

Global Design Forum İstanbul Opens

*Placemaking installations revealed across key locations,
activating İstanbul as an open platform for design*



The Red Room, designed by NUN Architecture and People Places Ideas | Photo: Mark Cocksedge

- The inaugural edition of Global Design Forum İstanbul is taking place 13 - 16 May 2026.
- Presented in collaboration with strategic creative platform People Places Ideas, it spans the Forum as well as citywide programming
- Melek Zeynep Bulut serves as the Artistic Director of Global Design Forum İstanbul
- The Forum offers two days of curated keynotes, panels and in-conversations, with the curatorial theme *Worlds in Contact* by Forum Content Advisor, Beatrice Galilee
- The four-day event convenes over 30 leading international voices from the world of architecture and design

14 May 2026 — Global Design Forum İstanbul is now officially open, positioning the city once again as a vital crossroads for creative exchange and forward-thinking dialogue. Over the next three days, the Forum will convene an international network of designers, architects, urbanists, cultural leaders and industry innovators. The İstanbul debut of Global

Design Forum, London Design Festival's flagship platform for global design discourse, is presented in collaboration with People Places Ideas (PPI), with Artistic Direction from Melek Zeynep Bulut. Bulut works alongside London Design Festival & Global Design Forum Co-Founder and Chairman Ben Evans.

The programme is shaped around four key principles: Placemaking, Storytelling, Discussion and Rethinking. A core pillar of Global Design Forum İstanbul is a series of public installations – part of the 'Placemaking' programme shaped by Melek Zeynep Bulut – designed under the curatorial theme "*Praise of Transience*". Designers and architects have been invited to reconsider the ancient relationship between the human body and architecture through the notions of transience and permanence: the installations consider the structure not as an object resistant to time, but as an organism that works with time and accompanies the body.

Highlighted installations include:

Pavilion of the Moment



Pavilion of the Moment, Waugh Thistleton Architects | Photo: Mark Cocksedge

Pavilion of the Moment by Waugh Thistleton Architects in collaboration with the National Wood Association and TORID (Turkish Forest Industry and Business Association) – is a timber structure composed of slender boards of Turkish Pinus Nigra, whose rhythmic repetition evokes the transience embedded in traditional patterns. The pavilion draws on the geometry of the adjacent Hagia Irene, abstracting the relationship between cube and sphere to create a meditative space. Lightweight and demountable, it offers a deliberate counterpoint to the surrounding monumental architecture. Rather than asserting permanence, it proposes a public space for reflection - one in which architecture is experienced as temporal, rhythmic and regenerative. Designed by Waugh Thistleton, a global leader in timber construction, the pavilion also signals a necessary shift towards more sustainable

building practices. Timber, as a renewable and low-carbon material, brings proven benefits for health and wellbeing.

Designers: Waugh Thistleton Architects in collaboration with the National Wood Association, TORID and People Places Ideas
Dates: 13 May - 7 June 2026
Venue: Topkapı Palace Complex

Yakîn



Yakîn, YAKIN Kolektif, Dr. Nil Aynalı (Marmara University, Architecture and Design Faculty), Furkan Türkyılmaz, Muhammed Arif Aksu | Photo: Mark Cocksedge

Yakîn explores the idea of space through the lens of Islamic mysticism. Instead of seeing space as something purely physical, the installation invites us to think of it as something that exists within us. In this view, space is not just defined by walls or boundaries, but by human experience, with the individual as the ultimate space where all possibilities exist. At the centre of *Yakîn* is the idea of the human self as layered and evolving. Flowing silk curtains represent these layers, moving between two states: the busy, ever-changing energy of the city, and a quiet, deeper sense of inner unity. As visitors move through the installation, the curtains shift - light and animated at the edges, then gradually becoming still and dense toward the centre.

Walking through these layers becomes a journey inward. As visitors pass through the soft, moving fabric and reach the calm core, they are invited to reflect on a more essential idea of space - one that is not physical, but personal, infinite and deeply connected to the self.

Designers: YAKIN Kolektif, Dr. Nil Aynalı (Marmara University, Architecture and Design Faculty), Furkan Türkyılmaz, Muhammed Arif Aksu
Architecture Department students: Ahmet Selim Avsallı, Bennu Yorulmaz, Ceren Gül, Melda Köse, Melek Nur Öztürk, Mustafa Burak Yırıkoğulları
Venue: Topkapı Palace Complex
Dates: 13 May - 7 June 2026

Oblique Land



Oblique Land, Alper Derinboğaz & Salon Architects | Photo: Mark Cocksedge

Oblique Land is a site-specific installation created for the Bosphorus-facing grounds of Kabataş High School as part of Global Design Forum İstanbul. It rethinks how we move through and experience space, using a sloped surface to create a new connection between people and the city. Rather than being a staircase or a flat platform, the structure sits somewhere in between. Its angled surface encourages visitors to move differently, shifting their balance and perspective as they engage with the view. In doing so, it recalls the historic hills overlooking the Bosphorus and invites people to reconnect with this shared urban landscape.

