



CREATIVE TENSIONS

YourStudio Design for a World in Flux

London Design Festival 2025

INTRODUCTION

London Design Festival 2025 unfolds against a backdrop of global tension and fragility shaping our world. Environmental uncertainty, political unrest and human vulnerability are pressing in from all sides, challenging us to reimagine how we live, create and what we value and consume. Design, at its best, responds not only with creativity but also with conscience.

This report captures how designers are navigating the push and pull of our times; finding beauty, resilience and purpose.



CONTENTS

THREADS OF RESISTANCE	04
SLOW INTENT	10
STRONGER TOGETHER	14
CIRCULAR VALUE	19
MAN & MACHINE	22

THREADS OF RESISTANCE

Textiles emerge as a medium of resistance, a language that intersects activism and artistry. Belonging, Identity, and Resilience, explored through embroidery, soundscapes and material experimentation, invite audiences to bear witness to displacement, trauma, and hope.

THERE IS NO PLACE

Themes of identity, hope, and tension tell stories of resistance through fabric

LOCATION:
V&A SOUTH KENSINGTON

DISTRICT:
BROMPTON DESIGN DISTRICT

There’s No Place by Jakkai Siributr is a collaborative installation created with displaced Shan communities. Hanging embroidered fabrics are paired with soundscapes of child refugees sharing hopes and dreams, weaving together identity, tension, and resilience. As visitors immerse themselves, deeper layers unfold, stories of loss, belonging, and the enduring human search for home. The work highlights how creativity can amplify marginalized voices, turning fabric and sound into acts of resistance.

Physical spaces can act as powerful stages for dialogue with audiences, particularly at a time when consumers are increasingly seeking to align their values with those of the brands they support.



ARTIST: JAKKAI SIRIBUTR PHOTOGRAPHY: HEATHER RIPLEY

“The soundscape added a layer of authenticity, humanity and emotion to the exhibition that brought the meaning behind the work to light.”

— HEATHER, 3D DESIGNER, YOURSTUDIO





TENDER REVOLUTION

Exploring softness as radical care:
a space for questioning, listening,
and renewal

Tender Revolution, presented by artists from the Royal College of Art, responds to rigid systems with practices of care, attentiveness and renewal. Fashion, textiles, ceramics, jewellery, and product frame design as an act of resistance, gentle yet radical in its insistence on empathy and human connection. Through listening, questioning, and material sensitivity, they show how small gestures can repair, connect, and imagine alternative futures.

The exhibition is a reminder that meaningful innovation doesn't always come from scale or spectacle, but from care-led design, rooted in human experience.

