

The Zetteler guide to LDF 2021 18-26 September 2021

Design District opens



London's latest landmark will open this September. Design District is a unique architectural masterclass comprising 16 buildings by 8 pioneering architects.

The capital's first permanent home for the creative industries officially bursts onto the scene in September, heralding an exciting new chapter for London. Right beside North Greenwich Tube, Design District will be open for the public to explore throughout LDF, and will host a programme of architecture tours led by Open City, plus talks from leading creative thinkers and makers. One of the most striking of its 16 buildings – the transparent, caterpillar-like, greenery-filled Design District Canteen by SelgasCano – will be open for top-drawer food and drink, and there'll be opportunities for everyone to for-creatives, by-creatives members' workspace Bureau first-hand.

Vaarnii launches



The honest qualities of pine are boldly expressed in Vaarnii's Soft Baroque Coffee Table

Head to the twentytwentyone showroom on River Street, Clerkenwell, between 20 and 26 September and, alongside an exhibition of landmark 20th-century furniture, you'll bear witness to the international debut of the groundbreaking new Finnish design brand Vaarnii. Founded by seasoned design professionals with backgrounds featuring Artek, Apple, Tom Dixon and Bang & Olufsen, the new brand is launching with 12 "brutal yet sophisticated" furniture pieces and home accessories – every one of them made in Finland from wild-grown Finnish pine. The roster of designers – which includes the likes of Mac Collins, Max Lamb, Fredrik Paulson, Sarah Kaye Rodden, Philippe Malouin, Soft Baroque and Industrial Facility – should be enough to tell you that this is a major moment. Get in touch for brand info, product images, or interviews with Vaarnii founder ahead of the launch.

Discovering tomorrow's designers



Sketch by Alessandra Fumagalli Romario

LDF has more than proven itself as a fantastic showcase for the biggest and best global design, but it's probably not the first place you'd look for the next generation of design talent. Discovered – a new collaboration between the American Hardwood Export Council (AHEC), Wallpaper* and the Design Museum – sets out to change that. Spanning five continents, the project offers a platform for 20 panel-picked young designers to conceive, create and manufacture a new piece of wooden furniture or an object inspired by life in a pandemic world. From a multifunctional stool reflecting the necessity of adaptability in fast-changing circumstances to meditation on the need for non-verbal communication in the form of a coffee table, the pieces are highly varied in execution, but all are guided by the concepts of touch, reflection and strength, and materially linked by the use of American hardwoods. They will be on show at the Design Museum throughout LDF and beyond.

Introducing: Designposts



Outside Benchmark's workshop in Kintbury

For the first time in festival history, the design districts of LDF will each have a distinctive sculptural design marker to greet visitors. Alongside its work on the Design Museum show *Discovered* (see above), AHEC is also joining forces with the Conran-founded furniture studio Benchmark to commission 10 Designposts. These one-off public sculptures will welcome visitors to each district, capture the unique character of their surroundings, demonstrate the principles of good design, and showcase the aesthetic and sustainability credentials American red oak.

The designers have been selected from two of the city's leading design schools: four from London Met picked by Peter Marigold; and six from the Bartlett chosen by Izaskun Chinchilla. They'll be whisked off to Benchmark's Berkshire workshop to learn new skills and create their respective Designposts, which will be in place for the duration of the festival. Given that all the usual student shows have been off the table for the last year; students have been largely unable to use their institution's workshops and facilities; and chances to mix with other designers have been few and far between, the project couldn't be needed more.

Happenings at HØLTE



Tom and Fiona inside their Hackney showroom and design studio

In the last couple of years, design studio HØLTE has fought its way from sector upstart to industry trendsetter, finding the aesthetic and economic sweet spot between bespoke and proprietary kitchen design. Founders Tom and Fi Ginnett are currently preparing to make a BIG announcement during LDF – and potentially marking the occasion with an event at their Broadway Market showroom. We can't give away too much about what that announcement might be right now – except that it concerns a pioneering sustainability initiative that will set a new benchmark for kitchen brands... More to come!