

Press Release
4 June 2024

Design Council reveals new Expert Network, in support of accelerating green design across the UK



The Design Council announces the new cohort of Design Council Experts, an active community of design pioneers working towards a planet-positive and regenerative future.

A network of over 240 practitioners working across all design sectors, Experts will be engaged to work on projects, help shape policy and advocate for change to demonstrate the power of design to achieve net zero over the next three years—with Phoebe English, Michael Pawlyn, Finn Harries, Indy Johar and Suhair Khan among the impressive line-up.

Launching ahead of the World Design Congress in London 2025, the network will be a key driving force for spotlighting the UK's design industry on a global stage, a sector growing at twice the UK average and contributing £97.4bn in GVA to the economy.

The Design Council Expert network includes designers from digital to fashion, service to systems, and the natural and built environment—including members of the Cabinet Office, the Design Museum, UK Department of Health and Creative Scotland.

The Design Council today reveals its new Expert network, featuring over 240 designers from across all design disciplines including digital, fashion, arts, crafts, policy, service, systems, and the natural and built environment. Championing the Design Council's *Design for Planet* mission – to galvanise the 1.97 million people working in design in the UK to design their way to net zero – Design Council Experts will be a key driver in supporting the broadening of the skills and resources needed to put planetary needs at the forefront of design.

The Design Council Expert network welcomes thought and practice leaders in design from all sectors, who are keen to contribute their time, knowledge and leadership to help the industry move towards a greener future and champion the economic, societal and environmental value of design. In turn, Experts will have the opportunity to support the Design Council to deliver its Design for Planet mission, working with partners on numerous opportunities for collaboration, networking and engagement.

Designers have the power to unlock the potential of design as a transformative asset in the collective fight against the climate crisis, creating a regenerative world for all. While over 71 percent of designers think that demand for environmental design will grow in the next three years, there is still work to be done to address increased training and teaching of green skills within UK environmental design. According to the Design Council's recent [Green Design Skills Gap Report](#), only 43 percent of designers feel moderately or fully equipped to meet this demand and half of designers think their education did not provide them with sufficient design for planet skills.

Applications for the new cohort opened in February and closed in April 2024. This year's cohort was selected by an Expert Panel Committee including designers, specialists and sustainability experts, alongside Design Council colleagues and representatives from its Board of Trustees. The network consists of over 240 designers, or commissioners of design, who will act as planet-positive pioneers within their field. Organisations represented include the Cabinet Office, Creative Scotland, Design Museum, Foster + Partners, Royal College of Art, UK Department of Health and University of Arts London.

The Expert Network plays a vital role in the work that the Design Council does: from providing specialised advice and support, to developing collective knowledge and policy, to visibly advocating for the design industries and their role in the green transition. Businesses, corporate bodies and institutions looking for knowledge of best practice, to develop green skills and to tackle the climate emergency across design disciplines are invited to enquire on ways of working with Design Council Experts.

Minnie Moll, CEO of the Design Council said: *“The calibre of applications we received was exceptional. This new cohort of Design Council Experts includes some of the most inspiring figures from the design landscape to help drive our Design for Planet mission. Collaboration will be key to designing solutions to the climate crisis, so working across sectors we will be more powerful together.”*

Phoebe English, Fashion Designer and Design Council Expert said: *“Design for Planet is an important mission as we are living in a time of great fragility where many of the systems we have designed, live within and rely on are flawed to the point of threatening all our futures. These urgently need redesigning and I believe the skills of designers, their agility and imagination has never been more important. I hope the new cohort are able to*

contribute to the wider imagination and therefore future possibilities of how these systems could be better reframed and fundamentally redesigned.”

Chris Hildrey, architect, designer and Design Council Expert said: *“Being selected as a Design Council Expert is a real honour and an exciting opportunity to help advance the role design plays in shaping our world. Design is a vital catalyst for all of us in adapting to the pressures we face economically, societally, and environmentally, so I'm excited to further explore the impact it can have as a tool for positive change.*

Design is at its best when it keeps its focus on outcome rather than what professional boundaries are being crossed. I hope this cohort's mixture of skills, diversity of experience, and spirit of collaboration will help to foster change and forge new links across sectors and existing silos. I hope this can happen both internally within the cohort and externally across the industry and the next generation of designers.”

Karishma Kusrkar, multidisciplinary designer and Design Council Expert said: *“By becoming a Design Council Expert, I will be part of a multi-disciplinary network of design practitioners across the UK and I am particularly excited about the opportunity to collaborate with others and learn about their work. I believe that being a part of this network will allow me to continue developing my knowledge on the impact design can have on society, how it can foster imagination and originate new products and services and how it can be harnessed to improve people’s lives.*

The new network of Design Council Experts will have cross-disciplinary expertise from across the UK which will allow a “cross-pollination” of ideas leading to meaningful projects across different industries. As representatives of the design sector, we have the power to affect real and meaningful change as well as originating game-changing local and international projects. Being a part of this network will enable us to be ambitious with what can be achieved and have the ability to work on larger scale projects. Through the work we do, we will be able to demonstrate the value of design to people outside of the design community.”

Sarah Wigglesworth, architect and Design Council Expert said: *“Becoming a Design Council Expert offers a platform for me (personally) to push forward and help speed up the green agenda within the design and spatial disciplines. I also hope that, collectively, we can spread the message to legislative powers to make the statutory changes needed to underpin the transition to a low carbon economy, with spatial equity and sustainable agendas at its heart. The role of design, as both a signifier and a practical enabler of social value, is not taken seriously enough by our leaders, and is often neglected in the conversation about deprivation. But it is the glue that holds everything together and we need to show how important this is.”*

The full members’ list of the new Design Council Expert network is available on the Design Council website [here](#). For more information on how to work with the Expert Network, please contact experts@designcouncil.org.uk.

