

Press Release, 21 May 2025

## NEW DETAILS REVEALED FOR THE 2025 SERPENTINE PAVILION *A CAPSULE IN TIME* DESIGNED BY MARINA TABASSUM

Built around a semi-mature Ginkgo tree, the Pavilion will become a stage for Serpentine's dynamic programme across the summer and until October

6 June – 26 October 2025

Press View: Tuesday 3 June, 8.30am–1pm, with speeches at 10am

Photography and filming: Tuesday 3 June, from 8:30am

Photocall: Tuesday 3 June, 9:30am

RSVP essential [press@serpentinegalleries.org](mailto:press@serpentinegalleries.org)

Press images available at [serpentinegalleries.org/press](https://serpentinegalleries.org/press)

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Serpentine Pavilion 2025 *A Capsule in Time*, designed by Marina Tabassum, Marina Tabassum Architects (MTA). Design render, exterior view. Photo © Marina Tabassum Architects (MTA) Courtesy: Serpentine.

The Serpentine Pavilion 2025, *A Capsule in Time*, designed by Bangladeshi architect and educator Marina Tabassum and her firm, Marina Tabassum Architects (MTA), opens on 6 June 2025 with Goldman Sachs supporting the annual project for the 11<sup>th</sup> consecutive year.

Tabassum's Pavilion will mark the 25<sup>th</sup> year of this pioneering commission and continues Dame Zaha Hadid's ethos of pushing the boundaries of architecture. Her mantra "There should be no end to experimentation", is the foundation in which this commission is built upon and Tabassum's Pavilion exemplifies this.

Celebrated for her work that seeks to establish an architectural language that is contemporary while rooted and engaging with place, climate, context, culture and history, Tabassum's design will resonate with Serpentine South and aims to prompt a dialogue between the permanent and the ephemeral nature of the commission.

The 2025 Pavilion is elongated in the north-south direction and features a central court that aligns with Serpentine South's bell tower. Inspired by the tradition of park-going and arched garden canopies that filter soft daylight through green foliage, the sculptural quality of the Pavilion is comprised of four wooden capsule forms with a translucent façade that diffuses and dapples light when infiltrating the space. Marking the first structure by Tabassum to be built entirely from wood, it also employs light as a way to enhance the qualities of the space. Emphasising the sensory and spiritual possibilities of architecture through scale, geometry and the interplay of light and shadow, Tabassum's design also features a kinetic element where one of the capsule forms is able to move and connect, transforming the Pavilion into a new spatial configuration.

Built around a semi-mature Ginkgo tree – a climate resilient tree species that dates back to the early Jurassic Period – Tabassum's Pavilion, like much of Tabassum's previous projects, considers the threshold between inside and outside, the tactility of material, lightness and darkness, height and volume. Throughout the course of summer and into autumn, the Ginkgo tree leaves will slowly shift from green to luminous gold-yellow. The selection of a Ginkgo, was inspired by the fact this species is showing tolerance to climate change and contributes to a diverse treescape in Kensington Gardens. The species is not susceptible to many current pest and diseases, and will be replanted into the park following the Pavilion's closure in October.

In an era of increasing censorship, Tabassum expands on her desire for the Pavilion to function as a versatile space where visitors can come together and connect through conversations and sharing of knowledge. Tabassum and her team at MTA have compiled a selection of books that celebrate the richness of Bengali culture, literature, poetry, ecology and Bangladesh. Stored on shelves built into the structure, it draws on the Pavilion's afterlife once no longer sited on Serpentine's lawn, which is envisioned as a library open to all.

In July, Serpentine and Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther und Franz König, Köln, will co-publish a catalogue to accompany the Pavilion. Designed by Wolfe Hall, it will bring together new and

insightful contributions from the fields of architecture and art to reflect on Tabassum's Pavilion and wider practice. Generously illustrated in colour throughout, it features essays by art and architecture historian Perween Hasan; architect, educator and Dean of Yale School of Architecture Deborah Berke; architect, writer and critic Thomas de Monchaux; writer, editor and curator Shumon Basar; and visual, experimental contributions from artists Rana Begum and Naeem Mohaiemen. Alongside these contributions, it includes reproductions of ink and pencil drawings taken from Tabassum's sketchbook whilst developing the design of the Pavilion; a photo essay by photographer Iwan Baan; an extensive conversation between Marina Tabassum and Serpentine's Artistic Director Hans Ulrich Obrist that delves into the work of Tabassum and traces the research, development and context behind the Pavilion; as well as a conversation between Tabassum and architect David Chipperfield.

