

**London Design Biennale opens at Somerset House with 38 exhibitions
from across six continents considering the vital role of design in
addressing global challenges**

1-27 June, Somerset House

www.londondesignbiennale.com
#LDB21

Installation images available [here](#)



Forest for Change – The Global Goals Pavilion at London Design Biennale. Credit Ed Reeve

- International designers, artists and curators present ground-breaking design concepts in response to the theme 'Resonance', chosen by Artistic Director Es Devlin
- Pavilions from across six continents take over the rooms and outdoor spaces of Somerset House with immersive and thought-provoking installations
- Universities, galleries, artists, musicians and design collectives join countries, territories and cities to consider the vital role of design in addressing global crises and challenges
- London Design Biennale is part of the Mayor of London's Let's Do London campaign to attract domestic visitors to our city and bring central London's economy back to life

1 June 2021, London, UK – Opening today at Somerset House, the third edition of London Design Biennale brings together over 30 pavilions to showcase leading international design thinking and

exchange visions of the ripple effect that ground-breaking design concepts have on the way we live, and the choices we make. Installations and presentations respond to the theme 'Resonance,' and Artistic Director Es Devlin's call to action: how can design provide solutions to the major challenges and crises the world faces today.

From the pandemic to climate change, equality to migration, through international collaboration, policy making and communication, pavilions explore the role that design can play in changing the world for the better. Visitors will create music through interactive installations, spend time in spaces that encourage meditation, share stories, explore immersive environments, and experience new perspectives on their surroundings.

This year universities, designers, students and members of the public from around the world are amongst participants in two new elements: [Design in An Age of Crisis](#), an exhibition showcasing radical design thinking from the world's design community, the public, and young people; and [Sustainability & Innovation](#), a series of installations by a selected group of universities and galleries, demonstrating their contribution to global issues through design.

Produced in partnership with Chatham House, [Design in An Age of Crisis](#) presents responses to a global Open Call, which attracted 500 submissions from over 50 countries across 6 continents. Visitors will be able to walk through an installation at Somerset House displaying three hundred of these projects on printed cards as a 'cathedral of creativity'. Twelve shortlisted projects are highlighted, with a final room presenting a selection of design ideas from young people.

Universities and galleries will take part as [Sustainability & Innovation](#) installations. 'Unfolding', from the [Centre for Natural Material Innovation, University of Cambridge](#) and PLP Architecture focuses on the possibilities of engineered timber for producing flexible housing and improving the way we live and build. Academic staff from [Kingston School of Art](#) will present four creative research projects, each unified by the notion of designing for, and with, time. [The Royal College of Art](#) will showcase four companies creating sustainable solutions to ecological issues around global consumption, each part of the InnovationRCA centre for entrepreneurship. Suspended wooden sculptures respond to nature's resonance and play with light and shadow in a collaboration between contemporary crafts and applied art gallery [Ruup & Form](#) and interdisciplinary artist Naomi McIntosh.

A programme of digital talks will complement and extend this year's London Design Biennale. [Biennale Sessions](#) will engage the global design community with sessions looking at the role of design in areas including sustainability and the environment, politics and society, inclusivity and history. Featuring speakers such as designer Ini Archibong; artist and activist Beatie Wolfe; Nelly Ben Hayoun, Founder of Nelly Ben Hayoun Studios Ltd; Priya Khanchandani, Head of Curatorial and Interpretation, Design Museum; and Dr Christopher Turner, Keeper of Design, Architecture and Digital, V&A.

Outdoors at Somerset House, visitors will be able to walk through a forest of 400 trees in the courtyard. [Forest for Change - The Global Goals Pavilion](#) will offer 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" structured like a sail.

Located throughout the spaces of Somerset House, visitors will see pavilions from around the world exploring sustainability and the environment, globalisation and migration, day-to-day life, culture and history. Pavilions participating include [Antarctica, Argentina, Austria, Canada, Chile, Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel,](#)

Japan, Latvia, Poland, Taiwan, and Venezuela, with Italy, Nile Region, Norway, New York City, and Pakistan taking part digitally.

Special Projects will also feature from a collective for designers from the MENA region, [Designers in the Middle](#); pioneering artist [Beatie Wolfe](#); a team of French designers and curators led by [Servaire&Co](#) and [Alter-Projects](#); and from London-based sound artist, musician, and designer [Marco Perry Sound](#).

