confessions of a design geek is an award-winning blog established in 2010 by Katie Treggiden to discover, champion and inspire new designers. It has been named as a top design blog by Dwell US, Elle Decor Italia and The Sunday Times. Katie also writes for the Guardian, Dezeen, Design Milk, the Telegraph and Ideal

The alternative guide to London Design Festival 2015

by KATIE on Sep 17, 2015 · 2:25 pm

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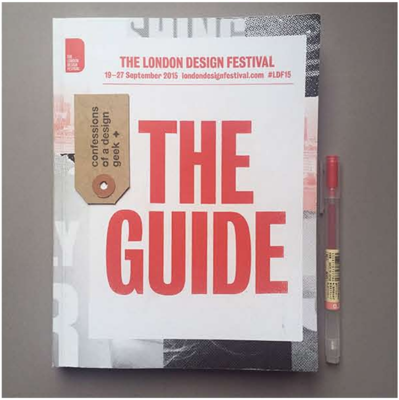
THE LONDON DESIGN FESTIVAL
19–27 September 2015 londondesignfestival.com #LDF15
THE GUIDE
confessions of a design geek

It's that time of year again, and the London Design Festival is looming. All the action starts on Saturday 20 September, so I have scoured the guide, trawled through my inbox and asked my friends in the know, sorted through invites, read all the press releases, and put my ear to the ground – and pulled together this handy day-by-day to guide to help you navigate the 200+ events taking place across the capital.

Saturday 20 September 2015 – V&A

THE OGHAM WALL
GRAFTON ARCHITECTS & GRAPHIC RELIEF FOR IRISH DESIGN 2015
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CISION TOP 10 INTERIOR DESIGN BLOG 2015

The V&A is the 'hub' venue again this year, and promises an exciting collection of special commissions alongside existing exhibitions. "It is always thrilling to see the museum enlivened by the broad and imaginative range of displays and installations that appear during the London Design Festival," said director Martin Roth. Join a tour of the LDF installations departing from the Festival Desk in the Grand Entrance at 12pm, 2pm or 4pm. I do one of the tours every year and they are a great way to make sure you see everything – they last about an hour.

Among the highlights this year will be: You Know You Cannot See Yourself So Well As By Reflection, a reflective installation in the John Madejski Garden designed to spark conversations about identity and cultural exchange; The Cloakroom by Faye TooGood, where visitors will be invited to wear specially designed coats that transform them into custodians for the day; and Robin Day Works in Wood, an exhibition to mark the centenary of the iconic designer's birth. Most famous for his Polypropylene stacking chairs, this exhibition focuses on his life-long love of wood. "I think his use of wood is a neglected aspect of his work," explains his daughter Paula Day, who has made small wooden objects and drawings by her father, never seen before, available for the exhibition.

CURIOSITY CLOUD
MISCHER'TRAXLER
confessions of a design geek

Also at the V&A will be the Ogham Wall by Grafton Architects and Graphic Relief, a collection of three-metre-high cast concrete 'fins' inspired by the Irish Ogham alphabet; Zotem, an 18-metre-high monolith, created by Norwegian designer Kim Thomé to rise from the museum's Grand Entrance to the Contemporary Ceramics Gallery on the sixth floor above; and the Curiosity Cloud by Mischer'Traxler and Perrier-Jouët – 250 mouth-blown glass globes each containing a single hand-fabricated, foil-printed, laser-cut, hand-embroidered insect. "Curiosity Cloud is about celebrating a moment in nature and the relationship that humans have with the entomological world around us," said the designers. And there's much more – so take your time, grab lunch in one of the V&A's many cafes, and make sure you pop into the specially commissioned LDF shop (which might just have copies of Fiera Magazine for sale!)

- V&A, Cromwell Rd, London SW7 2RL, 10am – 5.45pm daily

Sunday 20 September 2015 – Decorex

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2015 CISION TOP 10

LATEST TWEETS

I have sorted through invites, read all the press releases and asked my friends in the know for this #LDF15 guide: http://t.co/rauhuVR13q#,23 hours ago

@yeshen On which site? #,Sep 19

All the action at the #LDF15 starts today! Check @coadg's handy day-by-day guide: http://t.co/svWBmdv2BR#,Sep 19

@eporta_ Thanks so much for having me! #FF right backatcha! #,Sep 18

Thank you! :) RT @tjns: I just voted for @coadg in the Amara Interior Blog Awards! Cast your vote now... http://t.co/gR4eW6H92O#IBA15#,Sep 18

