

London Design Biennale 2021 presents the world's leading design and design-led innovation, creativity and research

1-27 June, Somerset House

www.londondesignbiennale.com #LDB21

For press images, please contact ldb@brunswickgroup.com

- Pavilions from countries, states, territories and cities from six continents will exhibit ground-breaking design concepts that address global challenges and crises
- Engaging installations will invite visitors to fully immerse themselves in the best of international design thinking
- Additional exhibition *Design in an Age of Crisis* and exhibits on *Sustainability & Innovation* will further explore the role of design in society

29 April 2021, London, UK – Under the theme 'Resonance', which considers the ripple effect of ground-breaking design concepts on the way we live, and the choices we make, pavilions from across six continents, will be joined by special projects and partnerships for a global collaboration and exchange on how design can shape our collective futures.

With a shared belief in the vital role design can play in addressing the crises facing the world today, international voices from across the globe will share their perspectives and put forward ideas on the major challenges we face: exploring issues from the pandemic to climate change, equality to migration, through international collaboration, policy making and communication.

Pavilions

Countries, territories, regions and cities from all over the world will present their responses to the question posed by Artistic Director Es Devlin: how can design provide solutions to the major challenges of our time?

Pavilions participating in the 2021 edition of London Design Biennale include:

Highlighting the melting of the global icecaps, **Antarctica** will consider if this global peril is reversible in an AI-generated video installation. **Austria** will focus on the essential task of climate 'care' and the possibilities artificial intelligence may open to make us a climate-conscious species. **Canada** will make visitors physically bend around its installation to spotlight the reliance on artificial heating and cooling systems at the expense of the wellbeing of our planet. **Germany's** display of disposable cutlery will look at how these objects represent centuries of cultural heritage as well as today's throwaway society, encouraging the viewer to develop new perspectives for alternative futures.

Reflecting on the loss of water as a national resource, **Guatemala** will create a sound installation of over 50 rain sticks. **India** will bring together stories from across the country that map ideas of ecology, sustainability and design.

Exploring the ways in which textiles have been used historically to reflect the rhythm of the seasons in domestic interiors, **Poland** will present contemporary climate-responsive design. The metaphorical possibilities of new raw materials, such as avocado seeds, in place of **Venezuela's** economic reliance on fossil fuels will be investigated.

Outdoor pavilions this year include **Forest for Change: The Global Goals Pavilion**, which will see a forest coming to Somerset House courtyard. Forest for Change will create a magnificent green landscape of 400 trees, offering a journey of discovery and interaction, with an installation in the central clearing of the forest, driving awareness of the United Nations' Global Goals for Sustainable Development. On the River Terrace, the **Pavilion of the African Diaspora** will provide a global stage for the voices of people born of the African diaspora in an architectural folly.

Taking an ancient, geological view, **Chile** will use the sound of rocks to propose a rethinking of our forms of coexistence on the planet. **Argentina** invites visitors to the weaving of a shared territory that unfolds from designer Cristian Mohaded's long-standing relationship with the artisan Lorenzo Reyes and the Simbol, a plant that grows in the north of Argentina. **Israel** will explore the perpetual tension between globalisation and nationalism and the boiling point they are reaching in this symbolic installation. **Ghana** will explore the conversation between the country and two of its former colonial rulers, Britain and Denmark, over four centuries, with a site-specific installation looking at the history of Somerset House.

Indonesia will explore the design of public housing to investigate the shortcomings in modern domestic space that indigenous communities face. Inspired by the ritual act of worship, **Taiwan** will demonstrate how humans can connect through goodwill, faith, and compassion in an interactive exhibition featuring metronomes. **Greece** celebrates a natural treasure that emanates from the soil: the olive tree and the oil it produces.

Hong Kong will invite visitors to develop stories, dreams and speculations around its history and future, creating an alternative archive. Through a performative living monument, **Latvia** will celebrate the country's literature. **Japan** will pay homage to the ancient Japanese art of Washi paper-making and papier-mâché through a sensory experience that connects Tokyo and London.