London Design Biennale is part of the Mayor's Let's Do London campaign. In May, Sadiq Khan launched the year-long campaign in partnership with the city's hospitality, culture, and retail industries to attract domestic visitors to our city and bring central London's economy back to life.

Sir John Sorrell CBE, President, London Design Biennale says: "Great design ideas can help change things for the better, inspire people and give them hope for the future - never more needed than now. At Somerset House this June, the London Design Biennale will present inspired thinking from across the world in a unique exhibition designed to entertain, inform and spark action."

Es Devlin OBE, Artistic Director, London Design Biennale, says: "In our global, digital era, design can instantly permeate borders and bridge cultures. As a community of designers approaching shared global challenges from culturally diverse viewpoints, the collective resonance of our ideas and our actions has the power to be truly transformative. I am delighted to be working alongside such an extraordinary group of designers, thinkers, artists and makers who have the power to influence and change minds in order to help build a more sustainable future."

Victoria Broackes, Director, says: "We are excited to be welcoming visitors to explore installations and exhibits from some of the world's most ambitious and imaginative designers and curators. London Design Biennale provides a forum for international collaboration, and for designers to exchange thoughts, perspectives and solutions for the challenges we are facing, which this year feels more important than ever. I look forward to our visitors – at Somerset House and online – being inspired and engaged."

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, said: "I am delighted that the London Design Biennale is returning to our city. Uniting international designers, curators and design institutes to showcase inspiring solutions to major world challenges, this important exhibition demonstrates that London is a global creative capital. As one of the first major cultural events to take place following the easing of lockdown restrictions, this is a great example of what Londoners and visitors can enjoy in our city this year as part of our Let's Do London campaign."

Tickets are available [here](#)

Pavilions participating in London Design Biennale:

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

African Diaspora

PoAD

The Pavilion of the African Diaspora (PoAD) was born from the need for a space on the global stage centred on the voices and contributions of people born of the African Diaspora.

Antarctica

Cold Flux

Highlighting the peril of our global icecaps, Ben Cullen Williams' installation questions if the melt is irreversible or whether there is hope if we act now.

Argentina

Monte Abierto

In Monte Abierto, the designer Cristian Mohaded invites us to the weaving of a shared territory that unfolds from his long-standing relationship with the artisan Lorenzo Reyes and the Simbol, a plant that grows in the north of Argentina.

Austria

Tokens For Climate Care

"Tokens for Climate Care" focuses on the current and essential human task of climate care through the transformative power of design and the tools of artificial intelligence.

Canada

Duckt

DUCKT is a metaphor for our willingness to 'bend' to the ever-growing energy demands of mechanical systems in inefficiently designed buildings.

Chile

Tectonic Resonances

Tectonic Resonances is about the sound of rocks. Did you know that small stones became the first ritual instruments for sound and rhythm? And that geological events in Chile have an effect on the globe? Chile is a country of rocks that resonate, and for the team behind the Pavilion, this is the starting point for a decolonising discourse for design in the south.

Czech Republic

Planes of Perception

Taking inspiration from the architecture of Somerset House, Petr Stanický's Planes of Perception is an architectural intervention made using aluminium frames and reflective aluminium sheets to alter the point of view for visitors as they move through the room. Based on human feelings, the installation allows the viewer to perceive reality through multiple layers.

Finland

Empathy Echo Chamber

The term "echo chamber" has come to exemplify polarisation and isolation in the information age. Finland's pavilion challenges this notion, in a moment when we are looking for ways to reconnect with each other and re-enter public life.

Germany

Spoon Archaeology

"Spoon Archaeology" is designed as a study, presenting historical references from a museum collection next to contemporary cutlery designs. The installation presents the material and immaterial cultural heritage of the past and present, and invites the audience to resonate sustainable solutions for the future.

Ghana

Amplify

Amplify develops a concept which explores the engagement between Ghana, Great Britain, and Denmark over four centuries. The architecture of Somerset House and its 450-year history provides the foil for this installation, which re-evaluates the influence of Ghana's rich cultural tapestry. In this exhibition, the 'what ifs' and 'maybes' of an imaginary balanced cultural interchange of ideas and trade are considered.

Greece

Together

Together is an enchanted, immersive scene of illuminated, embracing olive trees reflected in mirrors and sounded by sounds of Greek nature, encouraging us to contemplate feelings of origin, connection and separation.

