

Press Release  
20 August 2024

# The Design Council announces Design for Planet Festival programme 2024



The Design Council announces the programme for the fourth edition of the award-winning Design for Planet Festival 2024 – inviting designers, design studios and businesses to collaborate for a net-zero future.

Taking place in Manchester, a city rich in urban and industrial design history, this year's festival is in partnership with Manchester School of Art part of Manchester Metropolitan University, Innovate UK and Suez, on 6 November 2024.

Under the theme of design for Planet-Positive Business – in the lead up to the World Design Congress in London 2025 – the festival will demonstrate the important role designers play in generating solutions for the climate crisis.

Guests will hear from leading voices such as celebrated fashion designer and *Great British Sewing Bee* presenter, *Patrick Grant*; Lab Director at D-Ford, Ford's Global Innovation arm, *Usha Raghavachari*; President of the Royal Institute of British Architects, *Muyiwa Oki*; Chief Sustainability and External Affairs Officer at SUEZ, *Dr Adam Read*; and Creative Director at Faith in Nature and Co-creator of Nature on the Board, *Simeon Rose*.

**Featuring a series of keynote talks, discussions and workshops across the design sector, such as regenerative design, retrofitting, graphic and circular fashion design, the event will be free to attend for designers, students, businesses and universities.**

**Attendees can sign up for free to join the live stream from around the world.**

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Design for Planet Festival is the Design Council's flagship event, forming part of the Design for Planet mission: to galvanise the 1.97 million people working in design across the UK to design our way to a net zero world and beyond.

Launched in 2021, the festival brings together the whole design sector – from AI and digital systems, to fashion and architecture – inspiring action around climate-positive design and showcasing the latest regenerative design innovations. This year's festival will bring global attention to the UK's leadership in design and its role in addressing the planetary emergency, in the lead up to the World Design Congress in London 2025.

Manchester is the UK's third largest green economy, a city with an ambition for inclusive, green growth and a thriving design industry. Renowned for its rich industrial past and vibrant cultural scene, Manchester's position as the world's first industrialised city has left the region's heritage deeply intertwined with its architectural and design landscape. In collaboration with Manchester School of Art – in the same year that Manchester Met celebrates its 200th anniversary – the festival *Planet-Positive Business* theme will demonstrate how design can support in the shaping of sustainable product lines, alongside the creation of circular business models and services; to mobilise the UK's powerful design community into uniting efforts with businesses to address the climate crisis.

The Design Council's recently published research shows that while 73% of designers think the demand for environmental design is going to grow, only 43% think they have the capability to do so. The Design for Planet Festival aims to help close the green design skills gap by empowering designers with the stories, stats and skills to challenge briefs, suggest innovative materials and systems at the forefront of sustainability, and highlight the power of design to achieve the triple bottom line.

Championing design innovation and advocacy, the event will bring together designers, design studios, students, businesses, educators and policymakers. Exploring themes such as retrofit as a catalyst in urban architecture, regenerative growth in design enterprises and how circular design could transform Manchester's fashion scene.

**Programme highlights include:**

- **Opening Remarks:** Minnie Moll (Design Council), Martyn Evans (Manchester Metropolitan University)
- **Keynote – Growing a Regenerative Design Business:** Patrick Grant (Community Clothing, BBC's Great British Sewing Bee)
- **Keynote – Driving the Future:** Usha Raghavachari (D-Ford)
- **Panel – Fashion Forward, Manchester's Industrial Past and Sustainable Future:** Susan Postlethwaite (MMU), Alison Carlin (Manchester Fashion Movement), Talia Hussain (Loughborough University)

- **Panel – Radical Retrofitting:** Gemma Birchall (Purcell), Muyiwa Oki (RIBA), Tayo Adebowale (Cirkadia), Nick Johnson (Marketserv Ltd), Phin Harper (Open City)
- **How to: Visualise sustainability in the digital age:** Abb-d Taiyo (Driftime)
- **Design Debates: Making money or changing the system?** Martyn Evans (Landsec U+I), James Vaccaro (RePattern, Triodos Bank)), Katie Hill (B Lab Global)
- **Design Debates: Products vs Business models?** Richard Hall (UKRI), Lisa Henderson (ilka), Simeon Rose (Faith in Nature), Efia Mainoo (BlackOwner Studios + Marketplace), Pete Swift (Planit), Dr Bernice Pan (Deploy) and Nilescha Chauvet (GOOD Agency)
- **Keynote – Skills for the Future:** Sophie Thomas (Thomas.Matthews)

The full programme is available [HERE](#).

