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Press release

The South Ken Green Trail – welcoming people and nature on Exhibition Road

An algae factory, a nest-like timber mound and giant slices of a decommissioned wind turbine blade form a series of new ‘green interventions’ unveiled today on London’s Exhibition Road. Together they are supporting the post-pandemic recovery of London’s arts and science district, and demonstrating how plants, greenery and biodiversity can be creatively embedded in London’s public realm, reclaiming space for nature amidst the bustle of the capital.

The free-to-visit installations will be in place for everyone to enjoy until October alongside a new walking trail connecting them with other planting and green spaces across the district. A downloadable trail map will help visitors to explore and discover hidden nature in the city, with activities and events throughout the summer providing inspiring ideas for a greener future.

Design teams were chosen as part of a competition organised by the London Festival of Architecture and Discover South Kensington. Each has worked with one of the three cultural partner institutions – the V&A, Science Museum and Goethe-Institut – to develop installations that can inspire visitors to Exhibition Road, and to encourage them to further explore this welcoming, vibrant and diverse district. By bringing together leading design and current research in biodiversity and sustainability, the installations epitomise the area’s role in promoting debate and driving progress to address society’s most pressing challenges.

- **The Algae Meadow** has been created by Seyi Adekun and Wayward, in collaboration with the V&A, and working with specialists from UCL and Imperial College London. Visitors can meander through a vertical wildflower meadow which connects the architecture of Exhibition Road to the depths of the Serpentine Lake in Hyde Park through a hydroponic algae canopy. Standing outside the Natural History Museum, this installation is constructed from local, responsibly sourced and recycled material and is a community build project giving opportunities to London based students and volunteers from the Black Females in Architecture network.

- **In Home away from Hive** at the Science Museum, Mizzi Studio have created an organic, nest-like timber lattice, layered with medicinal and pollinating plants in consultation with garden designers from the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. Creating a link with Medicine: The Wellcome Galleries at the museum and Kensington and Chelsea Council's Bee SuperHighway, the installation provides an immersive hive of discovery, education and biodiversity. Built by Firecracker Works, visitors can walk in and around the structure, whose undulations echo those of natural earth mounds and hives. Inside the structure, plants and daylight pours in to provide beautiful spaces for respite and care for insects as well as joy for visitors.
- **Windflower** outside the Goethe-Institut by Urban Radicals with Adam Harris has a modified and re-purposed decommissioned wind turbine blade bringing the scale and surprising beauty of this mega-structure into the city centre. This is planted with wildflowers to attract pollinators while allowing visitors to walk through, sit on or enjoy it.

The South Ken Green Trail draws on the cross-pollination of ideas for which London's arts and science district is renowned, and represents an important opportunity to engage visitors and spark action as the UK prepares to host COP26 and co-ordinate global efforts to tackle climate change. Connecting with cultural partners' programming around the summit, the Trail builds on increased public interest in nature and green spaces since lockdown, and highlights local biodiversity initiatives including Kensington and Chelsea Council's Bee SuperHighway.

As well as forming part of the London Festival of Architecture's year-round programme of public realm interventions, the South Ken Green Trail is also part of the Kensington + Chelsea Festival, a season of fun, inspirational, surprising and extraordinary experiences across Kensington and Chelsea's iconic venues and public spaces, funded by Kensington and Chelsea Council. Promoting this and other exciting events and activities taking place across the borough in parks, markets, museums and more, the Council is running its K&C Summer of Love campaign to celebrate the breadth of things to do and enjoy this summer. The Green Trail installations will remain in place until the Great Exhibition Road Festival which runs from 9-15 October. A free annual celebration of science and the arts in South Kensington and online, the Festival brings together scientists, artists, designers and innovators to discuss solutions to the climate emergency.

The South Ken Green Trail is being delivered by Discover South Kensington in partnership with the London Festival of Architecture, V&A, Goethe-Institut and Science Museum, and is supported by the Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851, Kensington and Chelsea Council, Westminster City Council, and the Let's Do London programme. The Natural History Museum, The Royal Parks and Imperial College London are helping to deliver the trail and events programme. The project has also been made possible through the support of Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) Catapult, who supplied the wind turbine blade, and idverde, who are providing watering and maintenance for the installations.

Rosa Rogina, Programme Director at New London Architecture and the London Festival of Architecture, said:

"The South Ken Green Trail is one of the London Festival of Architecture's most exciting and relevant projects ever. The three installations epitomise our mission to support design talent in London and enhance the city's public realm in ways that are innovative and inspiring. More importantly, it has

been a privilege for the LFA to play its part in supporting the post-pandemic recovery of the South Kensington arts and science district, and to enhance public understanding of urban biodiversity in the run up to the critical COP26 summit later this year.”

