

Liverpool Biennial



Design & Empire (working title)

24 – 26 November 2017
Liverpool, various venues

Design & Empire [working title] is a weekend of events exploring the power structures embedded within contemporary and historical design, visual art, and consumer culture.

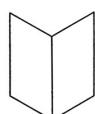
Presented by Liverpool Biennial and Liverpool John Moores University and curated by Prem Krishnamurthy, Emily King, and Joasia Krysa, *Design & Empire* brings together practitioners from the fields of art, design, architecture, and fashion. Framed by guided city tours exploring Liverpool's architectural past and a cooking event serving a colonial-style Christmas pudding, the weekend presents a series of talks from leading creative voices. These conversations touch upon topics ranging from national identity and the display of museum collections, copying within creative manufacturing, distributed models of property ownership, postcolonial approaches to contemporary fashion, reuse and revaluation of bio-industrial materials, the politics of computer interfaces, and beyond.

With Liverpool as both the subject and stage, *Design & Empire* will collaborate with its citizens in challenging aspects of Liverpool's imperial legacy whilst reflecting on current practices within design and visual culture.

All events are free with booking required via www.biennial.com

Delivered in partnership with RIBA North and The Serving Library at Liverpool John Moores University's Exhibition Research Lab. Funded by Arts Council England. Organised with support from Jana Lukavečki. Thanks to Ian Mitchell, Mike O'Shaughnessy and Paul Owen at Liverpool John Moores University.

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Friday 24 November

6 – 6.20pm

Welcome and *Design & Empire* Introduction

Welcome by Suzy Jones (Director, RIBA North) and Sally Tallant (Director, Liverpool Biennial)

Introduction to *Design & Empire* by Joasia Krysa

RIBA North, 21 Mann Island, Liverpool Waterfront, L3 1BP

6.20 – 7pm

Imperial by Design by Prem Krishnamurthy & Emily King

RIBA North

Framing the goals of *Design & Empire [working title]*, curators Prem Krishnamurthy and Emily King consider how design itself functions as primary force in the production, consumption, and distribution of political and cultural ideologies. With examples ranging from branding campaigns, consumer products, multilingual typographies, and more, this opening presentation offers a case for reevaluating design's significant role in both creating and challenging power structures.

7 – 8pm

Drinks Reception

RIBA North

Saturday 25 November

10.30 – 12pm

Empire Walks: Guided City Tour

Organised by RIBA North with introduction by Emily King

Starting point: RIBA North, 21 Mann Island, L3 1BP

Ending point: Britannia Adelphi Hotel

Limited capacity, booking required via www.biennial.com

Liverpool established its international reputation as a pre-eminent gateway for shipping, trade, and the movement of people – in multiple, sometimes troubling, forms. The city created to service this exchange is dense in buildings, streets, public spaces, and infrastructure, financed with colonial profits. Many of these have shifted use since they were originally constructed, helping to create contemporary Liverpool. This tour spotlights key structures that helped Liverpool become a major port of the British Empire, including the Three Graces, the waterfront warehouses of the Albert Dock and the stately buildings around the town hall that were built as headquarters for some of the primary companies involved in trade.

1.30 – 7.30pm

Design & Empire Talks

Welcome by Prof Caroline Wilkinson (Director, Liverpool School of Art and Design, Liverpool John Moores University)

Liverpool School of Art and Design, 2 Duckinfield St, L3 5RD

1.30 – 2.30pm

Empire Talks I: Shumi Bose & Christopher Kulendran Thomas

Moderated by Prem Krishnamurthy

Design Studio 2

The symposium's first *Empire Talks* session pairs curator, educator, and editor Shumi Bose with artist Christopher Kulendran Thomas to consider topics including national identity, property ownership, and economic redistribution. Reflecting on past and ongoing work, from Bose's research as co-curator of the British Pavilion at the 15th Venice Biennale of Architecture (2016) and her current work as a curator at RIBA, as well as Kulendran Thomas's project *New Eelam* – which proposes a provocative model of distributed citizenship in the form of a tech start-up – this panel examines how the rethinking of interfaces, residences, and networked systems offer opportunities for new structures to emerge.