A network of installations from the **Czech Republic** will play with the geometric structures of the West Wing of Somerset House to present the viewer with different ways of perceiving reality through architecture. **Finland** will challenge the notion of the "echo chamber" in a moment when we are looking for ways to reconnect with each other and re-enter public life. **New York City** will create an interactive healing environment that reflects the Recharge Rooms, which the pavilion's designers formed to support the mental health and wellbeing of first responders during the pandemic.

Three pavilions will be taking part digitally, on the website of London Design Biennale. The idea that the solutions to many of the problems faced by the planet can be found in the 'earth' will be explored by **Italy**, with an immersive installation offering an experience of the growth of an imaginary city. **Norway** will demonstrate how ocean-based inclusive design enables societal collaborations, meets local community needs and can achieve sustainable change. In a series of

videos, **Pakistan** will consider notions of displacement through the elaborate stonework of Pietra Dura, as practised by Afghan migrants who have brought the ancient artisan technique with them.

Special Projects

A collective for designers from the MENA region, **Designers In The Middle** will take the Casbah (known as the 'Old City') as a theme, exploring its urban and socioeconomic contribution to the MENA region and its modern architecture.

Artist **Beatie Wolfe** will showcase an Environmental Protest Piece about the impact of humans on the planet, built using a reimagined music video format and 800,000 years of our planet's data. A team of French designers and curators led by **Alter Projects** will present a concept on behavioural design inspired by Marcel Proust's novel *Swann's Way*, exploring how, through ASMR, we are able to revive or create memories.

Participating pavilions include: **Alter Projects, the African Diaspora, Antarctica, Argentina, Austria, Beatie Wolfe, Canada, Chile, Czech Republic, Designers in the Middle, Finland, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, New York City, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Taiwan, The Global Goals Pavilion, Venezuela.**

Further details on the pavilions and their design teams are available online [here](#).

Design in An Age of Crisis

This exhibition will showcase radical design thinking from the world's design community, the public, and young people, in response to a global Open Call created in partnership with Chatham House that attracted 500 submissions from over 50 countries across 6 continents. Visitors will be able to view and absorb these radical ideas in an installation at Somerset House, designed by Juliet Quintero of award-winning architecture, art and place-shaping studio Dallas-Pierce-Quintero, with graphics by world renowned design studio Pentagram. The exhibition is supported using public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England.

Sustainability & Innovation

A series of installations by a selected group of universities, organisations and brands demonstrating their contribution to global issues through design.

As part of this, the Centre for Natural Material Innovation, **University of Cambridge** will present 'Unfolding,' an installation that will explore the evolving relationship between nature and the city, natural materials and buildings. The project will focus specifically on the use of engineered timber for the production of flexible housing and explores the ways in which timber can improve the way we live and build through a light, flexible and transformable structure.

Biennale Sessions

To ensure a full engagement of London Design Biennale's global community, a series of digital sessions will complement and extend the 2021 programme, connecting different design-related topics and disciplines including sustainability and environmental resonance, political and societal resonance, inclusive design, and many more. The Biennale Sessions programme will be announced [here](#) in May.

Victoria Broackes, Director, London Design Biennale, said: *“Following a year like no other, global collaboration is more vital than ever, and perhaps more possible. This June, designers from across the world will come together to exchange expertise and ideas exploring how design can better the world we inhabit. We look forward to welcoming visitors both to Somerset House and to the Biennale's online programme, and inspiring our audience with the positive change that can be brought about through design.”*

Jonathan Reekie, Director, Somerset House, said: *“We’re very proud that Somerset House’s cultural programme is reopening with the London Design Biennale, including Es Devlin’s spectacular Forest for Change. It is the perfect start to a season that will bring not only fresh imaginative thinking to global issues but also moments of joy and shared experience as we step out into the wider world and start to reconnect with each other.”*

Tickets are available [here](#)

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PRESS CONTACTS

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Public opening dates 1 – 27 June

Press preview 1 June

- Website: www.londondesignbiennale.com
- Twitter: [@londonbiennale](https://twitter.com/londonbiennale)
- Instagram: [@londondesignbiennale](https://www.instagram.com/londondesignbiennale)
- Facebook: [@Londondesignbiennale](https://www.facebook.com/Londondesignbiennale)
- #LDB21

COVID-19 Safety

This year, London Design Biennale will have a one-way route, and timed ticketing with a set capacity, to ensure the safety and wellbeing of visitors and staff, adhering to government guidelines and Somerset House health and safety compliance requirements.