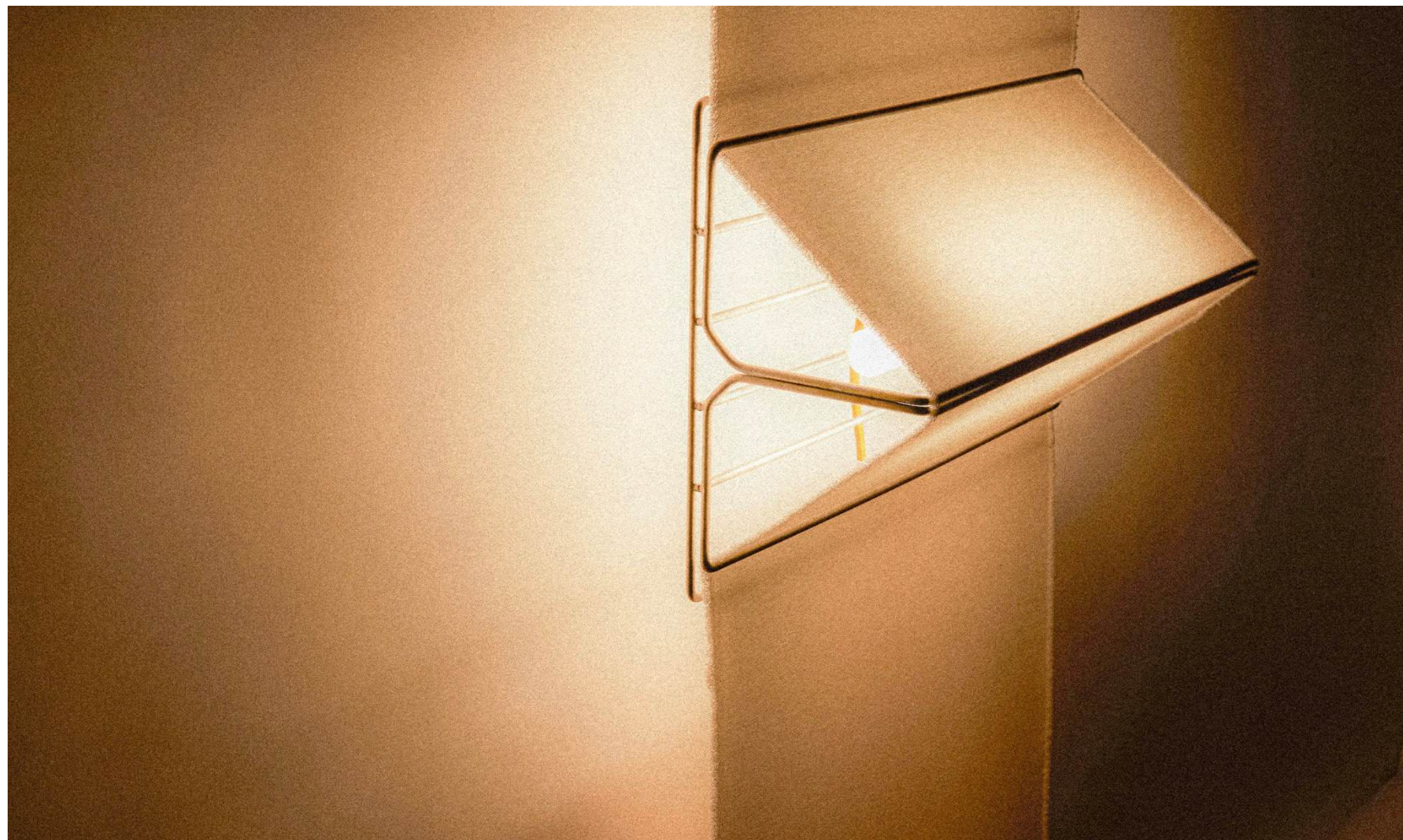
LOCATION:
237 BROMOTON ROAD

DISTRICT:
BROMPTON DESIGN DISTRICT

ARTIST: RUIKIN GUO

“Textiles are always enjoyable for their pure exploration of colour, form and structure and here sculptural investigations into waste fabric created enveloping, other worldly intrigue.”

— KATY, STRATEGIST, YOURSTUDIO



ARTIST: ALEXANDRE MANKO

VOICES FROM THE UNDEFINED



A curatorial effort to bypass traditional art-world validation systems

ArtEvol 2025 explores resistance through emergence, an artistic movement in flux, shaped by tensions between technology and the body, the self and the other, the real and the fictional. Presented by the London Art Collective, the exhibition amplifies the voices of marginalized and diasporic individuals. By embracing contradiction, drift, and unresolved desire, *ArtEvol* resists closure, presenting art as an evolving dialogue rather than a fixed statement.

The exhibition highlights the importance of elevating diverse voices, creating platforms that challenge convention and reimagine the future through multiplicity.

LOCATION:
GREAT PULTENEY STREET GALLERY

DISTRICT:
MAYFAIR DESIGN DISTRICT

ART COLLECTIVE: ARTEVOL

SLOW INTENT

Slowness, tactility and mindful making emerged as responses to a fast-paced, efficiency-driven world. The festival celebrates imperfect materials and processes, highlighting the stories, histories, and ecological connections embedded in craft. Nature and analogue practices ground the work, fostering emotional depth and authentic engagement.



ARTIST: SEBASTIAN SOCHAN



ARTIST: DANA GOH

THE SUN IS BUT A MORNING STAR

Tactile gestures reclaim
emotional depth and slowness
in a fast-paced world

LOCATION:
GREAT PULTENEY STREET GALLERY

DISTRICT:
MAYFAIR DESIGN DISTRICT

FRONT COVER IMAGE:
MIRI SHIN, QLOUD COLLECTIVE

Presented by Qloud Collective, *The Sun is but a Morning Star* showcases nine artists exploring the evolving role of craft in contemporary design. The exhibition reflects on intentional slowness, intimacy, and the poetic force of making in an urgent world driven by efficiency and speed of production.

Tactile works reconnect audiences to nature, foliage, and the grounding rhythms of craft. By emphasizing tenderness over speed and efficiency, the show reminds brands and retailers that care-driven design can foster deeper connections, emotional resonance, and consumer engagement extending beyond surface-level transactions.