2.30 – 3.30pm	<i>Empire Talks II: Frederico Duarte & Mohamed Elshahed</i> Moderated by Emily King Design Studio 2
	Frederico Duarte is a writer and curator, whose exhibition of contemporary Brazilian design, <i>How to Pronounce Design in Portuguese</i> , is currently on show at Lisbon's design and fashion museum MUDE. As curator of the British Museum's Modern Egypt Project, Mohamed Elshahed works between Cairo and London to assemble a collection of material culture from twentieth and twenty-first century Egypt. In this conversation, they will each discuss the intersection between design and national identity with reference to the collecting policies of museums that were once at the heart of imperial systems.
3.30 – 4pm	Coffee break
4 – 5pm	<i>One and the Many by Meriç Öner</i> Introduced by Prem Krishnamurthy Design Studio 2
	Reframing questions of authenticity, manufacturing, and creative genius, Meriç Öner will discuss the idea of 'genuine copies' within the history of Turkish industrial production. This localised case study opens up into a discussion of Istanbul & Ankara's SALT, a unique model of cultural display, and how the hybrid institution reflects upon the roles and formats of exhibition making.
5 – 6pm	<i>Empire Talks III: Christian Ulrik Andersen & Mae-ling Lokko</i> Moderated by Joasia Krysa Design Studio 2
	<i>Empire Talks III</i> revolves around digital infrastructure and material construction as opportunities for the revaluation of the new global technological paradigm. As an architectural historian and material technologist, Mae-ling Lokko focuses on the up-cycling of agro-waste and biopolymer materials into 'high' performance building material systems. In his work as a researcher in digital design and software studies, Christian Ulrik Andersen explores the politics of computer interface with reference to the Scandinavian tradition of critical interface design. The presentations will consider the contrast between hidden dimensions of production – both virtual and physical – and the seemingly-smooth mechanisms of contemporary consumption.
6 – 6.30pm	Break

6.30 – 7.30pm *Ruins of Empire: Detroit as Refrain/The Liverpool Echo*
by Paul Elliman
Introduced by Stuart Bertolotti-Bailey (Co-Director, The Serving Library)
In partnership with The Serving Library
LJMU's Exhibition Research Lab

Paul Elliman's work follows language through its many social and technological guises, tracing the ways in which typography, the human voice, and bodily gestures work in correspondence with the other forms and sounds of the city. At The Serving Library, he will pursue the trajectory implied by the industrial and post-industrial locations of his youth, revisiting them via images and music. Moving from Merseyside to Michigan and onto Silicon Valley, he will imagine an anthropology-of-the-near.

7.30 – 8.30pm **Drinks**
LJMU's Exhibition Research Lab

Sunday 26 November

- 10.30 – 12pm** ***Stir-up Sunday* by Cooking Sections (Daniel Fernández Pascual & Alon Schwabe)**
LJMU's Exhibition Research Lab, Liverpool School of Art and Design,
2 Duckinfield St, L3 5RD
Introduced by Emily King

Working between visual art, architecture, and geopolitics, Cooking Sections explores the systems that organise the world through food. Last year the duo initiated the *Empire Remains Shop*, a public installation in Central London that speculated on the possibility and implications of selling back the remains of the British Empire.

Stir-up Sunday is the last Sunday before Advent. The name comes from the Book of Common Prayer's collect for the day (*Stir up, we beseech thee, O Lord, the wills of thy faithful people*), but it is now more associated with the custom of making Christmas Pudding, a dish with ingredients that were once sourced across the British Empire. In a hybrid performance lecture and food event, Cooking Sections will introduce the myriad web of colonial routes and locations that underlie contemporary culinary fare, taking the pudding as both a case study and object for consumption.

- 12 – 1pm** ***Empire Talks IV: Grace Wales Bonner & Duro Olowu***
Moderated by Emily King
LJMU's Exhibition Research Lab

Grace Wales Bonner grew up in Southeast London with a Jamaican father and English mother. Duro Olowu was born in Lagos to a Nigerian father and Jamaican mother and spent his childhood travelling between Nigeria and Europe. Both fashion designers refer to their heritage in their work: Grace claims her mixed-race background as a key reference in her collections and exploring representations of black male sexuality/identity, while Duro invokes the unexpected mix of fabrics, textures, and draping techniques of the clothing worn by the women that once surrounded him. In this final conversation of the symposium, questions of cultural origination, export, and value construction emerge from the globalised context of contemporary fashion design.

- 1 – 1.30pm** ***Design & Empire Closing Remarks***
LJMU's Exhibition Research Lab

Partners and Venues

Liverpool Biennial

Liverpool Biennial is the UK biennial of contemporary art and commissions artists to make and present work in the context of Liverpool. It takes place every two years across the city in public spaces, galleries, museums and online. The Biennial is underpinned by a programme of research, education, residencies and commissions. Founded in 1998, Liverpool Biennial has commissioned over 300 new artworks and presented work by over 450 artists from around the world. Liverpool Biennial 2018: *Beautiful world, where are you?* runs from 14 July – 28 October.

