, the artist-architect duo John Booth and CAN present 'Up in Smoke' at the NOW Gallery, the space overhauled into an eye-popping installation delving deep into the Peninsula's history by reimagining its towering chimneys. The appeal is broad: Booth's hand-painted, multicoloured constructs evoke everything from Boord Street's robust stacks to the slimline vents of the later gasworks, while also harnessing a quietly winsome appeal with their childlike reimagining of the urban skyline.

Down by the water, designer Kitty Joseph's prismatic, ethereal installation 'Chromatic River Walk' sees the riverside strewn with billowing organza-fabric flags on bamboo poles and recycled reflective vinyl, all imagined in thrall to the ebb and flow of the Thames.



Courtesy: Greenwich Peninsula

She will lead an early evening drawing session on Thursday 19 September, encouraging attendees to put pastel and pencil to paper and immerse themselves in the Peninsula's expansive cloudscape and her own interventions on the shore.

The self-starting, meanwhile, can pick up an Art Trail map from the NOW Gallery and make their way past Joseph's textiles, Anthony Gormley's eldritch *Quantum Clouds* and The Tide's myriad works. On Wednesday 18 September, they can poke their heads into one of the Design District's workshops to learn about residents' varied practices in an open day dubbed 'Your Route to Creativity', featuring workshops with impresarios such as Helen Kirkum (who transforms waste into sneakers) and Anya Cluer of Bloom East (who will be hosting a dried-flower wreath-making workshop).

"It always feels like LDF marks our birthday as a Design District," says Laura Flanagan, marketing director for Knight Dragon/Greenwich Peninsula. "We took on the site 10 years ago; the first thing we did was open a gallery. I think that speaks to how much art, culture and creativity has always been a cornerstone of the Peninsula – to build an ecosystem that allows people to come together." That sense of allegiance and community is palpable across Greenwich's reinvigorated landscape, with the Peninsula a year-round beacon for creativity that only burns brighter during the Festival's late-summer days.



Courtesy: Greenwich Peninsula



In the Spotlight

What is

Explore our engaging agenda of partner installations, openings and exhibitions

Spotlight?

Going on-grid at Olympia

***'Off The Shelf' pavilion
by Rio Kobayashi & Webb Yates***

Words by Tom Howells

Courtesy: Olympia

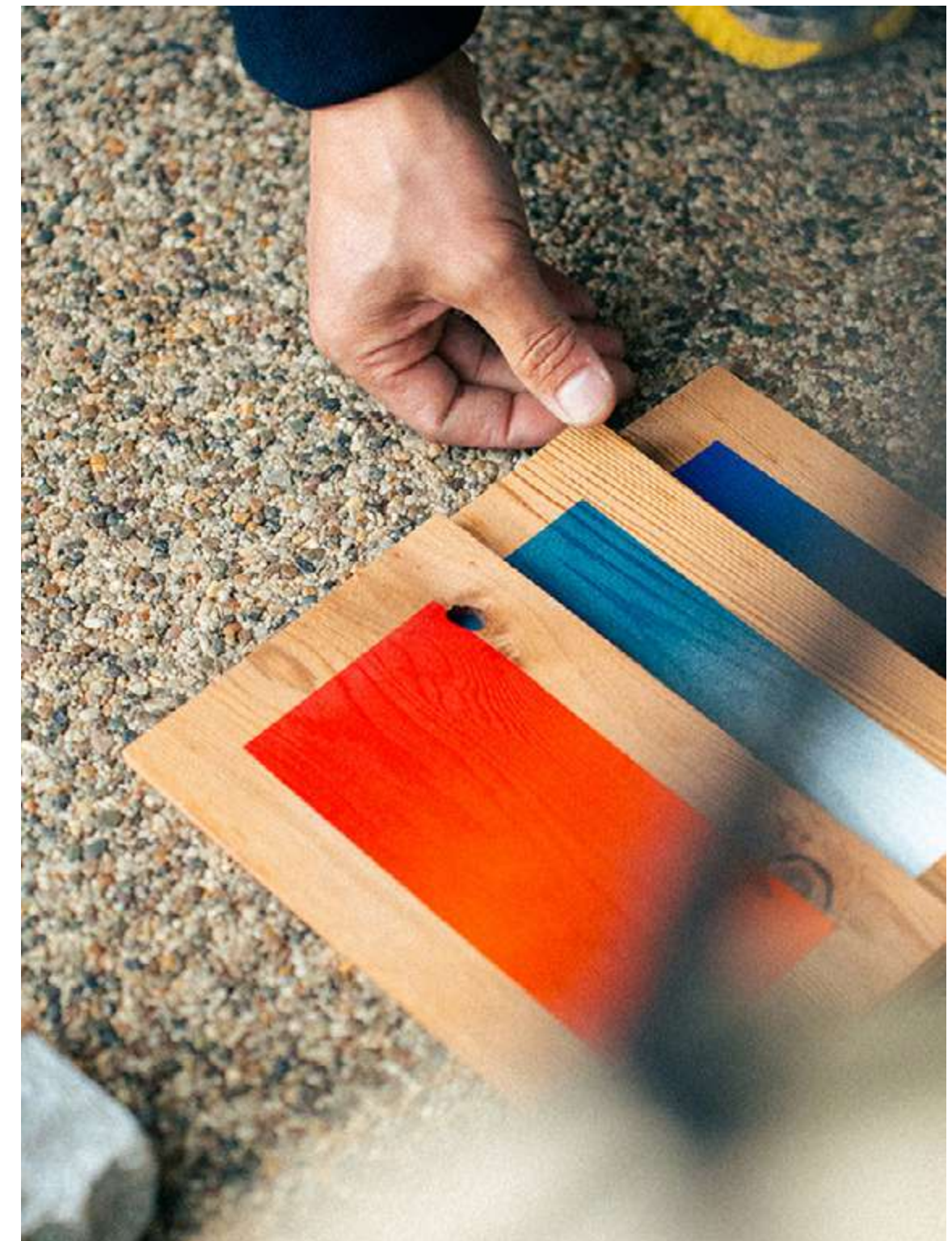


Kensington Olympia's glass-plated Victorian Grand Hall and the serene vernacular of Japanese domestic architecture might not seem synonymous. But this is the quiet revelation explored in 'Off The Shelf', a pavilion collaboration between the maker-designer Rio Kobayashi and the multidisciplinary engineering firm Webb Yates. The pair were introduced by Vickie Hayward of Company, Place, the site-specific architectural facilitator that has overseen the pavilion's curation and construction as a precursor to a more comprehensive overhaul of the Olympia site.

Kobayashi's concept is beautifully simple: a grid-like wall of geometric recesses, constructed in Portland stone and Douglas fir. Instead of welds, joins or screws, the entire structure is cleverly weighted, pre-stressed and clamped together so it can be dismantled and the materials redistributed – an environmentally conscious decision in thrall to a circular design economy.

Kobayashi, who trained as a carpenter, grew up in Japan in a family of artisans who built their own homes. For 'Off The Shelf', he initially embraced the concept of the shoji screen: a semi-opaque domestic wall, designed for observation, with a grid design on one side and spaces for art on the other.

