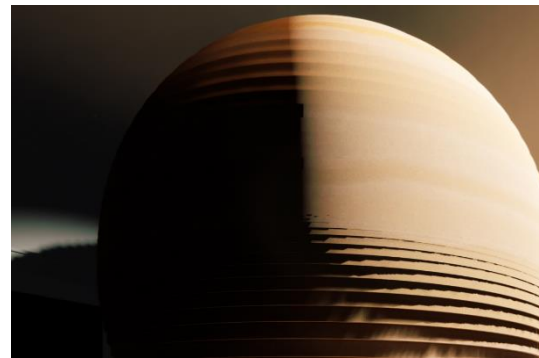


**London Design Biennale announces the first 20 pavilions
for 2025 edition, 'Surface Reflections'
5-29 June, Somerset House**



Top (L to R) Peru ; Nigeria
Bottom (L to R) Northumbria University & UCL ; Malta

[PRESS PACK & IMAGES](#)

- London Design Biennale announces the first 20 pavilions to feature in its fifth edition
- Over 40 designers and changemakers from around the world will showcase world-leading design, confronting global challenges and inspiring audiences with thought-provoking installations
- Artistic Director, Dr Samuel Ross MBE has set the theme of 'Surface Reflections'
- Returning this year, 'Eureka' will showcase design-led innovation projects from leading research centres
- London Design Biennale are offering Early Bird tickets with a 50% discount until 27 March 2025

6 March 2025, [London Design Biennale](#) announces the first confirmed pavilions for its 2025 edition, taking place at Somerset House, which is celebrating its 25th birthday as a leading international arts destination in 2025, from 5-29 June. The theme of this edition of the Biennale, 'Surface Reflections', explores how ideas are fuelled by both our internal experiences and external influences.

The fifth edition continues the Biennale's mission to demonstrate how design can better the world we inhabit whilst broadening our understanding of design's role in addressing challenges and

identifying solutions. Exhibitors will share perspectives and solutions to some of the global issues that face humanity today, exploring areas from the urban environment to preservation of cultural heritage, environmental sustainability to post-conflict recovery.

This edition's Artistic Director, **Dr Samuel Ross MBE**, founder of A-COLD-WALL* and SR_A SR_A, has set the theme of 'Surface Reflections', which invites participants, through the medium of design, to explore how expressions of who we are, are shaped. Ross said, *"Revelations in life are prompted by personal histories that inform who we are – our ideas are fuelled by both our internal experiences and external influences. Together, these form the multifaceted hues of human experience."*

Victoria Broackes, Director, London Design Biennale, said: *"Since the last Biennale the global context has drastically changed and the need for collaboration and exchange in a peaceful context feels more important than ever. International design teams continue to demonstrate the possibilities of and their faith in, what can be achieved through design and design thinking. The Biennale reveals what is on people's minds, across the world, right now. We will see exhibitors presenting design in all its forms - from futuristic urban planning to collaborative efforts to preserve environments."*

The first exhibitors announced are: Argentina, Hong Kong, Poland, Malta, Nigeria, Oman, Peru, Japan, a pavilion from Uzbekistan, Lebanon and Romania. A number of independent projects have also been announced: Rachel Botsman will unveil 'Roots of Trust', Melek Zeynep Bulut will present 'The Recursion Project', Eco-Vision Plan will share a film 'Rainforest Succession – Lamiam', Oparanze Congress will showcase 'The Forever Now' and World Monuments Fund Britain and English Heritage will present 'Coastal Connections'. The first Eureka projects to be announced include a collaboration between Northumbria University and UCL as well as presentations from King's College London and VCUarts Qatar.

Argentina in the West Wing of Somerset House will take visitors on an immersive sensory journey exploring the vibrant cultural and material legacy of the Argentinian Andes, bringing ancestral narratives to life through an exploration of textile and light.

In the Embankment Galleries, **Hong Kong** highlights the complex relationships between emotions and the environment, spatial design and psychology, to help visitors understand the socio-psychological effects of living in continuously evolving urban environments. **Poland**, the 2023 London Design Biennale Medal winner, returns this year with an installation exploring the politics of waiting and the tension of suspended time, by transforming the intangible state into tangible form. Drawing from the Polish Highland tradition of woodcarving while waiting, the project reinterprets this ornamental practice as a visual record of passing time.