The installation challenges the idea of the ground as something passive. Instead, it turns it into an active element that guides movement, shapes how we look, and makes us more aware of our own bodies in space. *Oblique Land* also functions as a flexible public space. It can be used for sitting, gathering, or simply observing the view, offering a new and unexpected vantage point over the Bosphorus. It becomes a meeting point between the individual, the city and its landscape.

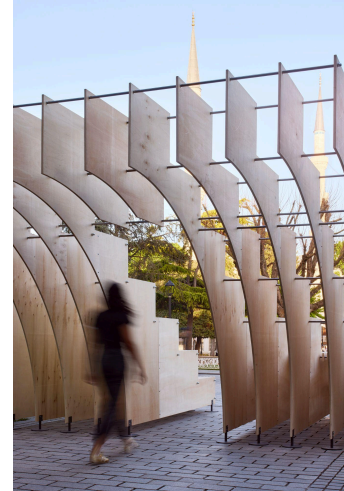
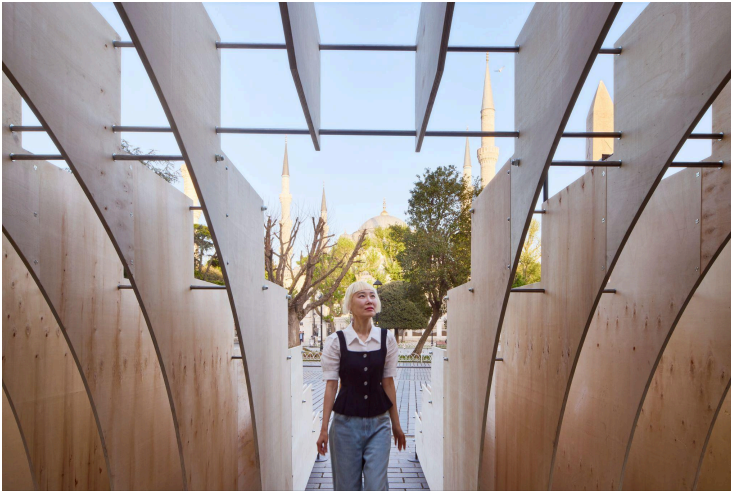
Designer: Alper Derinboğaz & Salon Architects

Team: Rumeysa Karacuha, Ece Akbay, Selen Tüzün, Belinay Parmak

Venue: Kabataş High School, Bosphorus

Dates: 13 May - 7 June 2026

Wall | Tribune | Gate



Wall | Tribune | Gate, Ali Derya Dostoğlu & Uğur Özer | Photo: Mark Cocksedge

Located along the entrance axis of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, *Wall / Tribune / Gate* is designed as a temporary installation that reflects on İstanbul's layered history and urban form. The installation takes inspiration from the ancient Hippodrome, once one of the city's most important public spaces during the Roman and Byzantine periods. Specifically, it references the tribune (sphenodone), much of which now lies hidden beneath today's ground level. The design draws directly from archaeological measurements, grounding the structure in the site's history rather than treating it as a purely contemporary object.

By lifting visitors slightly above ground, the installation creates a new way of seeing the surrounding architecture, including the façade of Ibrahim Pasha Palace. In doing so, it brings back a sense of the area's former scale and importance, turning history into a physical experience. At its centre, a gap between the seating elements forms a visual and spatial opening aligned with the museum's exit. This feature works both

as a frame for movement and as a subtle reference to the entrances and exits of ancient arenas. At the same time, the installation acts like a low wall or tribune, offering a place to sit, gather, and observe. Lightweight and temporary in structure, *Wall / Tribune / Gate* connects past and present, using simple architectural gestures to reveal the hidden layers of the city.

