LONDON DESIGN BIENNALE 2025

New wave of pioneering pavilions for London Design Biennale 2025 edition, 'Surface Reflections', with six weeks to go

5-29 June, Somerset House

L-R: Turkey, 'Emotional Reflections: The Soul of Seven Horizons' © Halise Karakay; Silk Road's Teplo Store Global South, 'Wura'' © Danielle Alakija

- With six weeks to go until London Design Biennale, a new wave of innovative and pioneering pavilions has been revealed
- Joining the London Design Biennale programme this year, the Global Design Forum hosts a series of events under the title 'Design and the Invisible' featuring a multidisciplinary community of creative practitioners using design-led solutions to address fundamental issues
- Designers and changemakers from over 40 pavilions from around the world will showcase world-leading design, confronting global challenges and inspiring audiences with thought-provoking installations
- Accreditation is now open. Visit Londondesignbiennale.co.uk/press

28 April: London Design Biennale today unveils a new wave of international pavilions joining the fifth edition, running from 5-29 June. The theme of this year's Biennale, 'Surface Reflections', encourages participants to explore how ideas are fuelled by both our internal experiences and external influences. The Biennale takes place at Somerset House, a leading international arts destination, celebrating its 25th birthday this year.

The fifth edition continues the Biennale's mission to demonstrate how design can improve our world while broadening our understanding of design's role in addressing and solving global challenges. The diverse range of pavilions explores many challenges humanity faces today, from how to improve urban environments and the preservation of cultural heritage to environmental sustainability and post-conflict recovery.

Artists and designers at London Design Biennale are confronting one of the most pressing current issues – the environment: how it is changing, how we can protect it, and how we live in it. The Design Council's 'Green Design Skills Blueprint' defines the practical skills that designers need to ensure their practice is sustainable for both the planet and its people. Similarly, Chile's 'Minerasophia' celebrates the wisdom of minerals, their legacy and potential to change the way we relate to the concepts of 'value' and 'waste'. This

immersive installation showcases forgotten local matters and cultures, preserving the original heritage of processed or discarded minerals as autonomous and transformative entities. Looking at the impact of extreme weather on communities, Spain's pavilion honours the young and old who rose to help, without hesitation, and offered their support anonymously and selflessly to those affected in the devastating flash floods that took place in Valencia in 2024.

Reimagining the future of society through the lens of inclusive design and community driven innovation, the Institute for Global Prosperity at UCL presents 'People Powered Prosperity'. The pavilion will use data to explore what prosperity means in different communities, showcasing how people from all walks of life can shape better livelihoods, safer environments, stronger voices in democracy and healthier cities. Similarly, a global leader in its use of design, the UK Civil Service Design Policy division delves into its network of designers and innovation labs with a series of workshops titled 'Serious Gaming to Save the Planet' to convey how effective and meaningful design drives reform of policy and services to provide the public with more meaningful outcomes. Also focussing on policy and collaboration, the Delegation of the European Union to the United Kingdom showcases 'Global Gateway – EU Worldwide Partnerships'. The pavilion celebrates the power of unity, connectivity and shared purpose in designing a better future for people and the planet. Meanwhile, the Netherlands are represented by the Nieuwe Instituut, who return to the Biennale following their role as Artistic Director in 2023. 'Remapping Collaborations Working Group', initiated during the 2023 Biennale, is a publication tracing the interpersonal, institutional and political forces that shape – and complicate – how we work together.

Empowering communities, the Global South pavilion presents 'Wura', meaning "precious" in Yoruba. This installation is a sculptural homage to the wealth, resilience, and complexity of the Global South. Crafted from gold chains and cowrie shells, it intertwines histories of trade, colonisation and cultural rebirth, symbolising an indigenous economy rooted in exchange and connection. 'Wura' invites viewers to reflect on inheritance, continuity and the creation of shared worth in a world still grappling with its past. Looking at the interplay of borders, San Diego – Tijuana presents the film 'Play Borderisms', exploring belonging, displacement and resilience when navigating in-between worlds.