In the East Wing, **Malta** reimagines rituals for death and memorialising, anticipating the future role of cremation in Malta through a striking 2.4-meter limestone sphere. **Nigerian** designers challenge the idea of singular monolithic African identity, using materials native to the Lejja community in South-East Nigeria and envisage this overlooked region as Nigeria's social capital.

Oman draws on traditional Omani pottery to explore the balance between heritage and the digital age, with an immersive installation referencing ancient water vessels for data storage, prompting

reflections on memory and value in a hyper-connected world. **Romania** explores the tension between rapid technological advances and rich cultural heritage, through a portal of reflection using obsolete and recycled materials animated with AI.

Peru showcases the work of Andean women crafting wigs from their own hair using ancestral techniques, through an exhibition of photography and a narrative that demonstrates how artisans can invert tradition to support contemporary livelihoods and economic independence. **Japan** takes over the Nelson Stairs in Somerset House, presenting a material, music and costume experiment exploring the durability of Washi paper, with live performances and workshops.

Saudi Arabia introduces an exciting expansive design approach that questions, disrupts, and reimagines systems of access and distribution of water and our relationship with it. *The Once and Future Garden*, a pavilion from **Uzbekistan** draws inspiration from the lost gardens of Samarkand, with tradition uniting the individual producers working at the intersection of art, craft and contemporary design. **Lebanon** have also confirmed their participation in the Biennale.

Acclaimed author and artist **Rachel Botsman** brings her work 'Roots of Trust' which reimagines the first known organisational chart, created in 1855, and invites viewers to visualise the changing structures of work, the flow of information, people and trust. Beijing-based **Eco-Vision Plan** presents a film project documenting the preservation of the biodiversity of the Cultural Landscape of Old Tea Forests of the Jingmai Mountain in the Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture, where the Blang ethnic group reside.

Turkish-born, London-based artist and designer **Melek Zeynep Bulut** explores movement design with 'The Recursion Project', where repetition creates an infinite cycle, forms dissolve into fractals, boundaries blur and visitors can visualise the possibility of a fourth dimension. **Oparanze Congress** presents objects that conjure the Mbari Houses in Owerri, Nigeria, before inviting visitors into an egalitarian making space to become active participants in a Mbari making community.

World Monuments Fund and English Heritage present a collaboration about conserving coastal heritage, sharing knowledge and solutions across borders to address the common challenges of managing treasured places in dynamic environments.

Returning to the London Design Biennale this year, the **Eureka** pavilions spotlight ground-breaking creative thinking from leading research departments and showcase a selection of interdisciplinary projects demonstrating the breadth and role of design and innovation in creating better futures. A special collaboration between **Northumbria University and UCL** showcases innovative biological materials, envisioning a future where buildings are grown, not constructed. **King's College London** shares 'The Curiosity Cabinet' at 171 Strand as a satellite pavilion featuring extraordinary research from across the university. **VCUarts Qatar** present a group exhibition of nine projects by collaborative teams of faculty, students and alumni, examining materiality, cultural constructs and societal impact in Qatar.

Further details of the first announced projects below. Design teams and additional information can be found at londondesignbiennale.com:

Argentina – *Sur Andina*

In 'Sur Andina', designers Cindy Lilen and Iliana Diaz Lopez guide visitors on a sensory, 3,500km journey across the Argentinian Andes. Exploring its vibrant cultural and material legacy, the immersive installation merges ancestral narratives with modern necessities, honouring Andean cosmivision and its profound respect for humanity and nature through an exploration of textiles, light and sound.

Eco-Vision Plan – *Rainforest Succession – Lamiam*

How can drinking tea support rainforest biodiversity conservation? Combining and highlighting the traditional farming practices of the Blang ethnic group, the biodiversity of the tea forest ecosystem, and the challenges of tribal modernization, the project 'Rainforest Succession – Lamiam' from Eco-Vision Plan brings into focus the unique landscape of Old Tea Forests and the traditional culinary heritage of the Blang people. The Blang people mainly live in the Menghai county in the southwestern Yunnan Province of China.