The programme will explore and advocate for how design can help achieve Planet Positive Business in five key ways:

1. Design can save money by reducing carbon and helping to reduce scope 1-3 emissions.
2. Design can increase commerciality of sustainable products de-risking innovation by testing with users ensuring solutions are desirable.
3. Design can create value out of waste (or bio-material innovation) and helps keep more value in play.
4. Design helps businesses meet wider ESG and fiduciary responsibilities including reducing climate risks, saving customers money and winning more business.
5. Design can help businesses stay ahead of the market (creating new markets and ways of doing business).

**Dr Adam Read MBE, Chief Sustainability & External Affairs Officer at SUEZ recycling and recovery UK, said:**

*“We’re excited to be partnering with the Design Council for this year’s Design for Planet Festival. SUEZ understands the power of design and its influence on the circular economy, and that’s why we want to be collaborative and work with designers as a route to influence sustainable design, and encourage designers to fully consider the whole lifecycle of a product during its inception. As an industry that underpins green transitions across a number of industries, we’re passionate about equipping the next generation of talent with the skills and competencies they need to champion innovation and deliver the sustainable design of the future.”*

**Cat Drew, Chief Design Officer, the Design Council said:**

*“We are delighted to be bringing the Design for Planet Festival to Manchester for 2024, an incredible city, well-known for its transformation from an industrial powerhouse to a modern cultural hub, and leading an inclusive, green economy. It is fantastic to be bringing the design community together to convene and upskill their capabilities to support business to do well and do good. We need a new economy that is fuelled by green design-led innovation, with designers working with businesses not only to create regenerative products, services and places, but also the business models that underpin them.”*

**Professor Martyn Evans, Director of Manchester School of Art, said:**

*“As one of the UK’s leading universities for sustainability, we are thrilled to partner with the Design Council for this year’s Design for Planet Festival. Design has always been at the heart of Manchester School of Art – in 1838 the School was created as a response to the manufacturing needs of industry in the city and once again, we are dedicated to educating and empowering the next generation of designers with the skills they need to address the climate emergency towards a greener, cleaner future.”*

Design for Planet Festival 2024 will run on 6 November at Manchester School of Art, Manchester Metropolitan University.

**Online registrations are free to book [here](#).**

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**ENDS**

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**IMAGES**

**Images can be found [here](#).**

**Notes to Editor:**

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**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. Their 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. In September 2025 the Design Council will host the prestigious World Design Congress as a catalytic moment in driving the sector towards designing for planet.

designcouncil.org.uk

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**About Manchester Metropolitan University**

Manchester School of Art, Manchester Metropolitan University, is the second oldest art school in the UK (established in 1838), and one of the most comprehensive. It is housed in purpose built, state-of-the-art, award-winning buildings, and includes the [Department of Art and Performance](#) (including the [Manchester School of Theatre](#)), [Department of Design](#), [Manchester School of Architecture](#), [Manchester Fashion Institute](#) and the new [School of Digital Arts](#). In addition to Manchester School of Art, the university is also home to [Manchester Poetry Library](#) and the [Manchester Writing School](#), integral to Manchester's status as a UNESCO world [city of literature](#).

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### **About World Design Congress**

The prestigious World Design Congress is coming to London for the first time in over 50 years. The 34th edition will be hosted by the Design Council at the Barbican Centre for 1,000 in-person delegates and global online attendees. The World Design Organization's two-day event takes place every two years, gathering together the international design community and thought leaders from business, research and education to discuss and debate design issues of global importance. The theme for 2025 will be Design for Planet. The effects of climate change are more evident than ever and design has a crucial role to play to help reduce carbon emissions and increase biodiversity. This is a moment to convene and accelerate design's power in building a regenerative future for all.

[World Design Congress](#)