

Waste Age

Tour Proposal



The 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 135 tours to 107 venues in 31 countries worldwide.

The Design Museum's touring exhibitions range in size from 150 to 1,000 square metres and cover all areas of design – architecture, fashion, furniture, graphics, product 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, Miuccia Prada, Frank Gehry, Eileen Gray and Dieter Rams. On 24 November 2016, the Design Museum relocated to Kensington, West London. Architect 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.

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The Design Museum, London



CURATORS

Gemma Curtin is former Curator at the Design Museum

Justin McGuirk is Chief Curator at the Design Museum

EXHIBITION DESIGN

Material Cultures

GRAPHIC DESIGN

SPIN

VENUE

Design Museum, London

23 October 2021 - 20 February 2022

Hong Kong Design Institute

13 January - 30 April 2023

Paris

December 2023 - Summer 2024

TOUR AVAILABILITY

Slots available in 2023 and 2025

SPACE

Approx. 900 square metres

Exhibition overview

The Stone Age, the Bronze Age and Steam Age all defined historical periods that shaped the future of humankind and our planet. The world produces 2 billion metric tons of rubbish each year, estimated to increase to 3.4 billion metric tons by 2050. With only 15% of waste reclaimed, we are in a Waste Age, where the impact of our lifestyle of careless design, production and consumption is leaving an indelible and potentially toxic layer that will shape the lives of future generations.

The things we need to live and thrive have been produced with materials and energy taken from the Earth. The world's resources are finite, with vast reserves now no longer underground but held within the buildings, infrastructure, systems and stuff that surround us. Design has a central role to ensure that the environmental impact of what we produce now and in the future is considered. In three sections, Waste Age tells the story of the environmental crisis created by our 'take, make, waste' economy. The exhibition presents the current crisis and design's role in the problem. It then explores how design can transform our waste into valuable resources, promote new ways of living with the Earth and not from it, and where there is no such thing as waste.

From used to coffee cups to living furniture, Blast Studio
(The Biological Laboratory of Architecture and Sensitive Technologies)



What's in the exhibition

An extensive 8-metre-long timeline of the History of Waste

Photographs by Edward Burtynsky showing the scale and impact of extraction and waste

A new large-scale commission from Ghanaian artist Ibrahim Mahama revealing where our electronic waste is dumped

A deconstructed VW Beetle, iPhone and other everyday objects

Stella McCartney's exclusive designs made from waste and recycled materials

3D printed chairs made from recycled fridges

New cutting-edge materials derived from algae and mycelium that will replace oil based polymers

A high fashion dress that uses algae sequins in place of plastic

A new degradable plastic made from waste carbon and citrus peel

A shirt made to last 50 years

Sustainable building materials using clay, wood and cork to replace concrete and steel

Waugh Thistleton Architects have been using cross laminated timber (CLT), a material that is created by gluing planks of timber in perpendicular layers to create a very strong and structurally rigid material. CLT can replace harmful construction materials such as concrete and steel which emit lots of carbon and cannot be disposed of. Photo © Waugh Thistleton Architects



Peak Waste

The scale of the problem

Peak Waste confronts visitors with the epic scale of the global waste problem we face and the urgent need for change. It shows how our production of waste has been historically managed but escalated since the mid 20th century. It shines a spotlight on the hidden workings of mass-production and consumerism. It reveals the realities of landfill and the global networks that have evolved to dispose of our toxic waste streams. Visitors will feel overwhelmed with the scale of the problem.

- **The scale of the problem** features prints by photographer Edward Burtynsky, whose work highlights and communicates the issue of waste.
- A detailed **Timeline** with text, images and object shows how we got to our current waste saturation.
- **A throwaway culture, Build to break, Why do we love plastic?** present how we made a disposable culture and the issues with mass-manufacturing.
- **Artist Commission.** To present the scale of the problem, the exhibition features the new commission *Fadama 40* by artist Ibrahim Mahama, which responds to the issue of e-waste at Agbogbloshie in Ghana.