Hong Kong – *Human-Centred Design: Visuospace*

'Human-Centred Design: Visuospace', presented by the Hong Kong pavilion, highlights the complex relationships between emotions and the environment, spatial design and psychology. The research project utilizes electroencephalogram (EEG) readings and an Artificial Intelligent (A.I.) generator that creates a neuroscientific dataset in response to a variety of urban spatial conditions, projected across a three-dimensional LED field to achieve a hologram-like projection. The changes of emotions will form an image flow like waves in the sea, as a symbol of the evolving emotions experienced within vertical cities.

Japan – *Paper Clouds: Materiality in Empty Space*

'Paper Clouds: Materiality in Empty Space' is a Japanese poem to The Nelson Stair, and to the surface textures, translucency, lightness and inner strength of Washi paper. Designed by SEKISUI HOUSE - KUMA LAB (The University of Tokyo) and curated by Clare Farrow, founder of Clare Farrow Studio, the project is an experiment in materiality, music and fashion with violinist and composer Midori Komachi. This is also the KUMA LAB's first costume design: a Washi prototype, recyclable paper dress for Komachi, to test the material's flexibility and durability when the body moves.

Melek Zeynep Bulut – *The Recursion Project*

'The Recursion Project' examines the concept of repetition as a force that reshapes the relationship between matter and perception. The experiential and interactive Tesseract Cube generates endlessly looping forms that dissolve into fractals. As the repetition of sounds and forms unfold, the visitor's boundaries blur, creating an illusion that transforms into an immersive ritualistic experience.

Malta – *URNA*

'URNA' challenges conventions and inspires dialogue on death, ritual and remembrance, anticipating cremation's future cultural significance in Malta, following its legalisation in 2019. It

replaces traditional burial-practice with sculptural, spherical modules that embody collective cosmic connections and diverse, evolving interpretations.

Nigeria – Hopes and Impediments

'Hopes and Impediments' explores the complex layers of Nigeria's individual and collective identity, by reimagining the South-Eastern Lejja community as a future social capital. It offers a powerful and critical reflection on how identities are shaped, not just by personal experience, but by the collective memories, shifting histories, values and realities that bind a community together.

Oman – Memory Grid

'Memory Grid' reimagines ancient vessels as a metaphor for how humanity preserves what it holds most precious. The exhibition highlights the shifting values of society and what we cherish most, through the artform of Omani pottery - vessels that preserved valuable resources throughout time. The installation bridges the tangibility of ancient resources with the fragility of digital artefacts, exploring themes of survival, value and human legacy.

Oparanze Congress – The Forever Now

'The Forever Now', presented by Oparanze Congress studio, showcases the Mbari Houses in Owerri, Nigeria, striking constructions that are built to commemorate or placate deities. The House and the objects within explore creativity and spirituality as a communal practice. Alongside the representation of the house itself visitors will be to experience a Mbari making community.

Peru – Hæirloom – Ollantaytambo's (post)modern weavers

'Hæirloom - Ollantaytambo's (post)modern weavers' showcases the work of a group of weavers in the Sacred Valley of Cusco who use ancestral techniques to make wigs from their own hair and the hair of their companions. The pavilion highlights the value of Peruvian Andean hair as a perpetually regenerative raw material to create pieces that bring great economic and social benefit to local women.

Poland – Records of Waiting

Not everyone gets to wait equally. The Polish pavilion examines the politics of waiting and the tension of suspended time by transforming the intangible state into tangible form. Drawn from the Polish Highland tradition of woodcarving while waiting, the project reimagines this ornamental practice as a visual record of passing time applied to different groups in society.

Rachel Botsman – Roots of Trust

'Roots of Trust', presented by Rachel Botsman, reimagines a historical design artefact created in 1855, that forever changed people's working lives - the first known organisational chart. Through an object of surprising beauty, the exhibit invites viewers to contemplate the organisation and flow of information, people, and trust, what has changed in today's world and what it means for the future. The London Design Biennale 2025 will be the first time this incredible design artefact has been reimagined and brought to life in an art or design exhibition. It has sat unrestored in the US Library of Congress for over 170 years.

