

Rana Begum x Webb Yates New installation for London Festival of Architecture



No.1387 Fence (2024), Switzerland, by Rana Begum and Webb Yates. Image courtesy of Verbier 3-D Foundation; photography by Melody Sky.

No.1616 Fence (2026)
Powder-coated fence

H 13m x W 1.4m x D 1m

Due to be unveiled on 18 June during the London Festival of Architecture, a new sculptural installation by artist Rana Begum and engineering practice Webb Yates explores boundaries, borders, and belonging in relation to art and engineering, public space and the built environment, context and materiality.

Material choices

No.1616 Fence (2026) is a monumental new installation that plays with a material paradox. Standing outside the iconic Space House in central London, it is built from industrial, powder-coated mesh: a material that both closes off physical access while remaining entirely visually open. The inherent transparency and porosity of the

mesh acts as a form of structural mark making, creating a gauze of colour that engages a visual dialogue with the surrounding site.

The work takes inspiration from prosaic structures such as pylons and radio masts. These minimal structures designed with economy and clarity of purpose often achieve a visual elegance that we sometimes don't give attention to.

"I love pushing against the expectations of materials and working within structural constraints; collaborating with engineers really helps open up possibilities where you thought there were none."

– Rana Begum, artist

The choice of a loud, distinctive red cuts through the visual noise of the busy central London environment, acting as a warning sign that invites passersby to stop in their tracks. The white and grey mineral and concrete material of Space House makes for a more austere setting for the work, it is dramatic in an urban way, with architectural pattern and sky as the backdrop.

From certain angles, the material overlaps into a dense, aggressive patch of solid red; from others, it slims down into a crisp line or almost entirely disappears, letting the surrounding architecture and sky take over. A continuation of a 2024 installation created during a residency in Verbier, Switzerland, this new installation responds directly to its austere, urban setting by Space House.

Located between Covent Garden and Holborn, Space House is a 267,000 sq ft workspace and retail campus that has recently undergone an extensive sustainability-led renovation. One of several London landmarks, including Centre Point and NatWest Tower, designed by the architect Richard Seifert with his long-term collaborator, engineer Willem Frischmann, the building is a synthesis of their disciplines, belonging simultaneously to the realms of structure and architecture.

Circular engineering

The installation is completely modular and assembled from off-the-shelf commercial components. It sits on Portland Stone, a pale British oolitic limestone borrowed from stone fabricator and quarry operator Albion Stone, nodding towards the history of nearby buildings and echoing the surrounding neutral tones. After the festival, the work can be easily disassembled, with all materials able to be reused.

“Webb Yates has designed a lot of pavilions – yet the idea of all this material ending up in a skip horrifies me. To change this, we design in a way where we can simply order standard components for delivery that morning and construct them on site, and once the festival is over, disassemble them to be used again.”

– Steve Webb, co-founder Webb Yates

A longstanding collaboration

No.1616 Fence represents the latest chapter in a long-standing, organic collaboration between Rana Begum and Steve Webb, defined by a playful back-and-forth between artistic vision and structural ingenuity. Both take inspiration from related issues of material, environment, and context, blurring the lines between the conventions of art and engineering.

Notes to editors

Credits

Artist x Engineer: Rana Begum x Webb Yates

Fabricators: BLOQS Create

Collaborators: Space House, HB Reavis, Albion Stone, Setworks

With thanks to: Zetteler and Kate MacGarry, London

Rana Begum

Born in Bangladesh in 1977, Rana Begum lives and works in London. Through her refined language of Minimalist abstraction, Begum blurs the boundaries between sculpture, painting and architecture. Her visual language draws from the urban landscape as well as geometric patterns from traditional Islamic art and architecture. Light is fundamental to her process. Begum’s works absorb and reflect varied densities of light to produce an experience for the viewer that is both temporal and sensorial.

ranabegum.com

Webb Yates

Webb Yates is a multidisciplinary engineering practice comprising structural, civil, and building services engineers. With offices in London and Birmingham, they work with a diverse range of design teams and clients to realise intelligent and

adventurous projects of all scales. Sustainability and an enjoyment of the collaborative creative process are central to their philosophy.

webbyates.com

HB Reavis

HB Reavis is a pan-European investor that designs, develops and manages places that focus on community connection, social value and the wellbeing of its clients. Operating across the UK, Germany, Poland, Slovakia and Hungary, the company has delivered close to 20 million sq ft of new development. HB Reavis currently manages an investment portfolio of 7.3 million sq ft and has a development pipeline of c. 2 million sq ft across multiple sectors.

In 2025, HB Reavis was appointed by QuadReal – a global real estate investment, development and operating company – to deliver the leasing and asset management services for Space House.

hbreavis.com

spacehouse.london