

Open Call Sitting Pretty



'The Giant Causeway' by Studio Yu with tomos.design for City of London, June 2018

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The commission

The London Festival of Architecture (LFA), and Network Rail (NR), invite you to create one of several one off public benches, to be installed in one of the mainline stations in London ahead on London Festival of Architecture 2020.

We are inviting architecture and design students, recent graduates and emerging practitioners to submit a design proposal for a bench that will test how the future of station seating might look like.

If your design is one of the winners, you will be awarded £5,000 to make your bench and install it in late May 2020. This will be a chance to participate in a unique project and showcase your imaginative design to the public and the many festival producers involved.

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The Context



New station seating at London Bridge and Victoria stations, March 2019

Owned and operated by Network Rail, the UK's railway infrastructure is Europe's fastest-growing network, getting millions of passengers to their destinations on a daily basis. The provision of good concourse seating is a major driver of passenger satisfaction in major railway stations in London. Quality seating is being identified as one of the main priorities for passengers if they have time to spare or simply wish to take a break before travelling.

This design competition seeks engaging new solutions to transform station seating, and to further brighten the experience of London's stations for Londoners, commuters and visitors alike. With significant opportunities to make a positive design contribution to the public realm within stations, the competition will see the creation of fun and imaginative seating provisions, tailored to passengers and passers-by as they sit, wait and rest. Entrants are encouraged to consider how they can incorporate elements that could potentially be replicated across six of London's largest mainline stations.

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The site

A variety of locations across mainline stations in London have been selected for the benches. These are areas where there is significant scope for public realm enhancement or seating provision. Exact locations will be shared with shortlisted entrants in mid-November.

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Design requirements

Each bench must offer a comfortable seat for a minimum of 3 adults. We are looking for pieces that function for visitors (are not purely sculptural) and are realistic to the brief (do not become pavilions or follies). They must be safe, durable and offer a low-cost design solution.

The benches should encourage people to spend more time in the stations. The design should include elements of surprise and be creative in terms of what could people do while they sit and wait.

We are seeking for low-maintenance designs that are flexible and adjustable to different locations as the decision on where benches go will ultimately be made by the Network Rail team.

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Budget

The total budget available for each winning entry is £5,000 plus VAT per bench. This is to include all associated production costs (materials, transport, construction and deinstall). The budget outline above includes a design fee of £500 inc. VAT for the winning team.

Half of the fee will be awarded in February 2020, on receipt of a signed agreement in which you commit to provide a bench as per your submission and any revisions as requested by Network Rail and London Festival of Architecture. The remaining fee will be given in June 2020 after delivery and approval of the bench.

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Further Guidance

- *Budget:* The budget will be managed by the entrant. You can use salvaged materials or seek in-kind materials sponsorship to reduce expenses.
- *Design:* The bench should be designed to prevent use or damage by skateboarders. It should be work as freestanding piece but with the ability to be fixed in a position if needed.
- *Health & safety:* The seating design must protect the safety and security of passengers, for example by withstanding damage, including blast fragmentation, and reducing the opportunity for concealment of hazards such as contaminants, sharp objects or explosive devices.
- The drawings will be checked by a Network Rail / station engineer for which you will need to provide a risk assessment document. On delivery, the bench will be checked to ensure it is safe for public use. You may be asked to make modifications but on sign-off until the deinstall the bench will be the property and responsibility of Network Rail.
- *Durability:* The bench will be in situ for a minimum of 3 months and you should consider the longevity and appearance of your design accordingly, to ensure that no or minimal maintenance is required during this period. Subject to durability, the benches may be able to be in place for longer or moved to a different location for an extended period.
- *Timescale:* The bench is expected to be installed in late May 2020 and stay in place until Autumn 2020.
- *Installation:* Unless otherwise agreed with Network Rail installation will take place on 31 May 2020.
- *Deinstallation:* Unless otherwise agreed with Network Rail deinstallation will take place in Autumn 2020.

- *Afterlife*: There might be an opportunity to re-site the bench at another Network Rail station after Autumn 2020.

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Submission

This competition has a two-stage submission. After the first stage submission, the judging panel will shortlist up to 10 individuals and/or practices which will then be invited to develop a design concept based on the information laid out in this open call and will be awarded an honorarium of £400 each. Following the second stage submission, up to 4 individuals and/or practices will be selected as competition winners and invited to build their proposed bench designs.