Romania – *Inner Reflections, Outer Worlds*

The Romanian Pavilion presents 'Inner Reflections, Outer Worlds', an interactive installation that explores the interplay between introspection and external environments. Made of recycled and obsolete materials, CDs, paper, plastic from EKG electrodes and plants, it tells the stories of contemporary Romanian personalities building a better society and encourages visitors to reflect on dialogues about the inner self and the outside world.

Saudi Arabia – *Good Water*

Saudi Arabia returns to the London Design Biennale, reaffirming its commitment to design as a powerful tool for dialogue and cultural exchange. 'Good Water' highlights Saudi Arabia's evolving design landscape and its engagement with global conversations on creativity, innovation and systems thinking.

The Once and Future Garden

Inspired by the lost gardens of Samarkand, a deep tradition unites the diverse objects in this pavilion from Uzbekistan. Taken individually, these pieces tell stories of human skill, creativity, and mastery of material, showcasing Uzbek producers working at the intersection of art, craft, and contemporary design. As a collective, their display evokes the atmosphere and memory of the magnificent gardens that once ringed Samarkand in southern Uzbekistan, former capital of the Timurid Empire (14-15th c.), for which artists produced ceramics, textiles, clothing, woodwork, and metalwork, leaving behind a legacy that echoes into the present day.

World Monuments Fund and English Heritage – *Coastal Connections*

Established in 2023, Coastal Connections is a collaboration between World Monuments Fund (WMF) and English Heritage forming a global network of coastal heritage sites. It brings together those who care for these special places to share solutions to common problems. From broadening perspectives to spotlighting new technologies, the network aims to enhance our response to climate change. In this Pavilion, we explore why these places matter, what challenges they share, and what the future holds: Christiansburg Castle, Ghana Fort Berkeley, Antigua and Barbuda Hurst Castle, UK Ocracoke Light Station, North Carolina Old Customs House, Tanzania Rapa Nui (Easter Island), Chile Port Lockroy, Antarctica. Though each site is unique, together they face common issues. By sharing solutions, Coastal Connections celebrates what we value about our global heritage by the sea and how we can safeguard its future.

Eureka:

Northumbria University and UCL – *Living Assembly: Building With Biology*

'Living Assembly: Building with Biology' explores a future built environment that is grown rather than constructed. The materials featured in the installation represent the cutting edge of biological construction technologies, produced by microbes and fungi, and reflect both the near and distant futures of biology as a building technology. The installation includes bulk materials made from mycelium—the root network of fungi—as well as leather produced by microbes, genetically engineered to self-pigment. It showcases both finished materials and those in formation,

responding to and interacting with their environment, while creating new biological niches. These materials span design scales, from the molecular to architectural.

King's College London – *The Curiosity Cabinet*

King's College London is a prestigious university renowned for research excellence, innovation, and global impact in education and culture. 'The Curiosity Cabinet' at 171 Strand is an exhibition space created by the Faculty of Arts & Humanities and King's Culture, dedicated to "curious people and curious objects".

VCUarts Qatar – *Matter Diplopia*

'Matter Diplopia' examines materiality, cultural construct, and societal impact in Qatar. Featuring projects by collaborative teams from VCUarts Qatar's faculty, students and alumni, the exhibition explores the interplay of local and global influences and cultural heritage, highlighting their role in shaping culture and societal impact in Qatar.

ENDS

Press pack including images and credit sheet: [here](#)

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 from April 2025

[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. In addition to this, limited early bird tickets are now available and provide 50% discount on full price general admission and concession tickets for all design enthusiasts. The early bird offer ends on 27 March. Advance tickets £5 off tickets will be on sale from 28 March.

Contact

For further information please contact:

Brunswick Arts | Lucy Dundas, Jasper Watkins, Sidje N'Choh and Dominique Schepers: +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 Biennale 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/>