Design Museum Touring Programme

The programme was set up in 2002 with the aim of bringing design exhibitions to audiences around the UK and internationally. Since then, the museum has organised more than 170 tours to 137 venues in 38 countries worldwide.

The Design Museum’s touring exhibitions range in size from 150 to 1000 square metres and encompass all areas of design – architecture, fashion, graphics, product, digital and more.

About the Design Museum

The Design Museum is the world’s leading museum devoted to 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 five 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, Margaret Calvert and Yinka Ilori.

On 24 November 2016, the Design Museum relocated to Kensington, West London. John Pawson 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 May 2018, the Design Museum was awarded the title of European Museum of the Year.

In 2021, the Design Museum launched Future Observatory, a national programme for design research supporting the UK’s response to the climate crisis. The three-year programme is coordinated by the Design Museum in partnership with the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), which is part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI).
Barbie®: The Exhibition

Opening to coincide with the 65th anniversary of the Barbie™ brand in 2024, the exhibition will explore the story of Barbie through a design lens, including fashion, architecture, furniture and vehicle design.

Highlights include a rare first edition of the very first doll released by Mattel® in 1959 (‘No. 1 Barbie’), the groundbreaking Day to Night Barbie from 1985 and the best-selling Barbie of all time, 1992’s Totally Hair Barbie which sold over 10 million across the globe.

The exhibition will also highlight the diversity of the Barbie range, with examples of the first Black, Hispanic and Asian dolls to bear the Barbie name, as well as dolls that reflect today’s diverse, multicultural society, including the first Barbie with Down syndrome, the first to use a wheelchair, and the first to be designed with a curvy body shape.

We’ll also be showcasing the friends of Barbie, including her first friend, Midge, and the much-loved Christie and Teresa; as well as the younger sister of Barbie, Skipper. There’ll also be a section dedicated to Ken, which will see six decades’ worth of Ken dolls on show, showing his evolution from his introduction in 1961.

Other objects from this historic brand will include Dreamhouses, vehicles and furniture, including the first ever Barbie Dreamhouse™ from 1962. Together these items will show how Barbie’s homes, vehicles and other products have all helped to design the universe in which she exists and has always reflected the tastes and trends of day, engaging with modern design in an aspirational but accessible way.
Skateboard

This exhibition chronicles the history of skateboard design from the 1950s to the present day, from homemade, humble beginnings to today’s professional and technologically advanced models.

Curated and designed by author, designer and skater Jonathan Olivares, this is the first UK exhibition to explore the evolution of skateboard design in such detail, developed in partnership with Converse. The exhibition showcases innovative skateboards and components and track how skateboarders have taken over sidewalks, swimming pools and skate parks designing new boards to suit their performance, style and surroundings.

Around 90 rare and unique boards are on display, alongside over 100 other objects, including hardware such as wheels and tucks, safety equipment, VHS tapes, DVDs, magazines and ephemera. Together they show skateboard’s technical developments and its evolving social acceptance.

Explore a range of contemporary boards alongside 1950s homemade skateboards from California – Laura Thornhill’s Logan Earth Ski 1970s pro model, Tony Hawk’s first ever professional model skateboard, Sky Brown’s first pro model and the Sky Brown x Skateistan Almost deck.
Worn as an everyday garment by some and considered by others to be contrived or uncomfortable, the definition of the sari has multiple subjectivities. Conventionally an unstitched drape wrapped around the body, which can be draped in multiple ways, its unfixed form has enabled it to morph and be absorbent of cultural influences.

In recent years the sari has been reinvented. The urban youth who previously associated the sari with formal wear can now be found wearing saris and sneakers on their commutes to work. Designers are experimenting with hybrid forms such as sari gowns and dresses, pre-draped saris and innovative materials such as steel.

Today the sari manifests as a garment subject to transformation, an expression of identity and resistance, and a crafted object with layers of cultural meanings. This exhibition positions the sari as a designed object from these three perspectives.
As little as a decade ago, ASMR (Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response) was largely dismissed as a figment of the imagination. Today the term represents one of the largest movements on the Internet, and it has become impossible to ignore. As academic institutions around the world seek to make sense of the phenomenon, creatives—known as “ASMRtists”—are building on a cultural movement that transcends language and culture in favour of bodily ‘feels’.

ASMR is a term that describes a physical sensation: euphoria or deep calm, sometimes a tingling in the body. In recent years an online audience of millions has grown, dedicated to watching the work of designers and content creators who try to trigger this feeling in their viewers. They do it by whispering or eating, touching or tapping, and more besides. This exhibition is the first dedicated to this feeling, and the emerging field of creativity that has grown up around it.

The exhibition is winner of the Dezeen Awards 2022 Exhibition design of the year.

WEIRD SENSATION FEELS GOOD: The World of ASMR
As we face the realities of the Earth's limited resources, designers and users alike are seeking greater clarity around how objects are made, and at what material cost. What materials go into the objects that define our day to day lives? And how might we learn to make better use of these materials in future?

Material Tales is a uniquely poetic exploration of the world of materials, taking visitors on a journey through the origins, uses, and evolution of matter. From their microscopic structure through to the global impact of their use and exploitation, materials are revealed in all of their complexities as they share the incredible stories of their emotional, technical and political lives.

Featuring highlights from the Design Museum Collection, as well as works by leading contemporary designers and a wealth of contextual material, Material Tales aims to provide greater material literacy for visitors of all ages. The exhibition is paired with a full educational pack and a ‘Research in Action’ element allowing host venues to run a full-day materials workshop.