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INSTAGRAM

THE GUIDE
MAKERS OF EAST LONDON

Decorex usually starts on the last Sunday of the festival, and I must confess, I am often all chaired out by that point, so I don't always make it. Happily, this year it runs from first Sunday until Wednesday 23 September and I'm really excited about this year's line up. Exhibitors Sebastian Cox, Bethan Gray, and Naomi Paul make it worth the trip alone, but I'm also looking forward to Future Heritage, a selection of contemporary makers curated by design critic Corinne Julius – and Making Luxury, an interactive installation featuring live demonstrations from Nic Webb, Volta, De Gournay and The Gainsborough Silk Weaving Company. It's a bit of a schlep, but there are complimentary buses running from Richmond and Osterley tube stations or it's a ten minute (signposted) walk from Syon Park.

- Decorex, Syon Park, Brentford, Middlesex TW8 8JF Sunday and Monday 10am – 6pm, Wednesday 10am – 5pm

Monday 21 September 2015 – Somerset House and Central

CENTRAL
confessions of a design geek

On Monday, I'm going to suggest you start by exploring new venue for LDF, Somerset House. Ten Designers in the West Wing includes installations by Edward Barber and Jay Osgerby, Ross Lovegrove, Jasper Morrison and Arik Levy. I'm particularly interested to see Faye Toogood's Drawing Room, for which she will recreate the interior of a dilapidated country house with charcoal drawings on plastic sheeting lining the walls, her Roly-Poly collection remodelled in charcoal-coloured fibreglass, a hand-woven rug and 'stray' cardboard origami chickens and ducks. I also can't wait to see My Grandfather's Tree by Max Lamb. A 187-year-old tree that had to be removed from his grandfather's Yorkshire farm has been cut into 130 logs, which will be laid out in order of diameter in Somerset House's Embankment Galleries. "I wanted the tree to remain integral to the wood, and to process each section of the tree as little as possible other than to make the top and base level in order to give function to the material," said the designer of the logs which will be used as stools, tables and chairs.

19 Greek Street is a must-see while you're central – this year's exhibition is The Art of Progress, which they describe as "a design-led ethical lifestyle exhibition featuring a café, a curated apartment, a gallery/lecture room and a wellness studio." As is The New Craftmen's Craft & Ingenuity – a showcase of emerging craft talent.

- Somerset House, Strand, London WC2R 1LA, 10am – 6pm daily
- 19 Greek Street, London, W1D 4DT
- The New Craftsmen 34 North Row, Mayfair, London W1K 6DG 10am – 6pm

Tuesday 22 September 2015 – Clerkenwell, Islington and King's Cross

Craft Central will be hosting "seven designers with seven styles and seven ways of making something extraordinary" in Material Consequences, an exhibition sharing what designers can do with simple materials like wood, metal, cloth, ceramics, glass and cork. Nearby at Desso, don't miss, Best In Class, an exhibition of 2015's brightest design graduates (curated by yours truly!).

The Islington Design District comprises nine shops and showrooms united by a map you can collect in any one of them. Highlights include the Camille Walala transformation of design shop Aria, stationery shop Present & Correct's interactive wall of envelopes and twentytwentyone where Barber & Osgerby's new lighting range will be launched. Grab the map, get a stamp in each venue and get a free coffee in Cafe Smug – and check out the exhibition of work by Dutch ceramist Lenneke Wispelwey while you're there.

Central Saint Martins presents The Intelligent Optimist, which explores possible futures for design through their graduate work. "The work of our students is almost by default optimistic – why design the world as a worse place? – and is always shot through with a canny intelligence," said a statement from the University. "The Intelligent Optimist has never been needed more than in the current era of political and social despondency. We are all looking for alternative visions, but not naively hopeful ones. In their various combinations of wit, rigour, lateral thinking, sensuousness, ingenuity, social engagement and all round intelligence, these Central Saint Martins graduates provide a brilliant riposte to the novelist Howard Jacobson's provocation that he has 'never met an intelligent optimist.'"

- Craft Central, 33-35 St John's Square, London EC1M 4DS, 9am – 5pm
- Desso, 23-25 Great Sutton Street, Clerkenwell, London EC1V 0DN.
- Aria, Barnsbury Hall, Barnsbury Street, Islington, London N1 1PN Monday – Saturday 10am – 6.30pm and Sunday 12pm – 5pm
- Present & Correct, 23 Arlington Way, London EC1R 1UY, Monday – Saturday 12 – 6.30pm.

