



**LONDON DESIGN FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES WINNERS
OF THE 2023 LONDON DESIGN MEDALS: HANIF KARA
OBE, POOJA AGRAWAL, POOR COLLECTIVE AND
MAGDALENE ODUNDO DBE**

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#LDF23

13 September 2023, London, UK: London Design Festival today announces the winners of the 2023 London Design Medals.

- **London Design Medal: Hanif Kara OBE**
- **Design Innovation Medal: Pooja Agrawal**
- **Emerging Design Medal: POoR Collective**
- **Lifetime Achievement Medal: Magdalene Odundo DBE**

Each year, London Design Festival recognises the contribution made by leading design figures and emerging talents to London and the industry with four London Design Medal awarded: The London Design Medal, Design Innovation Medal, Emerging Design Medal and Lifetime Achievement Medal.

A panel of established designers, industry commentators and previous winners meet to debate and judge the possible recipients of the four Medals. This year's jury members included: **Ozward Boateng OBE, Njusja De Gier, Es Devlin CBE, Sarah Douglas, Ben Evans CBE, Tristram Hunt, Yinka Ilori MBE, Domenic Lippa, Jay Osgerby OBE, Alice Rawsthorn, Raoul Shah, Justine Simons OBE, Dr Paul Thompson and Jane Withers.**

This year's winners are representative of our current industry and are forces in the world of creativity: engineering, craftsmanship, social justice, architecture and city planning. They are empowering the youth and talents of tomorrow, founding architecture practices with impact, embedding work with cultural identity and creating real change with local authority placemaking.

The winners will receive their Medals at an awards ceremony on the evening of Monday 18 September 2023 at St Stephen Walbrook, supported by **Fortnum & Mason.**

Ben Evans CBE, London Design Festival Director, said: *“Each year, London Design Festival celebrates the creativity and innovation that shapes our world. The 2023 London Design Medal winners are exemplary individuals and collectives, embodying the spirit of design excellence and its transformative power. Their work, from pushing the boundaries of architecture to fostering social change, inspires us all. Congratulations to the winners, and thank you for your invaluable contributions to the design industry and our vibrant city.”*

The 2023 winners are as follows:

Hanif Kara

The London Design Medal, is the highest accolade bestowed upon an individual who has distinguished themselves within the industry and demonstrated consistent design excellence.

This year's winner, Hanif Kara, is Design Director and Co-Founder of AKT II. Kara was born in Bombo, Uganda. Inspired by his father's work in a construction company, he developed an affinity to building, and the desire to improve quality of life through the built environment. Moving to the UK in the 1970s as a refugee, he worked at a car

manufacturer and as a draughtsman before landing a place at the University of Salford to study engineering, sponsored by his then-employer, Joseph Parks & Son steel fabricators in Cheshire. He entered his profession through heavy engineering schemes – such as North Sea oil rigs and power stations.

Kara's particular 'design-led' approach and interest in innovative form, pushing material uses, sustainable construction and complex analysis methods have seen him work on numerous pioneering projects at the forefront of the many challenges facing the built environment.

The practice has won over 350 design awards including the RIBA Stirling Award for the Peckham Library in 2000, the RIBA Lubetkin Prize for the UK Pavilion at Shanghai Expo in 2010, the RIBA Stirling Award for the Sainsbury Laboratory in 2012, and also for the Bloomberg European HQ in 2018.

Kara's career extends into wider areas of design beyond the structural engineering disciplines. He is the first engineer to be appointed on the Steering Committee for the highly regarded international AKAAs (Aga Khan Award for Architecture) where he continues today. He is a fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects, Institute of Civil Engineers, Royal Academy of Engineering, Institute of Structural Engineering, the Royal Society of Arts, and on the board of trustees of the Architecture Foundation.

Formerly he was a CABE (a National Watchdog commission for architecture and built environment) Commissioner and served as a member of the Design for London Advisory Group to the Mayor of London. Since 2015 he has served as a review panel member of the National Centres of Competence in Research (NCCR) Digital Fabrication at ETH Zurich and currently sits on the UK National Infrastructure Commission's Design Task Force and Expert Advisory Group and is a member of the HS2 design review panel.