SKETCHING WITH STICKERS

LOCATION:
THE DESIGN MUSEUM

DISTRICT:
BROMPTON DESIGN DISTRICT



Analogue as an Antidote:
The Return to Tactility

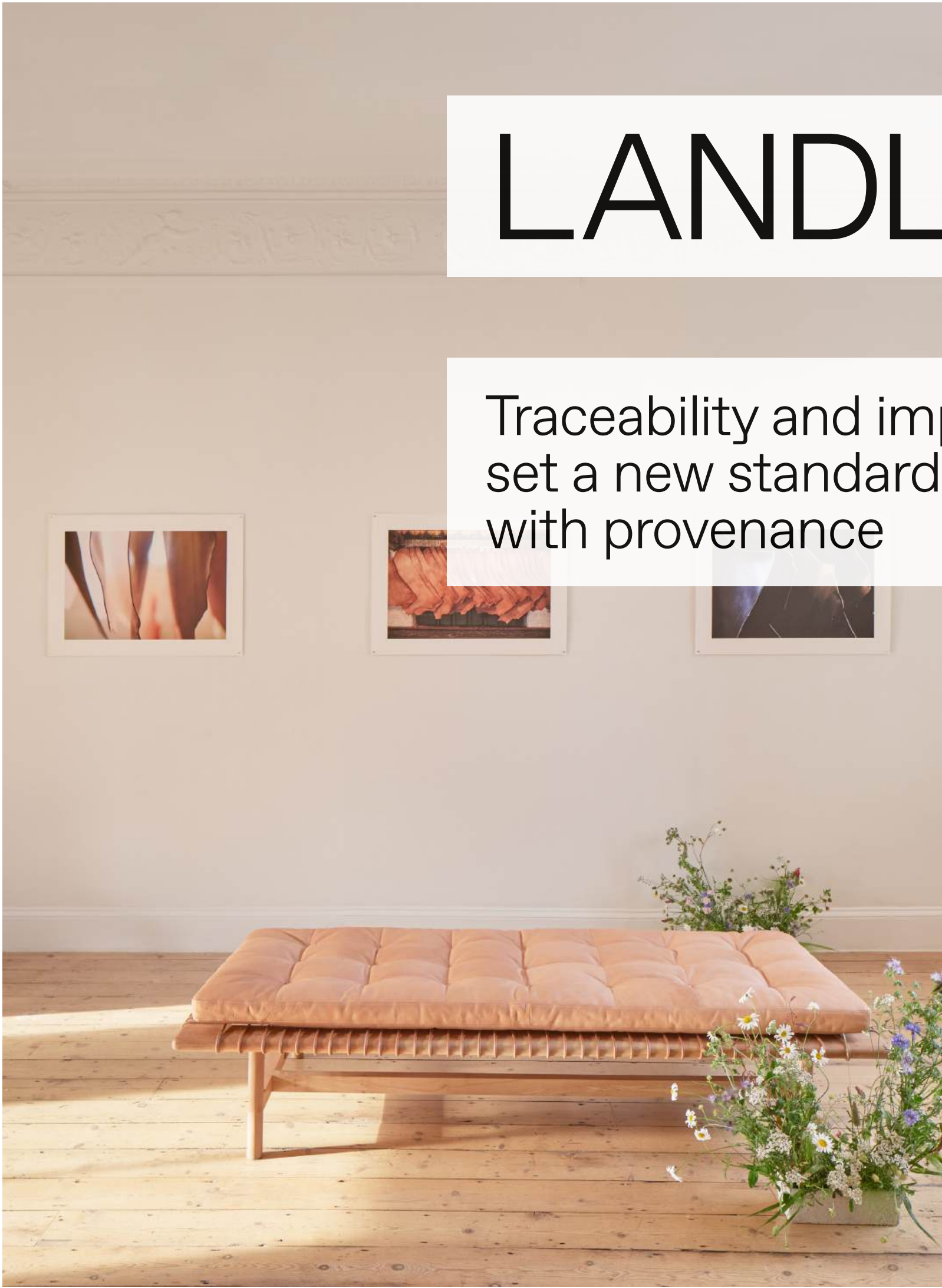
Sketching with Stickers by Marina Willer, Partner at Pentagram, emerged during lockdown as a mindful escape from screen fatigue. Using stickers to create analogue sketches, Willer embraces slowness, tactility, and imperfection as a counterpoint to the homogenizing influence of digital tools. The work highlights how analogue processes can unlock playfulness, individuality, and creative freedom in a time dominated by efficiency.

Design solutions that prioritize tactile engagement, craft, and sensory richness can differentiate experiences, offering audiences respite from digital overload and fostering deeper, more memorable connections.

ARTIST: MARINA WILLER



COLLABORATION: OTZI STUDIO X JASON LOWE X BRITISH PASTURE LEATHER



LANDLINES

Traceability and imperfection
set a new standard for leathers
with provenance

LOCATION:
CROMWELL PLACE

DISTRICT:
BROMPTON DESIGN DISTRICT

Otzi Studio showcase furniture made with British Pasture Leather, pioneer a new standard for leather production and authentic storytelling, connecting the material directly to regenerative farming practices. The company’s approach values the quality of process, from breeding to the ecosystem and the community. By tracing each hide back to farms that improve animal welfare and biodiversity, they challenge the traditional perception of flawless leather. Scrapes and “growth marks” are celebrated as a natural patina telling the story of the animal’s life.

Brands can build trust and value by providing consumers with a clear connection to the origin of their products through transparent supply chains.

The *tension of convention* challenges established norms and creates spaces for voices that are less often heard. Uniting people through difference, several installations focus on “third spaces” where communities come together, using shared stories and materials to create a sense of belonging and beauty.