- Smug 13 Camden Passage, Islington N1 8EA, Tuesday 12pm – 5pm, Wednesday 11am – 6pm, Thursday 12 – 7pm, Friday 11am – 6pm, Saturday 10am – 6pm and Sunday 12pm – 5pm.
- Central Saint Martins Granary Building, 1 Granary Square, King's Cross, London N1C 4AA, 9am – 7pm

Wednesday 23 September 2015 – 100% Design and West

WEST
100% Design

100% Design is the show that started it all and celebrates it 21st edition this year in a new venue, Olympia London, with the theme Design in Colour. The talks programme is particularly strong this year – catch Ilse Crawford at 11am talking about design that engages the senses, from the Danish concept of 'hygge' to being driven by the emotional side of design. If you're planning a later start to the day, author of The Twentieth Century in Colour, Keith Recker, is chairing What Different Colours Mean Around the World at 1.45pm, or you can see architect Mark Dytham, colour psychologist Angela Wright and neuroscientist Gabriele Jordan debate How Does Colour Make You Feel at 3.15pm chaired by editorial director of the Architects' Journal, Paul Finch. Don't miss new work from exhibitors Kirath Ghundoo, WUU, Weng Xinyu, and then head out to the rest of the West.

At 1.30pm, nip back to the V&A to hear Benchmark director Sean Sutcliffe and Fixperts co-founder Professor Daniel Charny discuss Fixing Attitudes with a panel of experts chaired by FT architecture critic and co-founder of the hardware manufacturer, Izé, Edwin Heathcote.

Then explore the Brompton Design District's pop-up programme, curated by design consultant Jane Withers. Don't miss Object Relations, an exhibition of designed objects paired with the tools used to make them, curated by Pai Wüstenberg. Oyuna presents Bygone // Reborn, three projects inspired by the Mongolian 'deel' – an outer garment worn by nomadic horseback warriors – in the same space. Nearby, Mint's Twisting Tradition will present craft-orientated design including nendo's new collection Tokyo Tribal and new work from 2015 confessions of a design geek bursary winner Alicja Patanowska.

A little further afield, but well worth the trip, the RCA will be presenting exhibitions covering topics from sustainability and healthcare design to the evolving nature of family life in the digital age, and a showcase of work by recently graduated Design Product students. Habitat's Platform will be hosting Inside Out, an exhibition of key pieces of furniture from the Crafts Council's collection, including work by Tom Dixon, Jim Partridge and Tomoko Azumi. And if you haven't already seen 2015's Serpentine Pavilion by artists José Selgas and Lucia Cano, it might be worth trying to squeeze in a visit – although it will be there until 16 October, so there's no hurry if you're local.

- 100% Design, Olympia London, Hammersmith Road, Kensington, London W14 8UX, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday (public day) 10am – 6pm, Thursday 10am – 9pm.
- Fixing Attitudes, the Lydia and Manfred Gorvy Lecture Theatre, Level 4, at the V&A – details as previously
- Object Relations, / Oyuna London Morgan, 6 Astwood Mews, SW7 4DE, 11am – 7pm daily.
- Mint, 2 North Terrace, Alexander Square, London SW3 2BA, Monday – Saturday 10.30am – 6.30pm, Thursday 10.30am – 7.30pm
- RCA Kensington, Kensington Gore, SW7 2EU, 11am – 5pm daily.
- Platform, Habitat, 1st Floor, 208 King's Road, Chelsea, London SW3 5XP, Monday – Friday 10am – 6pm, Saturday 9:30am – 6pm and Sunday 12pm – 6pm.
- Serpentine, Kensington Gardens, London W2 3XA, 10am – 6pm daily.

Thursday 24 September 2015 – designjunction and Central

Start your central explorations at designjunction's Victoria House venue, and if you fancy it, you can join me for a tokyobike tour from 10am – 1pm – we'll be getting 'off the beaten track' and seeing some of the smaller fringe events as part of the festival. Grab lunch at the specially commissioned TfL restaurant while appreciating Camilla Barnard's pop-up underground station made entirely from wood, and then set about exploring designjunction, which is split across two venues this year – we're going to do the 'The College' first. "The former Central Saint Martins is at the heart of London's vibrant design scene and the perfect environment for visitors to connect and engage with design," said designjunction's Deborah Spencer. Brands like HAY, Dare Studio, David Irwin and Lindsay Lang will be tucked into classrooms within the college, the former Cochrane Theatre will seat 300 for a seminar programme based on Design for a Reason, and Wrong for Hay's collaboration with Noble Espresso will keep you caffeinated. Come and find Fiera Magazine on stand 8a on level two and subscribe for just £30 a year.