This first stage submission will include:

1. Full name and contact details including postal address, contact number and email of project lead.
2. Brief biographies of all the project team.
3. Coloured photo of the design team (landscape) for promotional purposes.
4. A 200-word description about your practice along with any relevant technical experience acquired through previous experience; please include images of relevant previous work.
5. A short paragraph of max. 300 words on why you are interested in being involved in the project. You may wish to include some thoughts about your vision including any initial written reactions you may have to the brief.
6. No design work is required for the first stage and any included sketches will not be shared with the judges.

The work required for the second phase of the project will be reflective of the honorarium sum.

We will be expecting:

- the equivalent of an A2 board explaining your proposal. This can come in the form your practice feels will most effectively communicate your design to the judging panel.
- The submission should include hand or computer drawn 3D design visualisation, key construction details drawn to scale, with key dimensions noted, an outline all materials, budget and fabrication process.
- Physical models are optional but encouraged.

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Eligibility

The competition is open to students, trainee and emerging architects, and designers. We welcome collaborations, however the project must be actively led by a named emerging architect or designer. Emerging is defined by being no more than 7 years post graduate.

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Deadline and submission details

- Deadline for submission is Midday, Monday 11 November 2019. Submissions received after this time will not be considered.
- For competition enquires please contact: rosa@londonfestivalofarchitecture.org
- Please send expressions of interest in a PDF format via:
<https://www.londonfestivalofarchitecture.org/networkrailbenches/>
- The PDF should be no more than 5MB and 10 A4 pages.
- You will receive an email confirming receipt of your submission.

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Schedule outline

Submissions open: Tuesday 15 October 2019
Submissions closed: Monday 11 November 2019
Successful shortlisted practices notified: w/c 18 November 2019
Site visit for shortlisted practices: w/c 25 November 2019
2nd submission: Thursday 9 January 2020
Winners notified: w/c 20 January 2020
Winning designs opens to the public: 1 June 2019
Benches deinstalled by: October 2020

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Judging panel

Frank Anatole (Principal Architect, Network Rail)
Anthony Dewar (Professional Head Buildings and Architecture Safety, Technical & Engineering, Network Rail)
Will Hurst (Managing editor, Architects Journal)
Paul Priestman (Director, PriestmanGoode)
Tamsie Thomson (Director, London Festival of Architecture)

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Further information

- Submissions will be judged on originality, demonstration of creativity and relevance to the brief, as well as feasibility and how the proposal works in the context of the site.
- The ownership of Copyright of the design will be in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, that is Copyright rests with the author of the submitted design.
- All designs remain the intellectual property of the designer however the winning designs when built, will be the property of Network Rail.
- If in the future Network Rail decides to fabricate the design in more copies this will have to be agreed and approved by the designer. In this instance, LFA will help to negotiate conditions of the agreement.

- Please bear in mind that the project requires a fast turn around and may have peak moments when your practice will need to dedicate sufficient staff to deliver the project on time, on budget and to the high standard expected by all stakeholders.
- If selected, your practice/collaboration needs to organise: Professional Indemnity, and Employers Liability (in case you have employees). Public liability insurance for the project will be organised by the client.
- Significant efforts are made by all stakeholders of the project to ensure wide media coverage.
- London Festival of Architecture and Network Rail reserve the right to use images from the submissions for promotional purposes in press, social media and publications. All endeavours will be made to ensure accurate accreditation.

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Useful links

London Festival of Architecture:
www.londonfestivalofarchitecture.org

Network Rail
www.networkrail.co.uk

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Contact

To submit your entry please go to:
<https://www.londonfestivalofarchitecture.org/networkrailbenches/>

For general enquires please contact: rosa@londonfestivalofarchitecture.org

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Disclaimer

The competition organisers are not liable for lost, misdirected, or late entries. Decisions of the jury represent their professional judgments and all decisions are final. While it is the intent to construct the winning scheme, the organisers reserve the right to not proceed with construction for any reason. Material submitted by you shall be your sole responsibility, shall not infringe or violate the rights of any other party or violate any laws, contribute to or encourage infringing or otherwise unlawful conduct, or otherwise be obscene, objectionable, or in poor taste. By submitting such material, you are representing that you are the owner of such material and/or have all necessary rights, licenses, and authorization to distribute it.