Exhibition View, Peak Waste showing the 'What we Throwaway' plinth; alcoves related to 'A Throwaway Culture' including LIFE Magazine's 1955 'Throwaway Living article' and washed up Garfield phone pieces collected in France by Ar Viltansou; and the Bottle-top Chain made with collected waste from beaches in Cornwall over the winter of 2015 by the Cornish Plastic Pollution Coalition

Ibrahim Mahama, *Fadama 40*, 2021



A THROWAWAY CULTURE

The glamour of the 'throwaway' started with the prosperity of the post-war period. In the 1950s, mass production and cheap materials reduced the cost of things. However, time and labour were increasingly expensive, making repairs no longer time- or cost-effective. Products were made for convenience, with disposable cups, cutlery and nappies easier to replace than to clean, reducing the domestic workload. The range of materials it was considered acceptable to throw away started with paper and grew to include glass, ceramics, plastics, tin, aluminium and, increasingly with fast fashion, textiles. Boredom has replaced convenience, with 24% of people who throw out clothing stating they are sick of wearing the same things. In 2018, 300,000 tonnes of textiles ended up in landfill. The UK generated 44kg of single-use plastic waste per person in 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic led to a record surge in plastic waste - from disposable protective equipment to single-use plastic packaging - due to health and hygiene concerns.



Precious Waste

Changing our minds about value

Today 90% of the raw materials used in manufacturing become waste before they leave the factory, while 80% of products get thrown away in the first six months of life. The excesses of our throwaway economy have left us with huge amounts of waste. While we address that systemic problem, this should be seen as a resource waiting to be transformed into something desirable. Here visitors encounter imaginative approaches from designers who are redefining what's considered waste, finding and capturing the value in it, as well as examples of scalable commercial production using new and existing waste streams, from ocean plastic, electronic waste, textiles and construction. Visitors will enter a welcoming and ordered environment of active transformation inspired by recycling waste into new resources.

Opposite top: *Renoleum*, Christien Meindertsma, commissioned by Forbo Flooring, 2019

Opposite bottom: Exhibition view of *Renoleum*, Christien Meindertsma

Above: Exhibition view of *Materialism Volkswagen Beetle*, Studio Drift, 2018



- **The waste explorers** features the work of designers, including Studio Drift and Christien Meindertsma, who are drawing our attention to the issues of sustainability and encouraging us to reflect on what the things around us are made of. A wall of recycled materials will help explain the material complexity and how design can help make the circular economy work more efficiently.
- **Reclaiming precious resources** presents projects from industries and by designers that are recycling waste more efficiently using digital technology to embed and revalue the practice. It includes the following categories: Plastic, Electronic, Food, Fashion/Textile and Construction.
- **Reuse - valuing what we have** presents the work of designers and architects, including Celia Pym and Lacaton and Vassal, who are looking at new ways to mend or reuse. A process that values resources and recharges our emotional connection to things around us.

Opposite: Exhibition view, Ellen MacArthur Foundation, *Working To Eliminate Plastic Packaging*. The Ellen MacArthur Foundation works with brands to address plastic pollution and reduce plastic packaging before it reaches the consumer

Above: Exhibition View, *Precious Waste*. Left to right: *Endless Flow Rocking Chair* and *Chubby Chair* - 3D printed chairs made from old fridges, Dirk van der Kooij, 2011 and 2012; *Purged Plastic Wall Shelf* - made from industrial plastic waste, Soft Baroque, 2018; *Plastic Baroque Lamp* and *Plastic Baroque Armchair*, made from consumer plastic waste, James Shaw, 2019 and 2020; stack of *1 Inch Reclaimed Stacking Chairs* - made from waste polypropylene and waste wood fibre, designed by Jasper Morrison for Emeco, 2018



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Post Waste New ways of living

The third theme, Post Waste, brings together visionary designs that are shaping a future where resources are managed for the long term and there is no such thing as waste. It presents a wide range of exhibits, from new soluble polymers for packaging to garments made from algae and orange peel, to buildings made from sustainable grown material or that are designed for deconstruction. Post Waste celebrates approaches that are designing out waste and supporting regenerative design and the circular economy. In the third section, visitors see visions of near future, where materials and products are grown rather than extracted. The gallery highlights the earthy beauty of new bio no-waste materials such as seaweed, hemp or mycelium.

