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NATURAL SELECTION

Brompton Design District announces Nature/Nurture as curatorial theme for London Design Festival 2019

● 14–22 September 2019

With the world's wildlife increasingly under threat and habitats rapidly disappearing, there is an urgent need to reassess our relationship with nature and determine how design can help preserve it. For this year's London Design Festival (LDF), Brompton Design District puts the issue in the spotlight, announcing a programme of installations and exhibits in public and temporary spaces exploring the theme of **Nature/Nurture**.

"Nature/Nurture emerged from seeing how design is responding to the crisis in our relationship with the natural world and exploring ways to shift this balance. As well as learning from nature and natural cycles, how can we protect and encourage it?"

JANE WITHERS, CURATOR OF BROMPTON DESIGN DISTRICT AND FOUNDER OF JANE WITHERS STUDIO

Established in 2006 by South Kensington Estates, Brompton Design District is the oldest of LDF's designated districts and unique in its close partnership between established design brands and a temporary programme. Curated by Jane Withers since the first edition, Brompton has become the festival's go-to district for **progressive and responsible design**.

Over the years, Brompton has played host to many experimental exhibitions and events, celebrating design's role as an agent for change. Its curatorial platform is complemented by the rich mix of international design brands, world-renowned museums, and research-led institutions that have cemented Brompton's reputation as one of London's leading design communities. Brompton has become known as a platform for talents and ideas that have gone on to have significant impact on the design industry at large.

For 2019, the District has invited leading international designers and forward-thinking institutions including **Marlène Huissoud**, **Jorge Penadés** and the **Interaction Research Studio at Goldsmiths, University of London** to respond to the Nature/Nurture theme.



Jorge Penadés

BROMPTON BIOTOPIA

Brompton is home to a vast array of flora and fauna. More than 3,000 species, including birds, insects, amphibians, fungi and plants, have been recorded in the Natural History Museum wildlife garden alone.

However, it's now more vital than ever to integrate nature into urban environments and find a way for humans



Marlène Huissoud

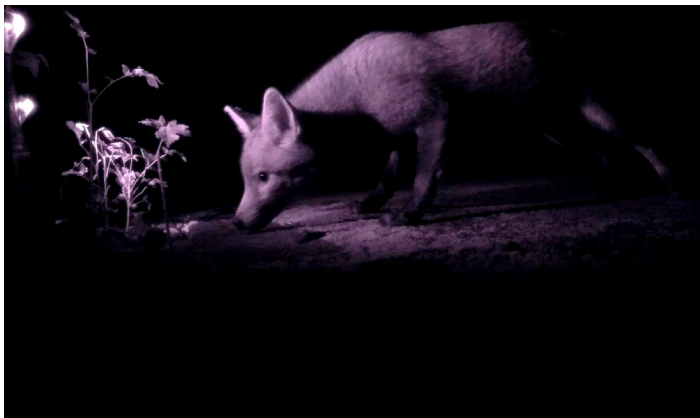
and wildlife to coexist. Urban populations are swelling (the UN predicts that two-thirds of global population will live in cities by 2050), and the animal population is increasingly threatened (40% of all insect species are in decline). Through the development of a series of animal habitats designed to support Brompton's existing ecosystems, Brompton Biotopia seeks to do precisely that. These habitats will act as material explorations of biological processes, and approach principles of design from an animal perspective – emulating how animals build their own homes rather than following human design conventions.

The project is grounded in academic research on biophilia – the mutually beneficial connection between humans and nature – with urban ecologist Dr Rob Francis of King's College London lending expert advice and guidance.

“Biodiversity is an integral and essential component of the urban environment. Biophilic design of buildings and other structures offers important opportunities for encouraging species and ecological communities to thrive in cities, to the benefit of all.”

DR ROB FRANCIS, KING'S COLLEGE LONDON

Award-winning experimental designer **Marlène Huissoud** is the first announced designer who will create habitats for the animal populations of Brompton – birds, bees and all life in between. Working entirely with natural and biodegradable materials, Huissoud will create sustainable animal shelters to go on display at public locations around Brompton.



Interaction Research Studio at Goldsmiths, University of London

Other participants include the **Interaction Research Studio at Goldsmiths, University of London**, which will be developing a habitat integrated with its My Naturewatch DIY wildlife cameras. Assembled from low-cost household materials, these motion-sensitive cameras were designed in collaboration with the Royal College of Art to offer an accessible way for people to use technology to bring them closer to nature.

The aim of Brompton Biotopia is to demonstrate to LDF visitors, Brompton residents and the global design community that even small and simple interventions can make a large and lasting difference to urban ecology.