As the final concept evolved, the screens were jettisoned, but their essence remains in the geometric aesthetic and the pavilion's inaugural installation, a sculptural botanic project by the artist-biologist Cynthia Fan (the first in a programme of events based around themes of art, science and nature, dubbed 'On The Shelf').



Courtesy: Olympia



From left to right: Cynthia Fan; Vickie Hayward; Rio Kobayashi; Steve Webb of Webb Yates. Courtesy: Olympia

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The pavilion is the first stone in Olympia's ambitious transformation; the 138-year-old site set to be transformed into a new destination for creativity, complete with cultural, leisure and hospitality venues. "We are trying to create space for others to engage with and animate, whether it be via 'On The Shelf' or through creating vistas for installations or stages for performances," explains Hayward. "In a way, this nods to Olympia's past and present as a great showcase."

Fundamentally, 'Off The Shelf' has been conceived as a place to foster discovery – an architecturally engaging zone for posing bigger questions. "I like to confuse people," laughs Kobayashi. "I want people talking about this place, to create an environment where not only one person is in focus; somewhere people can bond. That's what I really like."

14–22 September
Olympia Marketing Suite, Motorail Car
Park, Maclise Road, W14 0NE

Courtesy: Olympia / sketch by Rio Kobayashi



Courtesy: Olympia

A mood-boosting lightwork comes to Montcalm East

'Sunday Light' by Nat Martin and Sean Hammett

Words by Tom Howells



London's Montcalm Collection is not your average, homogenous group of hotels. Each of the luxe boltholes evokes a different part of the city's character, being variously located in 18th-century brewery buildings, Georgian townhouses and the former HQ of the Royal London Mutual Insurance Society (among other auspicious enclaves).

Montcalm East in Shoreditch might be the most aesthetically alluring of the bunch – housed in a diamond-shaped skyscraper (a nod to the work of the op art godhead Bridget Riley) and drawing inspiration from the photo studios of east London, further qualified by the fully functioning in-house photo lab.

The creative spirit shines on in 'Sunday Light'. Debuting at this year's Festival, the ambient installation, with shades of the luminous mega-interventions of James Turrell, was created by the RCA graduates Nat Martin and Sean Hammett.

Courtesy: Montcalm East



The effect, they explain, is that of a brilliant blue sky on a sunny day, featuring a wildly bright LED that produces more than 30,000 lumens, providing a sunlight-style uptick in energy and mood to those around it (assuaging the serene vibes of the airy Marlowe restaurant in which it is located).

“As we approach the autumn solstice, with shorter days and longer nights, it’s the perfect time to explore how light influences our mood,” says Samantha van Exter, head of hotels at the Montcalm Collection. “‘Sunday Light’ uniquely demonstrates how thoughtful engineering and design can uplift and counter those seasonal effects.”

Still in the dark? A complementary panel discussion on the evening of 19 September will answer any burning questions. Chaired by Katherine Templar Lewis of Kinda Studios and featuring Martin, Hammett, Christina Friis Blach Petersen of the lighting designers Lys Technologies and the artist/curator Alex Czetwertynski, the talk will clarify how light positively affects our physiology, its multifaceted uses in art and what exactly ‘good’ light is. Bright ideas, all.

14–22 September
151-157 City Road, EC1V 1JH

Courtesy: Montcalm East



An Italian education in Holland Park

***Istituto Marangoni presents
'Momentum: A Design Narrative'***

Words by Tom Howells



Courtesy: Istituto Marangoni

Founded in Milan in 1935 by Giulio Marangoni, the fashion and design school Istituto Marangoni has long been a byword for aesthetic prestige. With eight schools across the globe – including a dedicated design campus in Milan, plus the London iteration, which recently celebrated its 20th anniversary – the Istituto imparts the Italian tenets of luxury, beauty, quality and excellence in craftsmanship to more than 4,000 students from 107 countries.

For this year's edition of LDF, the school presents 'Momentum: A Design Narrative', bringing a selection of work from 13 of its BA and MA designers to the Design Museum. This includes an array of interior design pieces embracing valuable trends in upcycling and material repurposing, from Thomas Stevens' restorative spatial brand design for Aēsop (dubbed 'Retreat of Revival') to Lia Sabbagh's 'SOLNEX' (a women-only space challenging Saudi social norms, festooned with columns and powered by integrated renewable energy sources) and Ekaterina Ermakova's reimaging of an abandoned public baths in Ladywell.

A jewellery design display harnesses the resilience of women, via Chang Haozhe's multitextural 'Fesilience' set, engraved with motivational words. The product design selection, meanwhile, emboldens community discourse, learning and wellness – take Emilia Tombolesi's 'Picasso', a sensory toy for neurodivergent children, or 'Tower of Taste', an integrated fondue, grill, roasting and hot pot set to spark cultural exchange, by Anastasiia Kuleshova.

Finally, looking to the interstices of the real and digital worlds, the visual design cohort present thought-provoking and emotive works with a future-facing remit, whether it's Sara Minkara's kinetic, colourful exploration of typography ('Type N' Motion') or Aleksandra Slahova's 'Anispace', an AI-bolstered platform for anime and manga enthusiasts, where they can watch, read and discuss the media.

The 'Momentum' of the title, the school explains, refers to 'the impetus of an object in motion' per the laws of physics. In real-world terms, this kinetic sentiment is read as the creative innovation generated in the melding of unique perspectives and skill sets, especially when refracted through and guided by socially conscious themes. As a celebration of singular creativity, it's engaging; as a display of Istituto Marangoni's diversity and dynamism, it's irrefutable. Here's to the next 80 years.

14–22 September
Design Museum, 224–238 Kensington
High Street, W8 6AG



Courtesy: Istituto Marangoni



Space-age savvy and material magic

ASUS and Dezeen present 'Design You Can Feel'

Words by Tom Howells



Courtesy: Niceworkshop

Design history has taught us that true newness is defined less by flashy showboating and more by a nuanced, intuitive grasp of form and materials. So it goes with the computing titan ASUS and its embrace of Ceraluminum: a material created by a new mineralisation process, vaguely similar to anodising, whereby aluminium can be coated with a durable, tactile, recyclable, ceramic-style layer for hitherto unseen applications (not least as a surface for its new ZenBook laptops).

Ceraluminum in tow, the company sought to err away from the tech world and approached *Dezeen* to conceptualise an exhibition in the creative design space. The publication, long concerned with innovation and materials, was intrigued. “The tech and the engineering parts are just one side of the equation,” says *Dezeen*’s editorial director, Max Fraser. “How, then, do you then make that usable and appealing through design?” ‘Design You Can Feel’ – a journey through material, craftsmanship and AI – was born.

For the show, they hit up a number of designers pushing the material envelope in new and unusual directions. South Korea’s Niceworkshop harnessed Ceraluminum directly: they have taken a piece from a recent furniture series, made from old aluminium formworks,

and coating it with the material. The de facto showpiece, meanwhile, is a new concept from Kim Colin, Sam Hecht and Leo Leitner’s Future Facility studio. “They were reluctant to take one of their existing aluminium products and just ceramicise it,” says Fraser. Instead, they have designed a handheld device embracing the AI capabilities of ASUS’s new laptop, but “stripping away a lot of the embellishments and distraction that comes with a screen-based life”.