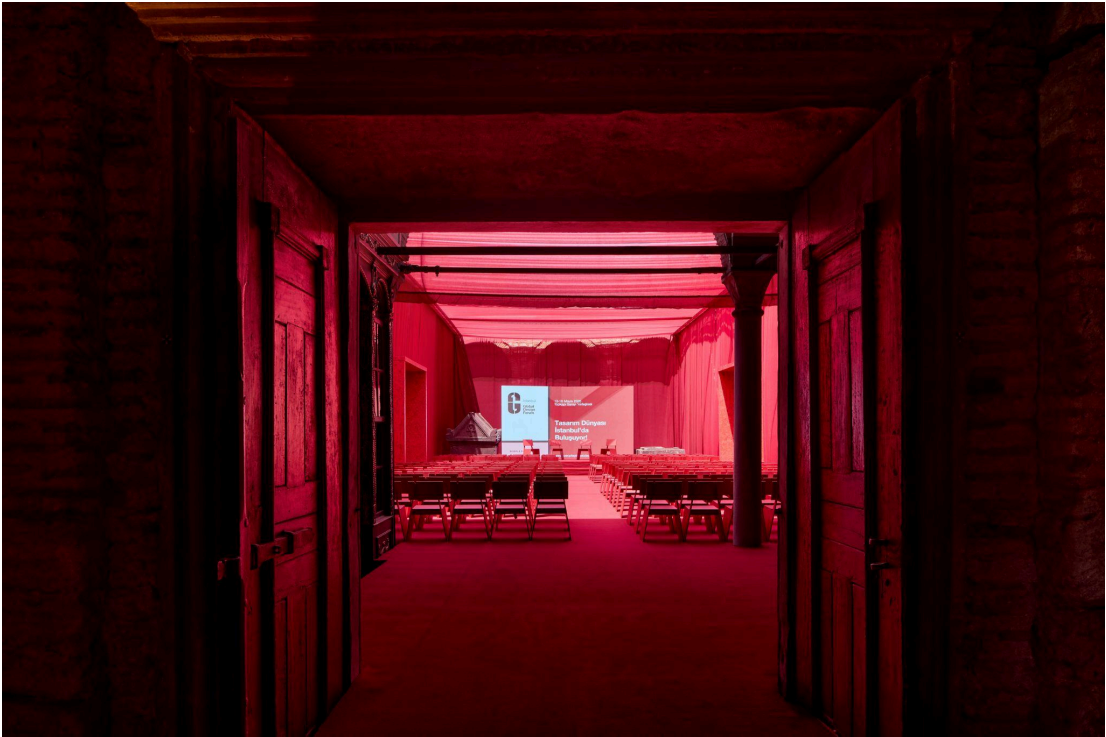
Designers: Ali Derya Dostođlu & Uđur Özer

Team: Berrin Sezer, Samet řahin, Uđur Sađlam, Statik Danıřmanlık, Mithat Bora Bulut, Tayfur Somer Tasarım Atölyesi

Venue: Topkapı Palace

Dates: 13 May - 7 June 2026

The Red Room



The Red Room, designed by NUN Architecture and People Places Ideas | Photo: Mark Cocksedge

Hagia Irene, located within the grounds of Topkapı Palace, is one of the few surviving examples of the atrium church typology in the world. *The Red Room* at the heart of this atrium treats the Forum venue as an installation in its own right. Standing since the 7th century, Hagia Irene's atrium has long served as an open-air threshold, enclosed by monumental walls yet exposed to the sky. The installation gently transforms this void into a temporary, intimate environment. Formed from layers of delicate red tulle, the structure creates a light-filled room within the colonnaded courtyard, evoking the softness and fragility of a dreamlike interior. The installation's monochromatic red palette draws on İstanbul's architectural heritage,

referencing the warm red ochre tones found in traditional yalis and historic timber houses.

This contemporary intervention bridges past and present, opening a dialogue between the church's enduring stone fabric and the city's more recent residential identity.

As daylight filters through the translucent material, it washes the space, and its visitors, in deep red tones, altering perception and atmosphere. The glow extends beyond the installation itself, subtly announcing its presence at the entrance and guiding visitors inward. *The Red Room* transforms Hagia Irene from a monument to be observed into a living, sensory forum where light, colour and history converge in a temporary yet powerful act of place-making.

Designers: NUN Architecture & People Places Ideas

Venue: Hagia Irene, Topkapı Palace Complex

Dates: 13 May - 15 May 2026

Patterns of Possibilities v2



Patterns of Possibilities v2, Candaş Şişman | Photo: Mark Cocksedge

Patterns of Possibilities v2 is a digital installation inspired by the curatorial idea: "There is no such place as İstanbul, there is only knowledge called İstanbul." Rather

than presenting the city as something fixed, the work explores it as something constantly formed through perception, memory, and chance. At the centre of the installation is an algorithm that continuously generates changing visual patterns. Every 6 minutes and 39 seconds, it combines 2,916 possible elements in a new, unpredictable way. When the cycle ends, the system resets and begins again, producing a completely different outcome each time. Each visual sequence is accompanied by corresponding sounds, which come together to form an evolving audio landscape.

As these patterns emerge and dissolve, visitors are invited to reflect on probability, coincidence, order and chaos. The work suggests that, much like the city itself, what we experience is shaped by countless overlapping possibilities rather than a single fixed reality.

Patterns of Possibilities v2 is a continuation of Candaş Şişman's previous project from 2015 with the same title. The version presented at Global Design Forum İstanbul, titled *Process*, captures one full cycle of this system, offering a recorded glimpse into a continuous and ever-changing formation.

