



**LONDON DESIGN FESTIVAL'S 21ST EDITION OPENS
TODAY PROVIDING A VITAL PLATFORM TO
SHOWCASE AND CELEBRATE UK DESIGN
EXCELLENCE**

16-24 SEPTEMBER 2023
londondesignfestival.com
#LDF23

15 September 2023, London, UK: London Design Festival's 21st edition opens tomorrow **16 September**, running until **24 September 2023** with a vibrant and thought-provoking programme of events, exhibitions, and installations, the Festival will once again provide a vital platform for designers and creative businesses to showcase their work. This year's edition will continue to foster growth and excellence in the sector, building on a two-decade-long legacy and commitment to promoting and supporting the UK's design community.

The Festival is proud to announce the **Mayor of London** and **Bloomberg Philanthropies** as Principal Supporters for 2023.

The creative industries are a British success story, and a powerhouse of the UK economy, growing 1.5 times faster than the wider economy over the past decade and contributing £108 billion in gross value added (GVA) annually. Employment in the sector has grown five times faster than the rest of the economy since 2011. Against this backdrop, London Design Festival continues to play a pivotal role in promoting the design sector and positioning London as a global design capital.

The Festival provides an unrivalled platform that showcases designers to domestic and international audiences. Last year there were 1.5 million visits by 360,000 visitors.

The Festival's programme also encourages the next generation to pursue a creative career. Young and emerging talent are a vital part of the creative ecosystem and key to maximising the economic potential of the sector. However, the sector faces long-term challenges as design subjects continue to experience a decline at GCSE and A levels. The Festival remains predominantly free, allowing diverse audiences to discover and encounter inspiring design stories. By providing accessible and inclusive experiences, it aims to inspire young audiences, encouraging them to consider a creative career.

The 2023 Festival programme will take over the city presenting groundbreaking ideas and creative concepts that underscore the vital role of design. The programme will feature major installations, museum exhibits, Design Districts that highlight creative clusters across London, Design Fairs and the Global Design Forum, a thought leadership programme that brings together creative leaders to explore and propose solutions for pressing global issues.

Additionally, the annual London Design Medals will recognise the contribution made by leading design figures and emerging talent to London and the industry, with four London Design Medals awarded each year. The Festival is delighted to continue its long-standing partnership with **Fortnum & Mason** as the Supporting Partner of the London Design Medals 2023. Further details of this year's winners will be announced in September.

Bloomberg Connects, a free digital guide to cultural organisations around the world that makes it easy to access and engage with arts and culture from mobile devices, will feature a free mobile guide to the Festival. The guide will include expert commentary, video highlights, behind the scenes footage and exhibition maps.

In line with its commitment to inclusivity and accessibility, the Festival introduces **Launch Pad**, a new initiative for 2023, which aims to elevate designers who typically face barriers to accessing the Festival's partnership scheme. Launch Pad invites emerging designers, recent graduates, charities, not-for-profit organisations and small businesses to apply, ensuring that a broad range of talent have an opportunity to showcase their work and connect with new audiences.

Ben Evans, London Design Festival Director, said: *“The London Design Festival continues to provide an invaluable platform for the UK's design community. Over the past two decades, the Festival has cemented London's reputation as a global creative capital while supporting designers at every level of their careers. This year's programme promises fresh perspectives and boundary-pushing ideas that will inspire audiences. But just as importantly, the Festival provides opportunities for emerging talent and promotes inclusivity in the sector. We are incredibly proud of the vital role the Festival plays in helping designers and creative businesses to reach new audiences and championing design's significance in shaping our world.”*

Justine Simons OBE, Deputy Mayor for Culture and the Creative Industries, London, said: *“The London Design Festival is a highlight in the cultural calendar, which the Mayor and I are delighted to support. It celebrates the design excellence and talent of our creative community and showcases London's position as a global design capital. The creative industries are playing a pivotal role in our economic recovery, bringing together people from all backgrounds and supporting young and emerging creative talent as we build a better London for everyone”*

Jemma Read, Global Head, Bloomberg Corporate Philanthropy, said: *“At Bloomberg, we believe that public art can spur important collaborations and improve the quality of life in our cities. We are delighted to support the London Design Festival's ambitious 2023 programme, bolstering London's reputation as a creative and cultural leader.”*

LANDMARK PROJECTS

WREN 300

2023 marks the 300th anniversary of Sir Christopher Wren's death. London Design Festival supported by **Bloomberg Philanthropies** takes the opportunity to delve into the legacy of the extraordinary architect and polymath through a modern lens. By collaborating with contemporary designers, the Festival aims to provide fresh insights into Wren and his collection of architectural masterpieces. The two Landmark Projects which will form part of the Wren 300 celebrations will serve as a means of engaging with his architectural and scientific heritage, as well as exploring how his works remain relevant and inspiring in the present day. Through innovative responses and creative interventions, the Festival seeks to infuse these spaces with contemporary perspectives, celebrating Wren's enduring influence and showcasing his significance in the 21st century.