Previous spread: Exhibition view, Precious Waste. A selection of textile based projects including work by Phoebe English, Bethany Williams and Stella McCartney

Opposite: Exhibition view, *Sequin Dress* by Charlotte McCurdy x Phillip Lim, 2020. Made from algae bioplastic sequins on a biodegradable plant-based dress

Above: Exhibition view, Post Waste. A segment of the 'Growing a No-Waste Future' subsection. On wall left to right: *SONY's Original Paper Blend* - a material for sustainable packaging; a *Mycelium Insulation Panel* by BIOHM; *Algae Vessels* and *Algae Wall Panel Tiles* by Atelier Luma



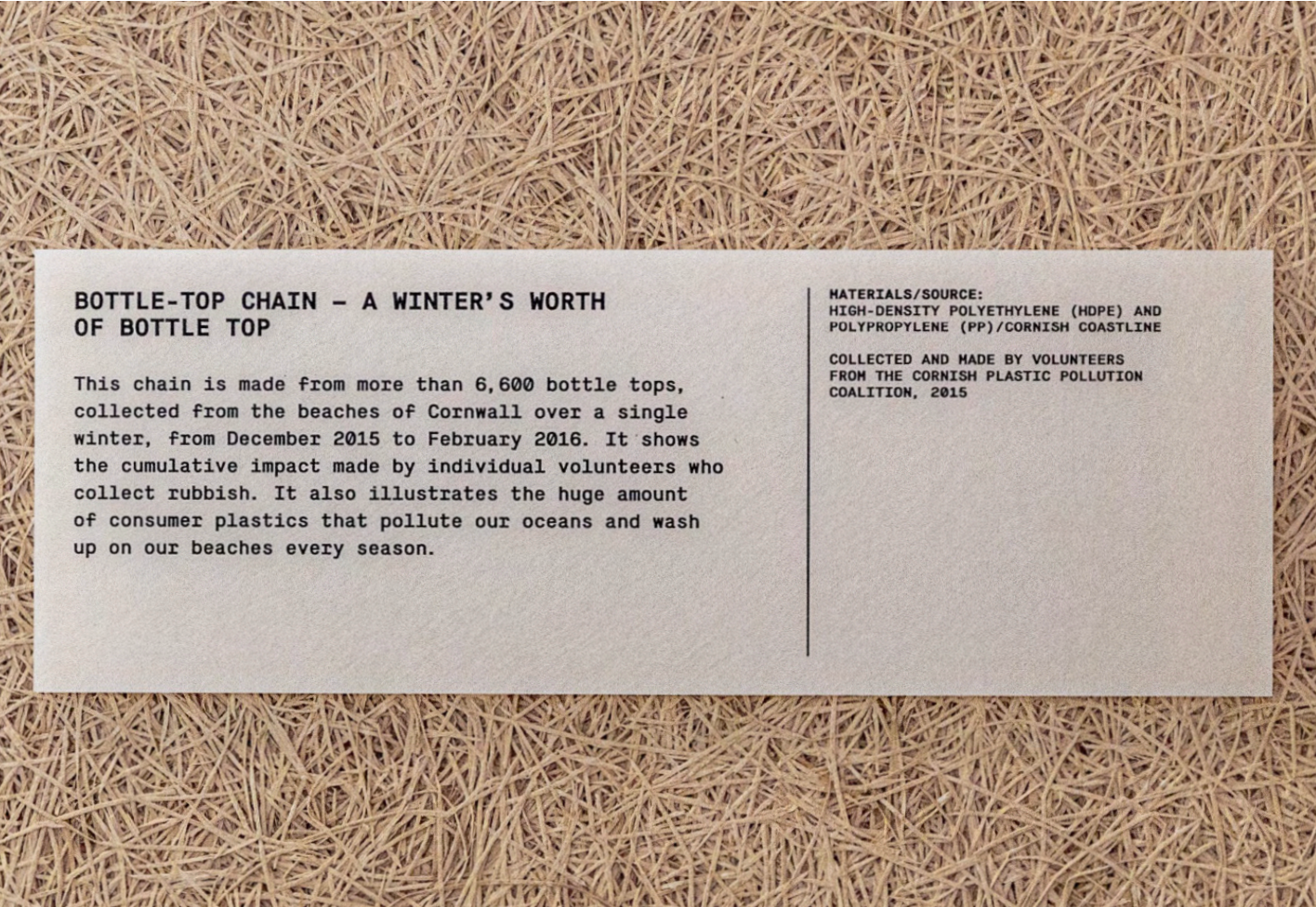
- **Growing a no-waste future** presents a dazzling selection of innovative grown materials, or materials made from agricultural waste, including the work of designers Fernando Laposse and Atelier Luma. These designers offer new alternatives to extracted oil or gas based polymers with materials that are soluble degradable, and hope for a no waste future.
- **Making things last** promotes changing how we live and consume. Are we addicted to consumption? New for new's sake? This subsection looks at new systems that help to reduce waste and consumption, the sharing economy, renting instead of owning things to reduce consumption. At the end of the exhibition is a newly commissioned film of advocates/campaigners/designers/social scientists to provoke discussion about 'living without waste'.
- **Ancient wisdom** explores global new and ancient no-waste living. It encourages visitors to learn and listen to the alternative non-western narrative. This is a global issue that effects those who are often causing the least harm.