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**LONDON FESTIVAL OF
ARCHITECTURE**

London Festival of Architecture

The London Festival of Architecture was founded in 2004, and is now firmly established as Europe's biggest annual architecture festival. The London Festival of Architecture 2018 will feature events across the capital from 1-30 June, and this year will explore the theme 'identity'. The London Festival of Architecture celebrates London as a global hub of architectural experimentation, practice and debate, provoking questions about the contemporary and future life of the city, and promoting positive change to its public realm. The London-wide programme is delivered by a diverse mix of architecture and design practices and practitioners, cultural and academic institutions, artists and many others.

www.londonfestivalofarchitecture.org

Twitter: @LFArchitecture



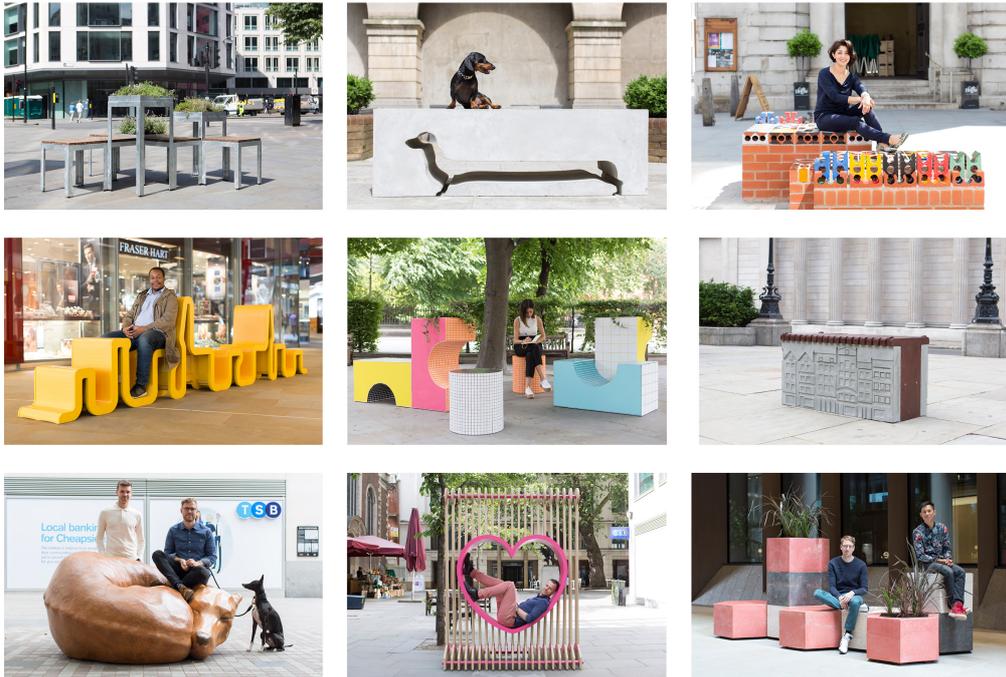
Network Rail

Network Rail own and operate the railway infrastructure in England, Wales and Scotland on behalf of the nation. That's 20,000 miles of track, 30,000 bridges and viaducts and thousands of tunnels, signals, level crossings and points. Network Rail also manage rail timetabling and 20 of the largest stations in England, Scotland and Wales. They work round-the-clock to provide a safe, reliable experience for the millions using Europe's fastest-growing railway each and every day.

www.networkrail.co.uk

Twitter: @networkrail

Reference



City Benches 2018 & 2019

In 2018, London Festival of Architecture (LFA), in collaboration with the City of London Corporation (CoL) and Cheapside Business Alliance (CBA) for the first time organised a competition for a series of one-off public benches installed around Cheapside and the Eastern City Cluster areas. The competition championed fresh design talent, and was open to architecture and design students, recent graduates and emerging practices. A judging panel including Pooja Agrawal (Greater London Authority), Katy Ghahremani (Make Architects), Simon Glynn (City of London Corporation) and Ellie Stathaki (Wallpaper*) chose benches that responded to their settings with imagination and air, and which were enjoyed by hundreds of thousands of people during the LFA in June 2018. Following on from the hugely popular series of 2018 benches, LFA, CoL and CBA ran the competition again in 2019 and selected a series of new designs for their ability to bring a fresh perspective on enlivening Cheapside's urban environment, with a vision for public furniture fit for a festival.