

Press Pack

SERPENTINE PAVILION 2021 DESIGNED BY SUMAYYA VALLY, COUNTERSPACE

11 June – 17 October 2021

SPONSORED BY GOLDMAN SACHS



Serpentine Pavilion 2021 designed by Counterspace, Design Render, Exterior View © Counterspace



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Press contacts:

Rose Dempsey, 07876 593 758, rosed@serpentinegalleries.org

Nadja Coyne, 07775 792 894, NadjaC@serpentinegalleries.org



Note from the Serpentine Artistic Director and Chief Executive

The realisation of the Serpentine Pavilion 2021 is only possible because of the enormously generous contribution of individuals, companies and foundations that have pledged sponsorship, or help in-kind, to the project. Serpentine has no budget for this annual architecture commission and must raise all the funds to make the scheme a reality.

We would be very grateful if you could acknowledge in print and online the Pavilion's principal supporters in your coverage of the project:

Serpentine Pavilion supported by	Goldman Sachs
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Press Release

20TH SERPENTINE PAVILION DESIGNED BY SUMAYYA VALLY, COUNTERSPACE

£100,000 fellowship to support artists announced to mark Pavilion's 20th anniversary

Pavilion extended out to the city with four fragments placed in neighbourhoods across London

11 June – 17 October 2021

Sponsored by Goldman Sachs

Watch the press briefing [here](#)

Press images at serpentinegalleries.org/press



The 20th Serpentine Pavilion, designed by Sumayya Vally, director of Johannesburg-based practice **Counterspace**, will open on **11 June 2021**. A TIME100 Next List honoree, Vally is the youngest architect to be commissioned for this internationally renowned architecture programme. The Serpentine Pavilion 2021 is being supported by Goldman Sachs for the seventh consecutive year. The Pavilion design is based on past and present places of meeting, organising and belonging across London. The forms in the Pavilion are a result of abstracting, superimposing and splicing



architectural elements, varying in scales of intimacy, from various locations, translating the shapes of London into the Pavilion structure in Kensington Gardens.

A new fellowship programme to support artists, *Support Structures for Support Structures*, is being announced on the occasion of the 20th Pavilion, creating a legacy for this unique commission and signalling a new chapter in the commission's history. *Support Structures for Support Structures* is conceived in collaboration with Sumayya Vally and draws on the history of Serpentine's Civic Projects programme. The fellowship will support up to ten artists and collectives in London working at the intersection of art, spatial politics and community practice with an unrestricted grant of at least £10,000 to develop their creative ideas and will also invite grantees to join an interdisciplinary network for support, development workshops and mentoring. The ten recipients, who will be selected by a jury of leading professionals, will be announced in July. The selection committee is Sepake Angiama, Director, Iniva; Pooja Agrawal, CEO, Public Practice; Leopold Lambert, Editor in Chief, The Funambulist; Rita Keegan, Artist and Sumayya Vally, Architect, Counterspace. The panel will be chaired by Amal Khalaf, Civic Curator, Serpentine, who will not take part in the selection process.

The Pavilion references the architecture of markets, restaurants, places of worship, bookshops and local cultural institutions that are particularly significant to diasporic and cross-cultural communities in neighbourhoods including Brixton, Hoxton, Hackney, Tower Hamlets, Edgware Road, Barking and Dagenham, Peckham and Notting Hill, among others.

For the first time since the programme started, the commission extends to the city, as four fragments of the Pavilion are installed in selected locations across London to support and facilitate gatherings and impromptu interactions and honour places that have held communities over time. The partners hosting these fragments are: New Beacon Books in Finsbury Park, one of the first Black publishers and booksellers in the UK; multi-purpose venue and community hub The Tabernacle in Notting Hill; arts centre The Albany in Deptford; and the new Becontree Forever Arts and Culture Hub at Valence Library in Barking and Dagenham, which was established this year to commemorate the centenary of the UK's largest council housing estate.

A specially commissioned programme for the Pavilion, *Listening to the City*, will feature work by artists including **Ain Bailey** and **Jay Bernard**, connecting visitors to the stories and sounds of lost spaces across London.

Counterspace is a Johannesburg-based collaborative architectural studio, directed by Sumayya Vally, founded in Johannesburg in 2015. Much of their work emerges from research and interdisciplinary arts-based projects, undertaking predominantly architectural projects, community engagement, exhibition and installation conceptualisation and urban research, design and intervention. Their work is concerned with inclusivity, otherness and future; and



often intersects with other creative disciplines to form innovative approaches to design challenges.

Sumayya Vally is the 20th creative to accept the invitation to design a temporary Pavilion on the Serpentine Gallery's lawn in Kensington Gardens. This pioneering commission, which began in 2000 with Zaha Hadid, has presented the first UK structures by some of the biggest names in international architecture. In recent years it has grown into a highly-anticipated showcase for emerging talent, from Frida Escobedo of Mexico to Francis Kéré of Burkina Faso and Bjarke Ingels of Denmark, whose 2016 Pavilion was the most visited architectural and design exhibition in the world. The Pavilion programme has evolved over 20 years as a commissioning platform for the Serpentine's experimental, interdisciplinary live, community and family programmes.

Sumayya Vally of Counterspace said: "My practice, and this Pavilion, is centred around amplifying and collaborating with multiple and diverse voices from many different histories; with an interest in themes of identity, community, belonging and gathering. The past year has drawn these themes sharply into focus and has allowed me the space to reflect on the incredible generosity of the communities that have been integral to this Pavilion. This has given rise to several initiatives that extend the duration, scale and reach of the Pavilion beyond its physical lifespan. In a time of isolation, these initiatives have deepened the Pavilion's intents toward sustained collaboration, and I am excited to continue this engagement with the Serpentine's civic and education teams and our partners over the summer and beyond."

Hans Ulrich Obrist, Artistic Director, and Bettina Korek, Chief Executive, Serpentine, said: "We look forward with great excitement to welcoming London to this remarkable space this June. Our deepest appreciation goes to Sumayya Vally and to all our supporters and contractors for their enduring commitment to the Serpentine Pavilion. The spirit of community that has carried us as an institution throughout such a challenging year is the same that we hope to enliven this project. Here's to a new chapter."

The 20th Serpentine Pavilion marks the seventh year of support from Pavilion Sponsors Goldman Sachs. Richard Gnodde, CEO, Goldman Sachs International, said: "Goldman Sachs has a longstanding commitment to supporting the arts and – for the seventh consecutive year – we are proud to partner with the Serpentine on the 2021 Pavilion. The Counterspace commission is a testament to Sumayya Vally and the extended Serpentine team, who have worked to deliver this project through an enormously challenging period. We are inspired by the innovation, creativity and energy that has gone into realising this year's structure and we look forward to seeing the Pavilion come to life."

Therme Group has acquired the 2021 Serpentine Pavilion designed by Counterspace. This marks the third consecutive year of partnership for Serpentine and the wellbeing leader, in support of the annual architecture programme.



Mikolaj Sekutowicz, Curator of Therme Art Program, said: *“Today more than ever it has become critical for the architectural community to propose creative solutions that can empower diverse communities. Counterspace’s response to this year’s commission comes as a beacon of light in these challenging times. We are truly inspired by Sumayya Vally’s vision, and are proud to partner with the Serpentine in support of this fantastic architectural programme.”*

For press information please contact:

Rose Dempsey rosed@serpentinegalleries.org, +44 (0)7876 593 758

Nadja Coyne nadjac@serpentinegalleries.org, +44 (0)7775 792 894

Notes to Editors

The embodied carbon from the Pavilion build has been studied in detail and monitored throughout the design and construction process. Through innovative material selection, and measures to ensure the main structure can be easily dismantled and reused, the result is a carbon-negative Pavilion and a positive net outcome.

A catalogue designed by Joseph Kohlmaier with contributions by Siphokazi Jonas, Courttia Newland, Professor Lesley Lokko, Yesomi Umolu and an extensive interview between Sumayya Vally and Sir David Adjaye OBE, Natalia Grabowska and Hans Ulrich Obrist will be published in Summer 2021.

Serpentine Artistic Director Hans Ulrich Obrist and Chief Executive Bettina Korek selected this year’s architect with advisors Sir David Adjaye OBE, Professor Lesley Lokko and David Glover alongside the Serpentine team – Julie Burnell, Head of Construction and Buildings, Serpentine, and the project’s curator Natalia Grabowska.

Support Structures for Support Structures is conceived by Amal Khalaf, Civic Curator and Sumayya Vally, Counterspace. It is made possible through the generous support of Agnes Gund, Sarah Arison, Suzanne Deal Booth, Aditya Mittal, Nicoletta Fiorucci Russo, Felicity Waley-Cohen, Barry and Laura Townsley and Andrew Cohen.

Fragments programme curated by Natalia Grabowska and produced by Jo Paton.

Listening to the City curated and produced by Alex Thorp, Education Curator and Jemma Egan, Assistant Education Curator, Amal Khalaf, Civic Curator, Elizabeth Graham, Associate Civic Curator and Layla Gatens, Assistant Civic Curator, Holly Shuttleworth, Producer.

Image Credits:

Serpentine Pavilion 2021 designed by Sumayya Vally, Design Render, Interior View © Counterspace
Sumayya Vally of Counterspace photographed by Justice Mukheli in Johannesburg, 2020 © Counterspace



Press Release

SUPPORT STRUCTURES FOR SUPPORT STRUCTURES

£100,000 fellowship to support artists announced to mark 20th anniversary of Serpentine Pavilion

8 June 2021



Image Credit: Bedfellows with Youth Forum, *The Making Of...* 2015 Photograph: Mark Blower

Support Structures for Support Structures is a fellowship programme initiated by Serpentine, that supports up to **ten** artists and collectives working at the intersection of art, spatial politics and community practice. The fellowship consists of an unrestricted grant of £10,000 or more to develop creative ideas as well as providing a network of support, development workshops and mentoring at a timely moment in the recipients' careers.

Support Structures for Support Structures – FAQ

Why are you doing this now?

Support Structures for Support Structures recognises that practitioners that work across art, spatial politics and community practice are often not supported by grant programmes or institutions in



a sustainable way. It aims to offer that support financially and via resources for learning, exchange and contemplation within the fellowship cohort.

Support Structures for Support Structures is announced on the occasion of the 20th Pavilion, creating a legacy for this unique commission and signalling a new chapter in the commission's history.

The programme has been developed in close collaboration with Pavilion architect Sumayya Vally, and is grounded in the work of Serpentine's Civic Projects programme over the last decade, supporting artists to work with people and communities across London to respond to the complexities of social change, focusing on practices that sit at the intersection of art, spatial politics and community practice.

How are the Pavilion and SS4SS connected?

The programme was initiated by Serpentine and Sumayya Vally as part of the Pavilion's legacy in honouring people and spaces that continue to hold and facilitate community in London.

The fellowship is developed with Sumayya Vally of architects Counterspace, alongside Serpentine's Civic Projects team.

During the two years of the Pavilion development, Vally and Serpentine's Civic team have been listening and looking closely at spaces of belonging in London, to understand the precarity of these sites of social and cultural production, and the people, artists and organisers who have been resisting their erasure.

Sumayya Vally of Counterspace said: "My practice and this Pavilion is centred around amplifying and collaborating with multiple and diverse voices from many different histories; with an interest in themes of identity, community, belonging and gathering. The past year has drawn these themes sharply into focus. Through Support Structures for Support Structures, we are working to deepen the Pavilion's intent and focus through a fellowship that helps nurture the practice of individuals and collectives that hold space for communities to gather across London. I am excited to work with Serpentine's Civic Projects team to make this fellowship Support Structures for Support Structures a lasting legacy for the 20th Serpentine Pavilion– to seed, support, grow and imagine different networks, structures, and bodies of knowledge in the arts. One of the most integral parts of this commission has been to extend the ethos of the Pavilion at different scales and in different realms – extending the commission by dispersing parts of the Pavilion and its various commissions over the summer and beyond. This fellowship truly gives us the opportunity to expand the reach of the Pavilion beyond its physical lifespan; and points directly to our collective role and the responsibility that architects have in working toward systemic change."



Amal Khalaf, Civic Curator, Serpentine said:

For over eleven years I have been working with collectives and artists whose work is based in community centres, markets, with migrant labour unions and with activists as well as civic organisations from councils to care homes across London. Through the long term commissions of our Civic projects programme, we have witnessed how artists working collaboratively with people can have an impact on our city, from making injustices more visible, as well as demonstrating how art can play a role in movement spaces and community organising. Often this work is not so visible, and the labour and care that comes with the commitment to this way of working is not always accounted for or made possible by existing structures in the art world. We hope Support Structures for Support Structures can provide a space to support artists who have been committed to doing the work of navigating informal and formal structures that hold our city together, whilst holding a radical politics of working collectively. We hope the fellowship can create a space to think together about how an art system can support these practices better. Through the workshops and conversations that will be held over the period of the fellowship we will look at how we can untangle systems of oppression in the art system and think about building new futures grounded in care and understanding of complex and interdisciplinary ways of working.

Who is funding this project?

Support Structures for Support Structures is made possible through the generous support of Agnes Gund, Sarah Arison, Suzanne Deal Booth, Aditya Mittal, Nicoletta Fiorucci Russo, Felicity Waley-Cohen, Barry and Laura Townsley and Andrew Cohen.

How will grantees be selected?

15 visual arts professionals and community leaders have been invited to each nominate **two** individuals or collectives whose work they believe has been making a significant contribution to their communities or groups that they work with through their artistic practice/projects.

The final selection of up to **ten fellows** will be made by a **Selection Panel** of respected practitioners and leaders.

The process is confidential. Artists/collectives will not be informed of their nomination and nominators are asked not to share details of the artists they nominated, either with the artist themselves or with anyone else.

Who is on the selection panel?

Sepake Angiama, Director, Iniva
Pooja Agrawal, CEO, Public Practice
Leopold Lambert, Editor in Chief, The Funambulist
Rita Keegan, Artist
Sumayya Vally, Counterspace



The panel will be chaired by Amal Khalaf, Civic Curator Serpentine, who will not take part in the selecting.

How are the fellows supported throughout the period of the fellowship

Serpentine Civic Projects team will manage the programme and support fellows. Each fellow will be paired with a mentor of their choice.

What is the period of the fellowship? When does it start/end?

It will begin in July 2020 and end in January 2021.

What is the future of the fellowship/Serpentine's commitment to it?

We hope that this cohort of fellows will inform the next round of the fellowship. We hope this is the first year of a long term initiative and will be working with an evaluator to monitor the process.

Is this an open call?

This is not an open call. **15** visual arts professionals and community leaders have been invited to each nominate **two** individuals or collectives whose work they believe is making a significant contribution to their communities or groups that they work with through their artistic practice/projects.

The final selection of **up to ten fellows** will be made by the Selection Panel of respected practitioners and leaders.

Who is eligible for the fellowship?