Pop into do shop to see Do Masters and pick up work by design graduates safe in the knowledge that the profits are making their way back to the designers. Another Country will be presenting a collection by guest designers reflecting the company's Dorset origins, while the Contemporary Ceramics Centre will be showing Marcus O'Mahony's first solo exhibition, explaining, "When clay is fired for three to four days with kiln temperatures of 1300 degrees, the resulting pots do not sit quietly. They erupt, explode and implode within the drama of the flames, wood and ash." Darkroom is celebrating its fifth anniversary with five products inspired by five geometric shapes.

Head back to designjunction's Victoria House for the late night shopping event from 7pm – 9pm to see 50 pop-up shops include confessions of a design geek favourites like HAM, Kangan Arora, Richard Brendon and Tom Pigeon. Enjoy a complimentary glass of bubbly on arrival and get involved in design masterclasses from nest.co.uk and 2 Lovely Gays, see live making demonstrations and enjoy the music.

- designjunction, The College, 12-42 Southampton Row, London WC1B 4AP, Thursday 11am – 21pm, Friday and Saturday 11am – 6pm, Sunday 11am – 5pm.
- do shop, 34 Shorts Gardens, London, Covent Garden, London WC2H 9PX, Monday – Saturday 10am – 6.30pm, Thursday 10am – 8pm, Sunday 12pm – 6pm.
- Another Country, 18 Crawford Street, Marylebone, London W1H 1BT, Monday – Friday 10am – 6pm, Saturday 11am – 5pm.
- Contemporary Ceramics Centre, 63 Great Russell St, London WC1B 3BF, Monday – Saturday 10.30 – 6pm.
- designjunction, Victoria House, 37 Southampton Row, London WC1B 4DA, Thursday 11am – 21pm, Friday and Saturday 11am – 6pm, Sunday 11am – 5pm.

Friday 25 September – Tent London and East

EAST
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I would suggest getting East bright and early and starting your day with a flat white and a Portuguese custard tart at Nude Espresso on Hanbury Street before diving into Tent London and Superbrands. Highlights will include 100% Norway; Etsy's Four Corners of Craft, the intriguingly titled Ó – an exhibition of craft and design from Ireland – and of course the Hoxton Mini Press mini-exhibition to launch Makers of East London, featuring a selection of products from my new book. I will be speaking on What Does it Mean to Publish a Design Magazine Today? a panel event led by Stack's Steve Watson, alongside John L Walters, editor of Eye and Dirty Furniture editor, Anna Bates. Register for your ticket here. Make sure you don't miss exhibitors Zoe Murphy, Daniel Schofield Studio, and Plymouth College of Art (I curated their stand, so that's going to be good!), and then head out to explore the rest of the East.

The Ace Hotel, where I'll be writer in residence for the festival, is the hub of the Shoreditch Design Triangle, and will be hosting a series of design-led events and exhibitions. I'm particularly looking forward to Ready, Made, Go, a collection of objects commissioned by the hotel in collaboration with Modern Design Review editor Laura Houseley to meet the real challenges and needs of the hotel. Work by established and up-and-coming designers including Philippe Malouin, Studio Vit and Parsha Gerayesh will be put into use by the hotel after the exhibition. I'm also going to be checking out 1882 Ltd and Benchmark at Factory, where two furniture brands will be sharing their love of making through a series of hands-on demonstrations, interactive displays and engaging talks; Alma Offcuts to Masterpieces: Ingenuity with Leather – a pop-up exhibition showing designs made from Alma's leather off-cuts by recent Central Saint Martin's graduates and designers; and The Makers Playground's take-over of the Blackhorse Workshop, where designers will be offering participative workshops, alongside after-dark events, outdoor installations and an off-grid cinema.

If you can squeeze it all in, Jasper Morrison's Kingsland Road shop is hosting an exhibition to accompany the launch of A Book of Things; Lee Broom is launching his latest collection with an immersive floral display throughout his showroom with edible floral treats by food writer Pip McCormac; and Tranzit Store is hosting a pop-up shop curated by Room39 founder Petra Green. Phew!

