



Left to right: Abiola Onabule, Ioana Man, Enni-Kukka Tuomala and Cynthia Voza Lusilu. Image credit: Felix Speller for the Design Museum

Designers in Residence: Care

7 April 2021

the Design Museum

#DesignersInResidence

Designers in Residence is the Design Museum's flagship programme to support emerging designers at an early stage in their careers

Carrying out their residency at home and in virtual environments, the all-female cohort will reveal their final projects in an interactive digital showcase which goes live on 7 April

Responding to the theme of 'Care', this year's residents explore mental health within Black British communities, rethinking the role of empathy between humans and nature, our relationship to microbes inside urban environments and a fashion collection inspired by traditional local crafts in Nigeria



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Following their ten-month residency, the 2020 Designers in Residence will unveil their collective digital exhibition on World Health Day, 7 April 2021, to create a conversation about how care is understood in the context of health.

Now in its thirteenth year, the annual programme invites emerging designers from any discipline to grow their practice and develop a new body of work. Each resident is offered a bursary, commissioning and production fee to realise their

project, supported by Arts Council England. Due to COVID-19, the designers carried out their residency from home, working collaboratively through the use of online platforms to create a digital showcase.

This year's residents were invited to respond to the theme of Care – a topic chosen before the pandemic but that has gained even more resonance over the course of their residency. As we enter a post COVID-19 landscape and a new decade characterised by technological acceleration, new working patterns and climate uncertainty, there is a crucial role for design in supporting the ways we care for ourselves, each other and the planet. The residents' projects explore care in its broadest sense, inviting online visitors to consider alternative tools and production systems that look to improve specific social and environmental challenges.

The 2020 Designers in Residence are: **Cynthia Voza Lusilu**, **Abiola Onabule**, **Enni-Kukka Tuomala** and **Ioana Man**.

Cynthia Voza Lusilu has been exploring how design can support positive mental health in Black British communities. Working collaboratively with mental health professionals, urban planners and Black residents living in the borough of Lewisham, she has designed new supportive tools – including care packages and an accompanying online platform – to promote well-being and stimulate conversations around wellness.



Drawing inspiration from her own Nigerian cultural heritage, and through the stories and lives of women, **Abiola Onabule** has explored the craft of adire, a type of indigo-dyed cloth typically made in southwestern Nigeria by Yoruba women. Her new collection uses adire techniques to investigate how local West African textile designs can be redefined to resonate with contemporary fashion. As part of her residency, Abiola has also created a collaborative film that brings to the forefront practices of care such as, local production, slowing down and conversation around the cultural importance of cloth.



Designer and artist, **Enni-Kukka Tuomala**'s work aims to challenge perceptions of empathy from an individual feeling to a collective power and understand its role in our daily lives. With a focus on the urgent need for humans to rethink their relationship with the natural world, Enni's residency project 'Forest Empathy' explores empathy between humans and trees. She has designed an atmospheric film revealing the complex personalities and perspectives of forests, alongside a new Empathy Ecosystem tracing the role of empathy in human and non-human life, and a tree tour of the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea that invites visitors to connect with urban forests in London.



Ioana Man has been exploring how architecture can collaborate with biology to create healthier, more sustainable environments through data visualisations that map microbial communities in West London. Using new scientific technology, she has designed a series of interactive digital walks that imagine a future where agriculture is essential to urban life, and food gardens as caring spaces for both humans and microbes alike.



The digital showcase will launch on Wednesday 7 April and is available to view online until August 2021. You can visit their new showcase [HERE](#).

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Notes to Editor

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DESIGNERS:

Abiola Onabule

Abiola Onabule is a London-based fashion designer with a master's degree in womenswear from Central Saint Martins. Her work draws inspiration from her Nigerian cultural heritage and through the stories and lives of women, abstracting, and celebrating form through silhouette, abstracting and cutting techniques, her collections and incorporating fabrics steeped in the crafts and practices of Nigerian textile culture. She is interested in the process of making as an 'act of care' and manifestations of personal, cultural and gendered stories within clothing.