Emily Candler, Executive Director, Discover South Kensington, said:

“Our programme of outdoor activity and events brings arts and science bursting out into Exhibition Road. We want visitors to discover something new and follow the trail to discover South Kensington’s surprising green treasures. Responding to the climate crisis is a priority for all South Kensington’s arts and science organisations and a core focus for our collaborative public programming. The South Ken Green Trail connects to a fun and thought-provoking programme of exhibitions, artworks, talks, workshops and events happening across the district in the run-up to COP26. This project also celebrates the area’s garden heritage, while tapping into the renewed appreciation of urban nature that so many people have found during the lockdowns.”

John Tweddle, Head of the Angela Marmont Centre for Biodiversity at the Natural History Museum said:

“Insect pollinators, such as bees, hoverflies, butterflies and moths might be small, but they’re mighty, and integral to both our health and that of the natural world that we rely on. Not only do they pollinate many of the food plants that are central to our nutrition, they play essential roles in pollinating many of the UK’s wildflower and tree species, which in turn provide vital habitats and food for other wildlife.

Yet, collectively, the UK’s insect pollinators are in real trouble, with the loss and fragmentation of suitable habitat, climate change and pesticide use putting many species under threat. We can all take positive steps to support pollinator numbers in the UK today.”

Cllr Elizabeth Campbell, leader of Kensington and Chelsea Council, said: “Tackling climate change is the challenge of our times – exciting and innovative projects like this help our borough to be a leader in this area as we seek to be carbon neutral by 2030.”

-Ends-

A full press pack – including images of the three installations – can be found <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/n4qpbocddyct14u/AACyAYAm0zkgD5VTarrhu426a?dl=0>.

Notes to editors

The **South Kensington Green Trail map** can be downloaded at <https://www.discoversouthken.com/itinerary/south-ken-green-trail/> and links the installations with green spaces and exhibits across South Kensington including:

- Natural History Museum’s Wildlife Garden
- Museum Lane Pollinator Meadow
- Foodbank for Pollinators by Natalie Taylor (commissioned by the Goethe-Institut)
- taraxos by Sophia Al-Maria – Serpentine
- Web of Life by Tomás Saraceno – Serpentine
- Kensington Palace Sunken Gardens
- V&A John Madejski Garden & Café
- Flowers and lawns around Imperial College London’s Queen’s Tower
- Royal Albert Hall Southern Steps gardens & outdoor terrace café
- Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens, managed by The Royal Parks charity

An additional installation has been commissioned by Kensington and Chelsea Council at Golborne Road, North Kensington. **The Wildian** is designed by Frances Kirk and Patrick McEvoy with the help of Prewett Bizley Architects, inspired by the extravagant designs of Victorian terrariums. Terrariums were invented by botanist Nathaniel Bagshaw Ward in London's East End, before becoming popularly used as elaborate display cases to grow delicate plants within the pollution of Victorian London. The planter will be filled with pollinating wildflowers and painted in shades of purple which are specifically within the colour range visible to bees.

Seyi Adeleku's practice focuses on enhancing social infrastructures, promoting environmental stewardship and regenerative circular economies through community co-designed spaces. Her practice explores the importance of how being involved in the creation of the spaces can improve our wellbeing and empower communities, and sees public art as an accessible platform to engage the wider public with key issues.

For this project, Seyi is collaborating with **Wayward** - a London-based landscape, art and architecture practice. Since 2006, Wayward has pioneered new methodologies in the creative use of underused land, translating derelict sites into large-scale, design-driven spaces that engage local communities and inspire international audiences, connecting plants and people.

Instagram: @seyi_adeleku

Twitter & Instagram: @waywardplants

Mizzi Studio is a design practice based in London and Valetta, made up of talented architects, interior designers and industrial designers. The team believe in the power of design to enrich people's lives and the world we live in. They seek out projects that have a positive social and environmental impact, add tangible value, and make our public realm a healthier, more vibrant place to live in. Mizzi Studio creates architecture that is informed by the processes that occur in nature, brought to life through craftsmanship and powered by technology.

www.mizzi.co.uk

@mizzistudio

Urban Radicals started out in 2019 as a duo between architect Nasios Varnavas and designer Era Savvides with the ambition to form a network of collaborators, to solve problems across contexts and scales. The studio has grown through projects, competitions, workshops, stories, painting, parties, dinners, fishing trips, walks, gatherings and conversations. Nasios and Era believe that by working across disciplines and through the broad skillset and perspectives of its expansive team, the studio is able to generate rich, impactful projects, rooted in place and context. As a collective, Urban Radicals examines architecture from a variety of perspectives – economy, ecology, storytelling, community, and craft. More recently, Nasios and Era have been selected to design and co-curate the National Participation for Cyprus at the 17th Architecture Biennale in Venice.

