

Serpentine Gallery

Press Release

Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2011 designed by Peter Zumthor

1 July – 16 October 2011

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The Serpentine Trust is a limited company registered in England under number 2150221

It is an educational charity, which is funded by Arts Council England and Westminster City Council
Registered charity number 298809

VAT Number 466 5881 01

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The Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2011 is designed by world-renowned Swiss architect **Peter Zumthor**. This year's Pavilion is the 11th commission in the Gallery's annual series, the world's first and most ambitious architectural programme of its kind. It is the architect's first completed building in the UK and includes a specially created garden by the influential Dutch designer **Piet Oudolf**.

At the heart of Peter Zumthor's Pavilion is a garden that the architect hopes will inspire visitors to become observers. Zumthor says his design 'aims to help its audience take the time to relax, to observe and then, perhaps, start to talk again - maybe not.' The design emphasises the role the senses and emotions play in our experience of architecture. With a refined selection of materials Zumthor creates contemplative spaces that evoke the spiritual dimension of our physical environment. As always, Zumthor's aesthetic goal is to customise the building precisely to its purpose as a physical body and an object of emotional experience.

Zumthor has stated that 'the concept for this year's Pavilion is the *hortus conclusus*, a contemplative room, a garden within a garden. The building acts as a stage, a backdrop for the interior garden of flowers and light. Through blackness and shadow one enters the building from the lawn and begins the transition into the central garden, a place abstracted from the world of noise and traffic and the smells of London – an interior space within which to sit, to walk, to observe the flowers. This experience will be intense and memorable, as will the materials themselves – full of memory and time.'

Materials have always played an evocative as well as an essential role in the buildings designed by Zumthor. The 2011 Pavilion is constructed of a lightweight timber frame wrapped with scrim and coated with a black Idenden over scrim. Exterior and interior walls with staggered doorways offer multiple paths for visitors to follow, gently guiding them to a central, hidden inner garden. The covered walkways and seating surrounding this central space create a serene, contemplative environment from which visitors look onto the richly planted sunlit garden, the heart and focus of the building.

With this Pavilion, as with previous structures such as the famous Thermal Baths at Vals, Switzerland, or the Bruder Klaus Chapel in Mechernich, Germany, Zumthor has emphasised the sensory and spiritual aspects of the architectural experience, from the precise yet simple composition and 'presence' of the materials, to the handling of scale and the effect of light.

Piet Oudolf is a prominent garden designer and a leading figure of the New Perennial planting movement. His award-winning designs emphasise the natural architecture of plants, using expressive drifts of grasses and herbaceous perennials to create gardens that evolve in form throughout the lives of the plants. These are chosen for their structure, form, texture and colour, showcasing many different varieties in his compositions. Oudolf has pioneered an approach to gardening that embraces the full life-cycle of plants, delighting in their beauty throughout the seasons.

Piet Oudolf said: "I am very pleased to be collaborating with Peter Zumthor and the Serpentine Gallery on this year's Pavilion and to be part of this exciting project. My work aims to bring nature back into human surroundings and this Pavilion provides the perfect opportunity for people to reflect and relax in a contemplative garden away from the busy metropolis."

The Serpentine's Pavilion commission, conceived in 2000 by Gallery Director Julia Peyton-Jones, has become an international site for architectural experimentation and follows a decade of Pavilions by some of the world's greatest architects. Each Pavilion is sited on the Gallery's lawn for three months and the immediacy of the commission – a maximum of six months from invitation to completion – provides a unique model worldwide.

Julia Peyton-Jones, Director, and Hans Ulrich Obrist, Co-Director, Serpentine Gallery, said: "It is an honour and a great joy to be working with Peter Zumthor on the 11th Serpentine Gallery Pavilion. The commission allows us to connect with the best architects in the world and each year is an exciting and completely new experience. Zumthor's plans will realise an exquisite space for the public to enjoy throughout the summer."

Zumthor's Serpentine Gallery Pavilion will operate as a public space and as a venue for Park Nights, the Gallery's high-profile programme of public talks and events. Park Nights will culminate in the annual Serpentine Gallery Marathon in October, now in its sixth year. In 2006 the Park Nights programme included the renowned 24-hour Serpentine Gallery Interview Marathon, convened by Hans Ulrich Obrist and architect Rem Koolhaas; in 2007, the Serpentine Gallery Experiment Marathon presented by artist Olafur Eliasson and Hans Ulrich Obrist; in 2008, Obrist led over 60 participants in the Serpentine Gallery Manifesto Marathon. This was followed in 2009 by the Serpentine Gallery Poetry Marathon and in 2010 by the Serpentine Gallery Map Marathon.