Opposite: Exhibition view, *Totomoxtle* - a veneer material made with husks of heirloom corn in Tonahuixtla, Mexico, Fernando Laposse; and *Sisal Table* - made from agave leave waste from the tequila industry, Fernando Laposse, 2019

Above: Corn husks used to make *Totomoxtle*. Image courtesy of Fernando Laposse







BOTTLE-TOP CHAIN – A WINTER’S WORTH OF BOTTLE TOP

This chain is made from more than 6,600 bottle tops, collected from the beaches of Cornwall over a single winter, from December 2015 to February 2016. It shows the cumulative impact made by individual volunteers who collect rubbish. It also illustrates the huge amount of consumer plastics that pollute our oceans and wash up on our beaches every season.

MATERIALS/SOURCE:
HIGH-DENSITY POLYETHYLENE (HDPE) AND
POLYPROPYLENE (PP)/CORNISH COASTLINE

COLLECTED AND MADE BY VOLUNTEERS
FROM THE CORNISH PLASTIC POLLUTION
COALITION, 2015

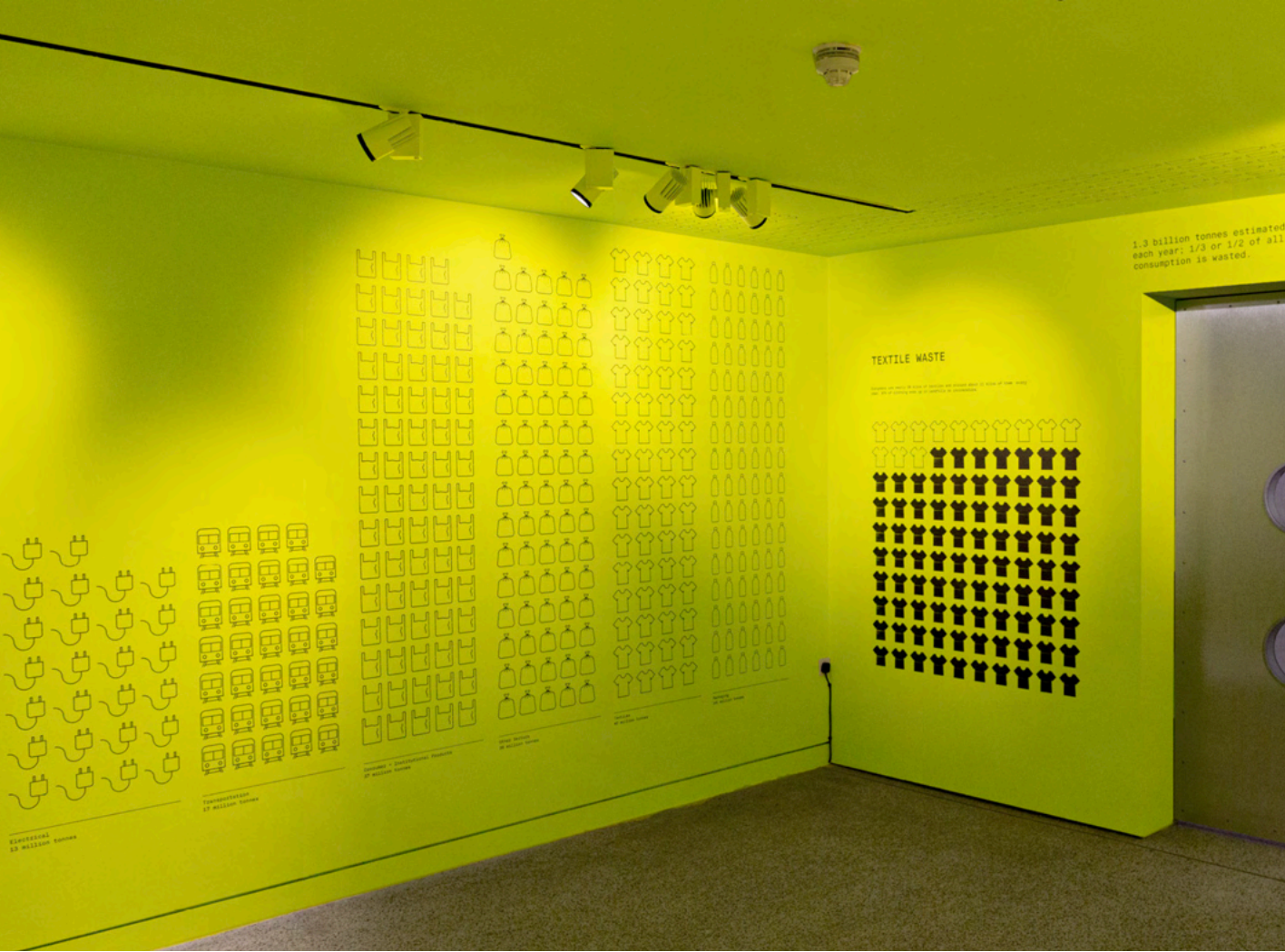


PEAK WASTE: THE SCALE OF THE PROBLEM

There is no waste in nature, yet our planet is drowning in humanity's pollution. Swelling streams of discarded plastics, textiles, electronics and materials from construction, agriculture and industry are overwhelming the systems set up to manage them. In the UK, most of our rubbish is incinerated or buried. The rest is exported to other countries, out of sight but still wreaking damage on people and the land. Rising levels of waste are fuelled by our increasing and careless consumption. We have reached peak waste.