At St Paul's Cathedral, London Design Festival in association with **Artichoke** will present **Aura** by Spanish artist **Pablo Valbuena**. The installation approaches what a temple means in today's world and examines the potential of time, sound and light to create contemporary rituals. **Aura** is a live installation that transforms the sounds present in the cathedral into a pulsating line of light projected at an architectural scale. The piece is deeply intertwined with the context and fabric of Wren's masterpiece. It introduces new ideas while seamlessly integrating into the building and its daily life as if it had been part of the original design. **Aura** listens to the sound, voices and music generated in St Paul's and materialises them into a spectral, three-dimensional aura that enhances the ritual aspects of this space.

Studio Waldemeyer will present **Halo** a transcendent light installation within St. Stephen Walbrook Church. The conical pendulum traces a celestial path around Henry Moore's famed altar, evoking planetary motions and creating an ethereal Halo. Slow colour transitions on the grand dome, inspired by natural phenomena like the aurora borealis, amplify the meditative aura. 'Halo' transcends religious affiliations, inviting viewers from all walks of life to immerse themselves in a unified appreciation of history, art, and spirituality. It is a captivating journey into the past and an evocative exploration of the celestial, encouraging the modern viewer to find spiritual resonance within the timeless and the ethereal.

FESTIVAL COMMISSION

Simone Brewster in collaboration with **Amorim** will present **Spirit of Place** on The Strand, an installation of 5 large scale sculptural vessels. This family of objects, ranging up to 2.5m, represents Amorim's cork forest at Herdade de Rio Frio, Portugal. The future of the forest is secured by four key traits: drought resistance, fungal resistance, upright expression, and fast voluminous growth. These four characteristics act as the foundation for the visual language of the piece, with Brewster translating each factor into a visual equivalent that can then be experienced and enjoyed in the centre of London.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Inspired by powerful Buddhist principles, the **Rubin Museum's Mandala Lab** in Canary Wharf is an interactive space designed to explore challenging emotions and consider how to transform them into wisdom. The freestanding structure contains a metaphoric floorplan for our emotional well-being, featuring five thought-provoking, playful experiences that guide you along an inner journey focused on self-awareness and awareness of others.

Multi award-winning artist **Morag Myerscough** has partnered with LDF automotive partner **MINI** to unveil an immersive installation at Shoreditch Electric Light Station. This vibrant journey into the future teases the brand's exciting vision, where tradition and technology collide, to create greener and more abundant urban environments. Morag's unique use of space and captivating designs perfectly align with MINI's values and commitment to enhancing urban city life.

LDF AT THE V&A MUSEUM

See iconic spaces within the [V&A Museum](#) transformed by an extraordinary collection of specially commissioned installations by international contemporary designers during London Design Festival.

This year's projects explore the global power of design to bind communities, reveal untold stories and rethink our relationship with materials:

[Part exchange](#) by [Andu Masebo](#) - this year's V&A Emerging Designer commission - retells the life story of a scrapped car through a series of objects inspired by the people whose lives it touched over 25 years. Drawing on conversations with previous owners, the components of an Alfa Romeo Cloverleaf have been reconfigured into domestic furnishings.

Together with the [Gifu Prefecture](#) in Japan and London based [Hayatsu Architects](#), the V&A presents a [Hana Mikoshi](#) or 'flower shrine'. Inspired by the 'Mino Matsuri festival', this sculptural seating installation will be decorated with 50,000 sakura-inspired washi paper flowers handcrafted by craftspeople in Japan. The flowers will be applied to the structure by visitors to the V&A throughout the summer.

In [But She Still Wears Kohl and Smells like Roses](#), Palestinian architect, artist and V&A Jameel Fellow [Dima Srouji](#) presents objects and film that reframe the history of glass in Greater Syria and Palestine. The new works include replicas of glassware from the V&A collection excavated from the region. The original vessels currently on display will be replaced with 'tomb cards' narrating the often-violent histories linked to their excavation.