Silk Road's 'Teplo Pop-Up Store', a driving force in Uzbekistan's design scene, brings a selection of works by some of the emerging independent brands and artisans it champions. Featuring a curated selection of contemporary fashion, accessories and ceramics, the store will offer under-represented designers a platform to share their stories and reach new audiences, beyond trends and algorithms. Meanwhile, Abu Dhabi sheds light on the traditional marine crafts that have long been a vital part of Emirati heritage, from dhow building and net weaving to pearl diving. Presented by House of Artisans, 'Tides and Traditions: The Journey of Maritime Crafts and Heritage' bridges these past traditions with the present, emphasizing the enduring value of Emirati traditional crafts as living expressions of creativity and continuity.

Reframing the theme of 'Surface Reflections', Turkey's 'Emotional Reflections: The Soul of Seven Horizons' invites visitors into a sensory space where emotional landscapes and external realities intertwine through sculptural forms, light, movement and sound. Delving into the hidden forces that shape our feelings and perceptions of the world, this pavilion encourages visitors to explore, reflect and find their own meaning in the experience.

Commenting on the new pavilions, Victoria Broackes, Director, London Design Biennale, said: "*With five weeks to go until the London Design Biennale opens, we have brought together a powerful selection of pavilions that will challenge and inspire audiences with the belief that design has the power to change and*

improve the world around us. At a time of global uncertainty, it is now more important than ever to champion and celebrate international collaboration and gatherings. From ancestral wisdom to radical thinking about the future, this year's Biennale is a valuable opportunity to come together to solve global problems with global solutions."

As part of the London Design Biennale programme this year, the Global Design Forum hosts a series of talks and panel discussions under the title 'Design and the Invisible'. The programme will feature a multidisciplinary community of creative practitioners and thinkers who will shine a light on the hidden global forces shaping design and the world, exploring how they can be challenged through design, creativity and collaboration. For ten years, the Global Design Forum has been leading the international debate about design and, for the first time in 2025, it will take place from 10-12 June at King's College London, during the London Design Biennale, in addition to its annual edition at the Victoria and Albert Museum as part of London Design Festival (13–21 September 2025).

Among the speakers will be the Biennale's Artistic Director Dr. Samuel Ross MBE, as well as architect Kengo Kuma, who will be in conversation with writer, journalist and Director of the Sir John Soane Museum, Will Gompertz; and economist and academic Mariana Mazzucato, who will be interviewed by V&A East Director, Gus Casely-Hayford. The full programme will be released in the coming weeks.

Debika Ray, Programme Director, Global Design Forum, said: "*We're excited to be part of London Design Biennale for the first time, under the banner of Samuel Ross' theme "Surface Reflections". Over the past ten years, Global Design Forum has become known for bringing together incredible emerging and leading voices from across the design world. In June, we'll be drawing on the rich themes explored by this year's pavilions, as well as bringing in leading thinkers from beyond the biennale, to generate important, cross-disciplinary conversations that tackle the major challenges of our day – ensuring these ideas live on beyond the Biennale. Together, our speakers will pull back the curtain on the unseen drivers of design – from financial flows and digital networks to contested borders and unspoken cultural codes – and platform ideas that change the world for the better.*"

ENDS

Press images and credit sheet: download here

Previous announcements: here

Full list of pavilions: here

Abu Dhabi, Argentina, Chile, Delegation of the European Union to the United Kingdom, The Design Council, Eco-Vision Plan, Global South, Hong Kong, Institute for Global Prosperity at UCL, Japan, King's College London, Melek Zeynep Bulut, Malta, Nigeria, Netherlands, Northumbria University and UCL, Oman, Oparanze Congress, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Rachel Botsman, Romania, San Diego – Tijuana, Silk Road Teplo Pop-Up Store, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Thailand, Turkey, UK Civil Service Design Policy Division, Uzbek Design, VCUarts Qatar and World Monuments Fund and English Heritage.