The roster continues in venerable form with Fernando Laposse, Giles Miller Studio, Natural Material Studio and Studio Furthermore, all of whose practices chime with the four metrics of ‘Enduring’, ‘Everlasting’, ‘Light’ and ‘Unique’ that ASUS mooted for the show, presenting work responding to, rather than directly utilising, Ceraluminum. But all are concerned with the tactile expression of the materials they are working with, creating objects that show explicitly how “form, colour and texture can be combined to create objects or moments that awaken the senses”, says *Dezeen*. ‘Design You Can Feel’ promises a seamless melding of worlds – a quietly fascinating material future made real.

17–22 September
Protein Studios, 31 New Inn Yard,
EC2A 3EY

Natural Material Studio / Photography: Peter Vinther



Heavy lifting in Piccadilly

Technogym presents 'Design to Move'

Words by Tom Howells



Courtesy: Technogym

“Design has always been a key element of our journey, a strong ally in transforming functionality into emotion and needs into aspirations,” says Nerio Alessandri, the founder and president of Technogym. “I believe that harmony and beauty are always much more attractive to people than basic functionality.”

It’s a credo the esteemed Italian sports equipment company has lived since its inception in 1983. Its beginnings were rather modest: it was founded by Alessandri when, at 22, he designed and built a piece of gym equipment in the family garage. It’s a testament to the company’s ambition that it now legitimately positions itself as a “comprehensive ecosystem of wellness lifestyle”.

This crossover is neatly emphasised in the exhibition ‘Design to Move’. First presented at this year’s Salone del Mobile in Milan, a carefully truncated version of the show – a vivid array of 40 Technogym workout benches, aesthetically reimaged by a host of lauded global designers – will be in situ at the brand’s 71 Piccadilly store for LDF24.

It was originally conceived, explains Alessandri, to explore the “special and deep relationship between design and wellness, style and functionality, emotional and physical aspects” that have long been integral to Technogym’s identity.

That might sound like a lot of flexing, but the display – laid out by the architect and designer Giulio Cappellini and the curator Bruna Roccasalva – features work by the visionary polymaths Kelly Hoppen, Myles Igwebuike, Elena Salmistraro and Gustavo Martini (as well as a design by Alessandri himself), throwing wide open the vibrant possibilities of kit normally rendered in minimalistic monochrome.

They are all for the taking, too: at the close of the festival, 15 of the benches will be auctioned by Sotheby’s, while the other 25 will be available to buy on Technogym’s website – with all proceeds going to Unicef. Who said pumping iron had to be self-indulgent?