Guatemala

Nostalgia

Nostalgia reflects on the loss of the natural resource of water. The interactive installation is a multidisciplinary project designed by Artist María Adela Díaz in collaboration with Composer and Musician Joaquin Orellana.

Hong Kong

Sandtable 沙盆推演

Sandtable 沙盆推演 invites visitors to write, dream, and speculate on the possible futures and many pasts of Hong Kong. Using the early British colonial legend of *Ah Kwan Showing the Way* as a springboard, and inspired by fortune-telling rituals, the audience can retell their version of events in sand.

India

Small is Beautiful

Small is Beautiful hopes to be a catalyst for building the ecosystem for innovation in sustainability, while harnessing the power of design to address the critical needs of India and the world today for clean water, clean air, clean earth and clean energy.

Indonesia

The Invisible: Free the Space!

An investigation into how the indigenous community faces shortcomings in their modern domestic space. The pavilion invites the audience to immerse in the inhabitant's imagination to resonate inclusive design and social equality.

Ireland

An Leabharlann

An Leabharlann is a library at the edge of the ocean, created by the island residency Drop Everything. This computer-generated model of the site and AI-assisted image search tool, allows visitors to explore this unique construction and collection.

Israel

The Boiler Room

Israel's pavilion will explore the perpetual tension between Globalisation (Networking) and Nationalism (Capsularisation), how they overlap and ignite each other, leading us to an imminent boiling point.

Italy

Terra

Terra (earth) is a short movie that tells a story about our capacity to adapt to climate challenges, making the most of the oldest material in history – earth – to find light in the darkness of tomorrow and, if necessary, turn it on.

Japan

Reinventing Texture

A pavilion of friendship, “Reinventing Texture” pays homage to the ancient Japanese art of Washi paper-making and papier-mâché through a sensory experience that connects Tokyo and London

Latvia

Confession to an In^{3*} Writer

“Confession to an In^{3*} writer” is intended to be a performative living monument to the literature of Latvia today.

New York City

Recharge Rooms

Studio Elsewhere created the Recharge Rooms during the global COVID-19 pandemic. Working alongside its scientific and clinical partners at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City, the aim of these interactive design interventions was to support the mental health of frontline workers.

Nile Region

Lotus of the Nile

An Afro-futuristic, collaborative journey down the world's longest river that reminds us technology and nature are connected, and humanity depends on both.

Norway

Ripple Effect – Connecting People and Nature

The sea has given Norway its name - the northern way. Norway’s digital contribution will bring you closer to the ocean, the fjords and rugged coast. They will present how ocean-based inclusive design provides ripple effects for people, the environment and business.

Pakistan

War Gardens

This film mirrors the ethos of Lél, a Peshawar-based collective that works with displaced Afghan refugees living in Pakistan, alongside local Pakistani craftspeople, propagating and advancing the art of Pietra dura or stone inlay.

Poland

The Clothed Home: Tuning in to the Seasonal Imagination

Poland explores the ways in which textiles are used to reflect the rhythm of seasonal changes in domestic interiors. It recalls bygone rituals through an artistic installation, seeking inspiration for contemporary climate-responsive design.

Taiwan

Swingphony

The swinging pendulum of a metronome creates “Swingphony,” a warm-hearted melody from Taiwan to the world. This melodious concerto of goodwill, faith, and compassion resonates with us all.

The Global Goals Pavilion

Forest for Change

In Forest for Change visitors will be taken through a journey on which they discover the United Nations' Global Goals for Sustainable Development - an ambitious plan to eradicate poverty, inequality and climate change.

Venezuela

La Rentrada

La Rentrada seeks to imagine the return of the Venezuelan diaspora. An event that will be marked by a radical questioning of previous systems.

Special Projects

Beatie Wolfe

From Green to Red

Art rebel Beatie Wolfe creates an environmental protest piece about human impact on the planet, built using 800,000 years of historic NASA data.

Designers in the Middle

Stream of Consciousness

Designers from the Middle East wish to tell a story. In this, they share the cultural background which is imprinted in their daily journey and express it as a visual narrative.

Marco Perry Sound

Mighty Monks Transformative Audio

A resonant audio-visual experience in three parts. An opportunity for introspection, reflection, new awareness and hope.