Waste contributes to climate change through the production of greenhouse gases. Human activity, including burning oil and gas in factories, heating our homes, emissions from vehicles and planes, and dumping waste in landfill, produces carbon dioxide or methane, gases that are causing the Earth's temperature to rise. Higher temperatures lead to melting icecaps, which cool the oceans and cause rising sea levels. These, in turn, lead to extreme weather, affecting vulnerable communities and species.

Our toxic levels of waste are damaging the planet.
How did we get here?



Exhibition Design Minimising Waste

2D design: SPIN
3D design: Material Cultures

The 2D and 3D designers were given a brief to minimise waste in their designs, embodying the narrative of the exhibition within its look and feel and setting new standards for future exhibitions from a waste perspective.

Features of the minimal waste exhibition design include:

- Text and graphics printed directly onto the walls with a handheld inkjet printer, normally used for industrial marking, avoiding plastic-heavy vinyl and unnecessary printing
- Captions were printed onto recycled and recyclable plastics
- Plinths were made from silicate bricks, reused from a previous exhibiton
- The cassette walls were made with natural and carbon negative materials, and were designed for dissassembly and reuse

Opposite top: Exhibition view, recycled plastic caption on wood wool wall

Opposite bottom: Exhibition view, entrance room with infographics printed onto wall with handheld inkjet printer with water-based inks

Above: Exhibition view, Peak Waste section text printed on wall with gun and animated infographics