Support Structures for Support Structures is a programme that supports artists and collectives who have demonstrated a commitment to experimenting with and producing projects, structures and frameworks that have had an impact on their communities and address urgent social issues.

The programme will support individuals or collectives based in Greater London. They do not need to be UK citizens, but should have demonstrated a commitment to working in London. We are particularly interested in supporting artists and collectives from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Will the work be exhibited at the Serpentine?

The fellowship consists of an unrestricted grant to develop creative ideas as well as providing a network of support, development workshops and mentoring at a timely moment in the recipients' careers.

It is not primarily focused on the production of artwork. There are no current plans to exhibit any resulting work in the galleries and there is no stipulation about what form the work should take.



SERPENTINE SUMMER 2021

FEATURING: AIN BAILEY, JAMES BARNOR, TOSH BASCO, BECONTREE FOREVER, JAY BERNARD, THE RESIDENTS OF BARKING & DAGENHAM, RHEA DILLON TORKWASE DYSON, BRIAN ENO, JACOB V JOYCE & RUDY LOEWE, SOPHIA AL MARIA, JOTA MOMBAÇA, JENNIFER PACKER, TOMÁS SARACENO, SUMAYYA VALLY and more

A season of exhibitions, architecture, live performance, digital commissions, conversations, sound commissions, family activities, outdoor art, talks, food, music and more at Serpentine this summer



Images and further information serpentinegalleries.org/press

This summer Serpentine presents a full programme of art, architecture, performance and more, within and beyond the galleries in Kensington Gardens.

Visitors can explore ideas behind current 5* exhibitions from James Barnor and Jennifer Packer with poetry readings, in conversations and discussions. The long-awaited Serpentine Pavilion 2021,



designed by Sumayya Vally, Counterspace, will host the return of the Park Night series of live encounters and a mini festival of *Back to Earth* activations, marking the progress of Serpentine's long term environmental programme, including sound commissions from Brian Eno and Torkwase Dyson. Off-site, fragments of the Serpentine Pavilion will be hosted by partners in four locations around the city.

The *Listening to the City* programme picks up the sounds and stories of London with new sound commissions installed in the Pavilion from Ain Bailey and Jay Bernard, plus live performances, workshops and events for young people and families, and the development of the Becontree Broadcasting Station in Barking and Dagenham.

A new public sculpture by Sophia al-Maria will be unveiled on the summer solstice, and the Serpentine Arts Technologies team release the second volume of Future Art Ecosystems in July, focusing on art and the metaverse.

A new café, The Magazine, will open in June in the Zaha Hadid designed Serpentine North Gallery, offering all day dining. The Pavilion Café will run in the Pavilion throughout the summer months.

More activity will be added regularly, please check www.serpentinegalleries.org/whatson for updates.

The exhibition programme is FREE but visitors must book a timed entry ticket at serpentinegalleries.org. Galleries open 10am-6pm; closed Monday except for Bank Holidays.

The Serpentine Pavilion is FREE, no ticket required, and is open 10am-6pm every day.

Live events in the Pavilion require a ticket which can be booked via serpentinegalleries.org

EXHIBITIONS

JAMES BARNOR: Accra/London – A Retrospective Serpentine North Gallery 19 May - 24 October

A major survey of British-Ghanaian photographer James Barnor, whose career as a studio portraitist, photojournalist and Black lifestyle photographer spans six decades and records major social and political changes in London.

Ongoing FAMILY FOTO – an open call for submission of the public's family photos.



27 July FLAMINGO & DRUM: Panel discussion exploring James Barnor's connection to these legendary publications
September Lucky Jim musical celebration

JENNIFER PACKER: The Eye Is Not Satisfied With Not Seeing
Serpentine South Gallery 19 May — 22 August

This 5***** exhibition, which first opened in December 2020, is the artist's first in a European institution, and includes paintings and drawings from the past decade alongside recent work.

ARCHITECTURE

SERPENTINE PAVILION 2021 DESIGNED BY SUMAYYA VALLY, COUNTERSPACE
Serpentine South Gallery Lawn 11 June – 17 October 2021

The 20th **Serpentine Pavilion**, designed by Sumayya Vally, director of Johannesburg-based practice **Counterspace**, will open on **11 June 2021**. A TIME100 Next List honoree, Vally is the youngest architect to be commissioned for this internationally renowned architecture programme.

SERPENTINE PAVILION 2021 FRAGMENTS

New Beacon Books, Finsbury Park; The Tabernacle, Notting Hill; The Albany, Deptford; Valence Library, Barking and Dagenham from 11 June

For the first time since the programme started, the commission extends to the city, as four fragments of the Pavilion are installed in selected locations across London to support and facilitate gatherings and impromptu interactions and honour places that have held communities over time. The partners hosting these fragments are: New Beacon Books in Finsbury Park, one of the first Black publishers and booksellers in the UK; multi-purpose venue and community hub The Tabernacle in Notting Hill; arts centre The Albany in Deptford; and the new Becontree Forever Arts and Culture Hub at Valence Library in Barking and Dagenham, which was established this year to commemorate the centenary of the UK's largest council housing estate.

SCULPTURE

SOPHIA AL-MARIA – TARAXOS PUBLIC SCULPTURE
Lawn adjacent to Serpentine South Gallery from 21 June onwards



The Serpentine x Modern Forms Sculpture Commission by Sophia Al-Maria will be unveiled on the Summer Solstice in Kensington Gardens. Inspired by the form of the dandelion, the sculpture is envisaged as a meditative space for thinking and listening.

ARTS TECHNOLOGIES

Online June – September

Future Art Ecosystems (FAE) is an annual strategic briefing launched in 2020 that provides concepts, references, language, and arguments that can be integrated into operational agendas for the construction of 21st century cultural infrastructure. The second issue of FAE focuses on the larger stakes involved in revamping ‘digital strategy’ at cultural institutions and will be accompanied by a series of live events and podcasts to be announced.

Also published this July is the first Serpentine Legal Lab Report on the legal issues experienced when collaborating across art, science and technology. Produced by the Legal Lab's Principal Investigator, Alana Kushnir of Guest Work Agency, in collaboration with Amurabi and with input from the Lab's Advisory Panel.

6 July Future Art Ecosystems 2 (FAE2) and Serpentine Legal Lab report released; download via serpentinegalleries.org

SOUND COMMISSIONS

Serpentine Pavilion 2021, Serpentine South Gallery Lawn, June – October

- 19 June -23 July** **Brian Eno:** A new sound commission, part of *Back to Earth*. Eno has composed a layered, stratified construction of sonic material that moves through the structure, from the earth beneath visitors’ feet to the space above their heads.
- 24 July - 25 Aug** **Jay Bernard:** A new sound commission produced in collaboration with young people from South London. Part of *Listening to the City*
- 26 Aug - 24 Sept** **Ain Bailey:** A new sound commission produced from new recordings and archival sounds of histories of community organising in South London. Part of *Listening to the City*
- 26 Sept – 17 Oct** **Torkwase Dyson:** A new sound commission, part of *Back to Earth*



LIVE PROGRAMME IN THE PAVILION

Back to Earth Day 2021

Serpentine Pavilion and Kensington Gardens and online, Saturday 19 June

Back to Earth, Serpentine's long-term project dedicated to the environment and the climate emergency, presents a day-long programme of talks, workshops, sound commissions, augmented reality and publications.

Limited number of in-person tickets available for events where noted, book £5 tickets or register for the FREE live stream at serpentinegalleries.org/whats-on/back-to-earth-day

All day: **Tomás Saraceno: Webs of Life**

A new Augmented Reality app, *Webs of Life*, by Tomás Saraceno with Acute Art, introducing audiences to the extraordinary physicality of spiders, their reading of the world through the webs they weave, and encouraging greater awareness and protection of their habitats.

10am-1pm: Brian Eno sound commission

Experience Brian Eno's *Back to Earth* sound commission, a work devised site-specifically for the Serpentine Pavilion 2021.

11am-12pm: Webs of Life, a walk

Booking required

A guided walk about spiders in Kensington Gardens by Peter Lawrence, Biodiversity Manager at The Royal Parks, on the occasion of the launch of Tomás Saraceno's AR app, *Webs of Life*.

2-2:30pm: CLIMAVORE, a conversation

Booking required

A conversation with spatial practitioners Cooking Sections on their long-term project, CLIMAVORE and their *Back to Earth* initiative, moderated by Lucia Pietroiusti, Serpentine Curator of General Ecology.

3-3:30pm: POWER PACK: Climate Emergency, a conversation

Booking required

A conversation with artists Rudy Loewe and Jacob V Joyce, creators of POWER PACK: Climate Emergency, a toolkit for young people that platforms BIPOC young climate activists. Copies of POWER PACK: Climate Emergency will be available to audiences on the day and throughout June.

4-5pm: Back to Earth, a conversation

Booking required



A panel on *Back to Earth* initiatives, as well as the role of art towards the environmental effort. Participants include artists Torkwase Dyson, Brian Eno, and more to be confirmed. Moderated by Serpentine Artistic Director Hans Ulrich Obrist.

6-7pm: 140 Artists' Ideas for Planet Earth, book launch

Booking required

140 Artists' Ideas for Planet Earth: Book launch of the first *Back to Earth* publication in collaboration with Penguin, featuring selected contributors from the book to share instructions, invitations, rituals and gestures. This event is presented in collaboration with Dazed.

PARK NIGHTS

Serpentine Pavilion 2021, Serpentine South Gallery Lawn, various dates July – September

Park Nights is Serpentine's experimental, interdisciplinary live series in the Serpentine Pavilion. Since 2002, Park Nights has presented new work across the spectrum of art, music, film, theatre, dance, literature, philosophy, fashion and technology. This year the series features new commissions and offers a space for practitioners to engage audiences once more. Featuring dance, poetry, music and art, Park Nights 2021 reimagines what it means to come together, witness and share through live performance.

16 July	PARK NIGHT: Jota Mombaça
17 Sept	PARK NIGHT: Rhea Dillon
22 Sept	PARK NIGHT: Sophia Al Maria, Tosh Basco

The Park Nights programme is ticketed; book via serpentinegalleries.org

LISTENING TO THE CITY

Serpentine Pavilion 2021, Serpentine South Gallery Lawn and Valence Library, Barking and Dagenham

The *Listening to the City* programme engages with a set of sonic landscapes from selected London neighbourhoods, paying attention to existing and lost spaces of gathering and belonging, with particular relevance to migrant communities across the city.

This programme is a collaboration with artists Ain Bailey, Jay Bernard, collaborative publishing practice OOMK, Becontree Forever, Radio Ballad's partner New Town Culture, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham and includes sound commissions in the Pavilion, listening sessions and



performances and a programme of workshops for residents to design and create the Becontree Broadcasting Station at Valence Library in Barking and Dagenham.

A free *Listening to the City* pack developed with OOMK for 7-14 year olds will be available on-site from 24 July and distributed through Kitchen Social network.

- 24 July - 25 Aug** **Jay Bernard:** A new sound commission produced in collaboration with young people from South London.
- 26 Aug - 24 Sep** **Ain Bailey:** A new sound piece commission from new recordings and archival sounds of histories of community organising in South London.

The following events are ticketed; book via serpentinegalleries.org

- 22 July** Listening Session: Jay Bernard
- 24 July** Community Family Day
- 14 Aug** Community Family Day
- 3 Sept** Performance: Ain Bailey
- A site-specific performance in the Serpentine Pavilion
- 25 Sept** Serpentine Pavilion tunes into Becontree Broadcasting Station, for a series of artist-led listening sessions broadcast live from Valence Library in Barking and Dagenham. Part of *Listening to the City*

For press information please contact:

Rose Dempsey rosed@serpentinegalleries.org, +44 (0)7876 593 758
Nadja Coyne nadjac@serpentinegalleries.org , +44 (0)7775 792 894

Image Credit:

Jakob Kudsk Steensen, The Deep Listener launch, Serpentine Gallery, London (12 July 2019) © 2019 Fiona Hanson

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Architect Statement



The design of the Serpentine Pavilion 2021 is based on past and present places of meeting, organising and belonging in London. The shapes and forms in the Pavilion are a result of abstracting, adding, superimposing and splicing architectural elements, varying in scales of intimacy, from various locations. Materially, these places are brought together in the Pavilion through imprints, formed and shaped in cork and micro-cement, finished with different

textures. They reference the architecture of some of London's gathering spaces – places of community and cultural production that are particularly relevant to migrant communities across the city, including places of worship, markets, restaurants, bookshops and local cultural institutions. Pieces of these places physically meet in the Pavilion to form new gathering spaces.

Listening to and amplifying ways of recording personal and collective experiences – those in the everyday and those in the embodied knowledge and rituals of communities – the Pavilion foregrounds stories of lost spaces that have been significant to the construction and continuity of identities for neighbourhoods in London including Brixton, Hoxton, Hackney, Tower Hamlets, Edgware Road, Barking and Dagenham, Peckham and Notting Hill. This drawing on erased and existing communal spaces recognises architecture's role in preserving and evolving the culture of a place and the connections people have to it.

By engaging with stories of migration – the dis-placement and re-placement of people – the design symbolically folds London onto the Serpentine lawn to bring together a multitude of histories, referencing diasporas and geographies within and beyond the city. Conversely, during the Summer, fragments of the Pavilion extend into sites across London that bring other voices into conversation. This dissolving of the structure into the city physically and programmatically amplifies multiple centres that have held communities over time.

Through a specially commissioned sound programme *Listening to the City*, the Pavilion engages with a set of sonic geographies of selected neighbourhoods. The design process has also extended into thinking through more equitable, sustainable and imaginative institutional structures by creating *Support Structures for Support Structures*, a grant and fellowship programme that supports artists who work in, support and hold communities in London through their work.

Sumayya Vally, Counterspace



Engineer's Statement

Media Contact:

Rachel Brierley

+44 (0)79 2053 3198

rachel.brierley@aecom.com

2021 Serpentine Pavilion

“The coming together of abstract sculptural forms, based on buildings and places in migrant and peripheral communities of London and its environs, was Counterspace’s overarching vision for this year’s Serpentine Pavilion. As technical advisor, AECOM’s role was to bridge the gap between client and architect, developing the design whilst maintaining the balance between a prescriptive technical brief and evolving architectural intent.

“Historically the Pavilion has been a vehicle for showcasing innovative materials, and this year the team focused on taking the original aluminium and concrete-clad concept and adopting instead a range of reused and repurposed materials. Thus, as well as having social sustainability at its heart, the Pavilion has many positive environmental credentials.

“Early research and experimentation included the use of unfired bricks made from reclaimed construction waste, and biologically-derived materials such as mycelium. With the challenging programme constraints using these materials on such a large and geometrically complex scheme proved a step too far this year, but it is clear that they have great potential for use in the construction industry.