14–19 September
71 Piccadilly, W1J 8HP

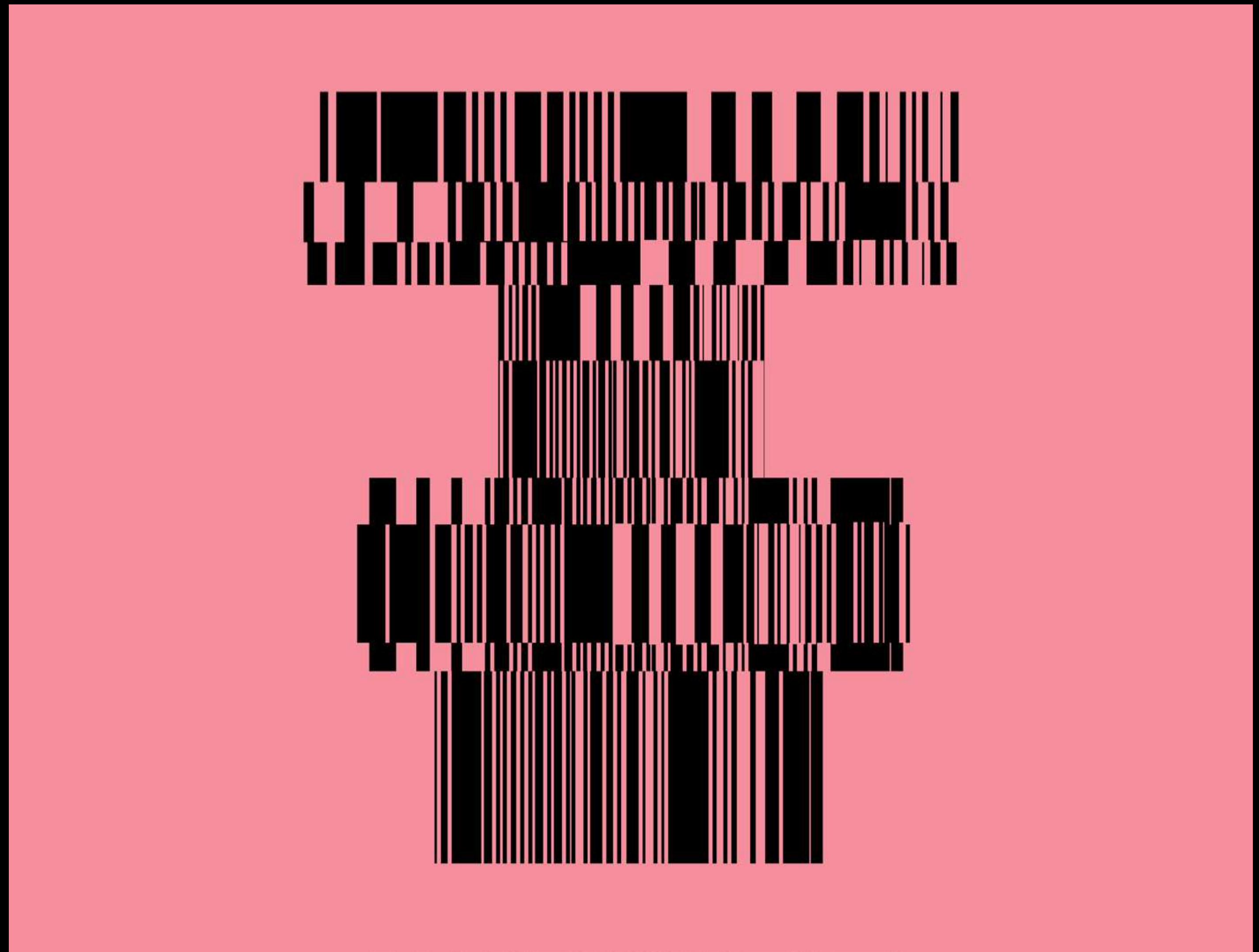


Courtesy: Technogym

Leader of the pack

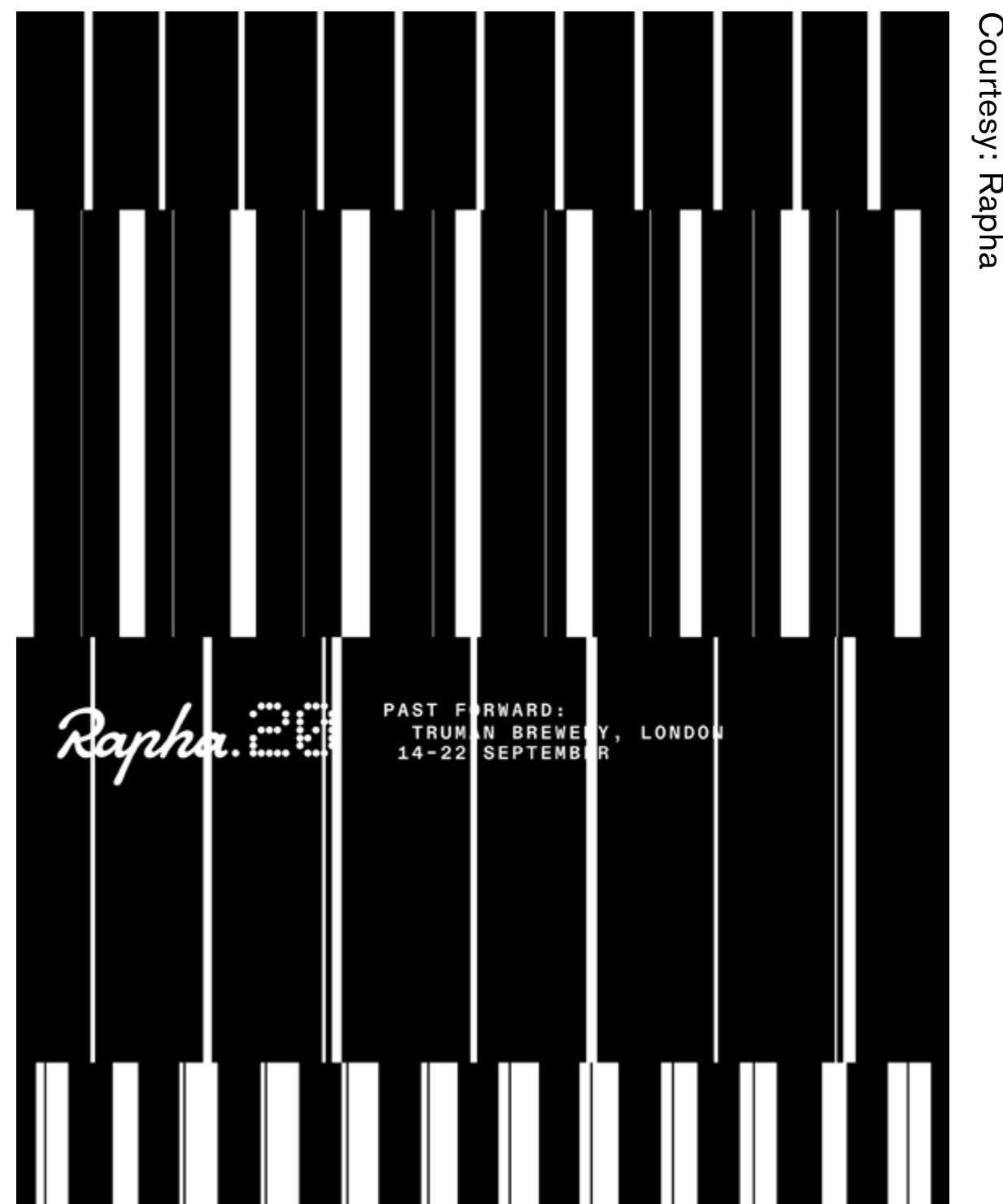
***Rapha presents
'Rapha20:
Past Forward'***

Words by Tom Howells



Courtesy: Rapha

Its urban infrastructure may be a little more chaotic than that of, say, Copenhagen or Amsterdam, but London is a city of cyclists – and no-one has defined the pastime's cosmopolitan aesthetic quite like Rapha.



Courtesy: Rapha

This year, the brand is celebrating its 20th anniversary with a homecoming of sorts. Back in 2004, Rapha set its wheels turning with an exhibition dubbed 'Kings of Pain' at Brick Lane's Truman Brewery complex – a showroom-cum-shrine to road racing's heroes, launched simultaneously with its touchstone Sportwool Classic Jersey, a functional and aesthetic piece of kit, in thrall to the jerseys of days gone by, that upended the resolutely non-sartorial, nylon-heavy world of cycling apparel.

In the years since, it's become a bona fide disruptor: with its own cycling club, Clubhouses, collaborations with Paul Smith and Palace skateboards, and a faultless inventory of cycling and lifestyle kit transcending its niche beginnings.

For LDF24, Rapha returns to the same site with 'Rapha20: Past Forward'. The show is multifaceted; more abstract and experiential than before, incorporating a 'Future of Cycling' manifesto (featuring interviews a bevy of cycling-world impresarios, whether riders, designers or community leaders increasing diversity within the sport), experiential design by branding agency Made Thought and a kinetic sculpture by Isabel + Helen, bringing to life the story of the brand's new touchstone piece. "People might come

thinking it's just going to be a collection of jerseys on mannequins," explains Rapha's exhibition co-lead, Jess Morgan. "It's very much not that."

In addition, visitors can browse a pop-up boutique, and the more active velo-enthusiasts can set off on a series of curated cycling routes around the city, taking in classic Rapha club rides, architecture and modernism forays, and routes connecting the festival's Design Districts. It's a honed array of activations, exemplifying the brand's cross-cultural status as an industry leader embracing cycling as a holistic calling – culturally astute, ecologically friendly, physically and existentially liberating, and socially egalitarian. Rapha has taken it upon itself, effusively, to place itself at the centre of this drive. "Rapha's purpose," says Morgan, "is to inspire the world to live life by bike."

"We've been doing a series of different moments throughout the year to celebrate 20 years," says co-lead Georgia Kasmin, "but this is definitely our pinnacle moment of celebration."

14–22 September
The Truman Brewery,
Ely's Yard, E1 6QR

What does the workplace of the future look like?

MillerKnoll presents 'Design With Impact'

Words by Tom Howells



Courtesy: MillerKnoll

MillerKnoll is a global leader in modern design and one of the largest manufacturers of products for home, office and beyond. It brings together myriad celebrated contemporary design names – Herman Miller, Knoll, Design Within Reach, Edelman, Geiger, HAY, Maharam, Muuto and NaughtOne among them – under one umbrella.

The company's new Clerkenwell flagship is a London home for the Knoll, Herman Miller and Maharam brands. It's all contained within The Sans, a beautifully remodelled and ecologically progressive 1,700 sq m former office flush with St John's Gate. Ben Groom, MillerKnoll's president of international contract, says the decision to take up in the design-centric neighbourhood was a no-brainer, "driven by the vibrant creative energy and the neighbourhood's rich architectural heritage. The area is home to more creative businesses and architects per square mile than anywhere else on the planet, making it one of the most important design hubs in the world."

For LDF24, the visitor experience is twofold. As well as taking in the showrooms within The Sans, visitors can imbibe the company's holistic remit through conversations on the company's 'Design With Impact' philosophy, hosted by Bertie Van Wyk, the senior insight strategist at MillerKnoll's global research and planning team. A defining aspect of the MillerKnoll identity, the mindset is about "enhancing wellbeing, fostering community and connection and helping organisations navigate and design for change" in a workspace culture that has been altered to an unprecedented degree in recent years, says Groom. While many office brands are talking about this upheaval, few are attempting to affect meaningful change around it in the way MillerKnoll is. Just *how* will become crystal clear at The Sans.