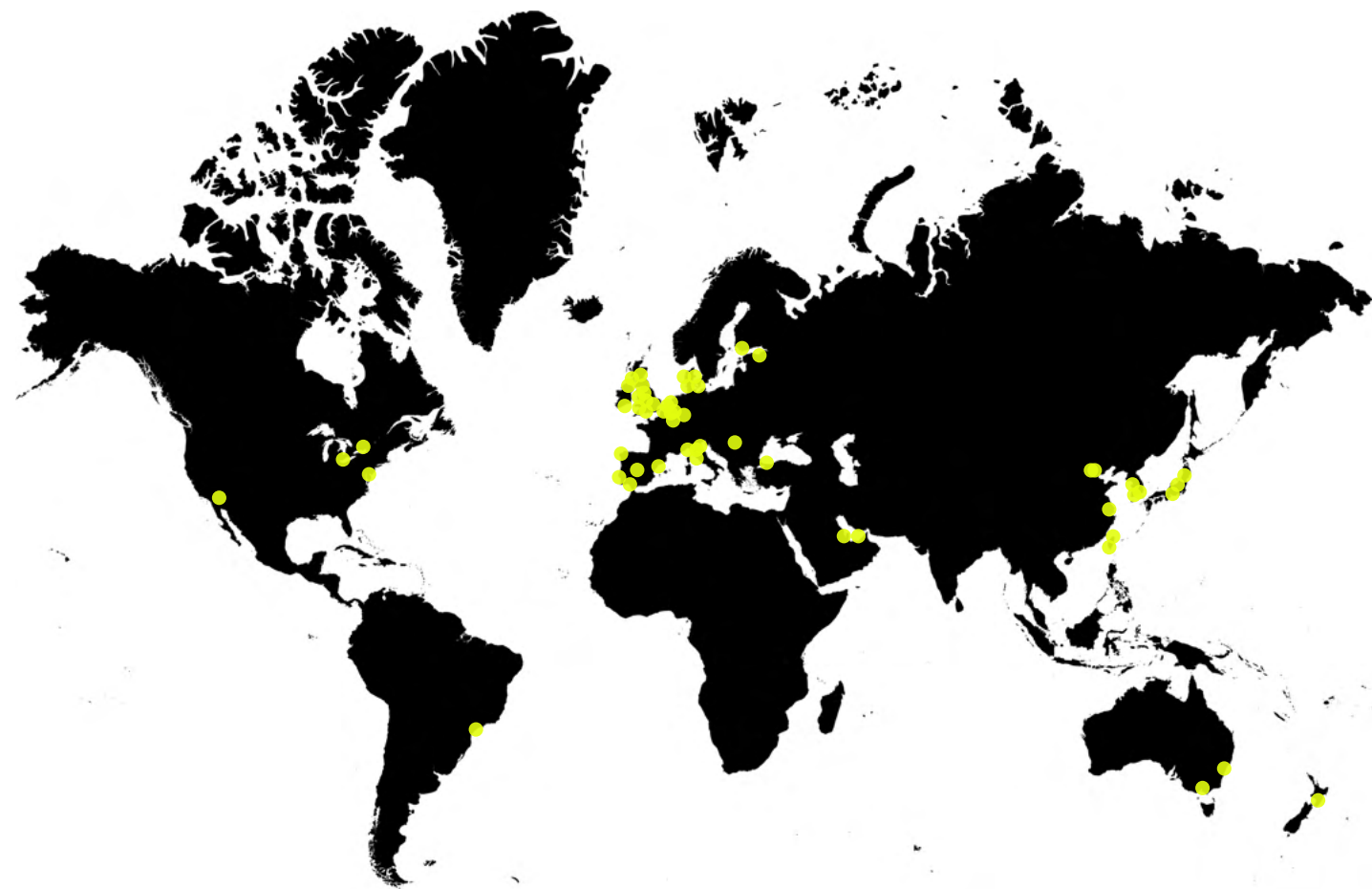
Terms and conditions

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 this exhibition and other tours available, please contact:

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designmuseum.org/exhibitions/touring-exhibitions

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