**Marina Tabassum, Architect, Marina Tabassum Architects (MTA) said:** "The Serpentine Pavilion celebrates the London summer – a time to be outdoors, connecting with friends and family in Kensington Gardens. We want to celebrate the tradition of park-going. On a sunny day, the play of filtered daylight through the translucent façade draws on the memory of being under a Shamiyana at a Bengali wedding. Built from a bamboo structure wrapped with colourfully decorated cloth, Shamiyanas can convene hundreds of guests on any occasion. The Serpentine Pavilion offers a unique platform under the summer sun to unite as people rich in diversity. How can we transcend our differences and connect as humans? The Serpentine Pavilion offers a place where people of diverse backgrounds, ages and cultures can come together under one roof and call for action, facilitating dialogues that expand our boundaries of tolerance and respect."

**Bettina Korek, Chief Executive, and Hans Ulrich Obrist, Artistic Director, said:** "We're thrilled that Marina Tabassum's design for the 25th Anniversary Serpentine Pavilion reflects the legacy of past commissions and responds to Serpentine's unique location in Kensington Gardens. The kinetic elements of *A Capsule in Time* echo the levitating features of Rem Koolhaas & Cecil Balmond with Arup's 2006 Pavilion, and the Gingko tree at its centre roots the structure to the Earth and to Tabassum's vision for evolved human connections with the environment. We are deeply grateful to our loyal partners whose generosity will once again make an incredible idea for the Serpentine Pavilion into a reality, to be enjoyed by audiences all summer as the hub of Serpentine's public programme."

**Antony Gutman and Kunal Shah, Co-CEOs of Goldman Sachs International said:** "For over a decade, Goldman Sachs has been proud to support the Serpentine Pavilion, a project that has championed bold creativity and architectural innovation since its inception 25 years ago. This year, we are delighted to celebrate Marina Tabassum, whose visionary approach to sustainable and context-driven design will bring a thought-provoking *A Capsule in Time* to Kensington Gardens. We extend our thanks to the Serpentine team and all those who make this pioneering project possible, ensuring it remains free and accessible to all."

**Jon Leach, Director of AECOM said:** "We are thrilled to be working with Marina and her team on this year's Pavilion. The project, with its tight timescales and unique engineering challenges, is always particularly rewarding for our team of engineers and project managers. Celebrating our thirteenth year on the Pavilion, it is fantastic to work with the Serpentine and the entire team once again to bring this year's design to life."

**Tim Leigh, Chief Creative Officer of Stage One Creative Services said:** “Delivering the Pavilions is a privilege. This will be the sixteenth we have delivered and it is remarkable how each scheme brings its own character and challenges. This year’s design is striking and deliberate and has been a joy to work on. In particular, the strong form combined with the kinetic dimension makes this a very special Pavilion. Each year our mission is to realise an architectural experiment and Marina Tabassum and her team have provided us with the perfect laboratory in which to work.”

**Launching a season of specially curated activations, this year’s Pavilion will play host to a series of live events and become a stage for public engagement including:**

-Starting on Friday 6 June, 16:30, Marina Tabassum will be in conversation with Serpentine Artistic Director Hans Ulrich Obrist to discuss the inspiration behind this year’s Pavilion and Tabassum’s approach to architecture.

-From July, *A Capsule in Time* will become a platform for Serpentine’s *Park Nights*, the annual interdisciplinary platform for live encounters in music, poetry, performance, and dance that will see artists create new site-specific works. Further details will be announced soon.

-This summer, Project Curator Chris Bayley will lead free Saturday afternoon tours of the Pavilion, exploring this year’s Pavilion and the history of the commission.

-*The Shape of a Circle in the Mind of a Fish*, a book which brings together seven years of celebrated projects on more-than-human consciousness and raising awareness of issues related to ecology from 100 contributors across disciplines, will be launched in the Pavilion.

-On Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> July, Serpentine will host the Pavilion Family Day, a free, drop-in event with hands-on activities and creative workshops in response to the Pavilion.

-On Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> September, Serpentine, in partnership with New Currency and Alaska Alaska, will host a day of activations featuring poetry, live performances, DJ sets.

To accompany the Pavilion, Tabassum has created a special limited edition print that will be released during the opening week.

This year’s Pavilion selection was made by Serpentine CEO Bettina Korek; Artistic Director Hans Ulrich Obrist; Director of Construction and Special Projects Julie Burnell; Exhibitions Curator Chris Bayley; Curator at Large, Architecture and Site-specific Projects Natalia Grabowska; and Assistant Exhibitions Curator Alexa Chow, together with advisors Sou Fujimoto and David Glover.

The Pavilion is supported by Goldman Sachs.