STRONGER TOGETHER

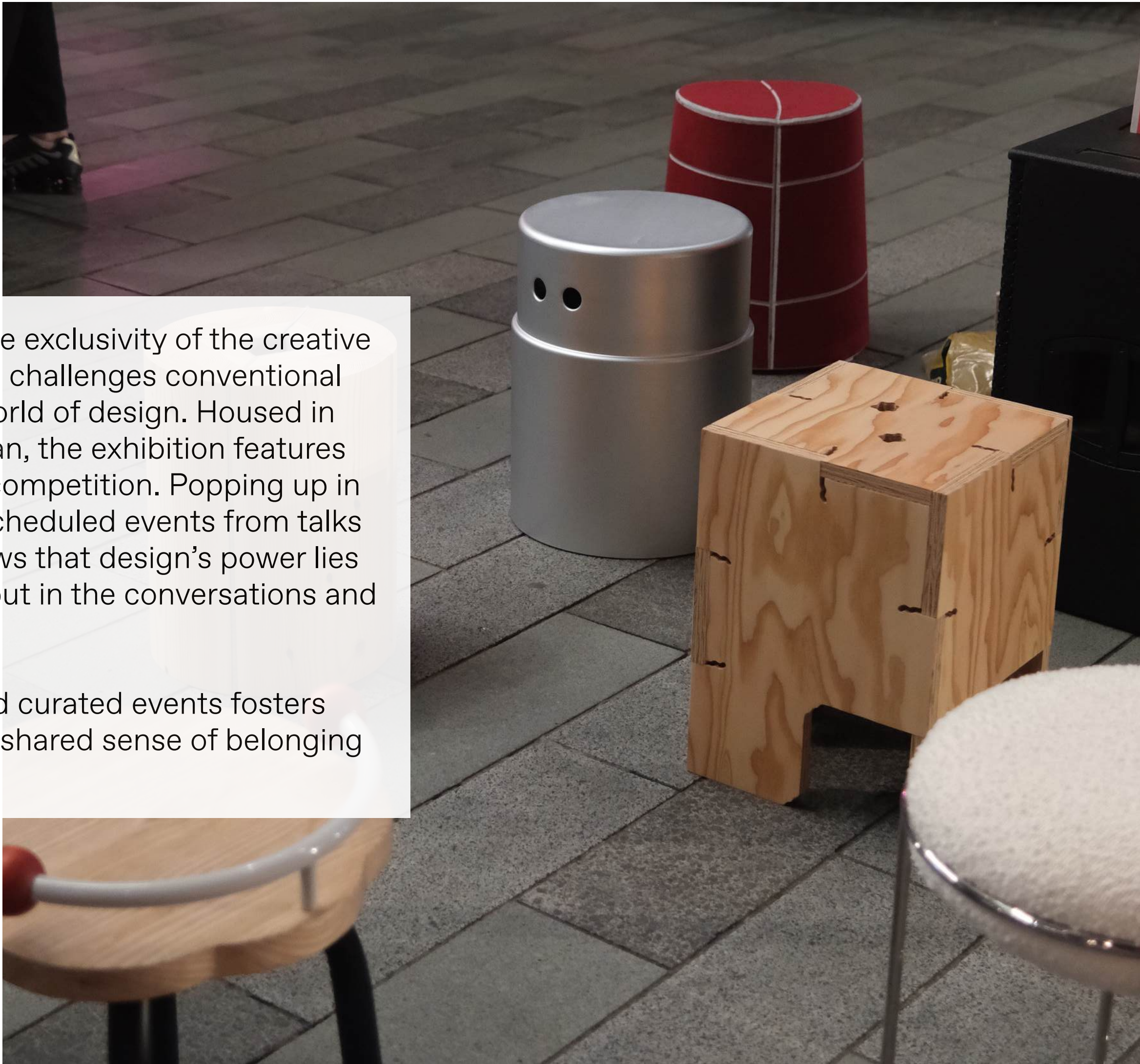
A SEAT AT THE TABLE

Collectively challenging
barriers to inclusion in design

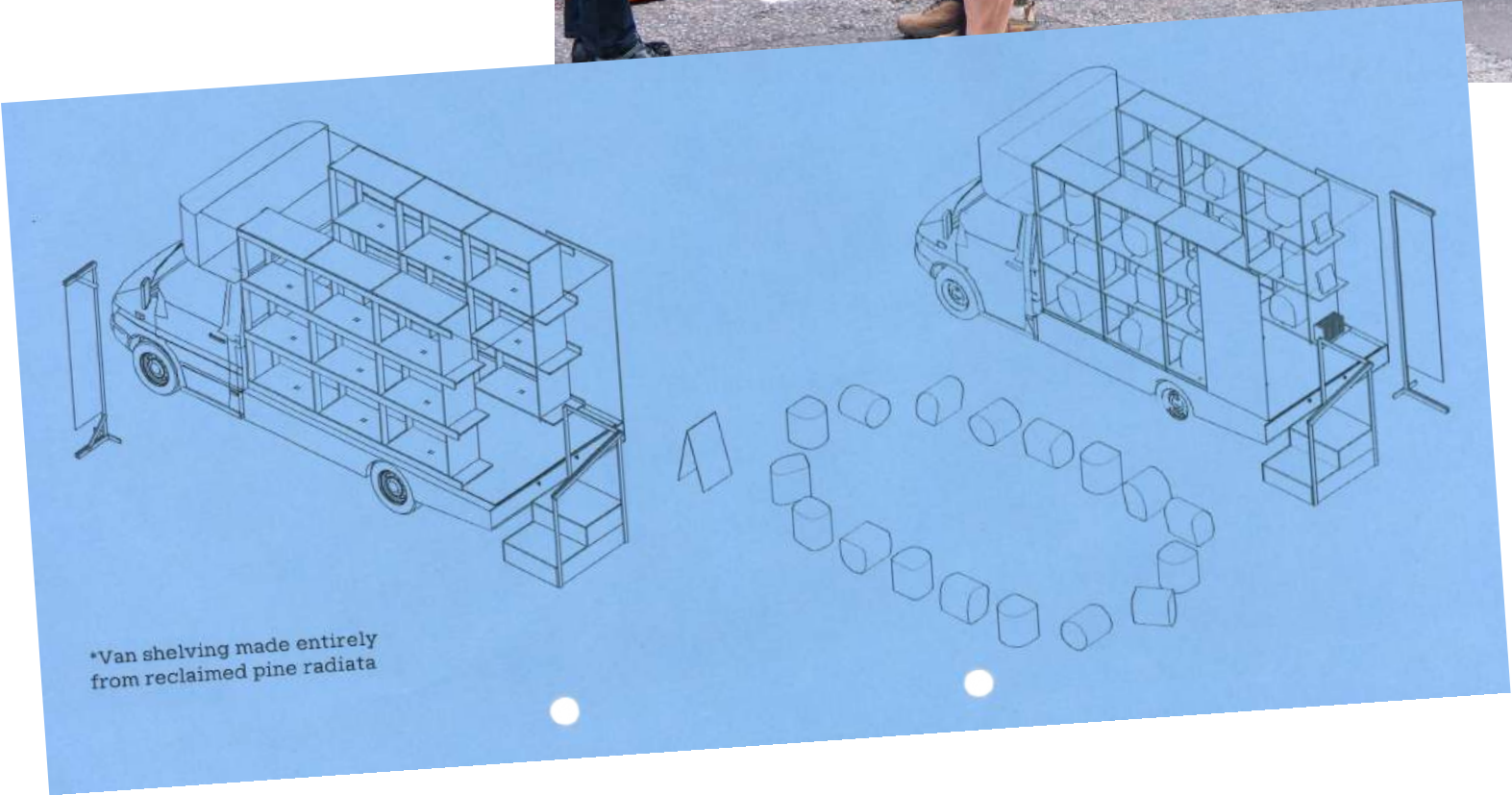
LOCATION:
VARIOUS

Born from frustration with the exclusivity of the creative industry, ‘A Seat at the Table’ challenges conventional barriers to inclusion in the world of design. Housed in the back of a roving Luton van, the exhibition features 36 chairs from an open call competition. Popping up in unexpected locations with scheduled events from talks to run clubs, the project shows that design’s power lies not just in the final product but in the conversations and community surrounding it.

Bridging design, purpose and curated events fosters a sense of community and a shared sense of belonging for audiences.



COLLECTIVE: DESIGN EVERYTHING



“A moving exhibition activating pockets of space across London is a silent protest towards tradition in an industry notoriously difficult to crack.”

— NAT, EXPERIENCE DESIGNER, YOURSTUDIO

YOU CAN SIT WITH US

An underground salon of queer design celebrates inclusivity in collective shades of green