He was awarded an OBE for his services to architecture, engineering and education in the 2022 New Years List of honours.

Hanif Kara OBE, said: *"The goal was to do well by designing a non-combustible model of practice, one that doesn't simply light up bright like a star and burn out but goes on to make a wider impact on the field beyond the narrow gaze of our own profession . This is why wider peer recognition and awards like this one specifically, matter. I am so grateful to the jury."*

Pooja Agrawal

The Design Innovation Medal, celebrates entrepreneurship in all its forms, both locally and internationally. It honours an individual for whom design lies at the core of their development and success.

Pooja Agrawal is an architect and planner who is the Co-Founder and CEO of the not-for-profit company Public Practice. She grew up in Mumbai, moved to London aged 16 and studied architecture at the University of Cambridge and the Bartlett, University of London. Interested in urban design and place-making, she gained experience at Publica and We Made That, before moving to the public sector to work at Homes England and the Greater London Authority (GLA), where she worked on housing strategy, delivery of a

community centre, policy on diversity and inclusion, and the Good Growth by Design programme, later to influence the Mayor's 50 Design Advocates. Agrawal was nominated for the Planners' Women of Influence award in 2018, 2019, 2021 and 2022.

Agrawal co-founded Public Practice with Finn Williams in 2017. They consistently work with local authorities to improve the built environment and the learning programme equips two annual cohorts of 30 architects with the practical skills, confidence and network required to accelerate change in the public sector. In Spring 2023, Public Practice announced they had their 10th cohort which consisted of 28 associates joining 23 local councils across the country. To date, Public Practice has placed 296 associates into 78 authorities, expanding nationally this year with two new programmes in the north and southeast. Public Practice functions as a social enterprise with 8 employees and carries out progressive research such as their recent trial of the 9 day fortnight within their working style.

Agrawal is a trustee of the Museum of Architecture, was previously a mentor at the Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust and FLUID, had taught at Central Saint Martins, and co-hosted the RIBA Guerrilla Tactics conference. Agrawal co-founded Sound Advice, a platform working to improve diversity in the architecture field through music with former GLA colleague Joseph Henry. She also created a handbook for the GLA on Supporting Diversity, aiming to work towards a more representative built environment sector.

Pooja Agrawal, said: *"Cities are organisms, they're always evolving and changing. You don't want to pause a city, change is a positive thing. The worry is when change is causing consequences of extreme inequality. I hope London continues to be a very vibrant, diverse place where everyone has the right to own parts of the city."*

I am delighted to have won the award for design innovation. This is a great example of public sector innovation and it is fantastic to see Public Practice being recognised as a design that has positively impacted London. As a framework, it enables passionate and socially led designers and architects to make meaningful changes within local authorities. We emerged out of London but continue to design and scale the organisation to ensure we can spread its impact across the country."

POoR Collective

Emerging Design Medal, recognises an individual or practice that has made a recent impact on the design scene and has an emerging practice showing design promise.

POoR Collective (Power out of Restriction) – is a London-based social enterprise, launched in 2019 and helmed by architects Shawn Adams, Larry Botchway and Ben Spry, and accountant Matt Harvey-Agyemang. It is dedicated to the development of communities within the built environment and driving positive social change.

POoR achieves empowerment via community-led projects that seek to give the rising generation more say in the planning outcomes of their locales; representing the under-represented by fostering their voices and having them assist in the co-design process. POoR works with school children, community groups, and local councils to inspire the next generation of designers. Teaming up with industry partners to offer paid opportunities to those interested in pursuing a career in architecture or design. POoR

has facilitated initiatives including the Makers & Mentors scheme, in conjunction with The Office Group (TOG).

Shawn Adams is a writer, lecturer and architectural designer. Currently teaching at Central St Martins, University of the Arts London, Shawn believes that architecture can be used as a tool to develop stronger communities. An alumnus of Blueprint For All previously known as the Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust, Shawn has delivered workshops in both primary and secondary schools. He has written for magazines that include VICE, Architects' Journal and Icon and has been featured in The Guardian and Financial Times. Shawn is a Wren Insurance Association Scholar and was recently awarded the AJ Student prize and RIBA Journal Rising Star title.