- Nude Espresso, 26 Hanbury St, London E1, Monday – Friday: 7am – 6pm, Saturday – Sunday: 9.30am – 5pm
- Tent London, Old Truman Brewery, 26 Hanbury Street, E1 6QR, Thursday 10am – 7pm, Friday and Saturday 10am – 8pm and Sunday 11am – 6pm.
- Ace Hotel, 100 Shoreditch High St, London E1 6JQ
- Factory, The Future Laboratory, 26 Elder Street, Shoreditch, London E1 6BT Tuesday 10am – 10pm, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday 10am – 7pm, Thursday and Sunday 10am – 4pm.
- Alma, 12 – 14 Greatorex Street, London, E1 5NF Monday – Friday 9am – 6pm.
- Blackhorse Workshop, 1 – 2 Sunderland Road Path, London, E17 6BX Monday – Sunday 10am – 10pm.
- Jasper Morrison Shop, 24b Kingsland Road, London, E2 8DA (ring bell for entry), Monday- Friday 11am – 5pm, Tuesday 11am – 8pm, Saturday 12pm – 6pm.
- Lee Broom, 95 Rivington Street, London EC2A 3AY Tuesday – Saturday 10am – 7pm, Sunday 11am – 6pm.
- Tranzit Store, Old Street Underground Station / Unit 2, London, EC1 Y1BE, Monday – Saturday 10am – 8pm

Saturday 26 September 2015 – designersblock and South

Yesterday was a pretty busy day, so let's start Saturday with a bit of lie-in and a good breakfast. Then make your way South of the river and to the Bargehouse at Oxo Tower Wharf for designersblock – always a firm favourite for avant garde and cutting edge independent design. This year over 100 designers will be showing product, lighting and ceramic design across three floors of this fascinating venue. While you're South, make sure you see Case Furniture's Robin Day retrospective – Redefining British Design and Better Bankside's Colourful Crossings for which three artists have been commissioned to bring art out of the galleries and onto the streets.

Then head over to the Design Museum for Designers in Residence – this year exploring the hot topic of migration; Designs of the Year; and Made North, a celebration of British Road Signs and the work of Jock Kinnear and Margaret Calvert in which leading designers have created 50 signs installed in the museum and across London to "poetically disrupt the everyday."

Brixton Design Week was established last year, and this year highlights include a Street Gallery, created by architects Squire and Partners on the site of former department store Bon Marche, including a bespoke print by Eley Kishimoto. "We have pulled together a dynamic community of Brixton-based artists and designers to bring the store back to life and animate the surrounding streets and neighbourhood," partner Tim Gledstone told coadg.

Wind up the evening at Citizen M's secret garden, created in collaboration with Vitra.

- designersblock, The Bargehouse, Oxo Tower Wharf, Barge House Street, London SE1 9PH Thursday – Sunday 11am – 6pm
- Case Furniture, 23 East Hill, London SW18 2HZ Monday – Friday 10am – 6pm, Saturday and Sunday 10am – 4pm
- Better Bankside, Southwark Street, London SE1 1RU, open 24 hours a day.
- Design Museum, Shad Thames, London SE1 2YD, 10am – 5.45pm
- Street Gallery, Ferndale Road and Stockwell Avenue, Brixton, London SW9 8BJ, open 24 hours a day.
- Citizen M, 20 Lavington Street, London SE1 0NZ, Daily until 11pm.

Sunday 27 September 2015 – Queens Park Design District

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After launching last year, Queen's Park Design District will include open studios, live design events, art installations, and workshops centred around Lonsdale Road, Salisbury Road and Kimberley Road. Complimentary rickshaws will carry you between locations – thankfully, but I suspect we'll all have sore feet by this point! I am particularly looking forward to seeing Bill Amberg Studio's Common collection and Plants out of Place, an exhibition by Swedish gardening house Coloni and trend forecaster Studio Aikieu celebrating weeds, which will be hosted in a blackened timber pavilion erected by local firm Claridge Architects in the 12-hectare park at the heart of the Queen's Park Design District.

- Bill Amberg Studio, 2 Lonsdale Rd, London NW6 6RD, 8,30am – 6pm.
- Plants Out of Place, Queen's Park London NW6, 9.30am – 6.30pm

Follow @coadg on twitter and instagram for the edited highlights or @fieramagazine for the live feed, and subscribe to Fiera Magazine for the full debrief.

Please check all addresses and opening times with the venues directly before travelling. Designers' quotes from the London Design Festival guide unless otherwise attributed.

Tags: 100% Design, Decorex, design, designersblock, designjunction, London Design Festival, New Designers, Tent London

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