“The Pavilion’s primary structure is made entirely from steelwork salvaged from other projects. Already in storage at contractor Stage One’s yard, where all elements of the Pavilion have been prefabricated off site, this minimised the embodied carbon of the structure both in the material production and in its transportation. Furthermore, carbon-negative cork produced as a by-product from the wine industry, and micro-cement derived from lime and waste from marble production, are used in the structure’s cladding.

“Steelwork has only been used where dictated by structural requirements and sustainably sourced timber has been used in all other areas. The sculptural forms are constructed using a lightweight plywood to ensure the pavilion is simple to transport, construct, deconstruct and relocate in the future. Like previous Pavilions that have been successfully located in the UK and overseas, the future relocation and repurposing of the 2021 Pavilion is a great legacy for the Gallery and ensures the structures are all reused despite the temporary nature of the initial installation.

“The fixed budget and extremely short programme of the Pavilion project, with the design, planning approval, manufacture and construction achieved in less than 20 weeks, has always driven spontaneity, innovation and creativity. Balancing the ability of the architect to freely express their vision with practical cost, buildability, time and functional constraints, and the restrictions of working in the Royal Parks, is a key challenge that the team has embraced each year.



“Located in Kensington Gardens, the project is not permitted to install any permanent foundations or intrusions in the ground which along with the lawn must be returned to its original state after the Pavilion has been removed. However permanent electrical and water infrastructure has been installed along with below-ground rainwater attenuation and connection to adjacent soakaways. These features are reused each year, and historically the environmental impact of the Pavilion has been minimised as far as possible.

“At more than six metres high the structure is one of the tallest Pavilions in recent years, and with a footprint of approximately 350m² is also one of the largest. Unlike many temporary structures the Pavilion designs typically aspire to have an air of permanence and belonging in their setting. This year’s tall and slender superstructure requires a shallow concrete base to support the loads and to allow a seamless integration between the landscape and safely accessible gathering spaces, both being critical to the gallery’s and architect’s vision for the circa 300,000 visitors that the Pavilion typically attracts. Cut and fill volumes have been balanced, the use of concrete and reinforcement has been minimised as far as practical, and the use of industry byproducts as cement replacements further reduces the environmental impact of the development. The base materials will be carefully recycled locally to the site after the removal of the Pavilion, as they have been in previous years, and the lawn replaced perfectly as required by the Royal Parks.

“Typically, the success of the Pavilion is reliant on two or three key details or material, but the intricacies of Counterspace’s Pavilion include hundreds of different design features, which required the team to create many bespoke details. With every angle critical to the design, AECOM’s team worked closely with the architect to ensure no attention to detail was lost during design development and construction. A strong collaborative relationship was quickly established, and with Counterspace in South Africa and the team in the UK working within the constraints of COVID-19 restrictions, daily exchanges of 3D models, digital visualisations and videos of samples and mock-ups were all integral to the process.

“The design celebrates the gathering of communities, which feels so important following the past year of social restrictions. With so many technical complexities and social sustainability at its heart, this year’s project was particularly rewarding to deliver.”



PAVILION FRAGMENTS

For the first time in the history of the Serpentine Pavilion commission, four Fragments of the Pavilion are placed in partner organisations whose work has inspired its design. They are located in New Beacon Books in Finsbury Park, one of the first Black publishers and booksellers in the UK; a multi-purpose venue and community centre The Tabernacle in Notting Hill; arts centre The Albany in Deptford, and Valence Library in Barking and Dagenham. The Fragments support the everyday operations of these organisations while enabling and honouring gatherings of local communities that they have supported for years. A gesture of decentralising architecture to include a multitude of voices, the Fragments extend out into the city the principals on which the Pavilion was designed.

The Fragment at New Beacon Books offers an additional space to display books and a seat for customers to browse through them. Additionally, it can also be used as a stage for a reading, lecture or spoken-word performance. At the Albany, the fragment extends the seating area in the garden for quiet reflection and can also function as a stage for intimate performances. The Fragment at the Tabernacle offers an additional seating area for people to enjoy and share a meal from the Tabernacle restaurant. Additionally, it can be used as a stage for small performances. At Valence Library the fragment has been designed to be used flexibly, as one structure or divided into smaller sections to respond to the needs of recordings made for the new radio station *Becontree Broadcasting*. It can also become part of the daily operations of the Valence Library.

Located on the grounds of Serpentine in Kensington Gardens, the Pavilion's design is based on past and present places of meeting, organising and belonging across several London neighbourhoods significant to diasporic and cross-cultural communities. The forms in the Pavilion are a result of abstracting, superimposing and splicing elements from architectures that vary in scales of intimacy, translating the shapes of London into the Pavilion structure.



PAVILION REFERENCE MAP



Courtesy of Sumayya Vally, Counterspace

This map represents places that have inspired the design of Serpentine Pavilion 2021, which is based on past and present places of meeting, organising and belonging across several London neighbourhoods significant to diasporic and cross-cultural communities. Responding to the historical erasure and scarcity of informal community spaces across the city, the Pavilion references and pays homage to existing and erased places that have held communities over time and continue to do so today.

EAST

Centerprise

136 Kingsland High Street, E8 2NS



Centerprise was a ground-breaking community centre, publishing project, bookshop and café active between 1971 and 2012.

The Four Aces Club

12 Dalston Lane, E8 2LX

The Four Aces Club was a pioneering music space. Established in 1966, it was one of the first venues in the United Kingdom to play music by Black artists.

Feminist Library Pamphlet Collection at Bishopsgate Institute

230 Bishopsgate, EC2M 4QH

The Feminist Library Pamphlet Collection compiled over thirty-five years, offers insights to women's lives across the world. The collection also gives a comprehensive view of the Women's Liberation Movement. The collection's diversity is not limited to the subject matter – material ranges from grey unpublished literature and official reports to campaign literature and ephemera.

Theatre of Black Women

136 Kingsland High Street, E8 2NS

Theatre of Black Women was Britain's first Black women's theatre company active in the 1980s. It was founded by Bernardine Evaristo, Patricia Hilaire and Paulette Randal.

Cardinal Heenan Centre

326 High Road, IG1 1QP

Cardinal Heenan Centre is a community centre in Ilford. It provides accommodation and facilities to community groups, who in turn offer services to and for the local population.

Centre 151 – Vietnam, Laos & Cambodia supporting the community

151 Whiston Road, E2 8GU

Centre 151 is an independent charity based in the heart of Hackney, promoting culture, arts and community integration at every level. The Centre offers a wide range of activities and amenities for the benefit of local and wider communities.

East London Mosque

446-450 Commercial Road, E1 0JN

82-92 Whitechapel Road, E1 1JQ

The East London Mosque inaugurated in three adjacent houses on Commercial Road in 1940. Following successful fundraising, a purpose-built mosque was opened in 1985 on Whitechapel Road, which became home to the East London Mosque and later expanded to include the London Muslim Centre.

Brick Lane Jamme Masjid

59 Brick Lane, E1 6QL

The building now known as the Brick Lane Jamme Masjid was built in 1743-4 as the Neuve Eglise, a French Protestant chapel. In 1897 it was acquired by a Lithuanian Orthodox Jewish group known as the Mahzikei Hadas ('Strengtheners of the Faith') and converted to become the Spitalfields Great Synagogue. In the second half of the twentieth century the Jewish population dispersed to the suburbs, making way for a new wave of Muslim immigrants from eastern India and Bangladesh; the synagogue fell into disuse for a time before becoming a mosque in 1976.



Rio Cinema

107 Kingsland High Street, E8 2PB

The original building that houses the Rio was converted into one of London's very first cinemas in 1909 by Clara Ludski, who named it the Kingsland Palace of Animated Pictures. Over the years, the cinema expanded and changed owners several times. In April 1976 the Rio was established as an independent cooperative took over, and since 1979 it has been run as a not-for-profit registered charity with an elected board of local people who act as volunteer trustees.

Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives

277 Bancroft Road, E1 4DQ

Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives holds unique resources on the history of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets created from the former Metropolitan Boroughs of Bethnal Green, Poplar and Stepney.

Ridley Road Market

Ridley Road, E8 2NP

Ridley Road has been home to the market in the heart of Dalston since the end of 1880s. The market consists of around 150 stalls offering a diverse range of international produce.

Valence Library

Becontree Avenue, RM8 3HT

Valence library is a local library located in Barking and Dagenham. In 2021, it will turn into a Becontree Centenary Arts and Culture Hub to bring together a series of performances, workshops, commissions, courses and family activities in partnership with local organisations.

Jagonari Women's Centre

183-185 Whitechapel Road, E1 1DN

Over 30 years Jagonari Women's Centre offered crucial support and education for local women and represented part of the wider collective action of the Bengali community in Tower Hamlets. The building for the Centre was designed by London-based feminist architects' practice Matrix.

Island Social Club

258 Kingsland Road, E8 4DG

Island Social Club 2016 was founded in 2016 by Joseph Pilgrim and Marie Mitchell. It connects people to British Caribbean culture by investigating the diaspora experience and creating spaces to interact with the culture.

SOUTH

West Indian Gazette

250 Brixton Road, SW9 6AQ

West Indian Gazette was was a newspaper founded in by Claudia Jones in Brixton and widely considered to have been Britain's first major black newspaper. It operated between 1958-1965.

198 Contemporary Arts and Learning

198 Railton Road, SE24 0JT



Founded in 1988 as Roots Community, 198 is a contemporary art space dedicated to nurturing and supporting the careers of emerging, under-represented artists and to advancement of public interest in the visual arts.

Chaconia

26 Deptford High Street, SE8 4AF

Chaconia is take-away in London that offers traditional Caribbean cuisine, specialising in roti from Trinidad & Tobago.

Umana Yana

294 Croxted Road, SE24 9DA

Umana Yana is a restaurant that specialises in Guyanese food prepared daily by the owner.

Blueprint for All

39 Brookmill Road, SE8 4HU

Established in 1998 as The Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust, after the murder of Stephen Lawrence in 1993, Blueprint for All is a centre for community learning and social research inspiring and motivating young people. It also acts as a hub where industry, community organisations and educational institutions can exchange information on urban design and regeneration.

The Young Vic

66 The Cut, SE1 8LZ

The Young Vic is a performing arts venue, established in 1970 as an offshoot of the Old Vic. It is dedicated to supporting new directors and artists working in theatre and performance today.

Brixton Market

Electric Avenue, SW9 8JX

Brixton Market is an undercover market, which in the twentieth century become a thriving hub for the local Caribbean community. The Market began on Atlantic Road in the 1870s and subsequently spread to Brixton Road. Electric Avenue built in 1880s was one of the first streets to have electric light.

Fazl Mosque

16 Gressenhall Road, SW18 5QL

The Fazl Mosque also known as The London Mosque, is the first purpose-built mosque in London opened in 1926.

The Albany

Douglas Way, SE8 4AG

The Albany is an arts centre in the heart of Deptford, which houses two studio theatres, a performance café, rehearsal and meeting rooms and a bar. It was originally established in 1894 as The Deptford Fund to improve the plight of local people and opened its first building, the Albany Institute in 1899.

It became the Albany Empire in the 1970s, renowned as a pioneering home for radical community arts. The building was destroyed by fire in 1978, leading to its purpose-built new building in 1982.

The Feminist Library at Sojourner Truth Community Centre



161 Sumner Road, SE15 6JL

Originally known as the Women's Research and Resources Centre, the Feminist Library was set up in 1975, at the height of the Women's Liberation Movement, a time of intense political campaigning and lively collective organising. It houses a large archive collection of feminist literature, particularly Women's Liberation Movement materials dating from the late 1960s to the 1990s. The Library is also an autonomous feminist community space.

Esu Hair Salon

72 Atlantic Road, SW9 8PX

Esu Hair Salon is a hair and beauty salon in Brixton that specialises in Afro and European hair.

Dominican Hair Republic

86 Brixton Road, SW9 6BH

Dominican Hair Republic was established in London in 2012. It offers professional hair care services specialising in Afro hair and curly textured hair.

Black Cultural Archives

1 Windrush Square, SW2 1EF

Black Cultural Archives is the only national heritage centre dedicated to collecting, preserving and celebrating the histories of African and Caribbean people in Britain.

Railton Road

Railton Road, SE24

Railton Road runs between Brixton and Herne Hill in the London Borough of Lambeth. The 1981 Brixton riot started on this street. The George public house was burnt down, and a number of other buildings were damaged. The George was replaced with a Caribbean bar called Mingles in 1981, which lasted in one form or another until the 2000s. It served as an important hub for local African and Caribbean diasporic communities for radical political activity and working-class community.

Buster Mantis

3-4 Resolution Way, SE8 4NT

Buster Mantis is an independent family-run bar, eatery and creative space whose owners have lived between Jamaica and London for the last 60 years. It takes its name from the first prime minister of Jamaica, Sir Alexander Bustamante, who was instrumental in establishing the country's independence.

Roti Joupa

12 Clapham High Street, SW4 7UT

Roti Joupa is a family-run take away restaurant, that serves traditional Trinidadian cuisine.

NORTH

Shishawi

51-53 Edgware Road, W2 2HZ

Shishawi is an Egyptian restaurant and shisha lounge. It operates in a building that housed a Royal Cinema from 1938. In 1961 it was overtaken by Jacey Cinemas and Gala Film Distributors, who



focused on continental and art house films and screened erotic films towards the end of its operations. After closing in 1979, the building briefly reopened showing Arabic films and shut in 1981.

New Beacon Books

76 Stroud Green Road, N4 3EN

New Beacon Books was founded in 1966 by John La Rose as one of UK's first Black publishing houses, specialist bookshop and international book distributor. For over 50 years New Beacon Books has made available to Britain and its communities, poetry, literature, non-fiction, history and children's books from Africa, Caribbean, Asia, African America, Europe, South America and Black Britain.

George Padmore Institute

76 Stroud Green Road, N4 3EN

The George Padmore Institute set up in 1991 grew out of a community of people connected with New Beacon Books. The Institute is an archive, educational research and information centre housing materials and documents relating mainly to Black communities of Caribbean, African and Asian descent in post-war Britain and continental Europe. The Institute organises and preserves the archival materials in its care to ensure they are available to individuals, researchers, students, schools and anyone interested in the social, economic and cultural history of black British communities.

The Showroom

63 Penfold Street, NW8 8PQ

The Showroom is a contemporary art space focused on collaborative approaches to cultural production within its locality and beyond. The Showroom was established in 1983 in East London but moved from its Bonner Road site in Bethnal Green to Penfold Street near Edgware Road in 2009.

Portman Early Childhood Centre

4 Lilestone Street, NW8 8SU

The Portman Early Childhood Centre provides education, care and family support services for young children and their families living in the Church Street area of Westminster, North London. These include a nursery school, adult education classes, family support, employment services, parenting groups and workshops.

Horizon Foods

Unit 8, 14 Bull Lane, N18 1SX

Horizon Foods creates and supplies authentic Trinidadian products, specialising in roti.