Servaire&Co and Alter Projects

Metronome

Inspired by 'In Search of Lost Time' in Swann's Way from Marcel Proust, Metronome aims to create a time bubble for visitors to reconnect with themselves, time and involuntary memories using their senses.

Sustainability & Innovation:

Further details on the Sustainability & Innovation exhibitions are available online [here](#).

Kingston University

Designing for Time

This exhibition features four creative research projects undertaken by members of academic staff at Kingston School of Art. These projects are unified by the notion of designing for, and with, time.

Royal College of Art

InnovationRCA

This display showcases four InnovationRCA companies creating sustainable, real-world solutions to ecological issues around global consumption, from reducing particle pollution and food waste to creating animal-free leather from pineapples.

Ruup & Form

Quiet Garden

This installation has been developed with sustainability at its core and aimed to respond to nature's resonance - a symphony of silence and sound. The magical sinuous play with light and shadow, nourishing a conversation.

University of Cambridge

Unfolding

"Unfolding" explores the evolving relationship between nature and the city, natural materials and buildings, and a flexible, adaptable and responsible future unfolding, balanced between people and the planet.

Design in An Age of Crisis:

Further details on the Design in An Age of Crisis exhibition are available online [here](#).

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.

Biennale Sessions:

The full programme of the Biennale Sessions can be found [here](#).

Design for a post-pandemic world: innovation for healthcare and well-being

2 June / 16:30 (BST), UTC +1

The Covid-19 crisis has unveiled the latent fragility of healthcare systems worldwide and put our physical and mental well-being to a test. The need for urgent solutions has inspired designers and architects to intervene. What has this pandemic taught us and what will remain of this catastrophic experience? The panel below will discuss recovery, justice in healthcare and how design can help us return to a better life.

Upgrade Yourself: Process | Interaction & Play with Hong Kong Design History Network

3 June / 13:00 – 14:30 (BST), UTC +1

In this 90-minute workshop, HKDHN members Janice Li, Juliana Kei, Mina Song and Sunnie Chan will share their individual career routes working within design research, curation, academia, and public institutions. The team will share how HKDHN network formed, the importance of collaboration and their focus on the design histories and material culture of Hong Kong.

A sense of place: Monuments, memory and the role of architecture in cultural placemaking

3 June/ 16.30 (BST), UTC +1

Monuments have always played a key role in shaping collective memories and histories, creating iconic links with the places where they are located. Through the voices of Ini Archibong and Tamara Houston, who are presenting the first Pavilion of the African Diaspora, and of artist Mehrnoosh Khadivi, this event is moderated by Design Curator Ameena M. McConnell, who explores the role of historical and contemporary landmarks in establishing cultural placemaking.

Designing a Better Latin America

7 June / 16:00 – 17:00 (BST), UTC +1

Canning House and the London Design Biennale present the Canning Cultural Lecture 2021, welcoming Latin American designers from this year's Biennale - representing Argentina, Chile, Guatemala and Venezuela. In this celebration of Latin American design, we hear from curators and designers on the inspirations, goals and purposes of their unique and fascinating projects.

- ENDS -

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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

Artist Es Devlin creates large-scale installations and stage sculptures that combine light, music and language in order to elicit emotional response and perspective shift in the minds of her audience.

Her latest large scale mirror maze, *Forest of Us* (2021), forms part of the inaugural exhibition at SUPERBLUE Miami alongside new works by James Turrell and TeamLab. The Imperial War Museum commission, *I Saw the World End* (2020) invited viewers to engage simultaneously with opposing perspectives on Europe's largest LED screen in Piccadilly Circus, while the monumental 360 degree sculpture *Memory Palace* (2019) mapped shifts in human perspective over 73 millennia.

Devlin developed her deep understanding of audience engagement through collaborations in theatre (*The Lehman Trilogy*), opera (*Carmen on the lake at Bregenz*), Olympic ceremonies (London and Rio) and has created some of the most renowned stage sculptures (with Beyoncé, The Weeknd, Billie Eilish, Dua Lipa, Miley Cyrus, Pet Shop Boys, U2, Kanye West) seen by mass audiences around the world.

Devlin has displayed her work in Trafalgar Square, the Serpentine, the V&A and the Metropolitan Museum and is the first woman chosen to design the British pavilion at the World Expo - opening in October this year. Her practice is the subject of the Netflix documentary series "Abstract: The Art of Design" and she was made OBE in 2015.

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. somersehouse.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.