

## Design District to open on 15 September

### London's landmark new creativity hub counts down to launch with public event programme



Design District is a permanent home for the creative industries – 16 buildings by eight pioneering architects, one minute from North Greenwich Underground station.

The most ambitious urban development in the history of London's creative industries now has a date set for its official opening.

In a series of events from 15 September, Design District will formally welcome the public to its site on Greenwich Peninsula, and introduce them to its extraordinary architecture, inspiring public spaces and newly arrived creative community.

A permanent home for the creative industries, Design District comprises 16 buildings by eight pioneering architects, one minute from North Greenwich Underground station. With studios, floors, or entire buildings available from £5 per sqft for the first 12 months, the district offers affordable spaces, comprehensive facilities and flexible leases – everything creative Londoners need to build back their business after Covid.

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Happening in conjunction with London Design Festival and London Fashion Week, Design District's opening will be marked with a special launch-night celebration on the 15th from 7pm, featuring music and performances, and by Design District Creates – an wide-ranging programme of insightful design talks, behind-the-scenes architecture tours and eye-opening exhibitions taking place throughout the month.

## A new creative ecosystem for London



With affordable spaces, comprehensive facilities and flexible leases, everything is designed to help creative Londoners thrive. View from the top of Design District's C1 building to the O2 and Canary Wharf.

Comprising a deliberately eclectic medley of 16 buildings by eight world-leading architects, Design District was initially conceived by Knight Dragon to provide a permanent, purpose-designed home for London's creative industries. As the economic impact of coronavirus hit the creative sector especially hard, the district's role has expanded – not only is it intended to be a hub for the sector, it also aims to facilitate its economic recovery, providing affordable, flexible workspace to individuals and enterprises and giving them the breathing space to build back and grow. For example, this year, for the first 12 months of their tenancy, every business

taking up residence in one of the district's 16 buildings is paying just £5 per square foot for its workspace.

Design District's founding vision is of a symbiotic ecosystem of creative-industry businesses and individuals – an artistic, technological and cultural hub, where creative professionals from all disciplines can share ideas, make new connections and be inspired. Central to this is the district's capacity to support creative businesses through all stages of growth and nurture creative professionals throughout every point in their careers.



Helen Arvanitakis, director of Design District, is available for interviews and comment.

Ravensbourne University's new Institute of Creativity & Technology is there to provide practical vocational education in the creative industries. Members' club Bureau offers affordable and flexible workspaces and business support to freelancers and small studios; then, as enterprises grow, there are offices, large studios, or even entire buildings available to accommodate them. Companies will find everything – and everyone – they need on their doorstep: small businesses can turn to the print shop downstairs; new product brands will only be a building or two away from a stylist for their shoots or a developer for their website.

Whether they are making artwork, designing UX, developing radical new products, or contributing in some other way to the UK's rich creative landscape, Design District businesses will find themselves at the heart of a diverse, supportive and forward-thinking community that will encompass 1,800 people when the district is fully occupied.

Now, as the countdown to launch begins and the first wave of tenants is confirmed, Design District's vision of an interdependent and mutually supportive community in which all can thrive is becoming reality.

## The first tenants

The new tenants will all be taking up permanent spaces in Design District's 16 buildings – each designed by one of eight world-leading architects. This first wave of residents lay the foundations for the rich creative ecosystem the development was conceived to nurture.

### 1. QUEERCIRCLE

The LGBTQ+ led non-profit works at the intersection of arts and social action, aiming to strengthen links between culture, health and wellbeing. In September, the organisation will open its first ever dedicated space for LGBTQ+ artists in [BUILDING NUMBER], designed by David Kohn Architects.

**A NEW  
HOME  
FOR  
LGBTQ+  
ARTISTS.  
A SAFE  
SPACE  
FOR THE  
LGBTQ+  
COMMUNITY.**

**QUEERCIRCLE**



Queercircle will be moving into David Kohn Architects' building following Design District's launch this September.

Comprising a central gallery, library and project studios, the ground-floor space will provide the venue for QUEERCIRCLE's annual programme of physical and digital exhibitions, residencies, and learning and participation events.

At a time when artists' studios are being lost at an alarming rate and with 50% of LGBTQ+ venues having closed in the last 10 years, there was a clear and urgent need for a permanent space even before the impact of Covid-19. Between exhibitions, QUEERCIRCLE plans to share their space – free of charge – to other LGBTQ+ organisations, supporting diverse programming and facilitating initiatives that strengthen the community.