"Each of our brands brings something unique to the table in terms of style, expertise and craftsmanship," Groom concludes. "But, as MillerKnoll, we're united by a common belief that design can change the world for the better. Our mission is to design spaces that are not only aesthetically pleasing, but also support the physical and mental health of the people who use them."

Courtesy: MillerKnoll

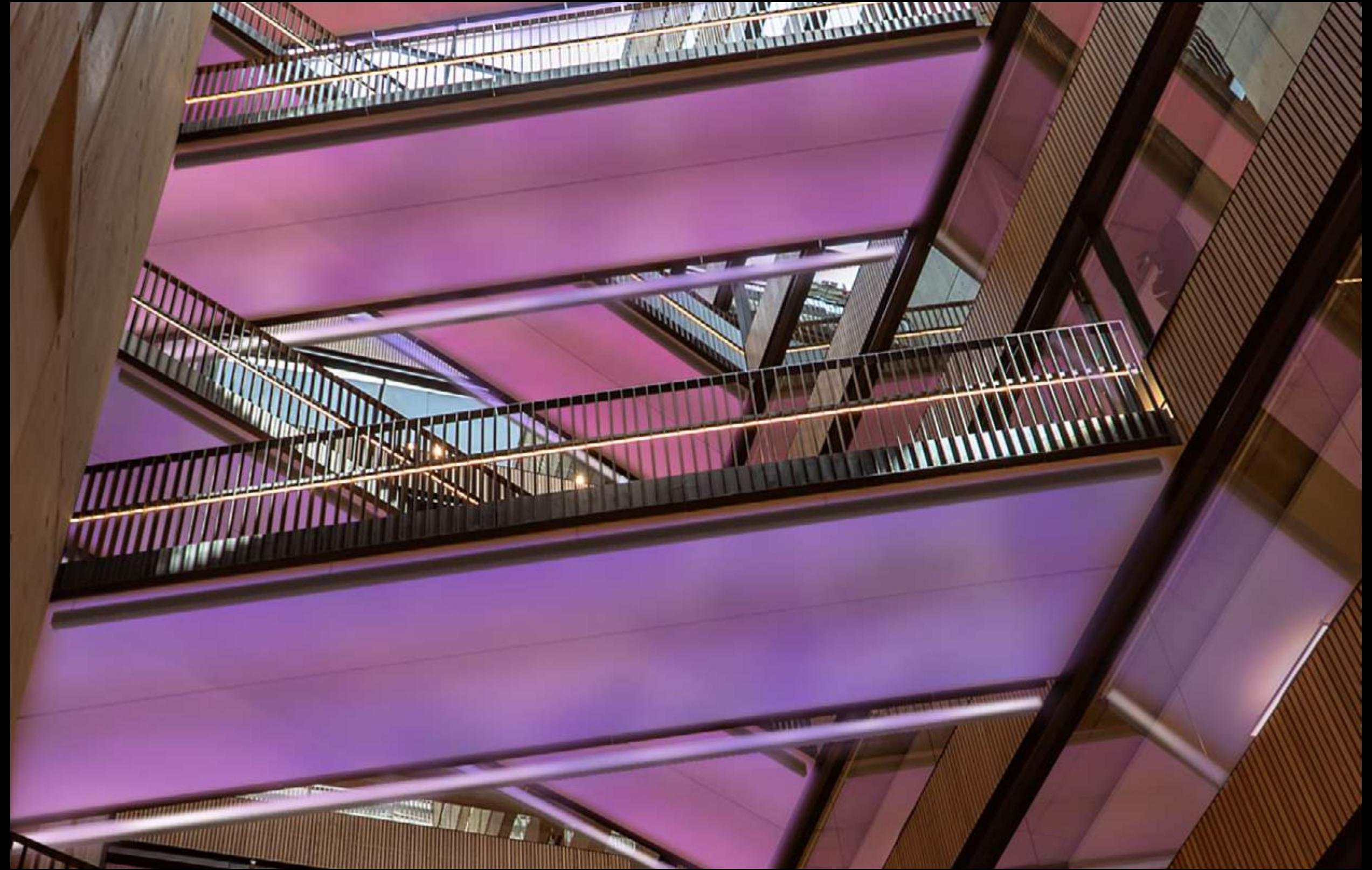


**'Design With Impact' runs 17–19 September
The Sans, 20 St John's Square, EC1M 4AH**

Embrace the atomic age in White City

***'Atomic Connection' by Synthetic
State and Mathilde Wittock***

Words by Tom Howells



Courtesy: Television Centre White City

Few buildings evoke post-war London architecture like Arthur Hayes and Graham Dawbarn's Television Centre: a midcentury icon especially recognisable for the totemic 'atomic dots' motif across its main façade. The 14-acre site was sold to Stanhope, Mitsui Fudosan and AIMCo in 2013, and is now a fertile hub of office space, homes, recording studios and restaurants – but the dots remain.

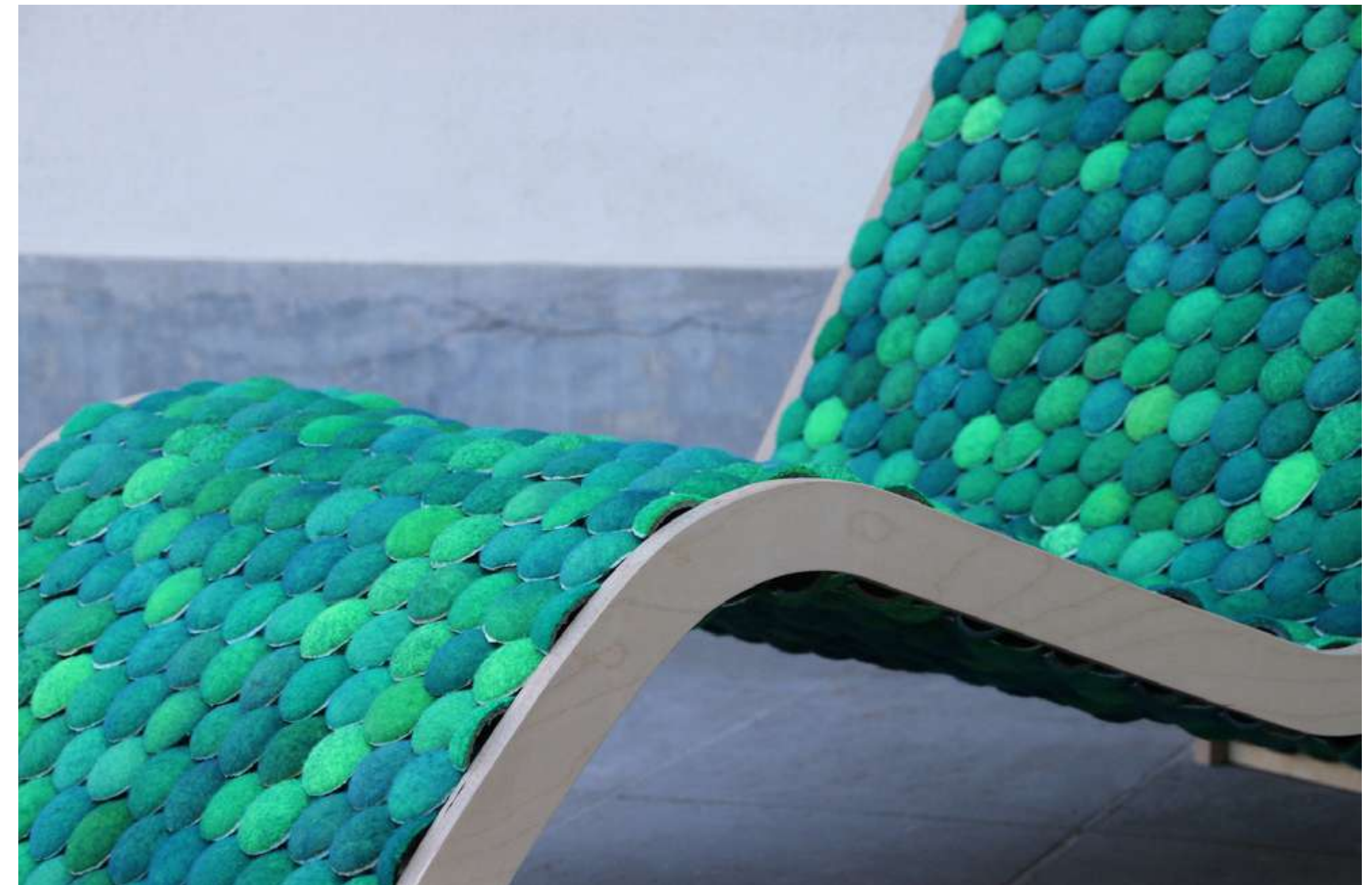
For LDF24, they have been harnessed as inspiration for 'Atomic Connection', a two-pronged lightwork and furniture installation by the Amsterdam-based tech innovators Synthetic State and the Belgian designer Mathilde Wittock. It will engage visitors to the White City icon in unprecedentedly lucid new ways.