2LG Studio creates an underground salon celebrating queer, multi-disciplinary talent across lighting, furniture, ceramics, glassware, art and textiles. Each artefact is a response to the green carnation, a flower Oscar Wilde wore as a discreet signal of queerness, now reimagined as a symbol of visibility and pride.

In championing inclusive design, brands will resonate with marginalized groups, demonstrating authenticity through collaboration and representation. When creativity, identity and culture intersect, it’s a reminder that inclusive design representation is not just progressive, but essential to meaningful connection.

LOCATION:
SHOREDITCH TOWN HALL

DISTRICT:
SHOREDITCH DESIGN TRIANGLE



IMAGE: 2LG STUDIO

SOFT WORLDS, SHARP EDGES

Femininity subverted:
An ode to the complexities
of femininity

Curated by designer Charlotte Taylor, the exhibition ‘Sharp Edges’ challenges conventional notions of femininity. A domestic scene, centred around a metal bed, sets the stage. Works by 36 female designers intentionally juxtapose “softness” with “hardness”. Materials like stainless steel and bike parts subvert the stereotype of women’s design as delicate and soft. The adaptable nature of many works speaks to the multifaceted demands of modern womanhood.

The show reminds us that design can serve as a medium for social commentary, showcasing how materials and forms can reflect complex identities beyond stereotypes.