Trinidad Roti Shop

27 Craven Park Road, NW10 8SE

Trinidad Roti Shop is a restaurant specialising in Trinidadian roti and traditional Caribbean cuisine.

PEER Gallery

97-99 Hoxton Street, N1 6QL



PEER is an independent arts organisation, putting down deep roots within the socially, culturally and economically diverse area of Hoxton. PEER's core ethos is to embed its activities into the local community and to offer and promote the highest quality art as being part of daily life.

Khadija's garden

71 Fanshaw Street, N1 6LA

In 2016, PEER fundraised to redesign the corner of Hoxton Street and Fanshaw Street on the Arden Estate. The project involved planting flowers, Silver Birch trees, adding seating, bins and bike parking to create a pocket park and community hub for local people to enjoy. The garden was renamed Khadija's Garden in 2017, in memory of artist Khadija Saye, who was killed in the Grenfell Tower fire on 14 June 2017.

The Islamic Cultural Centre and The London Central Mosque

Mosque Tower, Outer Circle, NW8 7RG

The London Central Mosque, also known as the Regent's Park Mosque, is an Islamic place of worship located on the edge of Regent's Park. It was designed by Sir Frederick Gibberd and completed in 1977.

WEST

Club Eleven

41 Great Windmill Street, W1D 7LU

50 Carnaby Street, W1F 9QA

Club Eleven was a nightclub operating between 1948 and 1950 which played a significant role in the emergence of the bebop jazz movement in Britain.

The Mosaic Rooms

226 Cromwell Road, SW5 0SW

A leading London based non-profit cultural organisation dedicated to supporting and promoting contemporary culture from and about the Arab world.

Stuart Hall Library

16 John Islip Street, SW1P 4JU

The Stuart Hall Library is the intellectual and social hub of Iniva, providing a context for Iniva's archive and the opportunity to study the institution's legacy preserving and promoting the work of artists of African and Asian descent born or based in the UK. The library offers a specialist collection of over 10,000 volumes on the history of contemporary visual art and culture within an international and transnational context, as well as providing critical material on issues of cultural identity. It also runs talks, workshops and events including the Research Network Programme.

Notting Hill Carnival

Notting Hill, Ladbroke Grove and Westbourne Park, W10

The Notting Hill Carnival is an annual carnival taking place on the streets of Notting Hill since 1966 over the late August bank holiday weekend. It is led by Caribbean communities and attracts



around two and a half million people annually, making it one of the world's largest street festivals, and a significant event in Black British culture.

Electric Cinema

191 Portobello Road, W11 2ED

The Electric Cinema is one of the oldest working cinemas in Britain. It opened in 1910 as one of the first buildings in Britain to be designed specifically for motion picture exhibition, and in the vicinity to be supplied with electricity. Throughout the years the cinema changed ownership several times and in 1993 became Britain's first Black cinema for a brief time. Today it is operated by Soho House.

The Gate Picturehouse

87 Notting Hill Gate, W11 3JZ

The Gate Picturehouse is a cinema, which first opened in 1911 as the Electric Palace. Since the 1950s the venue has steadily built a reputation as the place to see avant-garde and experimental cinema alongside repertory art-house programmes. With new ownership in 1974 came the change of name to The Gate. In 2003 the cinema joined the Picturehouse family and in 2004 it received a full refurbishment.

Islamic Centre of England

140 Maida Vale, W9 1QB

The Islamic Centre of England was founded in 1995 and opened officially in 1998. It provides spiritual guidance for the Muslim community at large, and also caters for the social, cultural, educational and recreational needs of members of the community – especially women and the next generation. It also focuses on disseminating authentic knowledge about Islam and to providing non-Muslims with a better and clearer understanding of Islam.

The Mangrove

8 All Saints Road, W11 1HA

The Mangrove was a Caribbean restaurant which opened in 1968 by Trinidadian community activist and civil rights campaigner Frank Crichlow. It was a meeting place for the Black community in the area, as well as for white radicals, artists, authors, and musicians. It functioned as the unofficial headquarters for the Notting Hill Carnival. It was repeatedly raided by the police on grounds of drug possession, despite a lack of evidence.

The Tabernacle

34-35 Powis Square, W11 2AY

The Tabernacle is a multi-purpose venue and community hub in the heart of Notting Hill and is the home to Notting Hill Carnival. Originally the building was founded as an Evangelical Christian church in 1869. In 1975 The Tabernacle closed as a church and was taken over by the Council and later became the Tabernacle Arts and Community Centre.

Hilltop Roti

46 Drayton Green Road, W13 8RY

Hilltop Roti was a Caribbean restaurant specialising in roti. After operating for over 5 years, it closed in 2020.

**Roti Kitchen**

6 Leeland Road, W13 9HH

Roti Kitchen is a restaurant in West London specialising in Caribbean and Indian roti.

Wall of Truth Maxilla Space

Westway Flyover, W10 5XL

The Maxilla memorial and healing space, incorporating the Wall of Truth, was created by and for members of the community in response to the great suffering after the fire at Grenfell Tower on 14 June 2017. The Wall of Truth is situated underneath the Westway flyover in direct line of site to nearby Grenfell Tower.



Serpentine Pavilion 2021 Fact Sheet

Overall site area

- 541sqm

Building footprint (exc. footpaths)

- 329sqm

Building usable, dry footprint

- 150sqm

Dimensions of Pavilion

- The shape of the roof is quasi-circular on plan with maximum radius ~ 10.5m
- Floor slab diameter ~ 20.6m
- 15 vertical forms concealing 13 no. structural columns
- Heights (from finished floor level):
 - 7.25m max overall height (for columns protruding above roof level)
 - 6.8m max overall height (for roof level)
 - 6.6m max internal ceiling height
 - 4.45m minimum internal ceiling height
 - 0.6m perimeter retaining wall height
- Pathways:
 - 3 no access pathways of ~ 1.9m width each
 - Path lengths: 14.5m, 6.3m, 5.6m
- Café:
 - Footprint (inc. storage space) ~ 8.4sqm
 - Customer facing counter plan dimensions ~ 2.5m x 0.8m

Structure and materials

- The roof supporting structure is formed from a grillage of steel, spanning between pin-ended columns and lattice columns connected directly to the substructure.
- All primary steel is repurposed from other decommissioned projects.
- Secondary framing by and large is formed from timber pallets/carcassing and is clad in plywood sheeting.



- Other materials used in the structure's cladding are: cork, produced as a by-product from the wine industry, and micro-cement derived from lime and waste from marble production.
- The Pavilion is founded on a platform of in situ concrete which uses industry by-products as cement replacements. The concrete is floated to provide the final finish. The concrete base will be recycled after the removal of the Pavilion.
- The Pavilion has three exits, one on the west side of the Pavilion and two on the south and south east sides respectively. Level access is provided for all exits so that mobility-impaired occupants are able to exit the Pavilion unaided. Travel to the nearest exit is possible within 22 m of all points of the building.

Serpentine Pavilion 2021

Project Team and Advisors

PAVILION ARCHITECT

COUNTERSPACE

Architect: Sumayya Vally

PROJECT DIRECTORS

Hans Ulrich Obrist, Artistic Director

Bettina Korek, CEO

PROJECT LEADER

Julie Burnell, Head of Construction and Buildings

PROJECT CURATOR

Natalia Grabowska, Assistant Curator

ENGINEERING AND TECHNICAL DESIGN

TECHNICAL CONSULTANT

David Glover

TECHNICAL ADVISORS



AECOM

Jon Leach

Amy Koerbel

Madalina Taylor

Alex Hammerton

Katja Leszczynska

Sam Saunders

Carlos Lopes

Adam Juster

Rob Murphy

Niamh O'Hare

Ulrich Groenewald

Artur Nowakowski

David Cheshire

Andy Baker

Natalie Harris

Anastasia Stella

TOWN PLANNING CONSULTANTS

DP9

Barnaby Collins

Zoe Smythe

CONSTRUCTION

Stage One Creative Services Ltd

Tiff Blakey

Ted Featonby

Tim Leigh

Mark Johnson

Gallowglass Health & Safety

Steve Kearney

The Technical Department

Jeremy Singleton

PROJECT ADVISORS

Michael R Bloomberg, Chairman, Serpentine Board of Trustees

Sir David Adjaye OBE, Architect and Trustee, Serpentine Board of Trustees

Professor Lesley Lokko



Andrew Scattergood, CEO

The Royal Parks

Tom Jarvis, Director, The Royal Parks

Andrew Williams, Park Manager, The Royal Parks

Hassan Lashkariani, Westminster City Council District Surveyor's Office (Building Control)

Westminster City Council Planning Office

London Fire and Emergency

Planning Authority

London Region, English Heritage

Friends of Hyde Park and

Kensington Gardens

Serpentine Pavilion 2021 Environmental Impact Statement

Source and use of materials

Throughout its history, the Serpentine Pavilion has been a showcase for innovative materials. Its environmental impact is minimised as far as possible.

A range of reused and repurposed materials have been used in the Serpentine Pavilion 2021: The Pavilion's primary structure is made entirely from steelwork salvaged from other projects already in storage at the contractor's yard (Stage One), where the Pavilion is prefabricated. This minimises the embodied carbon of the structure both in the material production and in its transportation.

Carbon-negative cork produced as a by-product from the wine industry (Amorim), and micro-cement derived from lime and waste from marble production, are used in the structure's cladding. Steelwork has only been used where dictated by structural requirements and sustainably sourced timber has been used in all other areas. The sculptural forms are constructed using a lightweight plywood to ensure the pavilion is simple to transport, construct, deconstruct and relocate in the future.

Foundations and infrastructure

Located in The Royal Park of Kensington Gardens, the project may not install any permanent foundations or intrusion in the ground in the form of piles or anchors, and the lawn must be returned to its original state after the Pavilion has been removed. However, permanent electrical



and water infrastructure has been installed along with below-ground rainwater attenuation and connection to adjacent soakaways. These features are reused each year.

This year's structure is over six metres high with a footprint of approximately 350m². It therefore requires a shallow concrete base to support the loads and to allow a seamless integration between the landscape and safely accessible gathering spaces, being critical to the gallery's approximate 300,000 visitors that the Pavilion attracts.

Cut and fill volumes have been balanced, the use of concrete and reinforcement has been minimised as far as practical, and the use of industry by-products as cement replacements further reduces the environmental impact of the development. The base materials will be carefully recycled locally to the site after the removal of the Pavilion, as they have been in previous years, and the lawn replaced as required by the Royal Parks.

Transport and relocation

Like previous Pavilions that have been successfully located in the UK and overseas, the relocation and repurposing of the Pavilions ensures the structures are all reused despite the temporary nature of the initial installation.



Serpentine Pavilions

2000 – 2019

Key Facts

Each summer the Serpentine invites an internationally renowned architect to create their first built structure in England. The Pavilion commission has become an international site for architectural experimentation and has presented projects by some of the world's greatest architects. The selection, made by Serpentine Artistic Director Hans Ulrich Obrist and Chief Executive Bettina Korek, Julie Burnell, Head of Buildings and Construction, and project's curator Natalia Grabowska together with advisors Sir David Adjaye OBE, Professor Lesley Lokko and David Glover, is led by the Serpentine's core curatorial thinking. The aim is to choose architects who consistently extend the boundaries of contemporary architectural practice and to introduce these practitioners to wider audiences. Since 2017 a group of architects have been invited to submit designs for selection, which marked a new approach to the commission.

The architectural brief is to design a 300-square-metre Pavilion that is used as a café and meeting space by day and a forum for learning, debate and entertainment at night. Since its inception, the Pavilion has become an established home for Serpentine's experimental public programmes. There is no budget for the project: it is realised through sponsorship, in-kind support and the sale of the Pavilion. The commission was first conceived by former Serpentine Galleries Director, Julia Peyton-Jones, in 2000, with Zaha Hadid, who designed the inaugural Pavilion.

- The annual Serpentine Pavilion Commission is the first initiative of its kind worldwide and has resulted in 20 temporary buildings for London.
- The Pavilions are landmark temporary structures designed by internationally renowned architects who have not yet completed a structure in the England (at the time of their invitation).
- Serpentine Pavilion architects to date: Junya Ishigami, 2019; Frida Escobedo, 2018; Francis Kéré, 2017; Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG), 2016; selgascano, 2015; Smiljan Radić, 2014; Sou Fujimoto, 2013; Herzog & de Meuron and Ai Weiwei, 2012; Peter Zumthor, 2011; Jean Nouvel, 2010; Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa of SANAA, 2009; Frank Gehry, 2008; Olafur Eliasson and Kjetil Thorsen, 2007; Rem Koolhaas and Cecil Balmond Arup, 2006; Álvaro Siza and Eduardo Souto de Moura with Cecil Balmond, Arup, 2005; MVRDV with Arup, 2004 (unrealised); Oscar Niemeyer, 2003; Toyo Ito with Arup, 2002; Daniel Libeskind



with Arup, 2001; Zaha Hadid, 2000. In 2016, the Serpentine presented four Summer Houses alongside the Serpentine Pavilion, designed by architects: Kunlé Adeyemi, Barkow Leibinger, Yona Friedman and Asif Khan

Serpentine Pavilions 2000 – 2019



Serpentine Pavilion 2019
Designed by Junya Ishigami

This is one of the most engaging and original Serpentine pavilions in the institution's two-decade history, perhaps even the best. A wonderful, ridiculous roof and an illustration of how this apparently light, seemingly stroll-in-the-park format just keeps giving.

The Financial Times



Serpentine Pavilion 2018
Designed by Frida Escobedo

In recent years the Serpentine Pavilion has been an important stepping stone for young architects: half calling card, half official seal of approval. But few have deployed such an impressive, powerful palette of chiaroscuro and ephemerality. It is to be hoped that it brings her the recognition and opportunity she deserves.

The Times



Serpentine Pavilion 2017
Designed by Francis Kéré

It is an enigmatically crafted poem to the architect's homeland. But, at a difficult time for the capital, it also forms a vibrant architectural lens through which we can reaffirm the cultural internationalism that is central to London's enduring character and spirit.

Building Design



Serpentine Pavilion 2016
Designed by Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG)

One of the most compelling contributions to the series so far. One-thousand eight-hundred and two of these specially developed units have been stacked together, lending the Pavilion's billowing surfaces an elegantly pixelated effect.

The Telegraph



Serpentine Pavilion 2015
Designed by selgascano

The playful plastic structure heading for the Serpentine will bring a welcome dose of mischief, and a secret stained-glass corridor, to London...it looks as if an exotic caterpillar might have nibbled on a magic mushroom before spinning its chrysalis.