## NOTES TO EDITORS

### Marina Tabassum

Marina Tabassum (b. 1969, Dhaka, Bangladesh) is an acclaimed architect and educator who has received numerous international recognitions in the field of architecture. She graduated in 1995 from Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology. Prior to founding Marina Tabassum Architects (MTA) in 2005, Tabassum was a founding partner of the Dhaka-based firm URBANA between 1995 and 2005 with Kashef Chowdhury. In 1997, URBANA won the national competition to design the Independence Monument of Bangladesh and the Museum of Independence under the Public Works Department and the Ministry of Liberation War Affairs. In her work, Tabassum seeks to establish a language of architecture that is contemporary yet reflectively rooted to place and prioritising climate, context, culture and history. Tabassum's practice remains consciously contained in size, undertaking a limited number of projects per year.

Tabassum is a Professor at Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands. She held the Norman Foster Chair at Yale University in 2023 and has taught as a visiting professor at numerous universities including the Harvard University Graduate School of Design, USA; the University of Toronto, Canada; and BRAC University, Bangladesh. She received an Honorary Doctorate from the Technical University of Munich, Germany, and served as academic director at the Bengal Institute for Architecture, Landscapes and Settlements between 2015 and 2021.

Tabassum's pursuit for the 'architecture of relevance' has won her numerous awards including the Soane Medal from the United Kingdom; Arnold Brunner Memorial Prize from the American Academy of Arts and Letters; the Gold Medal of the French Academy of Architecture; and the Jameel Prize from the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. She won the Aga Khan Award for Architecture in 2016 for the Bait ur Rouf Mosque and has served as a member of the Steering Committee of the Aga Khan Awards for Architecture from 2017 to 2022 and is a fellow of the Royal Society of Arts (RSA). In 2024, Tabassum was included in *TIME* Magazine's '100 Most Influential People'.

Tabassum chairs the Executive Board of Prokritee, a fair-trade organisation that promotes crafts and provides livelihood to thousands of women artisans of Bangladesh. She is the founding chairperson of the Foundation for Architecture and Community Equity (F.A.C.E), a non-for-profit organisation that focuses on climate adaption and architecture's agency and responsibility in providing dignified living conditions for marginalised populations. F.A.C.E is currently working with communities to build mobile modular housing (known as Khudi Bari) in various geographically and climatically challenged locations in Bangladesh.

Tabassum's work is currently the subject of a travelling exhibition organised by Architektur Museum der TUM, Munich, showing in Lisbon and Delft. She has previously presented work at Whitechapel Gallery, London (with Rana Begum, 2019); Sharjah Architecture Triennale (2019); and Venice Architecture Biennale (2018). Her work has been published by ArchiTangle; Harvard Graduate School of Design; ORO Editions; and Lars Müller Publishers among others.

## Marina Tabassum Architects (MTA)

Founded in 2005, Marina Tabassum Architects (MTA) is an internationally recognised architecture and studio-based practice located in Dhaka, Bangladesh. MTA began its journey in the quest of establishing a language of architecture that is contemporary to the world yet rooted to a specific place. Standing against the global pressure of consumer architecture – a fast breed of buildings that are out of place and context – MTA is committed to rooting architecture to a place and is informed by climate and geography. Their work is well regarded as environmentally conscious, socially responsible and historically and culturally appropriate. Every project undertaken is a sensitive and relevant response to the uniqueness of individual sites, contexts, cultures and people.

With a focus on combining research and teaching, MTA invests in extensive research work on the impacts of climate change in Bangladesh working closely with geographers, landscape architects, planners and other allied professionals. Their focus of work also extends to the marginalised low to ultra-low income population of the country with a goal to elevate the environmental and living conditions of people.

Headed by principle architect Marina Tabassum, the studio engages talented architects and professionals with an interest in self-built projects, who are willing to push the boundaries of the conventional norms of practice. The associate architects who are responsible for research, design and management of individual projects work directly under the principal architect. The practice is consciously kept and retained in an optimum size and projects undertaken are carefully chosen and are limited by number per year.

MTA's process-based practice model is well regarded in the international scene of architecture as a Twenty First Century model. As such, MTA has presented works and research to numerous institutions across Bangladesh and internationally. In 2016, MTA received the Aga Khan Award for Architecture for the Bait Ur Rouf Mosque – a building distinguished by its lack of popular mosque iconography, an emphasis on space and light and its capacity to function not only as a place of worship but also as a refuge for a dense neighbourhood on Dhaka's periphery. The project was also listed among the top 25 postwar buildings of the world by *New York Times*.