LOCATION:
THE LAVERY

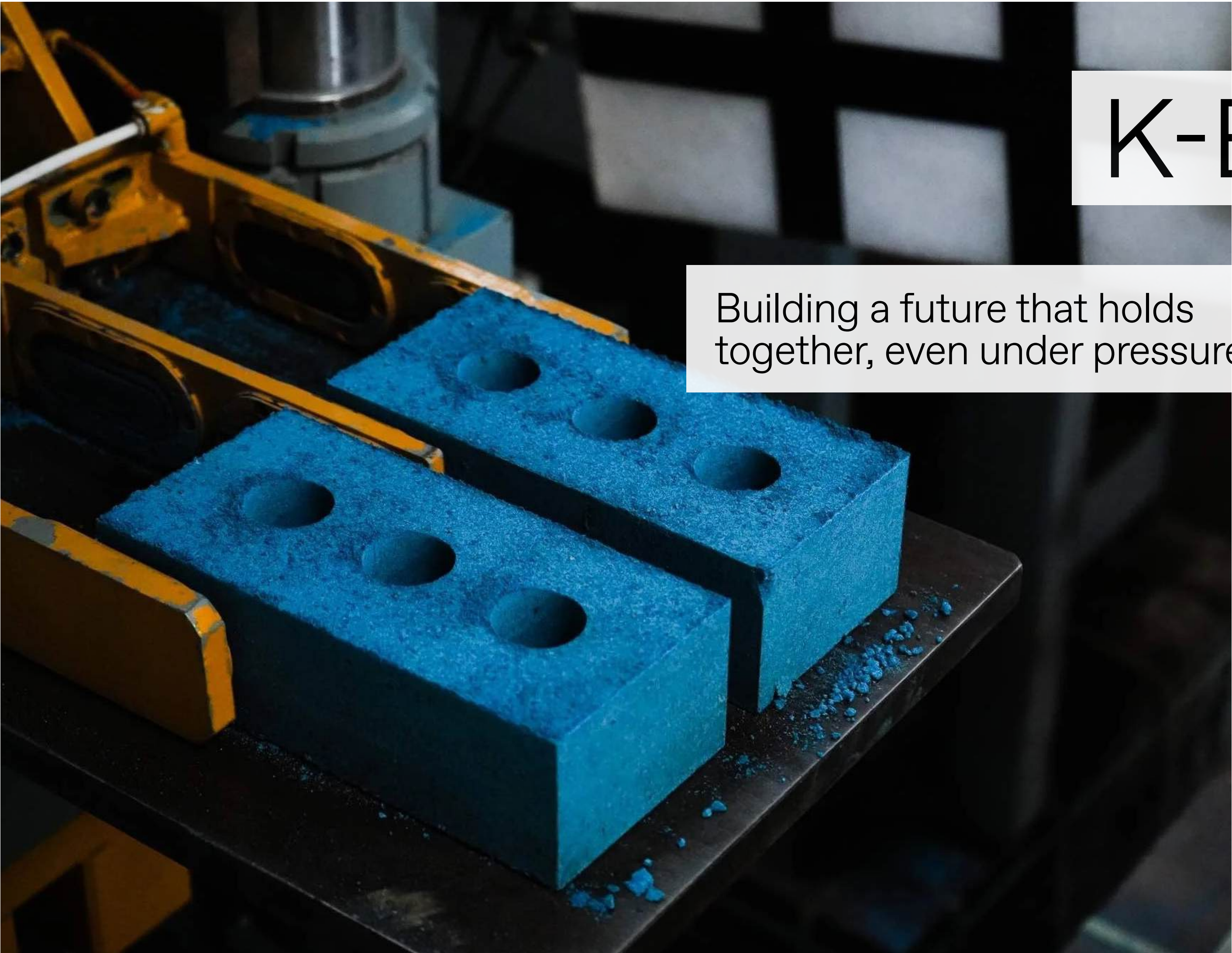
DISTRICT:
BROMPTON DESIGN DISTRICT



PHOTOGRAPHY: STUDIO STAGG VIA DEZEEN

CIRCULAR VALUE

In this climate, the value of design lies not just in what we create but in how we create it. Works across the festival celebrate materials with meaning, processes that honor tradition whilst embracing innovation, and stories that connect makers to materials and materials to people.



K-BRIQ

Building a future that holds together, even under pressure

The UK’s construction industry is a major source of waste. Kenoteq aims to remedy this with the K-BRIQ, a circular product made from 95% construction waste. These low-carbon bricks offer the same durability as conventional clay bricks. Partnering with local waste collection companies, Kenoteq transforms waste materials into a valuable building material.

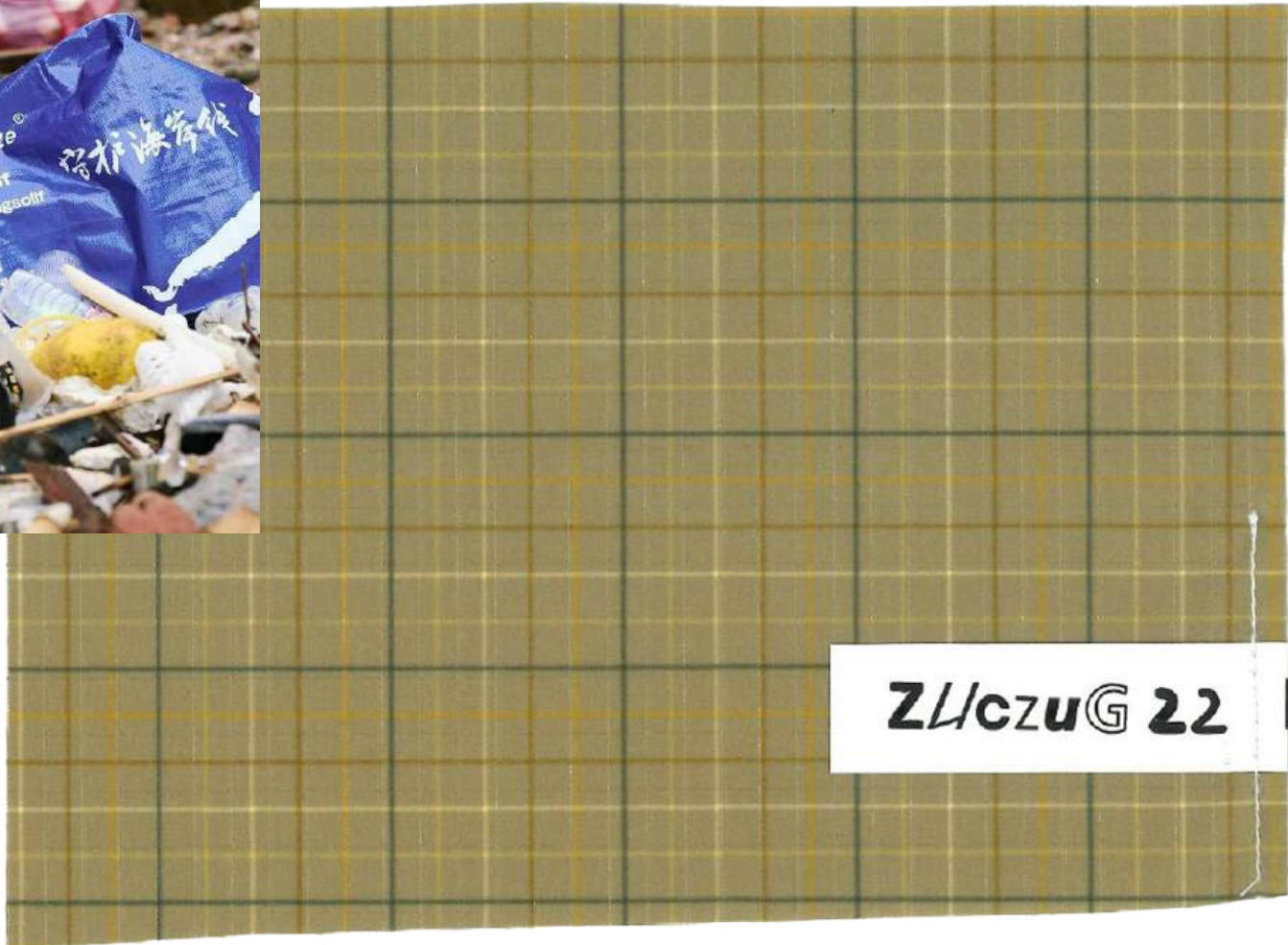
This approach reduces landfill waste and provides a tangible way for brands and retailers to lower their embodied carbon, and build their sustainability story into the very fabric of their spaces.