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Notes to Editor:

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[IMAGES](#)

Expert Panel Committee

Rose Abdollahzadeh, Project Lead at International Centre for the Creative Industries
Pooran Desai, Founder of OnePlanet
Cecilia Harvey, Found & Director of Cultural Nexus
Tom Lloyd, Co-Founder of Pearson Lloyd
Biljana Savic, Head of Urban and Integration at HS2 / Design Council Trustee
Sabine Zettler, Founder & Director of Zetteler
Cat Drew, Chief Design Officer of the Design Council

About Design Council

The Design Council is the UK's national strategic advisor for design, championing design and its ability to make life better for all. It is an independent and not for profit organisation incorporated by Royal Charter. The Design Council uniquely works across all design sectors and delivers programmes with business, government, public bodies and the third sector. The work encompasses thought leadership, tools and resources, showcasing excellence, and research to evidence the value of design and influence policy. Their Design for Planet mission was introduced in 2021 to galvanise and support the 1.97 million people who work in the UK's design economy to help achieve net zero and beyond. The Design Council will host the prestigious [World Design Congress](#) at the Barbican Centre in September 2025 to unite the global design community in the Design for Planet mission.

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Designer Bios

Phoebe English:

The PHOEBE ENGLISH studio was founded in 2011 and designs clothing with our planetary boundaries in mind. In the decade since Phoebe established the studio, the brand has developed into an internationally renowned label. The studio is in an ongoing transition towards sustainable circular design within a slow fashion context. The PHOEBE ENGLISH studio has dual roots in textile craftsmanship and reduced environmental impact, aiming to develop ways of working with design and its surrounding systems that align with the realities of our planetary limitations. A personal narrative runs throughout the work within the studio's established aesthetics of both the decorative and the utilitarian.

Chris Hildrey:

Chris is an architect and designer based in London. He is the director of Hildrey Studio and the founder of ProxyAddress, a social enterprise providing those facing homelessness with stable address details to access critical services. He is also an associate lecturer at Goldsmiths' Department of Design and a trustee of the Museum of Architecture.

Karishma Kusrkar:

Karishma is a multidisciplinary designer whose work spans a broad range of disciplines, from fashion and farming to placemaking and museums. Her interests lie in developing the creative economy, building sustainable businesses, and facilitating accessible knowledge sharing. Karishma's work has been featured in publications including Creative Boom, The Sunday Times, and 100 Archive, and she has spoken at Birmingham Design Festival, Why Design (Institute of Designers Ireland), and at The British Council's UK/Viet Nam Season in Ha Noi.

Michael Pawlyn:

Michael Pawlyn is an architect, writer, and public speaker. He has been described as an expert in regenerative design and biomimicry. He established his firm, Exploration Architecture, in 2007 to focus on high-performance buildings and solutions for the circular economy. The company has developed a ground-breaking office project, an ultra-low energy data centre, a zero waste textiles factory, and progressive solutions for green cities. Michael Pawlyn jointly initiated the widely acclaimed Sahara Forest Project; the latest version of which was opened by the King of Jordan in 2017.

Finn Harries:

Finn Harries is an environmental designer and filmmaker. His work focuses on climate change, ecology, and regenerative cultures. He is the co-founder of Earthrise Studio, a digital media company dedicated to communicating new ways of thinking about climate, culture, and consciousness, and Chief Designer of Juntos Farm, a new community space in the heart of Ibiza dedicated to regenerative farming and local food production.

Indy Johar:

Indy is co-founder of Dark Matter Labs and of the RIBA award-winning architecture and urban practice Architecture00. He is also a founding director of Open Systems Lab, seeded WikiHouse (open source housing), and Open Desk (open source furniture company). Indy is a non-executive international Director of the BloxHub, the Nordic Hub for sustainable urbanization. He is on the advisory board for the Future Observatory and is part of the committee for the London Festival of Architecture. He is also a fellow of the London Interdisciplinary School.

Sarah Wigglesworth:

Sarah Wigglesworth founded her London-based practice in 1993. It aimed to explore sustainable environments in all forms. It has won many awards, including the RIBA Sustainability Award for 9/10 Stock Orchard Street, an experiment exploring sustainable living on a brownfield site in north London. Other awards include RIBA Awards for Cremorne Canoeing Centre (2008), Siobhan Davies Studios (2006), and NLA awards for The Kingston Cycle Hub and Bridge (2021). In addition to her practice, between 1998 and 2016, Sarah was Professor of Architecture at the University of Sheffield, where she led the design research project DWELL (dwell.group.shef.ac.uk). She has sat on a number of committees, such as the President's Awards for Research, the Gold Medal selection panel, and the

Procurement Taskforce, all for the RIBA. She sits on several Design Review Panels. Sarah is committed to advocating for gender equity in the industry and is a member of Part W. She has published extensively and, in addition to authoring numerous essays, she is joint author of "Desiring Practices: architecture, gender, and the interdisciplinary" (Black Dog Press, 1996) and (with Jeremy Till) "The Everyday and Architecture" (Academy Wiley, 1998). The book she edited, entitled "Around and About Stock Orchard Street," was published by Routledge in 2011. She was awarded an MBE for services to architecture in 2003 and made an RDI in 2012.