An expanded version of the exhibition with interactive games and physical interactives has also been created for tour by the Design Museum and Hong Kong Science Museum in collaboration with Globe Creative and is titled Material Tales: The Art and Science of Things.
Waste Age

Waste Age tells the story of the environmental crisis created by our ‘take, make, waste’ economy. The exhibition explores how trash can be transformed into new resources, and how design can help usher in a new age where there is no such thing as waste.

Globally, over 2 billion metric tons of rubbish are produced annually and the World Bank estimates this will increase to 3.4 billion metric tons by 2050. Today only 15% of that is reclaimed. We are at a crisis point – we need to radically rethink our throwaway economy, changing systems and materials as well as thinking and behaviours.

This exhibition explores what lies beyond our current toxic waste infrastructures, exploring the environmental, social and geopolitical forces at work. Here visitors will be immersed in the waste crisis before being shown the transformative potential of new design approaches that are redefining fashion, construction, food, electronics or packaging and the new materials that will help shape a cleaner future.

This is an exhibition that not only seeks to imagine alternative futures, but one that empowers the visitor to be part of the solution.
Football: Designing the Beautiful Game

It is estimated that more than half the world population — some 3.5 billion people — watched part of the FIFA World Cup in 2018. Football is unquestionably the world’s most popular sport, with a dedicated fan base and truly international reach. It is also a significant industry, European football alone being estimated to hold a value of £22 billion in 2016. How did football evolve to be such a significant part of our cultural landscape, and what role has design played in shaping the sport?

Football: Designing the Beautiful Game is a large-scale exhibition exploring the design story behind football, unpicking how design has been used to push the game to its technical and emotional limits. From the master-planning of the world’s most significant football stadiums to the innovative materials used in today’s boots, the graphic design of team badges and the grassroots initiatives pushing back against the sport’s commercialisation, the exhibition will provide a rare insight into the people and processes that have made football what it is today.

CURATOR
Eleanor Watson is a former Curator at the Design Museum

EXHIBITION DESIGN
ONEX

GRAPHIC DESIGN
Shaz Madani Studio

VENUES
the Design Museum, London
8 April - 29 August 2022

FIFA Museum, Zurich
13 October 2023 - 1 April 2024

Wolverhampton Art Gallery, UK
25 May - 1 September 2024

TOUR AVAILABILITY
Slots available in 2024 and 2025

SPACE
approx. 900 square metres
Sneakers Unboxed: Studio to Street

Cult classics, limited edition silhouettes and rare colourways go under the spotlight as the Design Museum steps into the world of sneakers for the first time. Sneaker design has revolutionised retail styles, taken hold of a subculture and sparked a phenomenal audience of ‘sneakerheads’ from all over the world.

Divided into two chapters – Style and Performance – the exhibition invites you behind the scenes and reveals the design process that has led to the world’s most innovative kicks, be that self-lacing, 3D printed, made from 100% recyclables or cushioned with air bubbles.

Uncover the style icons and brand collaborations that have shaped the sneaker scene, examine the high-fashion reinvention of a streetwear staple and touch on the lucrative resale market that is currently valued at $2 billion. For the first time trend cycles are moving faster than the traditional speed of sneaker production. This exhibition asks what the impact of this is on manufacturing technology, creatives and makers.
KRAFTWERK, ROBOTS, 2015. PHOTOGRAPHY BY PETER BOETTCHER
Football: Designing the Beautiful Game

Edited by James Bird and Eleanor Watson

This book – the first of its kind – explores the design story behind football, diving into how design has been used to push the game to its technical and emotional limits. From the master planning of the new Tottenham Hotspur stadium and the innovative materials used in today’s boots, to the graphic design of the Juventus team logo and the grassroots initiatives pushing back against the sport’s commercialisation, this book provides a rare insight into the people and processes that have made football what it is today.

Accompanying a Design Museum exhibition of the same title, this book features contributions from figures across the world of football and design, from analyst Statman Dave and broadcaster Martin Tyler, to architect Jacques Herzog and VP of design at adidas Sam Handy. The diverse perspectives in this catalogue reveal the extraordinary richness of the game’s design legacy, and cast new light on its future.

The Offbeat Sari: Indian Fashion Unravelled

Edited by Priya Khanchandani

In India today, a new generation of designers, wearers and craftspeople are re-energising the sari, translating its heritage for a diverse, contemporary world. Visionary designers across the nation’s burgeoning cities are playing with drapes, experimental techniques and inventive materials. This transformation is empowering women and people of non-conforming identities who are re-writing the language of everyday fashion, wearing the sari in novel ways that unravel conventional forms of expression.

This book, published in tandem with The Offbeat Sari exhibition, brings together essays and interviews with designers who are working at the forefront of Indian fashion – from couturiers like Sabyasachi Mukherjee and Amit Aggarwal, to craft pioneers like Abraham & Thakore. Placing the sari’s leading creators in dialogue with writers, experts and advocates, this book reflects on how creative ingenuity is expanding the possibilities of contemporary dress across India, revealing some of the radically offbeat ways in which the sari has become a site for renewed innovation over the past decade.
INTERIOR SHOT OF THE DESIGN MUSEUM, 2016
Terms and Conditions

Hire fee, on request, includes:

– Curation and exhibition concept
– Tour management by Design Museum staff
– Exhibits
– Images and films
– Exhibition text in English
– 2D and 3D design concept
– Selected display kit

Costs payable by the venue:

– Hire fee, in instalments
– Exhibition and graphic design adaptation
– Share of transport and crating costs
– Storage of empty crates
– Nail-to-nail insurance
– All costs relating to exhibition production
– Installation and de-installation costs
– Marketing

Contact

To find out more about any of these exhibitions and other tours available from 2024 onwards, please contact:

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designmuseum.org/exhibitions/touring-exhibitions