Queercircle founder Ashley Joiner photographed at Design District by Taran Wilkhu.

*“We recognise the value in having secured an affordable space in a city which is becoming increasingly and devastatingly expensive. We hope to foster an ecology of artists, curators, writers, thinkers, community organisers, grassroots organisations and charities who collectively work together to build a stronger, more creative and collaborative community.”*

– Ashley Joiner, founder QUEERCIRCLE

## 2. ConceptKicks

Created by former athlete Daniel Bailey, ConceptKicks is a footwear-design research project and publication that drives and monitors innovation in the sneaker industry. As well as a platform to celebrate the designers and ideas driving advances in footwear, ConceptKicks consults and collaborates with leading brands and designers to develop narrative-changing products and concepts.



Daniel Bailey, founder of ConceptKicks, will move into Architecture 00's C1 building at Design District this September.

ConceptKicks will be using its studio in the Design District as its principal creative space to develop new footwear design concepts, as well as welcoming other creatives in the sector to network and share their stories. The public rooftop

basketball court (on building C1 by Architecture 00) will offer the studio the perfect space for product testing.

### **3. Clod Ensemble**

Performance company Clod Ensemble has spent the last 25 years creating provocative and original dance and participation projects rooted in music and movement. As well as its own highly original international productions, collaboratively developed with dancers, actors, musicians, medics, architects and others, the company sustains a programme of educational initiatives and participation projects in schools, higher education institutions and NHS Trusts.

Now, as it moves into a new studio space in [BUILDING] Design District, the company is entering a new chapter, and is set to benefit from being immersed in the district's creative community, and the possibility for bold new ideas and innovative collaborations that come with it.

### **4. Ravensbourne University London**

Known for its impressive 96.4% graduate employability rate, Ravensbourne is one of the UK's most important and influential institutions providing vocational professional education in the creative industries. Based on Greenwich Peninsula since 2010, the University has seized the opportunity afforded by Design District to open a new, dedicated Institute for Creativity and Technology to serve as its hub for postgraduate education and a launchpad for creative careers.

Occupying the entirety of a four-storey building by Barozzi Veiga, with interiors by Brinkworth, the new Institute will house GradSchool, Ravensbourne University's rapidly expanding postgraduate department, initially offering four new Masters courses: MA Design Communication and Technology; MA Fashion Design, Management and Innovation; MA Illustration for Communication; and MDes Service Design, Social Innovation and Design Leadership. The building will also contain ResearchRave, a dedicated space for sector-leading researchers working at the forefront of creative technology; an in-house creative agency, CreativeLab; and the start-up hothouse Incubation+.

The opening of the Institute puts Ravensbourne's students and staff at the heart of the Design District ecosystem. Students will have a brand new centre for exploration, experimentation and innovation in the heart of a professional creative community, and the businesses surrounding the Institute will have access to a never-ending stream of rising talents.

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*“The iconic architecture of the district creates a real landmark home for the Institute, one that by its nature will attract other creatives and ambitious, like-minded enterprises. The pedestrianised setting, thoughtfully created and interconnected public space and close proximity to a wider lifestyle and attractions also gives it a town-like feel and real sense of place where our students and partners will enjoy spending time.”*

– Paul Sternberg, director of postgraduate studies, Ravensbourne University London

## 5. Love Welcomes

Launched in 2017 in response to the refugee crisis in Greece, Love Welcomes is a creative social enterprise that sets out to help refugee women build a better future. Now working in Greece and beyond, supporting both women in refugee camps and those that have been resettled, Love Welcomes provides training and employment in the creation of products such as welcome mats and cushions using life jackets found washed up on local beaches. These products are available to buy from Love Welcomes’ website, with proceeds going towards liveable wages of the artisans that made them, as well as funding refugee support with health and legal issues, maternal supplies, and nutrition.



Sofia Osman, workshop manager at Love Welcomes photographed at Design District by Taran Wilkhu.

Love Welcomes’ move into a new studio space in Design District reflects the organisation’s growing scope and impact, and opens up new possibilities for bold

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new ideas and innovative collaborations that will emerge from being immersed in the district's creative community.

## **6. Brace Yourself**

Independent music brand Brace Yourself prides itself on breaking artists outside the mainstream and looks after one of the most enviable rosters in the industry, ranging from stadium-filling legends such as Manic Street Preachers, Mudhoney and Tricky, to breakthrough new talents like Bodega, Skullcrusher and Newdad.