Liverpool John Moores University's School of Art and Design

John Lennon Art and Design Building, 2 Duckinfield Street, Liverpool L3 5RD

Liverpool John Moores University's School of Art and Design is the oldest art school in the England outside of London, originally established in 1825 as Liverpool Mechanics' School of Art Institute. The school is housed in the RIBA award winning John Lennon Art and Design Building, situated in the heart of Liverpool in LJMU's Mount Pleasant campus. It offers cutting-edge educational programmes for artists, curators, graphic designers, illustrators, fashion designers and architects, with access to extensive studio spaces, lecture theatres, research labs, and dedicated public exhibition spaces.

LJMU's Exhibition Research Lab

John Lennon Art and Design Building, 2 Duckinfield Street, Liverpool L3 5RD

Exhibition Research Lab (ERL) is an academic centre and exhibition space, founded in 2012 as part of the Liverpool School of Art and Design and directed by Professor Joasia Krysa. ERL is uniquely positioned across the academic and cultural ecology of Liverpool, underpinned by collaborative posts held by staff with Tate Liverpool, FACT (Foundation for Art and Creative Technology), John Moores Painting Prize, Liverpool Biennial, and RIBA North (The Royal Institute of British Architects).

The Serving Library

LJMU's Exhibition Research Lab, 2 Duckinfield Street, Liverpool L3 5RD

The Serving Library is a non-profit organisation founded in 2011 to develop a shared toolkit for artist-centred education and discourse through related activities of publishing and collecting. It comprises an annual journal (*The Serving Library Annual*) published online and in print, an archive of framed objects on permanent display, and a public programme of workshops and events. It is run by Francesca Bertolotti-Bailey, Stuart Bertolotti-Bailey and David Reinfurt.

RIBA North

21 Mann Island, Liverpool Waterfront, Liverpool L3 1BP

RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) North is the new national architecture centre on the Liverpool Waterfront. It is a place for everyone to discover more about architecture, with exhibitions, talks and workshops, as well as a café and shop. RIBA North is an inspirational resource for both RIBA members and the public – championing architects, architecture and good design. At the heart of RIBA North is the City Gallery which includes an interactive 3D digital city model telling a variety of stories about Liverpool and the surrounding area.

Biographies

Emily King

Emily King is a London-based curator, writer, and design historian. She has organised several major exhibitions, including a career retrospective of Alan Fletcher for the London Design Museum, the interdisciplinary exhibition *Wouldn't it be nice: wishful thinking in art and design* for the Centre d'Art Contemporain in Geneva, special exhibitions for EXD Design Biennale in Lisbon, as well as a touring exhibition of Richard Hollis at Centre Pompidou, Paris, and Artists Space, New York. She has edited monographs on designers including M/M (Paris), Robert Brownjohn, and Peter Saville. In addition to contributing to a range of magazines, such as *Apartamento* and *Fantastic Man*, she has edited *The Gentlewoman* and *frieze*.

Prem Krishnamurthy

Prem Krishnamurthy lives in New York and Berlin and works between design, curating, editing, and teaching. He is Founding Principal of design studio Project Projects, which craft identities for art institutions, public spaces, leading architects, non-profit organisations, and global brands alike. Project Projects is the recipient of the Cooper Hewitt's 2015 National Design Award for Communication Design, the USA's highest recognition in the field. From 2012-2017, Krishnamurthy established and directed the critically-acclaimed exhibition space P! in New York City's Chinatown. He has curated recent exhibitions and programs at Stanley Picker Gallery at Kingston University London, UK (2017); The Bass Museum, Miami Beach, USA (2017); Para Site, Hong Kong, China (2016); and Austrian Cultural Forum New York (ACFNY), USA (2016). Krishnamurthy is organising a cycle of shows in 2018 on the work of polymathic artist and designer Elaine Lustig Cohen at the Jewish Museum, NYU's IFA, and other institutions. Having lectured and taught widely, he currently teaches at Barnard College.

Joasia Krysa

Joasia Krysa is a curator and Professor of Exhibition Research at Liverpool John Moores University, with a joint appointment at Liverpool Biennial, where she is Head of Research. Formerly she served as Artistic Director of Kunsthall Aarhus, Denmark, and co-curator of dOCUMENTA 13 and Liverpool Biennial 2016. Her research interests are located across contemporary art and digital culture. Recent publications include the books *Systemics, or Exhibition as a Series* (Sternberg Press, 2017) and *Writing and Unwriting Media Art History* (MIT Press 2015), and the edited journal volume *Contemporary Condition (Stages, vol 6,* Liverpool Biennial 2017). She is currently part of the curatorial team for Liverpool Biennial 2018 and working on a new monograph publication on curating and computational culture for Routledge.