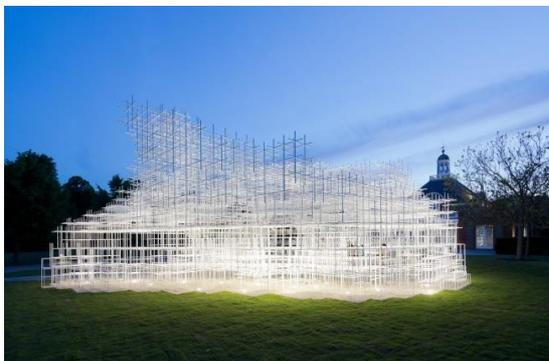
The Guardian



Serpentine Pavilion 2014
Designed by Smiljan Radić

The pavilion has become a quintessential part of the London summer scene, one of the rare moments when architecture is presented, unmediated, to a public who seem consistently – and increasingly – interested.

Financial Times



Serpentine Pavilion 2013
Designed by Sou Fujimoto

His ultra-delicate 'steel cloud' of slender white-painted rods, acrylic and glass is one of the best examples for years.

RIBA Journal



Serpentine Pavilion 2012
Designed by Herzog & de Meuron and
Ai Weiwei

They have created what...turns out to be one of the most compelling, most eccentric and most engaging Pavilions so far...Its theatricality makes it a stunning set, as well as a clever meditation on memory (and) on the consumption of the architectural image.



Serpentine Pavilion 2011
Designed by Peter Zumthor

At the heart of Peter Zumthor's Pavilion was a garden he hoped would inspire visitors to become observers. Zumthor said his design aimed, "to help its audience take the time to relax, to observe and then, perhaps, start to talk again.
Dezeen



Serpentine Pavilion 2010
Designed by Jean Nouvel

Never mind Wimbledon, Ascot or Glyndebourne, it's the annual Serpentine Pavilion that tells you it's summer season in the art world. This year's architectural incumbent is Jean Nouvel and a spiffing strawberry-red confection.
Time Out



Serpentine Pavilion 2009
Designed by Kazuyo Sejima and
Ryue Nishizawa of SANAA

The Serpentine Gallery really comes into its own in the summer, with its annual architectural extravaganza, a temporary pavilion. This year's floating aluminium roof curves its beautiful way through the trees and shrubs on the site, looking like a meandering stream or a trail of smoke.
Wall Street Journal



Serpentine Pavilion 2008
Designed by Frank Gehry

Having commissioned such figures as Rem Koolhaas, Zaha Hadid and Daniel Libeskind in years past, Gehry's name completes a straight flush of the most feted international architects of the day.

Daily Telegraph



Serpentine Pavilion 2007
Designed by Olafur Eliasson and Kjetil Thorsen

The seventh Serpentine Gallery Pavilion is a delightful and beautifully thought-out game. Often, in recent decades, art has been applied to architecture like a form of makeup. The Serpentine Gallery must be applauded for joining in this high game and nurturing a pavilion that deserves to be popular, and with its "laboratories", truly creative.

The Guardian



Serpentine Pavilion 2006
Rem Koolhaas with Cecil Balmond – Arup

A helium roof that rises and falls with the weather? Rem Koolhaas's Serpentine Pavilion is a joyous extravagance.

The Guardian



Serpentine Pavilion 2005

Álvaro Siza and Eduardo Souto de Moura with Cecil Balmond – Arup

The temporary pavilion has become unmissable, a rare opportunity to view the work of the finest international architects at first hand. This is how architecture should be exhibited and remembered. See it, and Siza's exquisite space will stay with you.

Financial Times



Serpentine Pavilion 2003

Designed by Oscar Niemeyer

The Pavilion is also Niemeyer's first work in this country, making amends for the loss of examples of others from the great period to which he belongs. This is a beautiful building, a modern architectural gem.

The Times



Serpentine Pavilion 2002

Designed by Toyo Ito with Arup

Daring, provocative, inspired... London's Serpentine Gallery has won rave reviews for its previous temporary summer pavilions... this year's design, by leading Japanese architect Toyo Ito, will be no exception.

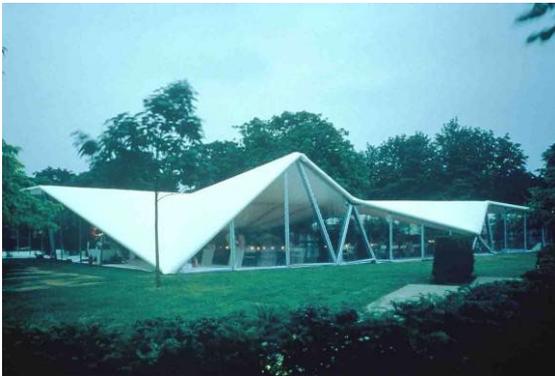
The Independent



Serpentine Pavilion 2001
Designed by Daniel Libeskind with Arup

Architect Daniel Libeskind was commissioned to create this amazing, folded aluminium-clad structure on the Serpentine Gallery's lawn.

Evening Standard



Serpentine Pavilion 2000
Designed by Zaha Hadid

The first pavilion was created to shelter a fundraising dinner to celebrate the gallery's 30th anniversary. Its aim was to "radically reinvent the accepted idea of a marquee". A folded triangulated structure rose and fell to define different internal spaces and vary the degree of openness. Inside were ranks of angular tables, in shades graded from pale to dark grey.

The Observer



Serpentine Pavilion 2021 Sponsors and Supporters

The Serpentine Pavilion is, both artistically and financially, a hugely ambitious undertaking. The construction and realisation of the Pavilion relies entirely on the support of a significant group of companies and individuals.

Serpentine Pavilion 2021 supported by

Goldman Sachs

The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc. is a leading global investment banking, securities and investment management firm that provides a wide range of financial services to a substantial and diversified client base that includes corporations, financial institutions, governments and individuals. Founded in 1869, the firm is headquartered in New York and maintains offices in all major financial centres around the world.

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Therme Group™ is a leading global wellbeing provider designing, constructing, and operating the world's largest wellbeing facilities. Its contemporary urban development proposition incorporates environmental concepts to re-integrate nature into everyday life. Therme Group's facilities combine its innovative sustainable technologies with human-oriented design. Drawing upon the tradition of ancient thermal baths, which were designed to be healing, social, and egalitarian settings, Therme Group builds environments that nurture the mind and body for visitors of all ages and demographics, creating healthy and resilient communities. Further information: thermegroup.com

Technical Consultant

David Glover

David Glover brings a unique continuity and design expertise to this year's Serpentine Pavilion. Having worked on 12 of the last 15 Pavilions, as well as the 2016 Summer Houses, Glover has a



singular understanding of how to combine the unique briefs of Serpentine and The Royal Parks in order to deliver an innovative project using new material and construction techniques that challenge the built environment. This year's Pavilion has focused on the use of environmental materials while delivering an exceptional Pavilion with a low carbon footprint.

Technical Advisors



AECOM delivers professional services throughout the project lifecycle for some of the world's most exciting developments and projects, including the Serpentine Pavilion for the eighth year running. On projects spanning transportation, buildings, water, energy and the environment, our public- and private-sector clients trust us to solve their most complex challenges. Our teams are driven by a common purpose to deliver a better world through our unrivalled technical expertise and innovation, a culture of equity, diversity and inclusion, and a commitment to environmental, social and governance priorities. AECOM is a Fortune 500 firm and its Professional Services business had revenue of \$13.2 billion in fiscal year 2020. See how we deliver what others can only imagine at aecom.com and [@AECOM](https://twitter.com/AECOM).

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STAGE ONE

Stage One is a company that serves the creative industry sector. They use digital manufacturing processes to create structures, artworks, environments and engineering that few others can deliver. Their value comes from taking a creative concept and developing it through the application of design consultancy, technical engineering and smart manufacturing processes. In particular they are expert at delivering projects with impossible timelines. As an example the construction of the Pavilion is completed in forty-two days. Stage One is perhaps best known for creating the Olympic Cauldron at the 2012 Olympic Games and The Hive, the UK Pavilion at the Milan Expo in 2015. Stage One is proud to be associated with the series of Serpentine Pavilions and has constructed every Serpentine Pavilion since 2009.

More information on the company can be found at www.stageone.co.uk or by contacting Tim Leigh, Managing Director, tim.leigh@stageone.co.uk



Gold Sponsors



Weil is a leader in the marketplace for sophisticated, international legal services and acts for many of the most successful companies in the world in their high-stakes matters and transactions. Founded in 1931, the firm has more than 1,100 lawyers across the US, Europe and Asia. weil.com

Silver Sponsors



Gallowglass Health & Safety provides consultancy on health and safety management for major public events and at prominent venues and locations. The company has been a preferred supplier to the Serpentine for nearly 10 years and was closely involved with the opening of the Serpentine Sackler Gallery in 2013.

GGH&S works in close partnership with the Serpentine Galleries, liaising between the Royal Parks, the Serpentine Galleries and their clients. In addition to providing a secure and safe environment for visitors and people working at the venue before, during and after events, GGH&S monitors all aspects of technical production. gallowglasshs.com

Bronze Sponsors



Corticeira Amorim is the world's largest cork processing group. Founded in 1870, the company currently has dozens of business units distributed across five continents, exporting to more than 100 countries. With strong sustainability credentials and a negative carbon footprint, Corticeira Amorim provides a set of cork solutions and applications to some of the world's most technological and disruptive industries, such as aerospace, automobile, construction, sports, energy, interior design, wines, sparkling and spirits. Corticeira Amorim is proud to collaborate with the Serpentine Galleries and to present its sustainable cork solutions at the Serpentine Summer Pavilion 2021, conceived by Sumayya Vally, Counterspace Studio.



DP9 is a leading town planning advisory practice, specialising in London. It advises on all types of development, ranging from Battersea Power Station and City towers to arts-based projects such as Tate Modern and the Serpentine Sackler Gallery. In particular, DP9 supports the use of good design to create better places. DP9 has advised on all but the first Pavilion projects and advises the Serpentine on other property matters.

Graham Foundation

Founded in 1956, the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts fosters the development and exchange of diverse and challenging ideas about architecture and its role in the arts, culture, and society.



SDS designs, engineers, manufactures and installs water management systems for sustainable infrastructure. The company is the UK's leader in sustainable drainage systems and has an extensive product range comprising integrated solutions for flood prevention, drought mitigation and pollution control. It is also a leading developer of innovative new systems that utilise smart, Internet-of-Things- enabled, technology to deliver autonomous operation and control. Every SDS solution is created to protect the water environment effectively and efficiently and to help customers, both in the UK and around the world, to treat, store and, wherever possible, reuse surface water.



the **technical** department

The Technical Department are pleased to be a Bronze Level Sponsor and the electrical services provider, for the Serpentine Pavilion 2021. We are excited to be working with Sumayya Vally, Counterspace, and Stage One. As a specialist electrical contractor, we provide tailor-made power solutions through our bespoke distribution systems which are built specifically to our client's requirements. This cost-effective solution provides a high level of flexibility to the power supply



and equipment supplied on each of our projects. In addition, we have the capability to install complex solutions for long-term or permanent installs.

thetechnicaldepartment.com



CREATIONS

About L Acoustics Creations and L-ISA Immersive Hyperreal Sound

Works by sound artists are presented in L-ISA Immersive Hyperreal Sound, a groundbreaking spatial audio technology by L-Acoustics, the world leader in premium professional audio. L-ISA enables artists to harness the vibrant emotional and sensorial impact of sound, involving visitors more deeply in immersive experiences. L-Acoustics Creations, dedicated to exceptional sound in residential and architectural environments, are proud to collaborate with Serpentine Galleries to elevate the listening experience, placing audio technology in the service of pioneering contemporary art and architecture. Learn more at l-acoustics-creations.com and l-isa-immersive.com

outset.

Established in 2003, Outset is the leading international, independent charity supporting innovative art projects that engage the widest possible audiences. With a presence in nine countries, Outset is recognised for creating influential models of responsive arts philanthropy with its innovative public-private initiatives. The charity was the first to introduce a pioneering paradigm of cross-institution collective patronage to fund challenging artistic projects in the UK, and now operates on a global scale. Outset is powered by inspiration, driven by expertise, renowned for its engagement, and focused on effective energy and ideas, with a commitment to being there at the outset of impactful change.

Serpentine supporters

And those who wish to remain anonymous

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For Immediate Release

Press Release

Media Contact:

Rachel Brierley
+44 (0)79 2053 3198
rachel.brierley@aecom.com

AECOM engineers its eighth Pavilion at the Serpentine Galleries

LONDON (June 08, 2021) — AECOM, the world’s premier infrastructure consulting firm, has delivered its eighth Pavilion project for the Serpentine Galleries in London, this year providing technical expertise for Johannesburg-based architectural studio Counterspace’s Serpentine Pavilion.

Working closely with the architect, Serpentine Galleries, the project’s contractor Stage One and technical advisor David Glover, AECOM has realised Counterspace’s vision of bringing together abstract forms from migrant and peripheral community spaces around London, creating a high-quality visitor attraction for people to enjoy this summer. AECOM provided the full range of engineering and technical advisory services.

The pavilion is constructed using a range of reused and repurposed materials. The primary structure is made entirely from steelwork salvaged from other projects. Already in storage at contractor Stage One’s yard where all elements of the Pavilion are prefabricated off site, this minimised the embodied carbon of the structure both in material production and transportation. Cork produced as a by-product from the wine industry and micro-cement derived from lime and waste from marble production are used in the structure’s cladding. This innovative material selection, combined with the use of sustainably sourced timber in the secondary structures, results in a Pavilion build that is carbon-negative.

At more than six metres high the structure is one of the tallest Pavilions in recent years and with a footprint of approximately 350m², it is also one of the largest. With every angle critical to the design, AECOM’s team worked closely with the architect to ensure no attention to detail was lost during development and construction. Many of the engineering elements and structural supports are bespoke to maintain the integrity of Counterspace’s highly sculptural design. A strong collaborative relationship was quickly established. With Counterspace in South Africa and the team in the UK working within the constraints of COVID-19 restrictions, daily exchanges of 3D models, digital visualisations and videos of samples and mock-ups were all integral to the design development.

Madalina Taylor, Senior Engineer, AECOM, said: “Typically, the success of the pavilion is reliant on perhaps two or three key details, but the intricacies of Counterspace’s Pavilion includes hundreds of different design features, which required us to create a lot of bespoke details. With plenty of



technical complexities and social sustainability at its heart, this year's project was particularly rewarding to deliver. The design celebrates gathering spaces, which feels so important following the past year of social restrictions. We can't wait to see the Pavilion become a place for reconnecting this summer."

The Serpentine Pavilion architectural commission showcases new temporary buildings by international architects. Zaha Hadid was the first architect selected to present her design in 2000. This year marks the Serpentine Galleries' 20th Pavilion, which is open to the public from June to October and will host live programmes and events.

About AECOM

AECOM is the world's premier infrastructure consulting firm, delivering professional services throughout the project lifecycle – from planning, design and engineering to programme and construction management. On projects spanning transportation, buildings, water, energy and the environment, our public- and private-sector clients trust us to solve their most complex challenges. Our teams are driven by a common purpose to deliver a better world through our unrivalled technical expertise and innovation, a culture of equity, diversity and inclusion, and a commitment to environmental, social and governance priorities. AECOM is a Fortune 500 firm and its Professional Services business had revenue of \$13.2 billion in fiscal year 2020. See how we deliver what others can only imagine at [aecom.com](https://www.aecom.com) and [@AECOM](https://twitter.com/AECOM).