Synthetic State's work – dubbed 'Dialogue' – is a multi-part light installation and technology demo, wherein circular rays (in thrall to the dots) are used to flood parts of the TVC building with a panoply of brilliant hues. The central atrium, with its internal bridges, is "the beating heart of the whole system", explains Synthetic State's founder, Navin Abey, although there are interventions strung around the site. The experience is passive and active – with a real-time interactive element via the use of sensors that alter the projection with the movement of an observer, changing the sense of space.

Wittock's half of the concept, meanwhile – called 'Bounce' – comprises two equally eye-popping benches and a lounge chair, constructed from colourful, recycled half-tennis balls (that circle motif again) and placed in the central atrium. It's a serene zone at which to stop, recline and enjoy the enveloping show above, in a part of the TVC building often missed by passing footfall.

"I'm looking forward to seeing the building transformed into a sensory experience where lights, colours, sound and the flow of life can be contemplated while sitting on the 'Bounce' furniture," Wittock concludes.

Courtesy: Television Centre White City



16–22 September
Television Centre,
101 Wood Lane,
White City, W12 7FW



An Antipodean greeting

***Fisher & Paykel experience
centre tours***

Words by Tom Howells

Courtesy: Fisher & Paykel



What does Kiwi hospitality look like? Curious LDF attendees can swerve the 16-hour flight (and wallet-dusting outlay) with a trip to Fisher & Paykel – the sole global appliance company with wares designed in New Zealand. A huge player in the southern market, but less well known in the northern hemisphere, the brand’s MO is one of generosity and heritage. Nowhere is this more readily apparent than at its new London flagship.

A client visit to one of Fisher & Paykel’s global ‘experience centres’ begins with a hot rock tea ceremony: “A small token of New Zealand, to give people that moment to breathe and take it in and get to know us,” says Sasha Joseph, Fisher & Paykel’s Wigmore Street experience centre manager. She is speaking from its immersive ‘social kitchen’ where, in among the client coffee mornings and formal meetings, they hold their feted ‘Mastery of Temperature’ sessions: a signature masterclass exploring the nuance of different heats in food preparation, based around a five-course tasting menu.

Although Fisher & Paykel soft-launched earlier this year, LDF poses an opportunity for the brand to truly immerse itself in London’s endlessly fecund retail scene – to “utilise the festivals and events to really shout about what we’re doing, taking people on a curated journey and tour throughout the space”, says Joseph. (Guests might enjoy a glass or two of New Zealand sauvignon blanc on the later openings, too.)

The Wigmore Street hub is consciously embedded within its context. Red brick tiles mirror those around Westminster, while a concave ceiling evokes the Underground. It’s all juxtaposed alluringly with pendants, furniture pieces and screens of beatific imagery from the home country. Storytelling – as much as building and nurturing client relationships – is an essential part of any successful brand. Fisher & Paykel just does it with an extra lick of Kiwi magic.



Courtesy: Fisher & Paykel

16–21 September
98 Wigmore Street, W1U 3RF



Technicolour world

2LG Studio presents 'SPECTRUM'

Words by Tom Howells

Russell Whitehead and Jordan Cluore / Courtesy: 2LG Studio



A vivacious embrace of colour is a fairly broad approach for a design studio – but it’s something that Jordan Cluroe and Russell Whitehead have explored with effusive panache in their work as 2LG.

The duo are marking 10 years of collaboration by bedding down at Hart Shoreditch to present ‘SPECTRUM’: a sensory journey and series of vibrant interventions around the hotel, ‘exploring human and personal connections to colour, evoking memories and inviting conversations’, they explain.

The hotel is a multifaceted canvas for their ‘joyful minimalism’, with products and ideas reimaged and revisited. The creations on show include a new take on a rug released with Floor Story, based on a large-scale moiré, here reinterpreted via AI filters in a rainbow spectrum; as well as a fresh presentation of a jacket based on a piece made for the furniture brand Ligne Roset, placed within a circular staircase at the Hart.

The de facto showpieces swerve away from the tangible: a bespoke, eight-minute soundscape written with the composer Quentin LaChapele and a wraparound video piece by the digital artist Lucy Hardcastle born out of the soundtrack. “It’s going to be a moment of euphoric calmness within the chaos of LDF that we hope people will be able to be fully encapsulated within,” says Whitehead.

The decade landmark has also let 2LG become retrospective in their ethos, they say, as well as a tad bolder, more confident and more inquisitive. “This show is an opportunity for us to explore the roots of our colour choices,” says Whitehead. “It’s been a personal journey, a deep dive into colour – what it means to us and how it affects people and spaces and things.”

Crucially, 2LG’s use of vivid palettes has long been synonymous with their queer identity. They hope this show will encourage discourse and self-expression in others. “There’s an emotional vulnerability to what we’re offering here,” says Cluroe. “I want people to feel like this is a safe space where they can reveal something of themselves.”