Christian Ulrik Andersen

Christian Ulrik Andersen (Denmark) is Associate Professor at Aarhus University, Department of Digital Design and Information Studies. Inspired by network and software culture, his research addresses the intersection between software and cultural performativity. The outcome is found in various articles and books, including the forthcoming *The Metainterface* (MIT Press) co-authored with Søren Pold, as well as a number of projects that address issues of tactical and free research, including the online journal *APRJA* together with Geoff Cox, and a peer-reviewed newspaper in collaboration with transmediale festival for art and digital culture, Berlin, Germany.

Christopher Kulendran Thomas

Christopher Kulendran Thomas (UK) lives and works in London. In his artistic work, he discusses the structural operations by which art's circulation and distribution produces reality. His work has been included in the 11th Gwangju Biennale, South Korea (2016); the 9th Berlin Biennale, Germany (2016); *moving is in every direction*, Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin, Germany (2017); *Bread and Roses*, Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw, Poland (2016); *Co-Workers: Network As Artist*, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, France (2015); and *Art Turning Left: How Values Changed Making*, Tate Liverpool, UK (2013). A solo exhibition of his work is currently on view at Tensta konsthall, Stockholm, Sweden.

Cooking Sections

Cooking Sections (Daniel Fernández Pascual, Spain & Alon Schwabe, Israel) live and work in London. A duo of spatial practitioners, Cooking Sections was founded in 2013. It was born to explore the systems that organise the world through food. Using installation, performance, mapping, and video, their research-based practice explores the overlapping boundaries between visual arts, architecture, and geopolitics. Cooking Sections was part of the exhibition at the U.S. Pavilion, Venice Architecture Biennale, Italy (2014). Their work has also been exhibited at the 13th Sharjah Biennial, United Arab Emirates (2017); Storefront for Art & Architecture New York, USA; dOCUMENTA 13, Germany (2012); Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice, Italy (2014); CA2M, Madrid, Spain (2015); The New Institute, Rotterdam, Netherlands (2016); UTS, Sydney, Australia (2016); and the Oslo Architecture Triennale, Norway (2016). They have been residents in *The Politics of Food* at Delfina Foundation, London, UK, and currently lead a studio unit at RCA, London, UK. In 2016 they opened *The Empire Remains Shop*.

Duro Olowu

Duro Olowu (Nigeria) lives and works in London. A designer and curator, Olowu launched his women's wear label in October 2004. His high-waisted, Kimono-like signature *Duro dress* was voted *Dress of the Year* in 2005 by both British and American Vogue. Olowu also won the *Best New Designer of the Year* award at the British Fashion Awards that same year. In 2010 he won the Best Designer Award at the African Fashion Awards in South Africa and was selected as one of six finalists at the Swiss Textiles Award in Zurich.

Also much heralded were his two curatorial projects, *Material* (2012) and *More Material* (2014), at Salon 94 Gallery, New York, USA. In 2016, Olowu curated the critically acclaimed Camden Arts Centre exhibition *Making & Unmaking* in London, UK. Pieces from his collections have been acquired by Rhode Island School of Art (RISD), USA and other institutions for their collections of costume and textiles.

Frederico Duarte

Frederico Duarte studied communication design in Lisbon and worked as a designer in Malaysia and Italy. In 2010 he completed his MFA degree in design criticism at the School of Visual Arts in New York. As a design critic and curator, since 2006 he has written articles and essays, contributed to books and catalogs, given lectures and workshops, organised events, and curated exhibitions on design, architecture, and creativity. His latest exhibition on Brazil and design in the 21st century *How to Pronounce Design in Portuguese: Brazil Today*, organised by MUDE, Lisbon's design and fashion museum, is currently on show till 31 December 2017. Concurrently he is conducting an AHRC and FCT-funded collaborative doctoral partnership research project on contemporary Brazilian design at Birkbeck College, University of London and Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK.

Grace Wales Bonner

Grace Wales Bonner (UK) lives and creates in London. Informed by broad research that encompasses critical theory, composition, literature, and historical sources, Wales Bonner explores a distinctive notion of luxury via a hybrid of European and African approaches. She graduated from Central St. Martins in 2014. The following year Wales Bonner was awarded Emerging Menswear Designer at the British Fashion Awards, and in 2016 she received the LVMH Young Designer Prize. Obtaining wide recognition, Wales Bonner has presented at the Serpentine Gallery and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK whilst also lecturing at Parsons in New York, USA. Wales Bonner international stockists include Dover Street Market, Selfridges, 10 Corso Como, and Joyce.