For her residency at the Design Museum, Abiola has been researching the craft of adire, the indigo-dyed cloth typically made in southwestern Nigeria by Yoruba women, using a variety of resist-dyeing techniques. She has collaborated on a new film that presents this craft as nurturing and sustainable and the antithesis of the careless and wasteful processes found within western textile production today. Her new collection uses adire techniques to investigate how local West African textile designs can be redefined to resonate with contemporary fashion, and uncovers the social, ethical and economic value of local production.

Cynthia Voza Lusilu

Cynthia Voza Lusilu is a transdisciplinary designer born and raised in Paris. She is interested in working with people to collaboratively reimagine ways of learning, thinking, and making. Her practice focuses on creating positive emotional experiences and researching how designers could develop more caring relationships when working with communities.

Cynthia is also currently working as a project designer at CIVIC SQUARE, a Birmingham-based organisation that aims at building the social and civic infrastructure for neighbourhoods of the 21st century.

For her residency at the Design Museum, she has been exploring mental health in Black British communities. She is designing new supportive tools, including care packages with black residents living in the borough of Lewisham, as well as an online platform with resources to promote wellbeing and emotional awareness.

Ioana Man

Ioana Man is a designer and researcher working between architecture, strategic design and critical practice. Since graduating from the Architectural Association, she has been developing tools, experiences and multimedia narratives that highlight the importance of microbial biodiversity in the built environment and the necessity of distributing its benefits fairly.

For this residency with the Design Museum, Ioana has designed a new body of work exploring how architecture can collaborate with biology to create a more sustainable built environment that embodies health and justice. Using new scientific technology, her work makes visible the microscopic ecologies of urban green spaces, demonstrating that humans and cities are part of nature, and that microbes are an integral part of life.

Ioana has designed a series of interactive digital walks that reveal food gardens as spaces for mutual care and imagine a future where urban agriculture is essential to public life.

Enni-Kukka Tuomala

Enni-Kukka Tuomala is a Finnish Empathy Artist and Designer based in London. A graduate of the Royal College of Art and Imperial College London with a joint MA and MSc in Global Innovation Design, her vision is to transform empathy from an individual feeling to a collective and radical power for positive social change through public interventions, installations, experiences, processes and tools.

For her residency with the Design Museum, Enni has been exploring empathy between humans and trees through an empathy ecosystem that traces the role of empathy in human and non-human life, a new film, and a tree tour across the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

Enni's work has been exhibited globally. Her projects include: a collaboration with the Finnish Parliament (since 2018) to bring empathy into politics through a collection of empathy tools; empathy commissions for the likes of the BBC, Greater London Authority, London Borough of Newham, Imperial College London, Bath University, LIFT, Bow Arts and Virgin; and the Campaign for Empathy, the world's first community-centered campaign to promote empathy through art and design. In 2021, Enni installed her first permanent public artwork in London and is

currently in the process of opening her first Empathy HQ: a creative studio and community space in Bow, London. In June 2021, the artist is representing Finland at the London Design Biennale 2021.

About the Design Museum:

The Design Museum is the world's leading museum devoted to contemporary architecture and design. Its work encompasses all elements of design, including fashion, product and graphic design. Since it opened its doors in 1989 the museum has displayed everything from an AK-47 to high heels designed by Christian Louboutin. It has staged over 100 exhibitions, welcomed over seven million visitors and showcased the work of some of the world's most celebrated designers and architects including Paul Smith, Zaha Hadid, Jonathan Ive, Frank Gehry, Eileen Gray and Dieter Rams. On 24 November 2016, The Design Museum relocated to Kensington, west London. Leading architect John Pawson has converted the interior of a 1960s modernist building to create a new home for the Design Museum giving it three times more space in which to show a wider range of exhibitions and significantly extend its learning programme.

In October 2020, the Design Museum was awarded £2,968,634 by Arts Council England from the Culture Recovery Fund announced by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

In July 2020, the Design Museum was awarded nearly £1 million National Lottery funding through the Arts Council's Emergency Response Fund.

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