[Unstruck Melody](#) is a collaboration between British-born Canadian artist [Nirbhai \(Nep\) Singh Sidhu](#) and UK arts organisation [Without Shape Without Form](#). They bring together their practices of spirituality into a new installation. Tapestry, sculpture and film create moments of self-discovery through contemporary Sikh teachings while exploring their impact on design now.

[Maya: The Birth of a Superhero](#) is an immersive installation and VR experience by [Poulomi Basu & CJ Clarke](#). It follows Maya, an ordinary 21st Century girl, as she transforms into a superhero whose powers derive from menstruation, in an odyssey of womanhood. The work is inspired by Basu's law changing impact art project 'Blood Speaks' about menstrual exile and violence against women in South Asia.

GLOBAL DESIGN FORUM

Global Design Forum will return to the V&A for five days of programming covering some of the most challenging and exciting topics that designers currently face. Global Design Forum partners this year include SAP, Pearlfisher, Istituto Europeo di Design and UAL.

DESIGN DISTRICTS

From North to South, East to West, the Design Districts are a key component of the Festival makeup. Each District has its own unique personality that reflects the local community and enables visitors to explore events a short walking distance from each other.

There will be 13 Design Districts as part of this year's Festival: **Bankside Design District, Brompton Design District, Greenwich Peninsula, Islington Design District, Kings Cross Design District, Mayfair Design District, Park Royal Design District, Shoreditch Design Triangle** and **Southwark Design District**. These will be joined by four new districts for 2023: **Dalston to Stokey Design District, Battersea Design District, Chelsea Design District** and **Fitzrovia Design District**.

DESIGN FAIRS

As part of the Festival programme, London Design Festival hosts major trade and consumer shows, formerly known as Design Destinations. These are the commercial pillars of the Festival and are key meeting places for designers, manufacturers, buyers, specifiers, the media and design enthusiasts to discover new product releases and identify current trends.

LONDON DESIGN FAIR

London Design Fair makes its much-anticipated return to the international design calendar on 21–24 September. The largest commercial exhibition during London Design Festival, the Fair is the leading showcase of cutting-edge design, brands, international pavilions, and makers. The fair returns to Truman Brewery in Shoreditch and visitors will enjoy talks and interactive workshops, as well as discover exciting new designs, installations and trends.

MATERIAL MATTERS

After last year's hugely successful debut, the **Material Matters** fair will return to Bargehouse, Oxo Tower Wharf as part of the Bankside Design District. The fair, which runs Wednesday 20 - Saturday 23 September will bring together world-leading brands, designers, makers, and innovators to investigate and celebrate the importance of materials and their ability to shape our lives. The refreshed line-up includes Headline Sponsor, UK lighting specialist Bert Frank and the Milan-based platform Isola and much more.

GRAPHIC IDENTITY 2023 BY PENTAGRAM

Since 2007, world-renowned creative agency Pentagram, have produced an annual graphic identity for each iteration of the Festival - responding to, and anticipating trends in design and typography.

Certain elements of the identity remain constant - the Festival's colour palette of white on red has been proved to be one of the Festival's most recognisable elements. This has allowed Pentagram to adapt the brief each year to produce distinctive visual identities ensuring that each year the Festival remains dynamic and interesting.

Domenic Lippa, Partner at Pentagram, has led the creative direction of the branding and visual design for the Festival since its inception.

Domenic Lippa, Partner at Pentagram, said: *"We approach each year with excitement and enthusiasm. I have always believed the reason we've been able to create new directions for the Festival is that different designers have contributed to the process over the years. I have always loved film and TV titles - they can instantly convey the themes within a short space of time. We started working with the typography with a nod to a cinematic feel. I love the way films can stretch one's experience and be dramatic in its form. The more acute and extreme the angles I believe reflect the power and strength of the Festival itself"*

Further information for this year's programme as well as details of the Global Design Forum, London Design Festival's curated thought leadership programme, and this year's London Design Medal winners will be announced over the summer.

- ENDS -

NOTES TO EDITORS

For further information, please contact Bianca Gidwani on +447853848640 and bianca@londonfestival.com

For all images and assets, please [download here](#).

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, retailers and educators to the capital, in a citywide celebration.

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ABOUT BLOOMBERG PHILANTHROPIES

Bloomberg Philanthropies invests in cities and countries around the world to ensure better, longer lives for the greatest number of people. The organisation focuses on five key areas for creating lasting change: the Arts, Education, Environment, Government Innovation, and Public Health. Bloomberg Philanthropies encompasses all of Michael R. Bloomberg's giving, including his foundation, corporate, and personal philanthropy as well as Bloomberg Associates, a pro bono consultancy that works in cities around the world.

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