

## FORMAFANTASMA ANNOUNCED AS SERPENTINE LEAD R&D FELLOWS, ECOLOGY

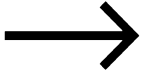
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**Serpentine is delighted to announce a multi-year collaboration with Formafantasma, who will join the organisation as Lead R&D Fellows, Ecology. The partnership strengthens Serpentine’s long-term commitment to embedding environmental thinking across its programme, operations, and organisational culture.**

Formafantasma, the research-based design studio led by Andrea Trimarchi and Simone Farresin, explores the environmental, historical, political, and social forces shaping contemporary design. Working across Serpentine’s programmes and systems, they will help develop new approaches to integrating ecological thinking into Serpentine’s day-to-day activities and long-term strategy.



Beginning in summer 2026, the appointment will span curatorial guidance, institutional advisory, and knowledge-building across exhibition-making, daily operations, resource use, labour, and Serpentine's civic role. The collaboration will begin with an in-depth research phase to map Serpentine's existing processes and systems, from curatorial practices to operational structures, identifying opportunities for ecological intervention and long-term change.

Running alongside this work, a multi-year public programme will invite audiences into the process, creating opportunities to share, document, and disseminate the findings and methodologies emerging from the ongoing research.

In 2020, Formafantasma presented *Cambio* at Serpentine North, a major research-led exhibition examining the ecological, political, and economic dimensions of the global timber industry.

**Formafantasma said:** "We are deeply honoured by the invitation to become Serpentine Lead R&D Fellows, Ecology. In close collaboration with the institution, we will continue a conversation that began with the exhibition *Cambio* in 2020, which approached design as a complex and often contradictory agent within the ecological crisis, simultaneously part of the problem and a potential space for transformation.

We are thrilled to start work on building an ecological framework through research, testing, and activation. As we move from theory to action, we will prioritise approaches that can begin locally and scale systematically. It is a responsibility and privilege to work with Serpentine, and it is wonderful to see the institution's openness to developing new programmes and structures that can evolve into a resource for many.

We look forward to collaboratively reimagining the civic role of institutions, from curatorial processes to questions about space, resources, labour, and ecology, and to creating new platforms for dialogue that acknowledge urgency while insisting on knowledge, complexity, and accountability."

**Bettina Korek, Chief Executive, said:** "At Serpentine, the artists and designers we collaborate with shape not only what we exhibit, but also how we think, act, and operate. Our partnership with Formafantasma extends ecological thinking into our systems, our spaces, and our everyday practices, probing the complex role an institution like ours plays within the ecological crisis."

**Hans Ulrich Obrist, Artistic Director, said:** "The collaboration with the late Gustav Metzger inspired us, from 2009 onwards, to embed ecological thinking within Serpentine's work. We are delighted to continue this legacy with Formafantasma, whose visionary practice engages with the ecological responsibilities of design. Formafantasma examine materials across time, from their histories to questions of future survival within contemporary living conditions. We can't wait to start this new chapter together."



## Serpentine Ecology

Serpentine's collaborations with artist Gustav Metzger established a long-term commitment to environmental research across both its organisational practice and public programme.

In 2006, Metzger was a participant in the inaugural Serpentine Marathon, where he spoke on the threat of human self-destruction. In 2009, Serpentine presented a major survey of his work, spanning six decades of his practice (1959–2009). In 2014, the *Extinction Marathon: Visions of the Future*, programmed in collaboration with Metzger, examined the urgent issue of extinction and laid the foundations for Serpentine's sustained engagement with environmental thought.

These led to the appointment of Lucia Pietroiusti as Curator of Ecology and, in 2018, the establishment of the General Ecology programme, embedding ecological thinking across Serpentine's exhibitions, public programming, and organisational practice.

Building on the legacy of its collaborations with Gustav Metzger, in 2026 Serpentine is once again partnering with artists and designers to position the institution as a site for sustainable innovation at the intersection of design, ecology, and public culture. As Lead R&D Fellows, Ecology, Formafantasma will develop a long-term programme of research, learning, and public engagement that will serve as a reference model for the wider cultural sector.

## NOTES TO EDITORS

### About Formafantasma

Since founding the studio in 2009, Andrea Trimarchi and Simone Farresin (Italy) have championed the need for value-laden advocacy merged with holistic design thinking. Their aim is to facilitate a deeper understanding of both our natural and built environments and to propose transformative interventions through design and its material, technical, social, and discursive possibilities.

Working from their studio in Milan (Italy) and Rotterdam (The Netherlands), the practice embraces a broad spectrum of typologies and methods, from product design through spatial design, strategic planning and design consultancy. Whether designing to a client's brief or developing self-initiated projects, the studio applies the same rigorous attention to context, process, and detail. As a result, Formafantasma's entire portfolio is characterised by a coherent visual language and meticulously researched outcomes.

For Formafantasma, this crossflow of knowledge and experience taken from both their commercial contracts and their more autonomous projects has benefitted and informed the respective other. It has also given them a unique perspective of the design industry, allowing them to acknowledge the legacy of industrial production as the fundamental source for the designer's expertise and agency in contemporary society while also addressing its historic contribution to environmental instability.



## 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 Pond (2024); and Esther Mahlangu's mural *Umntu 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.

## About Serpentine R&D

Serpentine R&D Fellowships support creative research as a long-term, evolving practice. Advancing Serpentine's mission to foster deeper connections between artists and society, the fellowships provide a platform for artists, curators, designers, architects, and creative technologists to develop, test, and share new ideas.

Each fellowship is developed in close collaboration with Serpentine and is tailored to the specific needs of the research. Together, the fellowships contribute to Serpentine's role as a living research environment, where ideas evolve over time, intersect across disciplines, and create opportunities for new forms of knowledge and innovation.

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