LOCATION:
SPACE HOUSE

DESIGNER: KENOTEQ

ZUCZUG 22

LOCATION:
SPACE HOUSE



Radical transparency and direct action create value for the community and the environment

Shanghai-based platform ZUCZUG created a robust and transparent sustainability model with its “From Beachcombing into Clothing” initiative. The brand collaborates with marine conservation groups on QingBang Island organizing community beach cleaning walks. The collected waste is then transformed into a 100% recycled polyester fabric. The process gives new life to ocean pollutants and provides a verifiable story for consumers.

Brands that engage with local communities purposefully can add significant sentimental and social value to a product, turning sustainable policies into tangible, shared experiences.

MAN & MACHINE

The significance of creativity lies in the interaction between people and technology. Across the festival, projects highlight how humans and AI can work together as creative partners. These collaborations combine human imagination with technological innovation, creating stories that connect artists, their tools, and their audiences.

SELF PORTRAIT

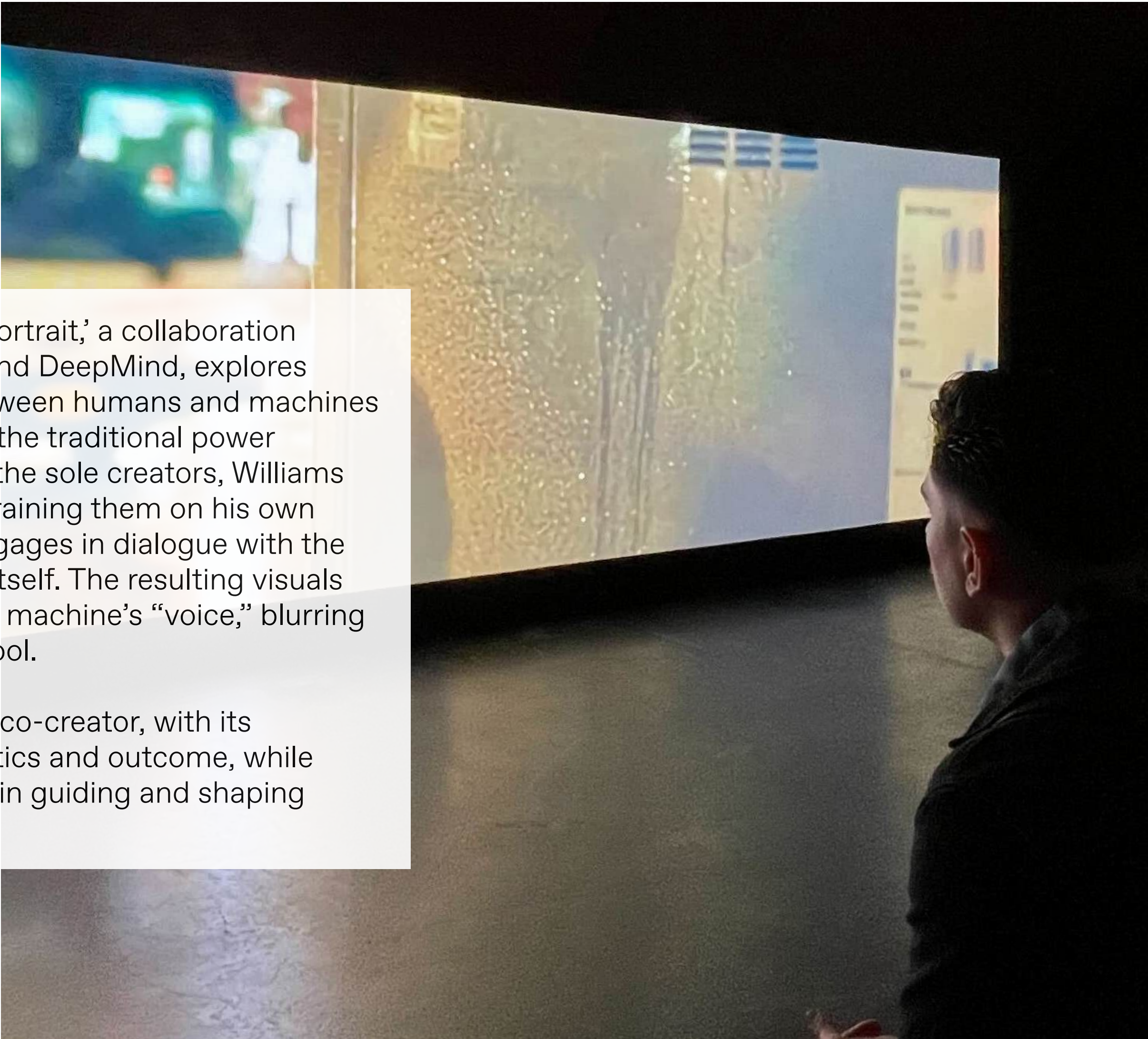
Exploring creativity, identity, and shared authorship in the age of AI

