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## Es Devlin named Artistic Director of London Design Biennale 2020, revealing 'Resonance' as the 2020 theme

**London, UK --** London Design Biennale announces today that multi-award-winning artist and designer Es Devlin OBE will be the Artistic Director of the third edition of the international exhibition at London's Somerset House, **8-27 September 2020**.

Widely recognised to be one of the most visionary and artistically ambitious figures working in the fields of music, opera, art, theatre and technology today, Devlin is known for creating large-scale performative sculptures and environments that fuse technology and poetry. For London Design Festival 2018, her luminous fluorescent red *Please Feed The Lions* installation roared AI-generated collective poetry to crowds in Trafalgar Square. *The Singing Tree*, a collective choral installation at the V&A, merged machine-learning with sound and light in 2017; and the 2016 *Mirrormaze* in Peckham and 2017 *ROOM 2022* at Miami Art Basel both explored reflective labyrinthine narratives and geometries.

She has conceived touring stage sculptures for Beyoncé, U2, The Weeknd, Adele and Kanye West, and collaborated with celebrated theoretical physicist Carlo Rovelli on an interpretation of *The Order of Time* read by Benedict Cumberbatch at BOLD Peckham in September 2018. She designed the London 2012 Olympic Closing Ceremony and has conceived the UK Pavilion for Expo 2020 Dubai.

Devlin has chosen '**Resonance**' as the theme, which over 50 countries, cities and territories will respond to in their installations and presentations across the entirety of the site.

Devlin explains, "*We live in an age of hyper resonance, the consequences of which are both exhilarating and devastating. Everything we design and*

*everything we produce resonates. Each idea we generate has the power to reach a mass digital audience undreamt of by previous generations, while the lifespans of the physical products we create often endure long beyond our own. Whether in the social media feeds of millions or in the bellies of marine animals, our ideas and our objects stick around.*

*In our global, digital era, design can reach instantly across borders and bridge cultures. It can positively alter behaviours and transform societies. Perspectives can be shifted and lives can be improved when new ideas resonate and are adopted by extended communities. Designers have the power to influence and amaze their audiences into making these profound shifts, using the mass networks available to them to resonate practices that will help build a more sustainable future."*

**Alongside Devlin's role as 2020 Artistic Director, London Design Biennale also announces the appointment of Will Sorrell as Managing Director.**

Prior to joining London Design Biennale, Sorrell was Managing Director of designjunction. He has instigated over 35 exhibitions in 15 countries, across design, art, architecture and fashion. These include seven editions of the award-winning designjunction show; the launch of Tom Dixon's critically acclaimed MOST event in Milan; and touring exhibitions with the British Council across four continents. Will graduated with a BA from New York University in Individualised Study (Diaspora and Intercultural Relations) and an MA from University of the Arts London in Enterprise and Management for the Creative Arts.

Commenting on his new role, Sorrell says:

*"It is such an exciting moment to join London Design Biennale. The third edition in 2020 will come at a time when the UK finds itself in new relationships with the world. What better way to strengthen those relationships, than to host the best international design thinking in our capital.*

*Embarking on this edition with Es Devlin is a pleasure. She is an expert on communicating to diverse, global audiences - and brings a deep understanding of how to both inspire, and entertain."*

The third edition of London Design Biennale will take place from 8 - 27 September 2020, with a press and private view on Monday 7 September 2020. Participants from 50 countries, territories and cities will be invited to respond to the theme Resonance with original design installations that will be shown across the entirety of Somerset House, including the Edmond J Safra Fountain Court and River Terrace.

Press images & assets are available to download [HERE](#):

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## About London Design Biennale

Established in 2016 by Sir John Sorrell CBE and Ben Evans, London Design Biennale is a prestigious international event that celebrates forward-thinking in the field of design. The aim of the exhibition is to provoke global debate and an exchange of ideas about the universal impact of design in contemporary culture. The 2018 edition welcomed the world's most imaginative and innovative curators, designers, and design institutions to the capital, with 40 countries, cities and territories taking part and over 200,000 visitors arriving at Somerset House during the three-week exhibition.

## About Es Devlin OBE

Es Devlin OBE practices across the worlds of art, opera, music and technology.

She is known for creating large-scale performative sculptures and environments that fuse technology and poetry. Her luminous fluorescent red Please Feed The Lions sculpture roared AI-generated collective poetry to crowds in Trafalgar Square in September 2018 for London Design Festival. The Singing Tree, a collective choral installation at the V&A, merged machine-learning with sound and light in 2017; the 2016 Mirrormaze in Peckham and 2017 ROOM 2022 at Miami Art Basel both explored reflective labyrinthine narratives and geometries.

She has conceived touring stage sculptures for Beyoncé, U2, The Weeknd, Adele and Kanye West and collaborated with celebrated theoretical physicist Carlo Rovelli on an interpretation of The Order of Time read by Benedict Cumberbatch at BOLD Peckham in September 2018.

She has pioneered an artistically and technically ambitious approach to her practice that bridges the gap between audience and performance, often using surface, light, projection and reflection to create dramatic and ambiguous spatial and psychological environments.

Her practice was the subject of the Netflix documentary series Abstract: the Art of Design, and she has recently been named winner of the much-coveted commission to design the UK Pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai. The PoemPavilion will continue the work in AI generated collective poetry first conceived with Hans Ulrich Obrist at the Serpentine in 2017.

## About Somerset House

A unique part of London's cultural scene, Somerset House is a historic building where surprising and original work comes to life. From its 18th-century origins, Somerset House has been a centre for debate and discussion – an intellectual powerhouse for the nation. Somerset House is today a key cultural destination in London in which to experience a broad range of artistic activity, engage with artists, designers and makers and be part of a major creative forum – an environment that is relaxed, welcoming, and inspirational to visit while providing a stimulating workplace for the cultural and creative industries.

Since its opening in 2000, Somerset House has built up a distinctive outdoor public programme including Skate, concerts, an open-air film season and a diverse range of temporary exhibitions throughout the site focusing on contemporary culture, with accompanying extensive learning programmes. In October 2016, Somerset House launched Somerset House Studios, a new experimental workspace connecting artists, makers and thinkers with audiences. The Studios provide a platform for creative projects and collaboration, promoting work that pushes bold ideas, engages with urgent issues and pioneers new technologies. Somerset House is one of the biggest communities of creative organisations in the capital, including The Courtauld Gallery and Institute of Art, King's College London Cultural Institute and over 100 other creative businesses. It currently attracts approximately 3.2 million visitors each year.