Based in East London for its first eight years, the company is now making the leap south of the river and taking over a studio in A3 (thus becoming a neighbour of QUEERCIRCLE). This will serve as its main communications hub, giving its team of six the option of a dynamic shared environment to work in, alongside working from home. In addition to their own unit, the company plans to take advantage of Bureau's social and meeting spaces to host visiting artists and guests.



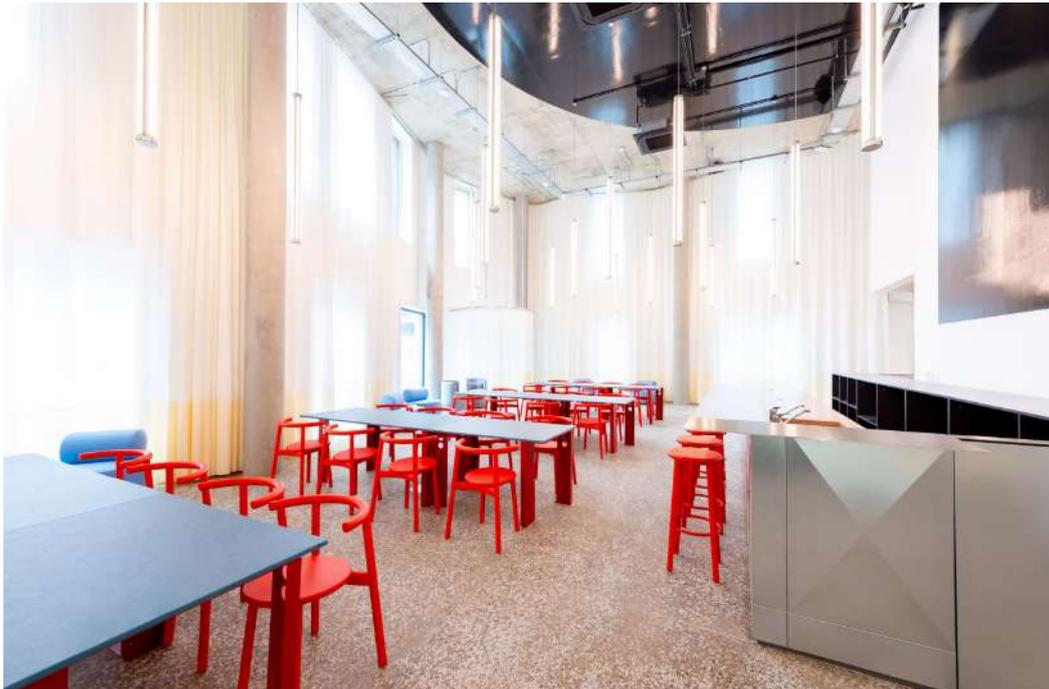
Brace Yourself founder Ivano Maggiulli photographed at Bureau in Design District by Taran Wilkhu.

*“We feed off the energy of other creatives, so I’m really excited that Brace Yourself will be at the heart of Design District’s network. Being based here gives us the scope for growth that the business needs – as well as somewhere we can be proud to bring our artists. The future looks bright.”*

– Ivano Maggiulli, founder, Brace Yourself

## 7. Bureau

Spread over two of the Design District’s buildings (designed by HNA and Architecture 00), Bureau is London’s new members’ club and workspace for the creative industries. Conceived as a place where freelancers and entrepreneurs from all creative disciplines and walks of life can work, exchange ideas and collaborate across disciplinary boundaries, Bureau offers a variety of workspaces, ranging from tables in communal lounges and fixed desks to full- and part-time micro-studios for teams of up to 10 people.



Bureau is a members club for creatives. This is a new approach to workspace — prioritising not just room to think and do, but shared resources, strong networks and space to collaborate.

Bureau’s interiors, by Roz Barr Architects, have been designed to suit all types and styles of creative work – from open, collaborative and energetic to quiet, calm and concentrated – creating an environment in which ideas can be shared, connections made, and collaboration encouraged. With memberships starting at just £80 pcm,

Bureau provides diverse and flexible state-of-the-art workspaces for one of the most accessible price points in London, placing its members at the heart of Design District's diverse professional creative community. With a comprehensive networking and events schedule, and a dedicated business support programme, Bureau is set to be the perfect place to build businesses and develop careers. And, should a business grows beyond the confines of Bureau, there'll more than likely be a larger space in the wider Design District ready for it.