Designer: Candaş Şişman

Venue: Hagia Irene

Dates: 13 May - 16 May 2026

A Melting Tomorrow

A Melting Tomorrow is an immersive dining installation inspired by the curatorial idea: "Time is not a linear structure but an endless flow, and to live in all times simultaneously." The work explores time through food, presenting an eating experience where nothing is fixed or permanent. Each element of the menu appears briefly, changes, and slowly disappears, turning every bite into a moment that cannot be repeated.

Rather than thinking in terms of past, present, and future, the installation suggests that everything exists in a continuous flow. What we experience as "now" is only temporary, always shifting and dissolving into something else. Melting becomes the central idea. The installation also reflects on memory and history. Just like taste, they are never fully preserved, but constantly reshaped through repetition and experience. What seems stable or permanent reveals itself to be fragile and always in the process of change. Through this sensory experience, *A Melting Tomorrow* invites visitors to see time differently; not as something fixed, but as something fluid, unstable and continuously unfolding.

Designer: Tanrı Misafiri

Venue: Hagia Irene Courtyard

Dates: Thursday 14 May

Istanbullar: Creative archive

The 'storytelling' principle of Melek Zeynep Bulut's artistic vision for Global Design Forum İstanbul is manifested in *İstanbullar: Creative Archive* – a dynamic map which gathers the city's designers and artists, contemporary architectural identities, storytellers and makers. They have contributed visual, audio and editorial content relating to 40 key design pieces and artworks as well as notable locations throughout İstanbul, turning the city into an open stage for design. *Istanbullar: Creative Archive* will launch following the Forum. More details will be announced in the closing release.

Forum Speaker Sessions:

Over two days of 'Discussion', some of the most provocative minds in design, architecture, fashion and technology gather to explore the encounters that are reshaping our discipline and our planet. Six sessions per day blend keynotes, panels and in-conversations, curated under the theme *Worlds in Contact* by Forum Content Advisor Beatrice Galilee. *Worlds in Contact* explores what happens when different worlds materially, politically and bodily collide.

Forum delegates include: Dima Srouji, Prem Krishnamurthy, Lina Ghotmeh, Ma Yansong, Liam Young, Forest Swords, Tom Dixon CBE, Boonserm Premthada, Hussein Chalayan MBE, Fernando Laposse, Olaf Grawert, Alon Schwabe & Daniel Fernández Pascual (Cooking Sections), Professor Lesley Lokko OBE, Suhair Khan, Beatrice Leanza, Dominique Petit-Frere, Marina Tabassum, James Bridle, Caroline Roux, Alper Derinboğaz, Defne Koz, Mehmet Mehmetlioğlu, Han Tümertekin, Banu Uçak, Beral Madra, Serap Ekizler Sönmez, Melike Altınışık, Selva Gürdoğan, Ömer Selçuk Baz, Sheika Reem Al-Thani, Anniina Koivu, Jan Boelen, Ahmad Angawi, Mireia Luzárraga, Celâleddin Çelik, Justine Simons OBE, Guta Moura Guedes, Anastasia Sinitsyna, Roland Lamb, Özlem Yalım, Andrew Waugh, Prof. Dr. Lale Özgenel, Samer Yamani.

To conclude Global Design Forum İstanbul, an international design competition for a contemporary garden and lighting in Yedikule district will be announced. Developed under the key programme principle, 'rethinking', the initiative is a revival project, designed to actively engage with future generations. More details will be announced at the closing of Global Design Forum İstanbul.

For more information, interview and feature opportunities, please contact :

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Notes to Editors

- Dates: 13-16 May 2026
- [Press Kit](#)
- [Global Design Forum İstanbul sessions](#)
- Presented in collaboration with People Places Ideas (PPI) | [@peopleplacesideas](#)
- <https://londondesignfestival.com/gdf-istanbul> | [@l_d_f_official](#)
- Artistic Direction: Melek Zeynep Bulut
- Forum Content Advisor: Beatrice Galilee
- Beral Madra: Art & Culture Advisor
- Celâleddin Çelik: Architectural Advisor
- About Global Design Forum
Global Design Forum is a curated thought leadership programme, celebrating design and the minds shaping its future. Global Design Forum İstanbul is launching a new programme of talks, installations and citywide experiences taking place 13–16 May 2026 in İstanbul, Türkiye. Organised in collaboration with People Places Ideas (PPI), this is a new design platform where global perspectives and İstanbul's living cultural landscape meet. The Forum brings global voices into conversation with local contexts, traditions and futures - creating an innovative space for design, culture and ideas in one of the world's most layered cities.
- About People Places Ideas
People Places Ideas is a creative industries platform based in İstanbul, London and Doha. PPI designs resonance and impact. It generates Creative Strategy, Curation, Research and Art & Design & Culture Policies. In this context, it positions itself as an interdisciplinary new ecosystem of creativity, bringing together all stakeholders and creating new intellectual encounters.
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