About London Design Biennale

Established in 2016 by Sir John Sorrell CBE and Ben Evans CBE, London Design Biennale promotes international collaboration and the global role of design. The 2018 Biennale welcomed the world’s most exciting and ambitious designers, innovators and cultural bodies to the capital. The third edition of London Design Biennale will take place from 1-27 June 2021, curated by Artistic Director Es Devlin.

Taking over the entirety of Somerset House, including the Edmond J. Safra Fountain Court and River Terrace, participants will respond to the theme, Resonance, which considers the ripple effect of ground-breaking design concepts on the way we live, and the choices we make. More information on [Pavilions](#) can be found here.

London Design Biennale's International Advisory Committee and Jury includes: Ms Paola Antonelli, Ms Victoria Broackes, Mr Aric Chen, Ms Es Devlin, Ms Nipa Doshi, Mr Ben Evans CBE, Mr James Lingwood MBE, Professor Jeremy Myerson, Mr Jonathan Reekie CBE, Dr. Christopher Turner, Ms Suhair Khan, Sir John Sorrell CBE, Ms Marva Griffin Wilshire and Mr Waldick Jatoba.

London Design Biennale 2021 is supported using public funding by Arts Council England and the Government's Culture Recovery Fund issued by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

About Es Devlin OBE

Es Devlin OBE practises 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 Lion 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 Victoria and Albert Museum, merged machine-learning with sound and light in 2017. The 2016 Mirrormaze in Peckham, London, and 2017 ROOM 2022 at Miami Art Basel both explored reflective labyrinthine narratives and geometries. Devlin 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 his book The Order of Time, read by actor Benedict Cumberbatch, at BOLD Peckham in September 2018. Es Devlin 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. Devlin's work was the subject of a documentary in the Netflix 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 2020 PoemPavilion will continue to explore the concept of the AI-generated collective poetry first conceived with Hans Ulrich Obrist at London's Serpentine Galleries in 2017.

About Somerset House

Somerset House is London's working arts centre and home to the UK's largest creative community. Built on historic foundations, we are situated in the very heart of the capital. Dedicated to backing progress, championing openness, nurturing creativity and empowering ideas, our cultural programme is ambitious in scope. We insist on relevance, but aren't afraid of irreverence, and are as keen on entertainment as enrichment. We embrace the biggest issues of our times and are committed to oxygenating new work by emerging artists. Where else can you spend an hour ice-skating while listening to a specially commissioned sound piece by a cutting edge artist? It is this creative tension – the way we harness our heritage, put the too-often overlooked on our central stage and use our neo-classical backdrop to showcase ground-breaking contemporary culture – that inspires our programme. Old and new, history and disruption, art and entertainment, high-tech and homemade, combined with the fact that we are home to a constantly shape-shifting working creative community: this is our point of difference. It is what we are proud of. And it is what makes the experience of visiting or working in Somerset House inspiring and energising, urgent and exciting. somersethouse.org.uk

About Chatham House

Chatham House, the Royal Institute of International Affairs, is an independent and world-leading policy institute. Founded in 1920, its mission is to help governments and societies build a sustainably secure, prosperous, and sustainable world. From its foundation in the aftermath of the First World War to the start of its second century in 2020, the story of Chatham House is one of bringing people together with a common purpose to help shape a safer and fairer world. Today, it also seeks to empower the next generation to take forward their own ideas for a better future. This partnership with the London Design Biennale – enabled by the [Chatham House-SNF CoLab](#) – is a major initiative in delivering these goals.