Larry Botchway is an architectural designer, researcher and illustrator. He has experience working with artists that include Antoni Malinowski and international research collectives such as Feral Atlas. His design work has been published by Stanford University Press and was exhibited at the Istanbul Biennial in 2020. Larry is an alumnus of Blueprint For All formerly known as the Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust and is an advocate for diversity and inclusion. Larry is actively working with the Metropolitan Police to understand the issues young people in South West London face around policing.

Ben Spry is a speaker, architectural designer and environmental campaigner. Having worked extensively on community-led projects, Ben uses his skills in critical design to drive positive change within the built environment. Ben has a wealth of expertise in co-design and has facilitated several consultation sessions for housing projects in London. A facilitator of the Architect's Climate Action Network's education working group, Ben aims to teach climate literacy to young people.

Matt Harvey-Agyemang is an ACCA qualified accountant who manages multiple stakeholder needs to deadlines. He also works closely with the ACCA to promote accountancy as a profession to young people from underrepresented communities.

Larry Botchway from POoR Collective, said: *“Our design approach allows us to act as a conduit for young people. Therefore, winning the Emerging Talent Medal isn't just a win for us, but a win for the numerous communities we have connected with. This award reinforces that there is value in championing young voices and providing opportunities for others.”*

Magdalene Odundo DBE

Lifetime Achievement Medal, honours an individual who has made significant and fundamental contributions to the design industry over their career

Magdalene Odundo was born in Nairobi in 1950. After education in Kenya and India, she studied at West Surrey College of Art and Design, Farnham, gaining a first class degree in Ceramics with Printmaking and Photography in 1976. She then taught at the Commonwealth Institute in London before studying Ceramics at the Royal College of Art, London. For her dissertation at Farnham she visited Uganda to research ceramic techniques. At the RCA, she developed the hand-coiling technique with which she builds up her asymmetrical vase-forms. The pots are unglazed; the colour comes from

the clay body and thin layers of slip clay while the smooth, glowing surface is achieved by burnishing by hand before and after firing. The pots are sometimes fired many times to achieve the right effect. This is a traditional Ugandan pottery technique called emsubi.

Her work draws on varied sources including Mexican traditional pottery and Greek Cycladic sculpture as well as sub-Saharan ceramics. Her use of multiple oxidised firings at high temperatures gives the great depth of colour and subtlety of reflection and, as each firing is an added risk, makes them more precious.

Odundo's inclusive approach to the practice of her craft and interest in many clay traditions have made her a celebrated ceramic artist across the world. Examples of her work are in nearly 50 international museums and many public collections including African Heritage, Nairobi, The Art Institute of Chicago and the British Museum, London. Odundo has been recognised as a significant player in contemporary ceramics, making her name a large contributor to African Art in the US during the 1990s.

She has received numerous honorary degrees including an honorary doctorate of arts by Anglia Ruskin University, the University of Arts Florida and the University of Arts London. Odundo was selected as chancellor of University of the Creative Arts in 2018 after being awarded Emerita Professor in 2016. She was appointed an OBE for services to art in 2008, and was appointed a DBE in 2020 for services to art and art education.

Magdalene Odundo DBE said: *"I have always been curious to discover why human beings make and surround themselves with objects that are not just utilitarian, but also give pleasure, have spiritual significance, and tell the stories of the people who made the objects."*

- ENDS -

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NOTES TO EDITORS

For further information, please contact:

Bianca Gidwani, bianca@londonfestival.com

Patricia Gill, patricia@londonfestival.com

ABOUT LONDON DESIGN FESTIVAL

Established in 2003 by Sir John Sorrell CBE and Ben Evans CBE, London Design Festival celebrates and promotes London as the design capital of the world.

London Design Festival has since earned the reputation as a key calendar moment of London's autumn creative season, alongside London Fashion Week, Frieze Art Fair and the London Film Festival, attracting the greatest thinkers, practitioners, educators to the capital, in a citywide celebration.

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