

## ***Design in an Age of Crisis* launches today, with 500 submissions from over 50 countries across 6 continents**

- London Design Biennale and Chatham House collaboration receives global response from designers and the public to themes of Health, Environment, Society and Work
- Ideas submitted reflect ingenuity at a time of crisis: pop-up greening systems, self-building air-drop shelters, radios created from electrical waste, musical instruments made from discarded materials to promote positive mental health, and compressible social-distancing aids
- The *Design in an Age of Crisis* online gallery launches today: [londondesignbiennale.com/design-age-crisis](https://londondesignbiennale.com/design-age-crisis)
- Chatham House's online event series will explore submissions, prior to a curated exhibition of highlights at this summer's [London Design Biennale](#) at Somerset House

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**14 January 2021, London, UK** - Launching today, the digital gallery *Design in an Age of Crisis* shows the vital role of design in addressing worldwide challenges and providing solutions. Devised by the Biennale in partnership with Chatham House, this initiative marks the beginning of a new platform for international exchange of radical design ideas to tackle critical issues facing society, visible to policy makers and influencers beyond the design sector.

By moving influential design discussion online, London Design Biennale and international affairs think-tank Chatham House has brought together over 500 designers and the general public, from over 50 countries, who responded to design briefs to tackle critical issues across Health, Environment, Society and Work.

The briefs were compiled by a [steering group](#) of academics, entrepreneurs, and business leaders, reflecting on problems created or exacerbated by the pandemic. The overwhelming number of responses shows the sheer determination of individuals to contribute to creating healthier, greener, equal, and prosperous societies, with many submissions considering ideas across multiple issues.

A selection of these designs will be presented at the London Design Biennale at Somerset House In June 2021.

### **Environment**

The climate change crisis is widely addressed, and as countries around the world look to the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) in November, submissions focus on a desire to rebalance our relationship with nature, presenting ideas to increase urban sustainability, better envisage the use of public space and the built environment, provide access to green space, and repurpose materials as well as futuristic and utopian concepts for future cities. Submissions include:

- *Pop-up ecosystems* to attach green spaces to existing buildings, bettering mental health, submitted by Stephanie Chaltiel, Felix Raspall, Carlos Banon, AirLab and MuDD architects

To view *Design in An Age of Crisis* submissions, visit: [londondesignbiennale.com/design-age-crisis](https://londondesignbiennale.com/design-age-crisis)

- *Radio Remade* is engineered entirely from electrical waste and everyday materials, sourced during Anisha Sharma's time in lockdown, raising awareness of legislation that prevents recycling of e-waste
- *LOT – London's land bank* is a digital platform that enables citizens to claim patches of unused land to start community greening projects, from Royal College of Art students Francesco Cagnola and Astha Johri
- *TURF* submitted by PriestmanGoode, suggests an app and manifesto to promote more people growing their own food, and sharing surplus with immediate neighbours and local business
- *The High Pad* aims to reduce pollution and traffic congestion in cities, with a vision of moving transport into the skies and returning streets to the public, from Steve Jensen Design
- *Kajkao* by Lako, a material research and design studio, explores bio-based circular materials from coca harvesting processes in Ecuador

## Health

In a year that has focused on the physical and mental health of people all over the world, responses explore removing healthcare barriers and how to provide open-source access to resources, thoughts on preparing for an ageing society as well as products to promote healthier living, coping with the pandemic and promoting better mental health. Submissions include:

- *London Orchestra From Waste Materials* aims to promote wellbeing through the power of music, whilst highlighting the potential of waste materials, from Andrew Scott at the Royal College of Art in collaboration with composer Hangrui Zhang from the Royal College of Music
- *Pillow Talk- Technology for Awkward Questions* are four devices designed by Stephanie Kneissl to encourage conversations around sex education
- Ellen Fowles submits a collection of clothing to combat reduced mobility, titled *Marian*, prioritising dignity and function with tailored yet practical designs
- Dutch Design Academy Eindhoven student Anna Dienemann has created a compressible accessory *Bounding Spaces* that playfully transforms to adapt to social distancing
- Julian Evans proposes a vehicle specifically designed for senior people, to inspire confidence and safety when driving

## Work

Our relationship with work has changed dramatically this year, reflected in the submissions that include apps to address work/life balance, repurposing and redesigning space – whether converting local spaces into offices or creative hubs that put a focus on local community and economic activity - as well as ideas to support greater inclusion in the workplace. Submissions include:

- *Out of (Paper) Office* is a playful response to remote working and repurposing vacant high street premises for community spaces, with a set of printable, customisable templates featuring office props, from Brown Office x Jon Abbott Studio
- *Cyclic workspace* presents an interactive installation considering the different stages of the menstrual cycle, and different workspaces designed to best support each phase, by Nora Jongen
- *Work from Home Clock* helps to organise time across work, families, friends, and leisure whilst working remotely, by Wareesa Lakanthampichit

- An idea to reclaim outdoor spaces within urban and suburban neighbourhoods, for remote working as well as fostering a sense of community spirit and local connection from Charlotte Broadribb

## Society

Responses address issues around human identity, social inclusion and diversity, community building and resilience in the face of crisis. Submissions include:

- *Radical Gravity* is a vision for an innovative, self-sustaining air-drop shelter system that provides emergency protection against natural disaster, using the free fall to self-build, submitted by Angelina Kozhevnikova, Kyungha Kwon, Konuralp Senol
- *Imagically* aims to make education about robotics accessible for all, with robots made out of cardboard and 3-D printed parts, encouraging learning and creativity, by Meret Wacker
- *The Alley Project* considers activating underutilised back alleys in Singapore by installing natural and artificial solutions to create vibrant public spaces, by TCA Think Tank
- *Aqueous Communes – Low-Cost Flood Resilient Housing* looks to the Sonbarsa Village in India, with a design that enables a safe habitat resilient to floods, and that recycles flood water for the benefit of the community, by Mayuri Sisodia & Kalpit Ashar of Mad(e) in Mumbai
- *CitizenSim Data Bank* by Paul Russell considers how to ease digital poverty in the UK

The 500 submissions are from countries around the world including Australia, Austria, China, Denmark, India, Israel, South Africa, Singapore, Switzerland, The Netherlands, United States and United Kingdom. Design and architecture studios, organisations and academies represented include Deepr, Design Academy Eindhoven, Other Architects, Royal College of Art, SPACE10, Nairobi Design Week, PriestmanGoode, Pratt Institute, University of Ljubljana - Academy of Fine Arts and Design and WilkinsonEyre.

## Chatham House Events

To continue the conversation ahead of the Biennale in June and investigate how radical design ideas can shape Health, Work, Environment and Society, a series of online public events will bring together panels of policy and design experts to further explore the submissions.

- **Redesigning Health:** Radical design ideas to keep us healthy, now and in the future (Tuesday 26 January, 13.00 GMT)
- **Redesigning Work:** Radical design ideas to reshape work and wellbeing (Tuesday 23 February, 13.00 GMT)
- **Redesigning for the Environment:** Radical design ideas to build a greener economy and communities (Tuesday 30 March 2021, 13.00 GMT)
- **Redesigning Society:** Radical design ideas for inclusive and equal societies (Tuesday 27 April, 13.00 GMT)
- **Redesigning the Future:** Radical design ideas from the next generation (Tuesday 25 May, 13.00 GMT). This final talk will be both online and in person.

You can register for the first public event, Redesigning Health, [here](#).

Sir John Sorrell CBE, President, London Design Biennale, said:

“The Design in An Age of Crisis submissions from over 50 countries demonstrate the huge desire to develop and communicate how global design thinking can address some of the major issues of our time. They offer an insight into the ability of design to better the world we inhabit and the creativity that grows out of times of crisis.”

Robin Niblett, Director and Chief Executive, Chatham House, said:

“The submissions to the Design in An Age of Crisis included in this online gallery demonstrate the very best of lateral, creative thinking and innovative solutions to global problems that have been exacerbated by the pandemic. Chatham House very much looks forward to working with these remarkable designers, bringing their pioneering, vibrant ideas to the attention of international policy makers and building pathways to making them reality.”

Victoria Broackes, Director, London Design Biennale, said:

“Design in an Age of Crisis brings together submissions from all over the world, from architecture and design firms to individuals forming ideas whilst at home during the pandemic. The range of ideas illustrates how anyone, anywhere can contribute to design thinking, and acts as a launch pad for further international collaboration, seeking out solutions to some of the major crises we face.”

Rose Abdollahzadeh, Managing Director, Research Partnerships, Chatham House, said: “The breadth and creativity of the submissions to Design in an Age of Crisis is inspiring. Our aim now is to bring these ideas to the attention of members of the public and the global policymaking community to foster new thinking, international dialogue and cooperation towards resolving the critical global issues facing us today.”

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For further information on London Design Biennale as well media assets, please contact:  
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- [londondesignbiennale.com](http://londondesignbiennale.com)
- Twitter: @londonbiennale
- Instagram: @london\_design\_biennale
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## About Design in An Age of Crisis

*Design in an Age of Crisis* aims to create links between the international design and policymaking communities on critical issues facing society. The partnership between London Design Biennale and Chatham House is driven by a mutual commitment to fostering international dialogue around solutions to the world's biggest global challenges. As London-based organizations, London Design Biennale and Chatham House use their platforms to look outwardly to further London and the UK's role as an international hub for innovation, new thinking, and ideas exchange.

The global Open Call Design in An Age of Crisis consisted of four briefs created by an international steering group of over fifty designers, academics, entrepreneurs, and business leaders:

- Environment: Building back greener: how can we design better places?
- Health: From illness to wellness: how can design make it easier to be healthy?
- Society: Equality for all: how can design help empower everyone?
- Work: Making work work for us: how can work be designed to be more meaningful?

The four briefs can be found [here](#). For young people, there is a specially designed brief available here, with opportunities to submit ideas open until 1 April 2021.

The steering group co-chairs and members can be found [here](#).

## About London Design Biennale

Established in 2016 by Sir John Sorrell CBE and Ben Evans CBE, London Design Biennale is a prestigious biannual event and a highlight on the global cultural calendar. The 2018 Biennale welcomed the world's most exciting and ambitious designers, innovators and cultural bodies to the capital with over 200,000 visitors to Somerset House over the three-week period. The third edition of London Design Biennale, June 2021, will be 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.

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

## 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.

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Submissions to the Open Call or featured on the Design in an Age of Crisis Gallery are the work of the individual/s or firms who submitted the entry. The submissions do not represent the views of London Design Biennale, Chatham House or steering group members. Their inclusion does not imply any endorsement of content nor support any claims of feasibility, practicality or environmental credentials.