LOCATION:
DESIGN LONDON SHOREDITCH

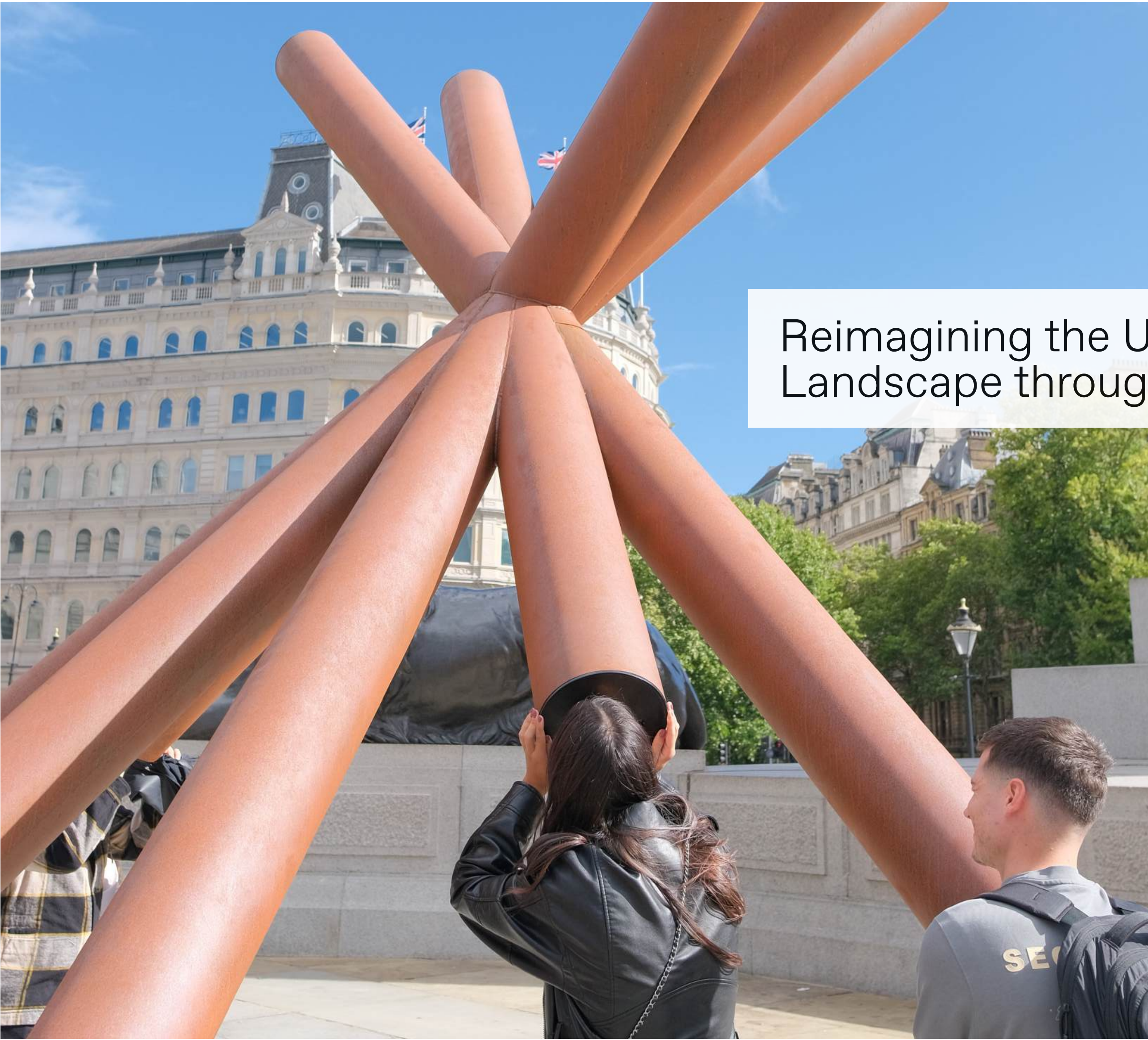
DISTRICT:
SHOREDITCH DESIGN TRIANGLE

Ben Cullen Williams’s ‘Self-Portrait,’ a collaboration with Google Arts & Culture and DeepMind, explores the evolving relationship between humans and machines in a world of AI. Challenging the traditional power dynamic where humans are the sole creators, Williams uses generative AI models, training them on his own photographic archive. He engages in dialogue with the AI, prompting it to describe itself. The resulting visuals are a direct translation of the machine’s “voice,” blurring the line between artist and tool.

The work showcases AI as a co-creator, with its own influence on the aesthetics and outcome, while human agency remains vital in guiding and shaping the final result.



ARTIST: BEN CULLEN WILLIAMS



Reimagining the Urban Landscape through a future lens

Paul Cockshedge’s installation “What Nelson Sees” offers visitors a unique perspective on London’s urban evolution, blending human creativity with AI. A series of copper-hued telescopes equipped with AI technology allow visitors to view London from the top of Nelson’s Column. Through the telescopes, viewers witness a time-lapsed visualization of the city’s history, from its Victorian past to its present and a speculative future.

Using AI to visualize data, Cockshedge transforms a static, historical vantage point into a dynamic, engaging narrative, demonstrating that technology can enhance our appreciation for the world around us.

LOCATION:
TRAFALGAR SQUARE

ARTIST: PAUL COCKSEGE PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK COCKSEGE

YourStudio creates environments and experiences that inspire human connection.

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