THERME ART



Serpentine Pavilion 2021 designed by Sumayya Vally, Counterspace, Design Render, Exterior View © Counterspace

Therme Group Announces Acquisition of the 2021 Serpentine Pavilion by Sumayya Vally, director of Johannesburg-based Studio Counterspace

Marks Third Consecutive Year in Support of the Renowned Architecture Programme

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

London, 8 June 2021 – Therme Group has acquired the 2021 Serpentine Pavilion designed by Sumayya Vally, Counterspace, marking the wellbeing leader's third consecutive year in partnership with the Serpentine to support its annual architecture programme.



The move follows Therme Group's acquisitions of 2019 and 2018 Pavilions designed by Junya Ishigami and Frida Escobedo, respectively, and highlights the many shared values connecting Therme Group's holistic vision of urban planning and the pioneering architecture programme. For Therme Group, the Serpentine Pavilion programme represents a paradigm of creative design – a template for a new kind of city founded on creativity, inclusion and sustainability.

Therme Group's acquisition of the 2021 Pavilion is part a growing portfolio of creative partnerships and joint ventures led by its international cultural initiative Therme Art, which has worked with Serpentine since 2018. The productive collaboration is founded in a shared ambition to work across disciplines and to forge new alliances beyond art.

Speaking on its acquisition of the Counterspace Pavilion, Dr Robert C. Hanea Therme Group's Founder and CEO said:

“Counterspace's response to this year's Serpentine Pavilion commission reflects the critical need we see today for architecture to transition into a grassroots approach that can empower diverse communities and forms of personal expression. Sumayya Vally's ability to imbue projects with candid humanitarian values is truly inspiring. We look forward to seeing the pavilion grow into a social sculpture over the summer and are very proud to partner with the Serpentine in support of this fantastic architectural programme now again in the third consecutive year.”

The Pavilion was designed to reference places of meeting, organizing and belonging that are particularly relevant to migrant communities in London. The forms in the Pavilion are a result of abstracting, superimposing and splicing architectural elements, varying in scales of intimacy, from various locations, translating the shapes of London into the Pavilion structure in Kensington Gardens. During the summer, fragments of the Pavilion will be installed in neighbourhoods across the city, to support and facilitate gatherings and impromptu interactions, to honour the history of places which have held communities over time. A specially commissioned sound programme for the Pavilion, *Listening to the City*, will feature work by artists including Ain Bailey and Jay Bernard, connecting visitors to the stories and sounds of lost spaces across London.

Speaking about Sumayya's architectural concept, Mikolaj Sekutowicz, CEO and Co-Founder of Therme Art, commented:

“Having in our mind the urban wellbeing solution that our company is creating for Manchester, we are looking at the shining example of Sumayya Vally's architecture of ideas contrary to an architecture of stones. We need this complex vision of architecture, that is not creating monuments but communities, networked ideas and urban resonances for the future of our cities to thrive.”

Counterspace's director Sumayya Vally, who founded the studio in Johannesburg in 2015, is the youngest architect to design the Serpentine's summer Pavilion. She has stated:



“I extend my warmest thanks to Therme for their support of the Serpentine Pavilion 2021 and I look forward to seeing it in its new home. Every building is just an idea until a team comes together to build it. We are very pleased to have Therme on our Pavilion team this year.”

Hans Ulrich Obrist, Artistic Director of the Serpentine, has commented on the renewed partnership between the Serpentine and Therme Group with the following words:

“We are so grateful to Therme Art for their continued support of the Serpentine Pavilion, which not only allows us to realise this ambitious project this summer, it also ensures the Pavilion has a future beyond its time in Kensington Gardens.”

Therme Art is the innovative arts and culture initiative set up by Therme Group to support the art community and develop creative solutions for integration within the ambitious urban design vision of Therme Group. This multidisciplinary work is complemented by the ongoing Wellbeing Culture Forum, a series of talks which have been presented in cooperation with partners including the British Council, Design Miami/, Manchester International Festival and the Serpentine.

In June, Therme Art will partner with the Serpentine to realise a special edition of the Wellbeing Culture Forum to mark the unveiling of the Serpentine Pavilion 2021. This will follow on from an extensive programme of mixed reality discussions exploring ideas of resilience, symbiosis and public space, realised during the opening of the 17th International Architecture Festival in Venice from 21–23 May.

Wellbeing innovator Therme Group is currently rolling out its global development strategy with projects under development in the United Kingdom, mainland Europe, North America and Asia Pacific. Work is scheduled to begin on the c. £250 million Therme Manchester later this year.

Press Contact

press@therme.one
therme.art

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Sumayya Vally, Counterspace

Sumayya’s design, research and pedagogical practice is searching for expression for hybrid identities and contested territories. Her work is often forensic, and draws on the aural, performance, the supernatural, the wayward and the overlooked as generative places of history and work.

Vally is the principal of Counterspace, the collaborative architectural studio based between Johannesburg and London, in search of design expression and form particularly for the continent.



The practice occupies a space between the functional and the speculative; pedagogy and praxis; simultaneously describing cities and their histories and futures and imagining them. An exploration into evolving methods of collaborative practice and research, Sumayya's practice operates adjacent to the academy, having formatively led Unit 12 (a master's studio) at the Graduate School of Architecture for six years.

A TIME100 Next List honouree and designer of the 20th Serpentine Pavilion (2020/2021), Vally is the youngest architect to be commissioned for the internationally renowned architecture programme.

Serpentine

Championing new ideas in contemporary art since 1970, the Serpentine has presented pioneering exhibitions for half a century, from a wide range of emerging practitioners to the most internationally recognised artists of our time. Across two sites only 5 minutes apart, in London's Kensington Gardens, the Serpentine presents a year-round, free programme of exhibitions, education, live events and technological innovation, in the park and beyond. Proud to maintain free access for all visitors, thanks to its unique location the Serpentine reaches an exceptionally broad audience and maintains a deep connection with its local community. Further information: serpentinegalleries.org

Therme Art

Therme Art is the cultural incubator of Therme Group. Responsible for the outreach to the creative communities, it curates forums between culture, science and society and works with internationally renowned artists and architects, as well as emerging talents, to commission and develop site-specific artistic projects that challenge the limitations of conventional exhibition spaces and redefine contemporary art viewing. Therme Art provides the resources and means required to fulfil artists' visions which cannot be realised in galleries or museums, regardless of their complexity, production, installation, and long-term maintenance. Further information: therme.art

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SERPENTINE



INTERVIEW WITH SUMAYYA VALLY

SIR DAVID ADJAYE OBE

NATALIA GRABOWSKA

HANS ULRICH OBRIST

Hans Ulrich Obrist: I want to begin at the beginning and ask you about how you came to architecture or how architecture came to you? Was there a sudden awakening, an epiphany, or was it a gradual process?

Sumayya Vally: I was born and raised in a small Apartheid township called Laudium, but I spent much of my childhood in my grandfather's stores on Ntemi Piliso Street in the heart of Johannesburg. Many South Africans don't have the opportunity to interact with worlds outside of their own – spaces were, and still are, very much segregated. I think that walking the streets in the city – especially walking to the Joburg Library – let me into worlds that I wouldn't have seen otherwise. Architecture came to me through the city and through fiction. I've always had an interest in finding and creating worlds, and in seeing what I truly consider architecture – the fabric of the city – as interesting starting points from which to imagine new worlds. It's very gradual, but I always had this desire to work in the city and to have a practice that brings together different parts of the city into the same world.

Joburg is rough, gritty, ruthless and fast in the nicest possible ways and the meanest possible ways. It's a burden and opportunity at the same time. Its tensions, histories, legacies of segregation and exclusion, mean that at every turn there's work to do. But it's also a vastly and vibrantly creative world of inspiration, in the other disciplines, not in architecture. There's a sense of something other – other stories, other magic, another soul – that's waiting to be unlocked and translated into form.

HUO: Can you tell us about the beginnings of Counterspace?

SV: I felt very deeply that there was a lack of response from architecture to what's actually happening in the city. Counterspace was born out of this dissatisfaction – out of a frustration with



the complicity of the architectural profession and canon in our context, in perpetuating inherited and imposed narratives and forms. I really wanted to make work that troubles and counters these constructed narratives about 'lack' on the African continent – I believe that here, in the fringes and the margins, we can find what truly Johannesburg and African design languages can look like, and I wanted to work with and for this idea.

David Adjaye: What do you mean when you say there's no inspiration in Joburg for architecture? Joburg is full of architecture! It's one of the most urban cities in the continent. It was, of course, designed as an Apartheid city, but there's a ton of architecture.

SV: Sure, and it is a great city, but a lot of it is an architecture inherited from elsewhere – we don't really have architecture that has truly had a chance to develop from the mountains of Indigenous knowledge and practices that have been there all along. The city is effectively built against, instead of and on top of other forms.

DA: Can you talk about the philosophy of your practice? The way you work is unconventional. How do you practice? How do you work? How's the studio formed? Where are you based? Do you come together? Do you pull apart? Is it like a band?

SV: I've never been in a band, but I can imagine that there are some real similarities, in working creatively with a small group of tightly knit friends – more than colleagues, or perhaps a different, special kind of family. Pulling apart and coming together is an important part of any creative collaboration. Over time, the structure of Counterspace has evolved – I believe very much in fluid and agile structures of collaboration and collectivity.

At the moment, my practice is based in Braamfontein, Johannesburg. I work in a collaborative studio (the space is called Counterparts) with urban designers, exhibition designers, artists, landscape architects, writers and researchers. This platform also extends 'roving space' to the Graduate School of Architecture, where several of us also teach – so there are often staff and students in the space too. This isn't a co-working space, but a collaborative one – we came together consciously with the intent to share work, resources and ideas about the city. We often host exhibitions, and public events in the space.

I also share a tiny shopfront satellite space with a collaborator (this space is called Backstory), just up the road from our studio – in a much more bustling part of Braamfontein – where we host public engagement events and 'salons'. We invite other creatives, students and spatial practitioners (archaeologists, geographers, historians, etc.) to discuss and produce ideas together.



Sometimes we have exhibitions, or we screen films into the adjacent alleyway. In the beginning, I obtained the use of our spaces through skills-exchange. I designed for people and got free rent in return. I see these spaces as projects in themselves.

Natalia Grabowska: Your practice is very distinct from a traditional architecture studio, where the focus is on designing a building or an urban space. Right from the beginning, you started with a very different approach. Can you tell us more about it?

SV: As a young architect in Africa, I think it's important to work at many speeds and in many streams simultaneously, toward the project of finding and forging African design languages. We need to be working at the slow pace of a generational project – researching, finding and forging the archive – but also at the really gutsy pace of making things quickly. I really believe that if we look deeply at our own context, we'll find new architectures waiting to happen. This is the work of research.

Our first project at Counterspace (at the 2015 Chicago Biennial) followed on from my Master's thesis research on the toxic-mine-waste buffer-zones in Johannesburg, where I worked on documenting other stories, other lives and other inhabitations. They tell the story of Joburg in many different archaeologies – geological, historical, mythical, economic, chemical, environmental and social. This has popped up in different projects over the years: in our ongoing material research into sustainable land remediation, in the reading of buffer-zones as archives of the city's history, in our *Folded Skies* project, which is an attempt at capturing Joburg light and iridescent dust. That work was young, but it was forensic, narrative, atmospheric, things I'm still very interested in working with.

I suppose it starts with negotiation, listening – finding that architecture (or space-making or whatever you want to call it) is in everyone. Teaching is probably one of the most important things missing from the profession. Since clients and architects work together, certainly the architect should, to some degree be teaching the client. This is historically done through styles of architecture, which is very limiting and always retrogressive because it can only look back at a catalogue of easily recognisable architectures. In places like Johannesburg, we don't have the luxury to be regressive. To be progressive is to assume that teaching is about guiding someone to find architecture and to do that, you need an esoteric process of discovery, transcription, translation, negotiation and a fair dose of patience from everyone involved.

HUO: The question of the practice being unusual, leads us on to the fact that you've done so many different things. Your practice is not only designing buildings. You've done sculptural



installations (*Folded Skies*, 2018), curation, choreography and design (*Conversation Rooms*, 2019), furniture, film (*An Inventory of Feminist Upheaval*, 2019), research projects (*Lost & Found: Phantoms of Spaces and Times*, 2015). You've designed all kinds of community spaces and convening spaces. You've designed a mosque. You've designed things that are not there, thinking about the aesthetics of absence. You also teach and run workshops. It's like a super strength here. Can you talk us through these different aspects to understand more about the practice?

SV: Joburg is very unequal by design – this is perpetuated from the macro scale of the city to the absolutely microscopic scales of how things work. This was the work of planning and architecture, at every scale from the segregative logics of public space down to the ways in which toxicity and radioactivity is absorbed by the city's inhabitants. An architect doesn't just make buildings; an architect makes scenarios, sensations, situations.

Just as there's a need to practice at different speeds there's also a need to practice in different ways – events, dialogue, discourse, publishing are very much a part of the practice. Of course, to a degree, everyone's practice has this, but what's particularly important is what we can say about the platforms and spaces that architecture creates through these projects. The *Conversation Rooms* project, for example, had an interest in reconfiguring platforms for discussion – power structures are in the things we overlook – in how we sit together, how we index and archive, how we name things, where we look for things. We haven't even begun to imagine what architecture for our context can be. I think there's design language waiting to be found in everything around us, and the experimentation with different media, methods and outputs is an attempt at a deep engagement with searching for more relevant design language for my context.

DA: There are nearly thirteen things that you're doing, and you've just started. It is clear that you want to create a range, but it seems as if you want to be working with the entire typology of form-making. What is your attitude to form-making?

SV: Form-making has a variety of different consequences depending on the pace and longevity of the form. I would call my attitude careful, which is not to say tentative, but I do try to take a lot of care, to be full of care.

DA: I find what is most interesting about your context is that the construction of Joburg, which is 150 years or so old, is a particular idea of the garden suburbs and modernity, a sort of modern city. It was constructed in the service of segregation, as a device for division, so it represents the dark side of modernism. If there's a light side of social liberty and inclusion,



there's the dark side too. You grew up in the dark side, as I call it. And from the dark side, you want to produce something else. To me, this is what underpins your desire to work – almost schizophrenically – across so many media. This idea of wanting to produce something that we could call African architecture – let's talk about that.

SV: There are histories of African vernacular that are incredibly rich and deep sources of inspiration for me, and then there's a vacuum. Our continent was ravaged, and architecture wasn't allowed to develop from the soul of its place. What I'm interested in now is looking at all the things architecture from my context has to say and how we can start saying them. Johannesburg is a place of supreme vibrancy, creativity and resourcefulness. It's the sum of so many socio-economic forces and histories. At the same time, it's a place of deep inequalities, violent silencing and extreme socio-economic disparity. This tension is a call to work – it forces one to think differently about what work is, can be, and should be.