For this project, Urban Radicals is collaborating with **Adam Harris** – landscape architect and project manager at Millimetre. Adam is passionate about native wildflower species and creating spaces that increase biodiversity in an urban setting and believes that by developing our connection to natural processes, we benefit both our cities and well-being. The team is also working with specialist wind energy consultants - **Aerotrope**, founded by Chris Hornzee-Jones.

www.urbanradicals.org

Instagram: @urbanradicals

www.aerotrope.com

Twitter: @AerotropeLtd

The London Festival of Architecture (LFA) is the world's largest annual architecture festival and is exploring the theme of 'care' through a hybrid programme in 2021. The LFA's mission is to support London's architectural and design talent, enthuse and engage with the public, and find new ways to look at familiar places. In 2020 the LFA explored the theme of power, and celebrated innovation and design through a digital events programme last June. The 2019 edition of the LFA inspired over 600 events across the capital, attracting over 800,000 visitors and a global audience of 138 million. A year-round programme of design competitions, design charrettes, campaigns and other activities also champions London as the best place in the world to practice and enjoy architecture.

www.londonfestivalofarchitecture.org

Twitter: @LFArchitecture

Instagram: @LondonFestivalofArchitecture

Discover South Kensington is a partnership of the leading cultural and educational organisations in South Kensington – London's home of science, arts and inspiration. This is one of the world's most popular cultural destinations and home to an extraordinary cluster of world-leading organisations pioneering innovation and learning in science and the arts. Here we generate and share knowledge and inspire the engineers, designers, scientists, musicians and artists of the future and before the pandemic we welcomed over 20 million visitors a year.

www.discoversouthken.com

Twitter: @SouthKensington

Instagram: @discover.south.kensington

The Victoria and Albert Museum, London (V&A) is the world's leading museum of art, design and performance with collections unrivalled in their scope and diversity, spanning 5,000 years of human creativity. It was established in 1852 to make works of art available to all and to inspire British designers and manufacturers. Today, its purpose is to champion creative industry, inspire the next generation, and spark everyone's imagination.

www.vam.ac.uk

Twitter: @V_and_A

Instagram: @vamuseum

The Science Museum is part of the Science Museum Group, the world's leading group of science museums that share a world-class collection providing an enduring record of scientific, technological and medical achievements from across the globe. Over the last century the Science Museum, the home of human ingenuity, has grown in scale and scope, inspiring visitors with exhibitions covering topics as diverse as robots, code-breaking, cosmonauts and superbugs. 2020 marked a decade of transformation for the museum with the opening of the largest medical galleries in the world - *Medicine: The Wellcome Galleries* and *Science City: The Linbury Gallery* - the story of how London became a hub of discovery during 1550-1800. The Science Museum was named a winner of the prestigious Art Fund Museum of the Year prize for 2020.

www.sciencemuseum.org.uk

Twitter: @sciencemuseum

The Goethe-Institut is the cultural institute of the Federal Republic of Germany with a global reach. It promotes knowledge of the German language abroad, fosters international cultural cooperation and conveys a comprehensive image of Germany with 159 locations in 98 countries worldwide. Engaging an audience interested in culture, language and education, the Goethe-Institut London is located on Exhibition Road, offering a broad variety of scope and spaces with nearby access to world-class institutions.

www.goethe.de/uk

Twitter: @GI_London1

The Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851 was established in 1850 to organise the Great Exhibition of 1851. The Exhibition made a surplus of £186,000 which the Commission, under the guidance of Prince Albert, used to purchase an estate in South Kensington. This estate has developed to become a centre of scientific, cultural and educational excellence which now houses the Natural History, Science and V&A museums; Imperial College London; the Royal Colleges of Art and Music; and the Royal Albert Hall. The Commission continues to support all the 'Albertopolis' institutions (ie those on its original estate) in their work in education, research, science and the arts and works closely with them to improve the experience of all those visiting, working, studying and living in South Kensington, one of the world's most popular cultural and educational destinations.

www.royalcommission1851.org

Twitter: @Royalcom1851

Instagram: @Royalcom1851

Kensington + Chelsea Festival: Kensington + Chelsea Art Week is expanding throughout the summer season with a festival that elevates the magic and shared experiences of public art and live performance, funded by Kensington and Chelsea Council. From 21 June – 31 August, K+C Festival will bring people together for a range of arts and culture activities to celebrate, inspire, and be inspired.

<https://www.kcaw.co.uk/kc-festival>

@KCAWlondon

K&C Summer of Love: Get ready to fall in love with Kensington and Chelsea again this summer as we get back out and about post-lockdown. We're celebrating what our borough has to offer with exciting events and activities taking place from June to September and you're invited to join in the fun. There's something for everyone to enjoy, from our parks, high streets and museums, to libraries, local businesses and more.

www.rbkc.gov.uk/summer-of-love

#OurRBKC

@RBKC

@KensingtonAndChelseaCouncil

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