## Serpentine Pavilion

This pioneering commission, which began in 2000 with Dame Zaha Hadid, has presented the first UK structures by some of the biggest names in international architecture. The Pavilion is realised with the support of technical advisors AECOM. In recent years it has grown into a highly anticipated showcase for emerging talents, from Sumayya Vally, Counterspace (South Africa), the youngest architect to be commissioned, and Frida Escobedo (Mexico), to Diébédo Francis Kéré (Burkina Faso) and Bjarke Ingels (Denmark). In 2022, *Black Chapel* was designed by Theaster Gates (US), in 2023 *À table* was designed by Lina Ghotmeh (France and Lebanon), and in 2024 *Archipelagic Void* was designed by Minsuk Cho and his firm, Mass Studies (South Korea).

In 2021, the Pavilion programme evolved beyond its physical location for the first time and expanded with a series of Fragments placed across London. It also saw the launch of *Support Structures for Support Structures*, 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.

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**Stage One Creative Services Ltd.** is a manufacturing and engineering company that delivers high-end projects for the creative industries. From ceremonies and live events to artworks and architecture, the company's work creates moments that people remember forever. Stage One has delivered work in more than 52 different countries, and our portfolio of work is presented at [www.stageone.co.uk](https://www.stageone.co.uk). Stage One is proud to be associated with the Serpentine Pavilion and has constructed every Serpentine Pavilion since 2009.

### **Friends of Ours**

Friends of Ours is a vibrant, independent brunch restaurant with two locations in London: the original in Hoxton and a new spot inside The Magazine at Serpentine North. Known for bold, seasonal dishes and a joyful approach to food, Friends of Ours is a neighbourhood favourite that champions local produce and creative cooking. With a focus on quality, community and a relaxed vibe, it's a go-to destination for food lovers across the city.

### **About Serpentine**

Building new connections between artists and audiences, Serpentine presents pioneering contemporary art exhibitions and cultural events with a legacy that stretches back over half a century, from a wide range of emerging practitioners to the most internationally recognised artists, writers, scientists, thinkers, and cultural thought leaders of our time.

Based in London's Kensington Gardens, across two sites, Serpentine North and Serpentine South, Serpentine features a year-round, free programme of exhibitions, architectural showcases, education, live events and technological activations, in the park and beyond the gallery walls.

Public art has emerged as a central strand of Serpentine's programme. Major presentations include a collection of Eduardo Paolozzi's sculptures (1987); Anish Kapoor's *Turning the World Upside Down* (2010); Lee Ufan's *Relatum – Stage* (2018–19); Christo and Jeanne-Claude's *London Mastaba* in the Serpentine Lake (2018); *I LOVE YOU EARTH* by Yoko Ono (2021); Dominique

Gonzalez-Foerster *In remembrance of the coming alien (Alienor)* (2022); Alexandra Daisy Ginsberg's *Pollinator Pathmaker* (2022–ongoing); Atta Kwami's *Dzidzɔ kple amenuveve* (Joy and Grace) (2021–22); Gerhard Richter's *STRIP-TOWER* (2024); Yayoi Kusama's *Pumpkin at the Round Pound* (2024); and Esther Mahlangu's mural *Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* (2024).

Proud to maintain free access for all visitors, Serpentine also reaches an exceptionally broad audience and maintains a profound connection with its local community.

## On view at Serpentine

### Arpita Singh: *Remembering* | 20 March – 27 July 2025

*Remembering* is the first institutional solo exhibition of Arpita Singh's work in London. The paintings on view celebrate Singh's endless experimentation with colour and mark making to figuratively explore emotional responses to social upheaval and international humanitarian crises.

### Giuseppe Penone: *Thoughts in the Roots* | 3 April – 7 September 2025

The most comprehensive institutional exhibition of Giuseppe Penone's practice in London, *Thoughts in the Roots* features sculptures and works from 1969 to today. A leading figure in the Arte Povera movement, born in Italy in the 1960s, that celebrates the simplicity of natural materials and artistic techniques, Giuseppe Penone experiments with a wide range of materials including wood, iron, wax, bronze, terracotta, marble and plaster, bringing their individual physical qualities to the fore. Expanding on the significance of trees as a recurring motif throughout Penone's work and enabling the artist to "perceive the space of Serpentine as a continuum with the nature of the park that surrounds it", three outdoor monumental bronze cast sculptures are presented on the plinth and close to the South gallery.


### Esther Mahlangu: *Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* | 4 October 2024 – 28 September 2025

Celebrated for her brightly coloured geometric paintings rooted in matrilineal Ndebele culture, Dr Esther Mahlangu (b. 1935, South Africa) has been creating large-scale and site-specific works for over eight decades. *Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*, which translates directly from Ndebele as 'I am because you are', marks her first public artwork in the UK.

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