Notes to Editors

Peter Zumthor

Born in Basel in 1943, Zumthor trained as a cabinetmaker at the shop of his father, as a designer and architect at the Kunstgewerbeschule Basel and at Pratt Institute, New York. In 1979 he established his own practice in Haldenstein, Switzerland. Major Buildings: Protective Housing for Roman Archaeological Excavations, Chur, Switzerland, 1986; Sogn Benedetg Chapel, Sumvitg, Switzerland, 1988; Therme Vals, Switzerland, 1996; Kunsthaus Bregenz, Austria, 1997; Swiss Sound Box, Swiss Pavilion, Expo 2000, Hanover, Germany, 2000; Kolumba Art Museum, Cologne, Germany, 2007; Bruder Klaus Field Chapel, Wachendorf, Germany, 2007. Major Awards: Carlsberg Architectural Prize, Copenhagen, 1998; Mies van der Rohe Award for European Architecture, Barcelona, 1998; Spirit of Nature Wood Architecture Award, Wood in Culture Association, Finland, 2006; Praemium Imperiale, Japan Art Association, 2008; The Pritzker Architecture Prize, The Hyatt Foundation, 2009.

Piet Oudolf

Oudolf's projects include the internationally renowned High Line in New York, which involved planting along a railway line that winds through the city. Combining minimalism with ecology, this garden was conceived of as a series of interwoven elements that lead visitors along a richly planted path. Other notable designs include the Lurie Garden in Millennium Park, Chicago; Wisley, the Royal Horticultural Society Garden in Surrey; Il Giardino delle Vergini at the 2010 Venice Biennale; and his own innovative garden in Hummelo, The Netherlands. He is the recipient of numerous awards including the 2010 Award of Distinction by the Association of Professional Landscape Designers and the 2009 Dalecarlica Award, Sweden. Oudolf's garden was also awarded 'Best in Show' at the 2000 Chelsea Flower Show, London. In 2010 he was named as one of the 100 Most Creative People in Business by Fast Company.

Serpentine Gallery Pavilion Commission

The Serpentine Gallery Pavilion commission is an ongoing programme of temporary structures by internationally acclaimed architects and designers. The series is unique worldwide and presents the work of an international architect or design team who has not completed a building in England at the time of the Gallery's invitation. The Pavilion architects to date are: Jean Nouvel, 2010; Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa, SANAA, 2009; Frank Gehry, 2008; Olafur Eliasson and Kjetil Thorsen, 2007; Rem Koolhaas and Cecil Balmond, with Arup, 2006; Álvaro Siza and Eduardo Souto de Moura with Cecil Balmond, Arup, 2005; MVRDV with Arup, 2004 (un-realised); Oscar Niemeyer, 2003; Toyo Ito with Arup, 2002; Daniel Libeskind with Arup, 2001; and Zaha Hadid, 2000. There is no budget for the Serpentine Gallery Pavilion commission. It is paid for by sponsorship and sponsorship help-in-kind, as well as the sale of the finished structure which does not cover more than 40% of its cost. The Serpentine Gallery collaborates with a range of companies and individuals whose support makes it possible to realise the Pavilion.

Maybach

The Serpentine Gallery Pavilion is sponsored by Maybach, creator of the world's most luxurious high-end luxury saloon cars. Maybach automobiles blend meticulous craftsmanship using exquisite materials with advanced comfort and safety technology, in some of the most powerful saloons available. Maybach Head of Operations in the UK, Nigel Unsworth, explained: "Travelling in a Maybach is unlike any other automotive encounter. The whole experience is one of quiet tranquillity coupled with unparalleled performance. Maybach can create bespoke vehicles to the owners' exacting standards. It's the nearest thing to a road-going private jet but rather than being an underused indulgence, a Maybach can quickly become the preferred way to travel. We're very proud to Sponsor this special building. The Serpentine Gallery Pavilion is a peaceful haven amidst the hubbub of London life, where one can contemplate anything they wish. This fits perfectly with our philosophy of providing clients with their own private mobile sanctuary whether they prefer to drive themselves or to be driven."

Arup

Peter Zumthor will collaborate with engineering firm Arup to realise the 2011 Serpentine Gallery Pavilion. The Arup team, led by David Glover, Ed Clark and Chris Neighbour, will provide all engineering and specialist technical advice for the project. Arup Director Ed Clark commented: "It is a privilege to support the Pavilion again in 2011. This is our tenth year of commitment to the programme which reflects our belief in the project and the positive experience our teams get from working with some of the most renowned architects of our time. It's an incredibly exciting opportunity. We look forward to working with Peter and helping him to deliver his first building in the UK."

Stanhope

Peter Rogers, Director of Stanhope, will donate his expertise to all aspects of the Pavilion. He said: "The Serpentine Pavilion is a unique project whose innovative and challenging designs transcend normal building projects as well as fusing art and architecture in an exciting built form."

Mace

Stephen Pycroft, Chairman and Chief Executive at Mace, said: "I am delighted that Mace is involved with the construction of the Serpentine Pavilion for a third year and look forward to working with Atelier Peter Zumthor & Partner. This is a prestigious annual project in London and is an important part of Mace's arts and culture portfolio, playing to our strength of delivering complex projects."

Pritzker Prize

Eduardo Souto de Moura has been awarded the 2011 Pritzker Architecture Prize. Souto de Moura, together with fellow Pritzker Laureate Álvaro Siza, designed the 2005 Serpentine Gallery Pavilion. Souto de Moura worked in his earlier years at Siza's office, and opened his own practice in 1980. Since then he has completed over sixty buildings, most of them in Portugal, and also in Spain, Italy, Germany, United Kingdom and Switzerland.

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