London Design Biennale 2025 Dates & Opening Hours

Preview: 05 June 2025, 12pm-4pm

06 – 29 June 2025, 11am-6pm

Website: https://www.londondesignbiennale.com/

Instagram: @londondesignbiennale

Facebook: @londondesignbiennale

Newsletter: LDB bulletin

Press accreditation is open

Register here

Ticket information: This year, the Biennale is excited to introduce £10 Youth tickets for visitors aged 16-25 on weekdays, facilitating greater accessibility for young design enthusiasts. Advance tickets (£5 off full-price tickets) are now on sale, until 5 June 2025. Book now and save.

Contact

For further information please contact:

Brunswick Arts | Lucy Dundas, Jasper Watkins, Sidje N'Choh, Dominique Schepers and Holly York: +44 782 352 7196

LDBpress@brunswickgroup.com

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. Since its inception the Biennales welcomes the world's most exciting and ambitious designers, innovators and cultural bodies to the capital.

The fifth edition of London Design Biennale will take place from 5-29 June 2025, artistically directed by Dr. Samuel Ross MBE— British designer and artist who is the founder of A-COLD-WALL* and SR_A SR_A, as well as the Black British Artists Grants Programme. Taking over the entirety of Somerset House, from the Edmond J. Safra Fountain Courtyard to the Embankment Galleries, participants from across the globe are invited to imagine and enact new forms of international cooperation and participation, through the medium of design.

London Design Biennale's International Advisory Committee and Jury includes: Paola Antonelli, Rashid and Ahmed bin Shabib, Victoria Broackes, Ben Evans CBE, Dylan Jones OBE, Suhair Khan, Prof. Jeremy Myerson, Charlene Prempeh, Tosin Oshinowo, Jonathan Reekie CBE, Dr Christopher Turner and Ana Yang.

https://www.londondesignbiennale.com/

About Dr. Samuel Ross MBE

Dr. Samuel Ross MBE (26 May 1991), British artist & designer. Ross was born in Brixton, London, to second-generation Windrush parents of Caribbean descent.

His perspective is well documented, winning numerous awards, including three British fashion awards, two GQ awards and The Serpentine Hublot design prize. Ross' practice spans from intimate solo exhibitions with White Cube and Friedman Benda, to innovative wearable objects engineered with LVMH group, Nike group and Apple group.

He worked extensively with the late Virgil Abloh, as his first design assistant for numerous years, he exchanged thoughts, ideas and concepts with the generational polymath.

In 2014 Ross independently founded A-COLD-WALL*, a luxury sportswear brand, self-described as a 'material study for social architecture'. Then, in 2019 Ross founded SR_A SR_A. Its function is that of an ongoing exploration into the artisan-driven, industrial beautification of precious garments, objects and space. Additionally, in 2020, Ross founded The Black British Artist Grants Programme. Ross summarises the endeavour as 'holistic design for change'.

https://samuel-ross.com/

About Somerset House

Step Inside, Think Outside

As the home of cultural innovators, Somerset House is a site of origination, with a cultural programme offering alternative perspectives on the biggest issues of our time. In 2025, Somerset House celebrates its 25th birthday, marking its extraordinary transformation to one of London's best loved cultural spaces and home to one of the largest creative communities in the UK. To mark this milestone, there will be a special year of artistic innovation featuring genre-defying exhibitions, new commissions and events bringing audiences closer to the range of cross-disciplinary work from our unrivalled resident creative community, cementing Somerset House as a leading international arts destination.

From our historic site in the heart of London, we work globally across art, creativity, business, and non-profit, nurturing new talent, methods and technologies. Our resident community of creative enterprises, arts organisations, artists and makers, makes us a centre of ideas, with most of our programme home-grown. We sit at the meeting point of artistic and social innovation, bringing worlds and minds together to create surprising and often magical results. Our spirit of constant curiosity and counter perspective is integral to our history and key to our future.

https://www.somersethouse.org.uk/