14–22 September
Hart Shoreditch,
61–67 Great Eastern Street,
EC2A 3HU



Courtesy: 2LG Studio

Explorers, impresarios and a trio of co-work icons

***Kristjana S Williams at Metal Box Factory; studio HANDS, Ivan Zahrebeniuk,
Akmaral Khassen and studio LOUD at The Frames Shoreditch;
blurck and Dasein lab at Leroy House***

Words by Tom Howells



Courtesy: studio HANDS x The Workplace

Urban workspace culture is big business these days – but the rise and rise of co-working and shared studio setups has also meant a sea of drab, glass-panelled homogeneity. Not so with Workspace, the prosaically named but progressively attuned company whose sites are home to more than 4,000 business in London. Its enclaves are free to personalise – a move, explains Cherry Tian, the head of marketing, that allows tenants to make a space “truly their own, to reflect the way they work, their identity, their culture”.

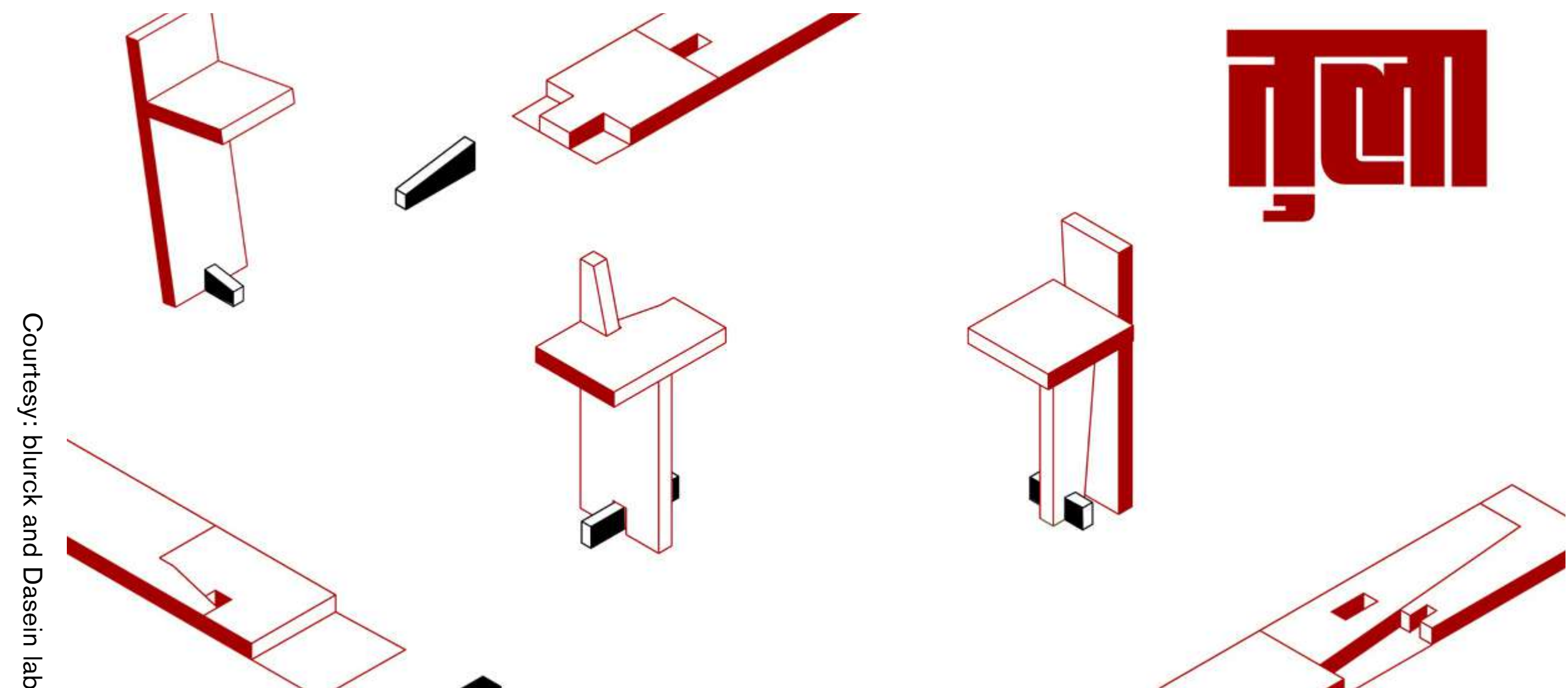
At LDF24, the company is throwing open the doors of three of its headline locales for an exhibition within each. At Bankside’s Metal Box Factory – three former industrial and warehouse buildings with a gigantic, airy central atrium – the Icelandic artist Kristjana S Williams presents a 3D installation exploring 21 female explorers through history. It’s a “geometric journey from land to sea”, with a verdant artwork paying homage to the women who upended gender conventions and documented the botanical world at a time when the world of discovery was overwhelmingly parochial. “These women really defied the norms and expectations of their age and pursued their passion for nature and adventure,” says Tian. “It’s a female empowerment piece.”

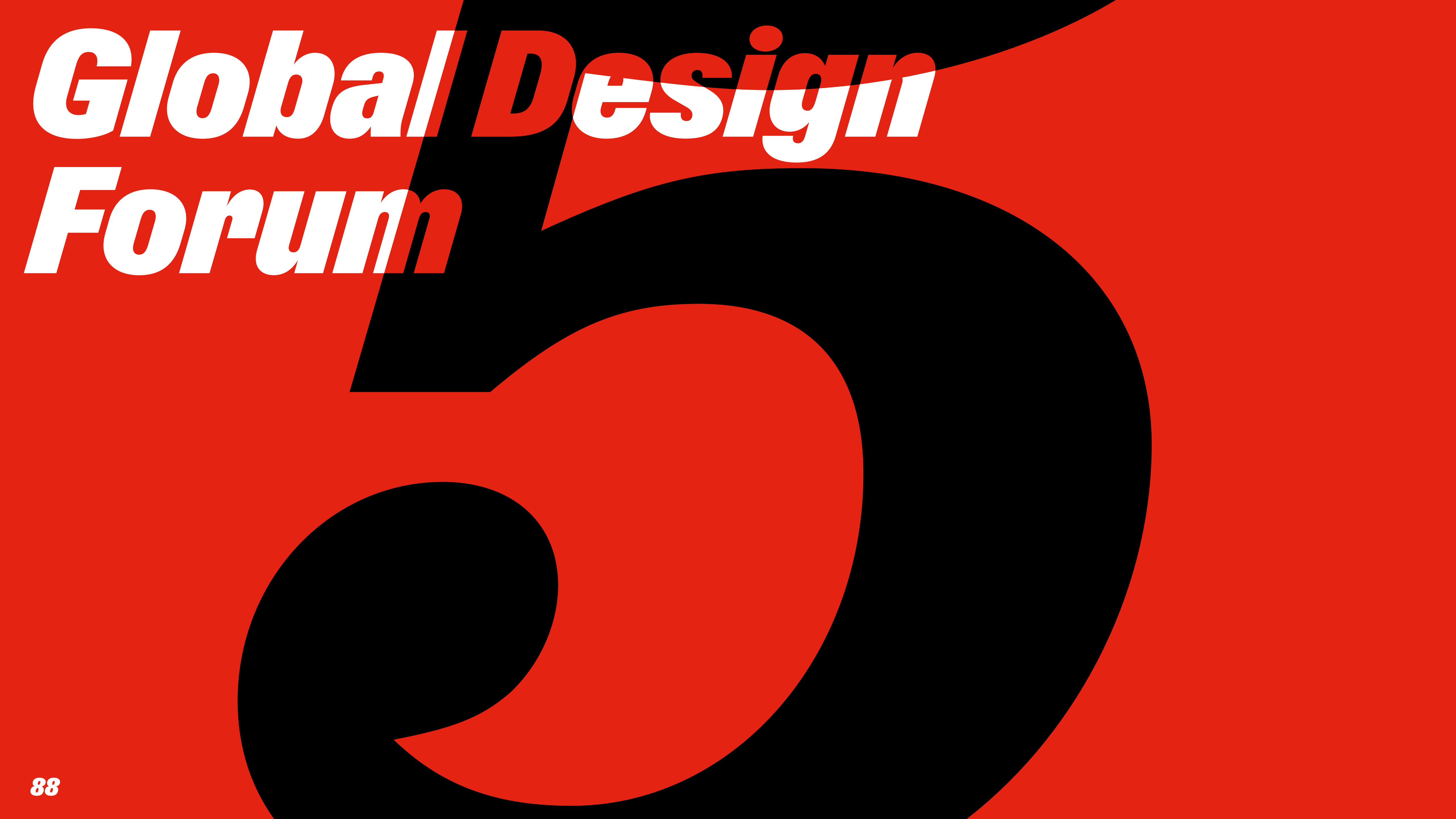
Over in Shoreditch, The Frames sees a host of creatives – studio HANDS, Akmaral Khassen, Ivan Zahrebeniuk and studio LOUD – delve into the magic of everyday objects (furniture, paintings, prints et al), exploring the way they transform our spaces.