“Nature in the urban environment is particularly topical as we’ve banished ‘wildness’ in the city and are now seeing the consequences in the catastrophic decrease in biodiversity. Brompton Biotopia uses the district as a platform to explore how design can help propagate nature in the city and small touches that might help shift this critical balance.”

JANE WITHERS, CURATOR, JANE WITHERS STUDIO



Jorge Penadés

NOMADIC PAVILION BY OFICINA PENADÉS

Madrid-based designer Jorge Penadés will unveil a strikingly simple but highly intelligent nomadic pavilion that will pop-up throughout the course of LDF in three public spaces in Brompton. Inspired by the biomechanics of the human body, the pavilion is lightweight and constructed from minimal materials – just tape (similar to kinesiology tape used to hold muscles in place) and plywood sheets. Using the tape to connect large plywood boards, Penadés offers a simple but compelling demonstration of how biomimicry and the human body might inform a discipline such as architecture. Or, in other words, how design can learn from nature.

LONDON FOUNTAIN CO

Another Brompton project in 2019, is the launch of London Fountain Co's first permanent drinking fountain in the public realm to be installed outside South Kensington Tube station. An initiative led by Jane Withers and Charles Asprey, the Fleet drinking fountain is designed by Michael Anastassiades and the prototype was unveiled in the V&A's John Madejski Garden in 2018. This permanent installation reflects Brompton's mission to not merely exhibit innovative work but to use design to actively participate in the area.

BROMPTON DESIGN DISTRICT

Brompton stands out as the only truly curated LDF design district. Held together by a unifying theme devised by Jane Withers Studio in collaboration South Kensington Estates, Brompton has become a leading voice in the global design community.

In 2018, the curatorial theme was Material Consequences, considering the circular economy, rethinking attitudes to materials and how we use and reuse materials and exploring waste and its potential as a resource. In 2019, Nature/Nurture builds upon those ideas, looking to the biosphere, organics and nature's own circular systems for inspirational models and methodologies.

"From the establishment of the V&A in 1851 to the collection of leading contemporary showrooms and flagship stores that line the streets today, design is in Brompton's DNA. Since we established the Design District in 2006, it has been a delight to see this identity evolve and embed itself in the community and to witness the real-life impact it has had on the area."

TIM BUTLER, MANAGING DIRECTOR, SOUTH KENSINGTON ESTATES

Over the last 13 years, Brompton has established its reputation as a leading London design community, in which renowned retail partners come together with trailblazing designers and world-leading cultural institutions such as the V&A to showcase and celebrate meaningful, game-changing new design. Iconic retail partners in Brompton include: Mint, Molteni&C, Cassina, B&B Italia, Smallbone of Devizes, Kartell, Meridiani, Poltrona Frau, Boffi, De Padova and The Conran Shop.

Further details of the Brompton Design District temporary programme, retail partner events and the District's dedicated talks programme will be released in the coming months.

For more information and images, please contact Grace Ridley-Smith at grace@zetteler.co.uk or on +44 (0)20 3735 5855

NOTES FOR EDITORS

ABOUT BROMPTON DESIGN DISTRICT

Established in 2006, Brompton is the longest-running dedicated design district of the London Design Festival. Initiated by South Kensington Estates and curated by Jane Withers since the beginning, the District has been instrumental in nurturing Brompton's reputation as an incubator of creative innovation and one of London's leading design hubs.

Each year, Brompton's iconic global design brands, landmark cultural institutions and a curated selection of pioneering independent studios come together to present some of the most forward-thinking, considered and progressive events and exhibitions of the London Design Festival.

bromptondesigndistrict.com

ABOUT JANE WITHERS STUDIO

The curator of Brompton Design District since its inception in 2006, Jane Withers is a design consultant with a passionate belief in the power of design to instigate positive change. Her eponymous studio works with cultural and commercial clients to apply design thinking to societal challenges, employing a multi-disciplinary of services, including strategy formation, programme development, curation and publishing.

Research-led and highly collaborative, Jane Withers Studio has a particular focus on environmental issues, and many of its projects are concerned with using design to raise awareness and initiate change – often in collaboration with the studio's extensive global network of professional and academic experts. This interest and approach informs the curation of Brompton Design District, and has played a huge part in making Brompton the focal point for sustainable design innovation during London Design Festival.

In 2018, the studio was awarded the Design Prize for Experimentation at the Salone del Mobile in Milan.

www.janewithers.com



My Naturewatch images from the Interaction Research Studio at Goldsmiths, University of London