I also think that the idea of working schizophrenically is really useful. Perhaps to be schizophrenic is to be deeply and meaningfully divided, which is necessary to be able to grow different parts of ourselves and connect to and engage with a variety of forces from the outside. It's quite spatial – if architecture could be said to also be about the making of spaces of separation, of security, then safe spaces could be made in a divided self to grow and entertain diverse, even conflicting, ideas of practice. That in turn allows me to imagine myself as highly connected to the environment, which is diverse – and to connect to diversity, to many different things.

NG: *Conversation Rooms* (2019) is a good example that also shows what you're aiming to do with the Pavilion commission – which is to connect people, to bring them together. It's very clear that in your practice, whatever you do and in whatever form, it's about gathering and integrating people.

HUO: *ETANowNow* (2019) is the same – you're bringing people together, you're encouraging interactions.

SV: Everything I look at is through the lens of a fundamental interest in territory, identity, belonging and trying to understand architecture beyond that which is built. Architecture is complicit in separating, othering, excluding, but it can also be a force for the opposite. Architects make walls, but we also make doors. The architecture that moves me most is architecture that makes an offering about the human condition and about people – that facilitates and has something to say about our relationships to each other, and our



relationships to territory and place. In the Pavilion, for example, sharing and exchange of pieces brings people, places and ideas together on the same platform and the same realm. It's really important for me that the project becomes truly collaborative with parts of London and that the people and places who inspire the project get to take ownership of it.

Now, more than ever, spaces of gathering need to be valued – they're sacred. Discourse, dialogues, publishing are all integral forms of practice too, and they're part of the fabric we have to work with in bringing people together and sharing beliefs, ideas – spaces to share and to differ.

DA: Is that in order to make a visible archive?

SV: Yes – I think all work is a form of archive, it perpetuates a set of politics – conscious or subconscious, implicit or explicit. Making architecture is also about telling stories. In my context, some stories are louder, more visible than others. And others are silenced or suppressed. In raising these as questions, and thinking through methods, means and media, I'm constantly questioning the violences and silences within the architectural canon, and suggesting where we might find alternative and counter-archives, and how different forms of media, publishing and dissemination can have an impact on what we understand as architectural truths. If the principle of truth is attached to visibility (if 'seeing is believing') then the visibility of the archive is essential – and that's an architectural question. So much of architectural production is about bringing the unseen (the future) into the vision of the present (the drawing or representation) so that it can be made.

DA: Do you feel an urgency? Is that what the production is about?

SV: I have no choice but to respond to everything around us, and there's so much that's urgent about our world right now – social justice, the climate crisis, a global exploitation of resources, forces of capitalism, environmental racism and degradation – all the consequences of previous generations are now my generation's conditions to live in, and to work with. I absolutely feel an urgency – ours is a project for a generation, and we as a generation must get it going now.



DA: Is this also to do with the fact that you're a young architect – that you're reaching out for what you can do, and making that as important as making a building?

SV: I absolutely do whatever comes, whatever I can find – and I want to use these as experiments for form-finding; but I also think it's important to work at many different scales and many forms. I see every project – instant or endless – as a way to find architectural languages from other sources. I think architecture in my context can benefit from looking at how other forces in the city express identity – in the performative, the aural, the temporal, the ritual.

DA: Can you tell us about your design for Brixton Mosque in Johannesburg, which is your only proposition for a building?

SV: It's a project for the transformation of an old NG kerk (Dutch-reformed church) which is currently used as a mosque by a very diverse community of migrants from across Africa, Europe and Asia – a really varied array of cultures, ethnicities and practices. The building is still recognised as historically significant in the urban fabric – and I really wanted to retain and respect its current identity, but articulate its hybridity in bringing together different eras, cultures, beliefs and languages.

DA: The idea of the mosque and the hybridisation of the old building with a complicated history and a new signifier seems to also be at the base of the work. How does that work?

SV: I really loved the symbolic notion of these crossings, of one form accommodating another use. So, I started to think about this through the actual architecture. How can it literally accommodate and express a coming together? How can we house several recognisable separate identities in one? Where do we articulate them? Where do we blur them? The first major intervention is a street-frontage that acts as a public foyer, inviting anyone (of any belief system) from the street to sit inside the archways. These are designed through a superimposition of the existing geometries and Islamic geometries to create a hybrid arch. The second major intervention is a simple beam of light that shines through the clock-tower five times a day at prayer time. A performative minaret.

HUO: It's interesting that both of you are currently working on places of worship – David, you're working on a cathedral in Ghana and you, Sumayya, on a mosque. I think that's not a coincidence – in this technological age, there are more and more connections between technology and spirituality. And in both cases, these aren't spaces for one specific religion, they're multiple. What do you think it is right now? Why are you both designing religious spaces?



DA: I think that fundamentally the continent is at a transitory place. On one hand, it's absorbing accepted wisdoms about how modern religion can articulate itself, while at the same time, it's trying to grapple with its own identity within that. It's rejecting and accepting, it's saying, okay, there's this model called collective social faith, and it's come as a result of a colonial residue, but the social context is trying to grapple with how it's now upscaling from its indigenous small faiths through the lens of this device to a larger national idea of faith. In my work, I'm very interested in this transformation that's happening as a society. For me, that's when architecture is required because architecture creates the stage for that belief that you've hybridised, or mutated. I want to set the stage to say, 'Actually, we've mutated. It's a new form. Let's go!' It's not a church, it's not an animist space, it's somewhere in between.

SV: In every project, there's a search to express something of identity. Every space is a dialogue between territory, function and its people. It's an opportunity not only to express those functions and communities but in a real sense to become them – and rather than a distinction between north and south, or an attitude of essentialism toward African identity, I'm interested in the complexity, contradictions and intersections between them – relations between host and home, between past and future too. We've been deeply connected for a long time. Some connections are difficult and dark, but through colony, empire, migration, we have bits of both – North and South – in all of us.

On some level, the Mosque project, and the Serpentine Pavilion, too, is a recognition of this tension and this opportunity as a moment to say something about who we are and how we interact. It's not only about the expression of identity, but also the invention of the kind of places in which people can identify – places that invite them to invent themselves through complex, new, shared and negotiated forms of identification.

DA: Was that your interest in making a mosque, or was it just the commission?

SV: I definitely want to do a lot more cultural work, to have the opportunity to be able to think through what new and more relevant typologies for these spaces of gathering, remembrance, and community can be for our current conditions. But yes, I also believe in making the most of what comes my way. And there are opportunities in all the projects to articulate these relationships – between people, places, histories, natures – an aspiration to bring together different places and people from different worlds and realms onto shared platforms. It's not so much to find 'common ground', but to see value in different worlds, 'other' worlds in dialogue with each other.



HUO: In your text *Golden Plateaus* (2019) you talk about rituals. And I'm very interested in this idea of rituals because I believe that yours is an architecture of rituals. As Byung-Chul Han says, we live in an age of communication but without community. In the age of smartphones and communication devices, we need new rituals that go beyond these tools. I'm interested to hear from you about the Pavilion as a place for rituals.

SV: In *Golden Plateaus*, I look at the worlds that people create themselves through rituals – how the separating lines in the city are circumvented, navigated, walked along, funambulist-style. Foregrounding the everyday rituals of gathering of wider London, of communities, spaces and places that may be overlooked is especially important. I find the cultural and urban diversity in London ecstatically interesting. It's a sum of so many histories. It's a living record of where we've come from and a constantly evolving renegotiation and reimagining of the current moment. London can be read as microcosm of a much larger global phenomenon that's more relevant than ever. The Pavilion wasn't about showcasing my design style or aesthetic. It was really important that the project is, as much as it can be, about truly sharing this platform with a greater story. The forms in the Pavilion are all inspired by everyday rituals of gathering, everyday forms of resistance and being in a city – from street fairs and restaurants to moments of street performance.

HUO: Your Pavilion draws inspiration from so many different places in London, from underground venues that were among the first to play music by Black artists, to local markets, gazettes and publishing houses, and the first mosques built in the city. You've looked at the architecture of monumental buildings, but also of everyday objects that all contribute to constructing belonging. Could you tell us about some of these selected places, their history, relevance to your research and design?

SV: I was really interested, for example, in the story of Claudia Jones, in how she came to London and started the *West Indian Gazette*. She set up the office above a small barber's shop in Brixton. That tiny little space meant so much for a whole generation and community, for whom it created a sense of belonging and a place for people to identify with, through the stories that she published, because people saw their own image in that way.

Many other spaces that were very small were also key in creating important cultural movements, like the Mangrove in Notting Hill, which was the unofficial headquarters of the Notting Hill Carnival; the Four Aces Club in Dalston, which was the first venue in the UK to play music by Black artists; and Centerprise, which was a very important hub for Black and queer publishing and literature. I read a lot of these books that were published in the 1970s at Centerprise. It was really



interesting discover their importance, and that before there was no voice present for so many people in these communities. I think also about the vulnerability of places that function in a similar way in the present. We talked with Alex Thorp, the Education Curator at the Serpentine, about The Portman Early Childhood Centre, how the pandemic impacted them, and other places like them. These places are so reliant on the generosity of people and bodies that anything that happens is a threat. It means that many institutions have had to close or become really vulnerable in this time. It's something that we've been aware of, but because of COVID, it's become more visible and more real.

DA: Can you describe the operations of the Pavilion? What constitutes it? Is it seven pieces, a roof and a floor? What's the imagery?

SV: It's a circular form carved into the ground and it's made up of forms that articulate different scales of gathering and different scales of intimacy. Some of them are about one to one interaction, some are about a group discussion, some are about sitting on the floor and having a meal. And all of them have been inspired by either looking at photographs in the archive of gathering spaces that have been erased or walking through London and taking photos of everyday gathering spaces. Each area is effectively inspired by a neighbourhood, but by extension, references similar conditions across London and beyond. Each piece is effectively a slice of floor, wall and ceiling. It represents an order of architecture not measured and separated into its constituent elements in terms of construction or the categories of two-dimensional projection (floors are flat things, walls are upright, etc), but defined by the way we convene in them and are convened by and in them.

DA: So, there's a fragment and then there's a material translation. Can you talk about that?

SV: It's formed from an intersection, superimposition, and abstraction of imprints of elements drawn from places of gathering specific to migrant and peripheral communities across London. What I've tried to transfer is some of the atmosphere of what that space feels like. The seating plans, in particular, are very important – the different heights at which people sit and the kind of interaction you have with the person next to you or across from you. And there are some details, especially from the ghost sites, that are a little bit more direct – things like textures, or bits of plaques, and so on. These come from sites that have been demolished.

DA: What about the materials?



SV: The majority is recycled materials that have been weather-treated. It makes use of the structural steel from other buildings, and of microcement, which has allowed me to work with the imprints and forms of the places the Pavilion references. I was looking for something that could be shaped into these forms that I'd collected from other places.

DA: But you don't want to mimic the places. You could have just made cornices and plasterboard, but you're doing something very different. Why is that?

SV: The shaping lends a level of abstraction and brings everything together cohesively, which is important for me. Individually, the different fragments from different places are really important, but as they come together, they create a Pavilion that's a continuous gathering space, that brings together all these places into one central form – not just symbolically bringing together various places, but also using combinations and superimpositions as ways to design hybrid new forms and forces.

HUO: You've created these places to bring people together. When we worked with Arthur Jaffa on his solo exhibition at the Serpentine, *A Series of Utterly Improbable, Yet Extraordinary Renditions* (2017), he was very conscious of reaching out to different people and communities in the city. He stressed that we can't just wait for people to come, that the free admission to the galleries is the baseline, but we need to reach out more, and more proactively. That's why he wanted his film *Love is the Message, The Message is Death*, not to be shown in the gallery, but in a different part of the city, to reach out and draw people in. The beautiful thing is that your Pavilion is doing exactly that. The idea is that it's not going to happen just here. Can you tell us about this idea, how it came to you and how you're going to realise it? It's very important for everyone to understand that this is different from the previous twenty Pavilions.

NG: What struck me in your very first proposal, was that you wanted to dismantle the Pavilion entirely over time. We were fascinated by this concept. Of course, we needed to make it work within the parameters of this commission, but we're still very much keeping that idea of starting the Pavilion in different places in London and then bringing it to the Serpentine lawn, together with voices from other neighbourhoods and communities and really folding the city onto the Serpentine lawn.

SV: Fortunately, or unfortunately, I see everything through the lens of Johannesburg, which is a very divisive city that has many different publics. When we got the brief and I looked at this commission – a very significant and visible commission on such a global platform – I felt that the lawn was waiting for a gesture. This is a platform to ask questions about architecture: What is a



gallery and who is it for? How does it operate for different kinds of people? What is a truly public space? It's really essential for the project to take root in other places and to situate media, thinkers, work and programme from different realms into the same platform. This is a key part of the way I work, which is about trying to bring in the vibrancy and expression from other things to imbue architecture with some life and some magic.

In a sense, the Pavilion has a very decentralised essence, where I'm hoping for parts to be determined by forces beyond ourselves. This reconfigures my role into something more like a co-author, allowing other voices and stories to help shape the Pavilion. Trying to push the programme and the structure in these ways has its challenges and working in a more communal way necessarily involves the responsibility of representation, which needs to be understood as an ongoing task, beyond the finite scope of these design decisions. I'm rapidly learning and growing as a researcher, 'choreographer', designer and person through this process.

HUO: You've extended this project in such a way that you not only bring the voices of different communities into it, but you've brought the Pavilion into these communities. There are four Fragments, designed in the same language as the Pavilion, that are located in partner places in different parts of London. It's interesting in relation to Édouard Glissant, who in his book *Treatise on the Whole World* says, 'The entire world is becoming an archipelago.' He explains that there are continental approaches and archipelago approaches. The continental ones are always more homogenous, whilst the archipelago approaches are much more inclusive. You're developing this archipelago of Fragments of the Pavilion in London. Could you tell us more about them and why it was so important for you to disperse the Pavilion throughout the city?

SV: As an architectural gesture, these Fragments are really about dialogue between places and about bringing people from different worlds and different realms into the same conversation or encouraging that somehow. When we started working on the Fragments, I imagined they'd be placed in the city and at the end of summer they'd be returned to the Pavilion. But with everything that's happened in the past year and the way that this process has evolved, I think of them as being a kind of handshake or hello. It's the first seed of a collaboration. They're designed to support the daily operations and activities of these spaces and are offered permanently. One of them is about sitting with another person and being contemplative, another is a stage, which allows for a small-scale performance and a very intimate audience. The one in the Albany is a podium and is about reading and being able to sit and engage with material. The Fragment for Valence Library in Barking and Dagenham is for an interview or conversation setting, as it will become a part of a radio station later. Each of them is also designed around an intimate scale of gathering.