Meanwhile, the multidisciplinary design practices blurck and Dasein lab have taken up at Islington’s Leroy House (which reflects the white Gault stone of St Paul’s church opposite), fashioning screwless, flatpack chairs from reclaimed London scaffolding planks and Delhi stone in a collaborative urban initiative dubbed ‘Tulā’.

It’s an highly engaging triumvirate – a bevy of intriguing art and design from a global panoply of creatives – and a fine way to immerse oneself in Workspace’s world. “Design is a key principle for Workspace, both in our buildings and our creative customers,” says Tian. “It’s great to be able to celebrate them and the wider London design community.”

Various locations, check londondesignfestival.com for details





Global Design Forum

Global Design Forum is LDF's curated thought leadership programme, celebrating design and the minds shaping its future.

Responsible design

The human experience

The healthy city

Resilience and repair

Shared histories

Human- and non-human-centred design

How tackling emissions can help us breathe easy

VELUX at Global Design Forum: 'The Healthy City'

Words by Tom Howells

90

Courtesy: VELUX Living Places by Adam Mork





For eight decades, the Danish skylight brand VELUX has helped illuminate the spaces in which we live – a legacy that began in during the second world war, when Villum Kann Rasmussen invented the first iteration of a roof window that transformed dowdy attics into newfangled domestic spaces.

Now, the company is an industry leader in both its signature products and in its commitment to sustainability, from the robust construction of the skylights in certified woods, to battling emission outputs by switching to renewable energy and financing WWF forest projects that will sequester a carbon output consummate with the company's entire historical emissions by 2041.

It's an ethos echoed, loudly, in VELUX's day of talks at this year's Global Design Forum. Under the banner of 'The Healthy City', it seeks to raise questions (and workable answers) around tackling urban air pollution and building emissions through design, constructing homes with reduced environmental impact, remedying climate-induced sleep inequality and building green cities – encouraging agronomists, architects and designers to collaborate around the challenges of urban biodiversity and population wellbeing.

Crucially, it's not all bluster. Last year, VELUX launched its 'Living Places' initiative in Copenhagen, fully substantiating its green credentials in the form of 'an experimental living environment'. It demonstrated that sustainable building can happen now – without new technology. 'Living Places' showed that the brand could create, at market price, a prototype house (in fact, seven in all) with a CO₂ footprint three times lower than that of the average single-family home in Denmark – a huge boon when the industry accounts for a gargantuan 34% of the globe's energy consumption and produces 37% of CO₂ emissions.

"Our partnership with this year's London Design Festival reflects our commitment to leading the way on sustainable business practices within our sector," says Richard Williams, senior architect development manager at VELUX. "Sustainability and green design are at the heart of both VELUX and the LDF, which is why hosting this day as one brings two allies together to inspire others within the sector."

How's that for a breath of fresh air?



Courtesy: VELUX Living Places by Adam Mork

17 September
V&A South Kensington,
Cromwell Road, SW7 2RL

Building for a world in crisis

Türkiye Design Council at Global Design Forum: 'Resilience and Repair'

Words by Tom Howells

The February 2023 earthquake in Türkiye was cataclysmic, levelling great swathes of the country along the Syrian border, killing more than 55,000 people and destroying infrastructure and buildings. In Hatay, the city of Antakya – the ancient city of Antioch, a site of indelible ancient significance – was particularly badly hit: 80% of the city centre, several neighbourhoods and myriad historic structures were flattened, leaving thousands homeless.

In the aftermath, the Istanbul-based Türkiye Design Council – an NGO supporting Türkiye's design sector, active since 2016 – set to work. It teamed up with an international consortium of architecture, design, sustainability, engineering, culture, heritage and archaeology experts to develop a masterplan to redesign and rebuild Hatay, utilising the skills of more than 50 multidisciplinary companies to do so.

This has included the local practices DB Architecture and KEYM Urban Renewal Centre, as well as the international practices Foster + Partners, Buro Happold and MIC-HUB, which developed the masterplan vision for Antakya and supporting design principles.

Courtesy: Türkiye Design Council





Courtesy: Foster and Partners

Neither was it a straight refashioning of the old metropolis: the new plan, explains TDC, has sought to reimagine Antakya with future generations in mind – with the climate resilience, environmental and social wellbeing, and connectivity that demands.

It's a massive undertaking: in scope and logistics, but also in the heartening notion of design, heritage and architecture experts pulling together in a show of resilience in the face of adversity. It directly echoes, too, the theme for TDC's Global Design Forum programme during LDF: a day of talks dubbed 'Resilience and Repair', including conversations around 'Responses to Conflict and Disaster', 'Community Resilience', 'Adapting to Survive' and a keynote on 'Preserving Identity Post Disaster', specifically on the rebuilding and revitalisation of Antakya and on which Furkan Demirci, chairman of the Türkiye Design Council, will be speaking.

"The revitalisation of Antakya isn't just important for Türkiye – it's important for the world," explains Demirci. "The world is in crisis. There's the climate, earthquakes, wildfires, wars. The cities are the core of our population and human civilization.

It's not just buildings and streets – it's the symbol of trust we have for each other. Design has a healing effect on people: it's a sacred practice."

This human aspect, he continues, is the underlying thrust of the Council's day at GDF. A project on the scale of the Antakya plan isn't mere office work; it sets an existential precedent for future situations of this kind. Taking the stage at LDF, he says, is a means to explaining to a wider audience that a project of this magnitude is viable. "We want," Demirci concludes, "to tell the world that this is possible."

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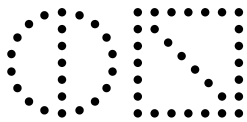
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