Mae-ling Lokko

Mae-ling Lokko (Saudi Arabia) lives between Accra and New York. Trained as an architectural historian and material technologist, Lokko is an Assistant Professor at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, New York, USA whose work centers on the upcycling of agro-waste and biopolymer materials into 'high' performance building material systems. Inspired by emerging multidisciplinary research on next generation bio-composite green materials, as well as Ghanaian contemporary art waste upcycling, Lokko's work often integrates a broad range of technical, environmental, political and cultural criteria that questions contemporary material-value systems and evolves material upcycling criteria. Recent exhibitions include ANO Institute of Contemporary Arts, Accra, Ghana (2017); Mmofra Foundation Climate Change Exhibition, Accra, Ghana (2017); Chale Wote Festival Accra, Ghana (2016); Rotch Golden Cube, Troy, USA (2016); and Advanced Energy Conference, New York, USA (2016).

Meriç Öner

Meriç Öner (Turkey) lives in Istanbul. Öner is a trained architect and Director of Research and Programs at SALT. Focusing mainly on Turkey and its surrounding geography after 1950s, she develops material culture research with a comprehensive and progressive approach. Her work circulates in forms of print and online publications, exhibitions, and public programs. Recent exhibitions include *Commissioners' Exhibition*, SALT Galata, Istanbul, Turkey (2017); *One and the Many*, SALT Galata, Istanbul (2016) and ÇSM, Ankara, Turkey (2017); and *SUMMER HOMES: Claiming the Coast*, SALT Beyoğlu, Istanbul, Turkey (2014). Öner is the programmer of SALT's Thursday Cinema, which presents in contemporary and historic media the transformation of cities through a selection of documentary and feature films. She is also editor of the publications *Tracing Istanbul (from the air)* (2009) and *Mapping Istanbul* (2009). Öner is on the advisory board of the 4th Istanbul Design Biennial.

Mohamed Elshahed

Mohamed Elshahed (Egypt) lives in Cairo. Trained as an architect, Elshahed's multidisciplinary practice focuses on the history of modernism in Egypt through architecture, images, and objects. His research and writing have focused on the works of Egyptian modernist architects, their publications, and the circulation of images of modernist buildings as a form of politics. As the Modern Egypt Project curator, he is responsible for building a new collection of material culture from the past century in Egypt. The collected objects will shed light on lifestyle, culture, economy and politics, as well as the developments, transformations, and major events in twentieth century Egypt. Recent exhibitions include *Mudun*, Vitra Museum, Weil Am Rhein, Germany (2017); *Cairo Now! City Incomplete*, Dubai Design Week, Dubai (2016); and *Modern Egypt Project Pop-up Display*, Cairo, Egypt (2016).

Paul Elliman

Paul Elliman (UK) lives and works in London. His work follows language through many of its social and technological guises, in which typography, human voice, and bodily gestures emerge as part of a direct correspondence with other visible forms and sounds of the city. Elliman is a visiting tutor for the MFA Voice Studies programme at the Sandberg Institute in Amsterdam. He has exhibited widely in venues such as the ICA, London, UK (2014); New Museum, New York, USA (2008); Tate Modern, London, UK (2001); and MoMA, New York, USA (2012); with recent solo exhibitions at KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, Germany (2017) and La Salle de Bains, Lyon, France (2017).

Shumi Bose

Shumi Bose (UK) is a teacher, curator, and editor who lives and works in London. She is a senior lecturer in Contextual Studies for BA Architecture at Central Saint Martins, and a curator of exhibitions at the Royal Institute of British Architects. Her research focusses on the relationships between financial systems, speculative development, and architectural production. Bose's active practice involves recognising and fostering discourse as a site for

spatial agency across diverse professional and cultural silos, through the production of publications, exhibitions, and events. Recent exhibitions, as curator, include *Pablo Bronstein: Conservatism or The Long Reign of Pseudo Georgian Architecture*, RIBA, London, UK (2017); *Home Economics*, British Pavilion, 15th Venice Biennale of Architecture, Italy (2016); and *Common Ground*, 13th Venice Biennale of Architecture, Italy (2012). Recent publications, as editor, include *Four Walls and a Roof* by Reinier de Graaf (Harvard UP 2017) and *Wherever You Find People* by Aberrant Architecture (Park Books 2016).