Architecture is about being together and about being apart, about making together and moving apart. To imagine architecture as decentralised, as agile, or as archipelagos, as you mentioned, is to see things in relation to each other. To understand that structures can support each other by decentralising is also to understand diaspora as a tactic – without romanticising it – to negotiate, shift and bring different territories together.

HUO: That reminds me of the late Cedric Price and his idea of the Magnets, where he proposed these temporary mobile structures for cities, which would provide public elements and stimulate new patterns of public movement. I find that interesting because it seems that your Fragments do exactly that: they stimulate new patterns of public movement.

SV: We are also thinking about it in response to the time that we've just had. On one hand, it's thinking sensitively about people engaging with each other, but on the other it's thinking about how we've missed being around each other, seeing new things, and listening to other voices. I've certainly missed it a lot, and especially because this Pavilion and so much of my work over the last year has been thinking about people gathering and coming together. In a way, so much of the project is focused on things that are intangible, like the programme of sound commissions *Listening to the City* and the fellowship *Support Structures for Support Structures*, which are integral components of this project. The Fragments make a claim about architecture's role in people interacting and engaging, and in starting to create active engagements and dialogue between people, which is something that's really close to home for me. Coming from a context where people were forced to be separated, these Fragments are working towards the inverse of separation, even if on very intimate scales, on the scale of a bench or the scale of a public amenity.

NG: These Fragments are also a gesture of de-centralising architecture and reconfiguring the city. They are placed in North, South, East and West London, where they support the daily operations of the selected places. The Fragment in New Beacon Books will function as an additional book display and a place for people to sit and browse through books; the one in the Albany will be a stage for a reading or performance; the Fragment in Barking and Dagenham will become part of a radio station and will enable meetings, interviews and other recordings; the one in The Tabernacle will be a place to sit while eating food from the kiosk, but can also function as a stage. Can you tell us more about the design of these Fragments and also about the importance of the places in which the Fragments are placed?



SV: Typologically, each piece is a little gesture for people to gather – a seat, a podium, a stage and an archive. The pieces draw on instances of these gestures across London – stairs in Brixton upon which conversations are made, sound systems that support an animated atmosphere and a gathering on the street. The fifth piece in this compendium of typologies is the Pavilion in Kensington gardens, through which each of these typologies conceptually come together – to create many surfaces across which we can gather. The Fragments are small, humble structures; they remind me of shadows. And their work is to lift and raise and support things that are already happening. Their programming is connected to thinking about other forms of public space – how radio, for example, acts as public space. I'm really interested in the forms we have for convening, and in how different architectures support forms of gathering.

NG: **We've been doing this commission differently in many ways this time and another thing that's new is that you're the first architect who's spent a few months in London. You've been based here during the initial research stages through design development. Your Pavilion is so embedded in London, even though your starting point of reference is Johannesburg. You've translated the way that you work in and with Joburg to London, which is a new city for you. You're looking at these different neighbourhoods, communities and buildings and translating them into the Pavilion structure. Could you talk a bit about being based here and how it's impacted your design?**

SV: Being in a place, absorbing it, ingesting it and then translating it is very important to my process. So much of conventional architectural practice doesn't try to meaningfully engage with people and context – or even, tries to not engage. It's important that I attempt to embed and gain as meaningful an understanding of the context as possible. I've been deeply inspired by London, its people and histories of movement. The Pavilion and its extended programme have been developed based on daily inspirations, findings and ingestions of the city.

HUO: **How has this past year affected your thinking about the Pavilion commission and architecture in more general terms?**

SV: When thinking about a project that's working towards change, that happens on many levels, it's important to think about how things can happen at different speeds and at different paces. On one hand, we gained the opportunity to work on sound commissions with artists in a way that allows things to unfold over the summer at a quieter, long-duration pace than the usual rush of the standard programme. That's been really exciting. Because of the extra time, we've been able to work on the Pavilion Fragments, which could have a life of their own that unfolds over the



summer in these different neighbourhoods. It may be a small gesture, but it taps into thinking durationally, into how the Serpentine works in Barking and Dagenham, for example. It can become a project that evolves into the future as well. Some of the research had to become remote and theoretical. Natalia and I had conversations about the level of engagement during a time when many communities and places we wanted to work with had so many more pressing issues to deal with. That aspect really made us think about the role of an institution like the Serpentine in relation to the city, what the ethos of this project means and what it can bring, how we can try to create dialogue between those two structures in a way that goes beyond the life of this Pavilion.

NG: Very early on, just as the pandemic started, we talked about the way in which architecture can construct belonging. From then onwards, along with Amal Khalaf, Civic Curator at the Serpentine, you've developed a fellowship programme, *Support Structures for Support Structures*, which is now an integral part of your Pavilion. Could you tell us more about the aims, the dreams for this fellowship?

SV: As you said, this scheme is reflecting on the fact that architecture is really important in how people construct belonging, and that all of these small spaces hold communities. They become support structures for entire movements, even though they're very tiny in their architecture. What we've found and what we felt during COVID was that they're also really reliant on bodies and on people and the generosity that they're able to bring to those spaces. In a sense, people are also support structures for these support structures. The fellowship, then, is a support structure for support structures in these support structures, because we're looking to collaborate with and to support structures that support communities. The long-term aim of this programme is also to be able to grow a network year on year that's based on entirely different bodies of knowledge, and is interested in deepening, finding and creating institutional networks in art spaces that can look entirely different from what we know at the moment.

Something that's really important about all of the spaces that the Pavilion touches on, draws on and is inspired by is that they fall outside the margins of what we recognise as traditional and significant architecture, but they're really important in their function as spaces of gathering for communities. They function entirely differently from conventional institutions. The Mangrove, for example, was a restaurant, but because of how people were allowed to gather around a table informally, speak different mother tongues, play music and discuss really important issues and organise themselves as a community, it became an entirely different model for what institutional spaces can look like.



HUO: Another extension of the Pavilion is a series of sound commissions, *Listening to the City*. In the twentieth century manifestos were projected and urbanist master plans were projected. Perhaps the twenty-first century should be more about listening to each other and to the planet. You've been listening to the stories of community places in London, through conversations but also archive materials. It would be great to hear what you've learnt from what you've been listening to.

SV: Many of the things that I was listening to before the pandemic became clearer, or the importance of those voices became clearer, over the last year. The Pavilion works towards bringing multiple voices into its form, in that it draws from many different places across London, and from many different forms of gathering. These formal and informal types of worship and of recreation aren't necessarily always catered for or recognised in our formal built environment. Even the research around that is very much about being able to bring other voices into the form and being able to manifest them in the Pavilion. *Listening to the City* is very exciting in that regard, as we're literally working with sound, voice, music and breath. I think of sound as a spatial volumetric element, which is very interesting to work with. Being able to bring different voices into the Pavilion is really interesting in this time when we aren't able to gather as we usually would. The sound can bring the presence of other beings, and other times; it allows us to physically engage with other bodies that aren't there.

It's important to say that *Listening to the City* is really focused on working with artists who are based in London and who've been working in the selected neighbourhoods before. It's about extending that work and that practice to create the sonic geography of these boroughs. Ain Bailey is working on the sonic geography around erased queer spaces in South East London. Jay Bernard is working on different experiences and voices in the same neighbourhood in Tulse Hill, reflecting on how different life can be for people in close geographic proximity.

NG: That very much overlaps with your interest in archives in general, preserving stories both orally and physically. Could you also tell us more about the importance of archives, both formal and informal, in your practice?

SV: The archive is a very active and generative place of work. In my context and upbringing, so much of our archive was inherited or dictated in a certain way. I remember, even when I was a young child, that many of our textbooks at school were slanted in a very particular direction. This



bias where archives and history are always written by particular voices, silences other voices. But so many other ways of being can't be contained in formal archives as we know them, because they're oral and aural and ritual based. Those archives are concerned with futurity. They're evolving and dynamic, and they embrace change and shift instead of fearing it. For this project, for example, we looked a lot at recipes, songs and stories and I see those as forms of archive as well. It's just that the way they're carried isn't recognised in a formal archival structure, which in itself is a form of silencing. But many of these archives have persisted despite that, and the Pavilion is interested in these overlooked archives and, by implication, the futures that they hold.

Linking all of these layers together, *Listening to the City*, *Support Structures for Support Structures* and the Fragments are all about finding active and dynamic ways of working with archive, and of creating archives that aren't necessarily focused on a dead preservation or a static heritage, but work on actively evolving projects forward in some way. They all carry information in different ways, in the oral and aural, in the form of listening to the city, but also in terms of how bodies organise and come together and create knowledge that then evolves from there.

HUO: Living archives, one can say.

SV: Yes. I come from traditions in which archives are seen as very alive and very dynamic. It's so much about how archives are carried across generations and how practices are allowed to evolve in forms like festivals. Thinking about Notting Hill Carnival again, which we referenced in the Pavilion, and which is also an important part of one of our Fragments: that's also a form of archive, it's just not always recognised and honoured as such. There are many small archives in this story – everyday spaces that are instrumental in the construction of belonging. I hope that the research around the Pavilion will generate dialogue and bring these spaces more deeply into consciousness for all of us, so that we recognise the importance of drawing on and allowing spaces like these to exist and evolve.

HUO: The recent fire at University of Cape Town and the destruction of Archives of African History shows us the fragility of archives.

SV: Yes, absolutely. That's been a huge loss. I'm even at a loss as to what to say about it. I'm not sure I agree with L.P. Hartley's famous line from the *Go-Between*, 'the past is a foreign country'. I think that the past is always present. Even in relation to the climate crisis and so much else, there are so many consequential things around archives that we need to understand more deeply:



everything from the planet as an archive, to geologies as an archive, or dust as archive. Archive is present in our lives and we need to be able to see it differently. Archive is very fragile in particular because only the very familiar form is recognised. How do we start to build networks around archives that are supported in different ways?

HUO: Can you both tell us how you approach sustainability in your practice? What does it mean for you? It's a complete game-changer in architecture.

DA: It has to be a systemic change. It can't stay the same way anymore.

SV: It's important to understand sustainability more deeply than looking at materials alone. Everything we do, every line we draw, is part of a bigger story – a much more 'planetary scale', as David often says. We need to understand the complicity of architecture in the planetary, and the interconnectedness of environmental racism, class and labour struggles, capitalism and exploitation, empires and extraction.

We're literally connected to the earth, and to each other, through centuries of breath – the air we breathe is the sum of the actions of our ancestors and predecessors. In Johannesburg, for example, our connections to deep time are on our ground surface – a meteor strike brought gold to the surface, and the deepest mines on earth were then created and mined by the hands of exploited Black labour. The mammoth mountains of mine-waste (bigger than stadiums) were then used to separate races from each other by colour. Toxic radioactive dust, recently discovered remains of labourers on the mines, debris from demolitions, are all being breathed by people who live near the mines – literally breathing in history and its consequences. It's important to understand these many scales of sustainability and where we can intervene in how we make work.

DA: In Joburg, you find an incredible attitude to recycling, remaking and reuse. So, there's a radicality you're subconsciously playing with that is at the base of your practice.

SV: It is.

DA: I find Joburg a place where there's no judgment of any material. You can go to the most luxurious place and it's made of basic metals welded together. The aesthetics don't have the same kinds of codes. That's something that seems to be consistent in your work. It's either hybridising existing systems and remaking them, or creating new socials, new materialities. You do it automatically. For us, it comes across as very radical, but you see it as very ordinary.



We have so many young architects who are dreaming of their big concrete buildings. You're not.

SV: In her article 'Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness' bell hooks describes the margin as a site of radical potential, rather than a place of lack. I really believe in this idea: that there's something new and different to be offered from working from the 'edges'. We're used to having to make the most of very little – of being able to piece together ideas from leftovers, fragments, and to speculate with what we have around us. I want my work to embody its place. It's important to listen to what the place, the ground, the city has to say. It's also important not to romanticise and reduce this to just the aesthetics of this philosophy of improvisation, speed and resourcefulness, but to really embody what these ways of working can become. Looking at how people actually use the city, that's very present in the *ETANowNow* (2019) project, for example, where people make makeshift bus stops and areas to wait. That's been translated; it's not in the same found materials, but it's in found ideology.

DA: This ideology somehow has a direct impact on materiality. If you're doing it consciously that gives you, as you move between the worlds, a certain kind of attitude that's very special. It's a very precise way of looking at the world.

HUO: What are your inspirations from previous generations? Who are your heroines or influences or architects?

DA: Or writers, or artists?

HUO: Politicians?

SV: I lean into several different disciplines – performance, performance art, popular culture, the street, the archive, and people and the lives they lead as inspiration for work. My foremost call to work is my city, Johannesburg – its problems, tensions, histories – and its deeply creative spirit. As Africans, we have this double burden, or this double opportunity – to carry history, and to project new visions despite the weight of it. Work that's able to do this inspires me, like the practice of Thebe Magugu or Sammy Baloji.

I've always been interested in finding the soul of a place and in creating atmospheres – I'm interested in the oral, the aural, light, colour – and I love the work of artists who translate atmosphere and the politics of interaction – John Akomfrah, Francis Alÿs, El Anatsui, Carrie Mae Weems, Marina Abramović, Theaster Gates, Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Walid Raad, Olafur Eliasson.



I'm deeply inspired by writers and texts, which often prompt me to make works. I'm inspired by Édouard Glissant, particularly my understanding of his words on generosity and opacity and the importance of this in being able to create. I'm deeply moved by bell hooks, Fred Moten, Wole Soyinka, Siphokazi Jonas, Christina Sharpe. Christina Sharpe's *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* was key for me when I conceptualised the Pavilion – she writes about being in the 'wake' of many things. I was inspired to think about a moment of response to the many consequences of empire and extraction. Also, the idea of the wake as procession was something I wanted to work with architecturally as I read her text. I'm reading a lot of China Miéville and Kathryn Yusoff as I work on conceptualising the events – and together with walking in the city, this is really inspiring.

I believe that it's my life's work to bring different narratives into the world through architecture – to bring forward other histories and other futures that have too long been ignored. The works of Isamu Noguchi, Luis Barragan, Balkrishna Doshi, Zaha Hadid – and most especially, David, your work – inspired me immensely in the beginning and continue to inspire me now, to think boldly about difference and from different places.

HUO: Another recurring question in all our interviews is about unrealised projects. What's your dream, unrealised project?

SV: I don't know if I have a dream project in terms of an architectural brief, but I definitely see myself as part of a movement or a generation of new, young African practices, trying to carve a space that's involved with creating as many new African building languages as possible. There's an infinity of untold stories, unheard voices to be told, retold, made and remade. There are many unrealised worlds to be made, as yet undreamt dreams. We need to be looking for architecture in unlikely places, and most of all, we need to be looking for architecture in ourselves. My dream project is for this generation to really take off and start building in the multitudes.