*"We wanted to create a space where we can nurture and nourish the creative industries, somewhere that creative freelancers could find a home and meet colleagues. It will give you all the tools and the space to grow, from a sole practitioner to a small team – and beyond."*

– Helen Arvanitakis, director of Design District

Applications for Bureau membership are open now at <https://bureau.club>.

## Design District Creates



### **Creative industry talks programme and tours by Open City**

After a special launch-night celebration on 15 September, Design District will be open to the public throughout the month, with free scheduled architecture tours led by Open City, and an eye-opening programme of conversations about design, fashion, craft and creative innovation curated by Nick Compton and featuring leading voices from the sector. Participants include activist and Google strategist

Suhair Khan; designer, urbanist and founder of Sound Advice Joseph Henry; interior architect (and designer of Bureau) Roz Barr; CEO of the Institute of Digital Fashion Leanne Elliott-Young; and Takram's Yosuke Ushigome.

### **Tuesday 21 September**

- 2pm: Big problems, bigger ideas: The promise of design activism
- 6.30pm: Coming unstitched: Can fashion fix itself?

### **Wednesday 22 September**

- 2pm: Collaboration: Make friends and influence people
- 6.30pm: Craft, code, print and grow: Tools for modern making

### **Thursday 23 September**

- 2pm: Creative spaces: Better places for better practice
- 6.30pm: Deep time: Design for now and the seventh generation

### **Art Block takeover of building D4 by Barozzi Veiga**

In addition, one of Design District's buildings will be given over to special exhibitions until 17 October. D4, by Barozzi Veiga, will host Art Block, a collaboration between Design District and NOW Gallery that will showcase a trio of shows across its three floors: Human Stories: The Surrealist, a showcase of motion graphics and digital art by Vince Fraser; *Images of Broken Light*, a photography retrospective from Charles Emerson; and Memories of Gigabytes, a series of installations exploring memory by Lisa Wolf.

### **NOW Gallery re-use collaboration**

Design District is also collaborating with NOW Gallery and materials studio Smile Plastics to transform Liz West's colourful vinyl-based installation on Greenwich Peninsula into a series of tables that will be used in Bureau, as well as a range of keyrings for Design District tenants.

### **Eat and drink at the new Design District Canteen**

The Design District Canteen by SelgasCano – a striking transparent, caterpillar-like structure – will also be open to visitors. In this greenery-filled space, a diverse array of international food outlets and drinks stalls will keep visitors refreshed throughout the event.

## Notes to editors

For more information about Design District's opening and the Design District Creates programme, please contact Rupert Evans-Harding at [designdistrict@zetteler.co.uk](mailto:designdistrict@zetteler.co.uk).

### **Design District**

At the heart of Greenwich Peninsula, Design District is London's first permanent, purpose-built hub for the creative industries.

Conceived and developed by Knight Dragon, and designed by eight leading architects, the Design District's collection of 16 unique buildings supports an ecosystem of 1,800 creatives, encompassing individual makers, ambitious start-ups, ground-breaking enterprises and industry leaders.

The closest Tube station is North Greenwich (30 metres). The Jubilee line (24-hour on Friday and Saturday), gets you to London Bridge in eight minutes and Waterloo in 11.

Rent a light-filled studio, a floor or an entire building for just £5 per sqft rent for the first year. With affordable spaces, comprehensive facilities and flexible leases, everything is designed to help creative Londoners thrive.

[designdistrict.co.uk](http://designdistrict.co.uk)

### **Greenwich Peninsula**

Greenwich Peninsula is fast becoming the capital's most boldly modern landscape, with 15,000 new homes, 13,000 new jobs and 48 acres of open public space emerging over the coming years. Here, a community of thousands of pioneers have the opportunity to live in new riverside homes, work in a cutting-edge Design District and enjoy a new linear park, the Tide – all wrapped by the River Thames. This is new London: a destination for modern urban living.

[greenwichpeninsula.co.uk](http://greenwichpeninsula.co.uk)

### **Knight Dragon**

Knight Dragon is an entrepreneurial urban regenerator and property developer. It creates places, builds properties and invests in related projects that bring new ideas and set new standards for urban living. The team uses creativity and collaboration to

innovate. Backed by Dr Henry Cheng, Chairman of New World Development Company Ltd and Chow Tai Fook Jewellery Group Ltd, and led by entrepreneur Sammy Lee, Knight Dragon has a solid foundation and a global outlook. Its flagship project is Greenwich Peninsula in London, where the team is delivering a new district that encapsulates Knight Dragon's approach and expertise in creative placemaking.

[knightdragon.com](http://knightdragon.com)