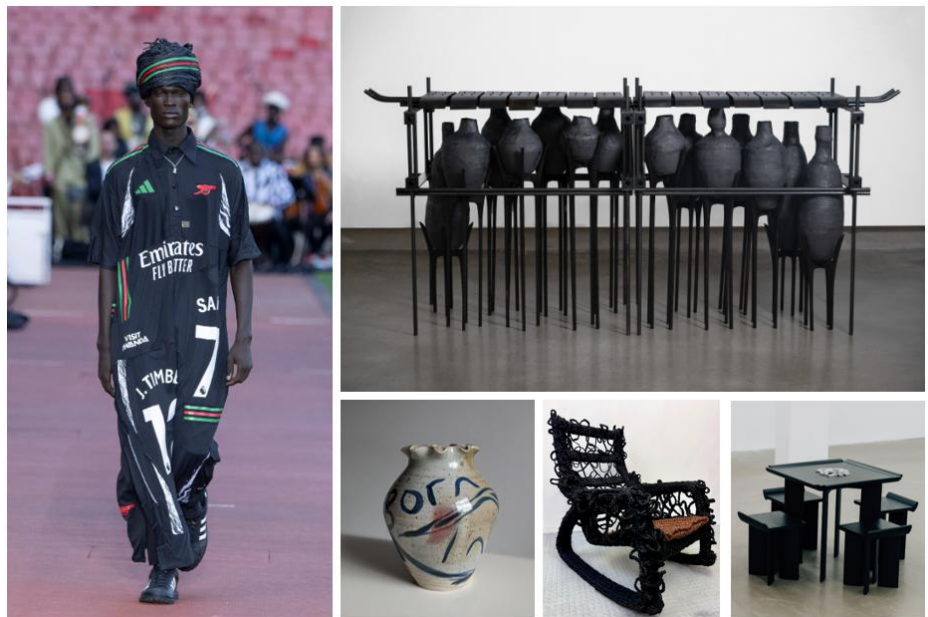


The Design Museum to open major exhibition of contemporary Black design this autumn

The Nue Black Aesthetic

06 November 2026 — 08 August 2027

the Design Museum



[PRESS IMAGES AVAILABLE HERE](#)

This autumn, the Design Museum in London will open an exhibition guest curated by author and journalist Charlene Prempeh that charts the work of some of the most innovative contemporary Black designers working right now.

The Nue Black Aesthetic — which runs from November 2026 until August 2027 — will feature 16 designers who are reshaping the design industry. It will be one of the most extensive exhibitions on contemporary Black design ever held in the UK.

With over 100 objects on display, visitors will see innovative practices that span from fashion and furniture, to architecture, product design and sculpture.

At the core of the exhibition will be the question: “What does it mean to be a Black designer working today?”

Across six sections, the show will demonstrate that Black design is not a monolith, and that there is no single way to be a Black designer. By spotlighting diverse practices and voices, the exhibition invites visitors to rethink assumptions about what Black design looks like and who gets to shape design culture.

The designers featured in the show are:

Tejumola Adenuga, Taiba Akhuetie, Ini Archibong, Simone Brewster, Mac Collins, Phoebe Collings-James, Foday Dumbuya, Feben, Nifemi Marcus-Bello, Andu Masebo, Saul Nash, Tosin Oshinowo, Bianca Saunders, Rachel Scott, Samuel Ross and Giles Tettey Nartey.

Additional works and graphics by over 20 designers — from Althea McNish to Yinka Ilori — will also feature in the exhibition’s introduction to contextualise Black design from the 20th and 21st centuries.

Many of the designers featured belong to diasporic communities, balancing shared experiences with the distinct traditions of their specific heritage. Their varied approaches to identity, culture and community reflect the myriad nuances of the Black experience.

The Nue Black Aesthetic has been guest-curated by Charlene Prempeh, founder of creative studio and art consultancy A Vibe Called Tech and author of *Now You See Me: An Introduction to 100 Years of Black Design*. The Project Curator from the Design Museum is Tiya Dahyabhai.

The title of the show references the cultural movements of the ‘Black Aesthetic’ of the 1960s and the ‘New Black Aesthetic’ of the 1980s. But this exhibition proposes a ‘Nue’ era — one defined by nuance, where there is no single way to be a Black designer.

Charlene Prempeh, guest-curator of *The Nue Black Aesthetic* said: “The idea that Black design is not monolithic should not be surprising or controversial and yet there has historically been very little interrogation about the complexities and inspiration of contemporary Black designers or about how the specific experience of creating in a predominantly white space influences their practice. This exhibition focuses a spotlight on the design work of the diasporic community while provoking a reassessment of what Black design is today.”

Exhibition sections

The exhibition will be split into six distinct sections, each exploring design under a broad definition, but collectively reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of being a Black designer.

The first section — **Towards a Nue Black Aesthetic** — presents the background and context to the current moment. Here visitors can explore milestones in Black design across the past seven decades. These pioneering designers and the scholarship around them have shaped contemporary practice, laying the foundation for nuanced approaches of Black designers today.

Identity as Inspiration examines the Black designers of now, who mine their identity as a departure point for their work. Each practitioner here invites us to see identity as a fluid, evolving source of creativity and innovation. Highlights in this section include the Bianca Saunders-designed suit worn by Usher at New York's Met Gala in 2023 which speaks to how Saunders redefines menswear through challenging hypermasculine stereotypes. There'll also be domestic furniture — including a chair and a lampshade — made of synthetic hair by sculptural artist Taiba Akhuetie. Growing up in the UK amid a culture that idolised European beauty standards, Akhuetie often saw Black hair treated as something to be managed or controlled. These pieces see Akhuetie reframe hairstyling as a positive communal ritual.

Design is an essential tool for forging and sustaining Black communities, and in **Community Building**, the focus is on how designers embrace their craft as a space of belonging. Objects here will include a high-fashion reimaging of the Arsenal 2024/25 away kit, which fashion brand LABRUM designed in collaboration with adidas. Its black, red and green colour scheme draws on the colours of Pan Africanism, and the kit resonated widely, bringing together Arsenal supporters across the African diaspora.

From challenging established aesthetic norms, questioning commercial hierarchies or creating cultural legacies that shift how design is understood, **Rethinking the System** will look at the Black designers challenging norms. Visitors will see architect Giles Tettey Nartey's contemporary twist on a balafon — a type of xylophone originating in West Africa — which speaks to his work confronting how the Western design canon has dismissed traditional design from West Africa as frozen in time.

The penultimate section sees a new film created specially for this exhibition by and directed by Samona Olanipekun. **Black by Design** follows the designers featured in the exhibition as they unpack their personal journeys and motivations. Through intimate interviews, studio visits, and candid reflections, this film explores how they navigate the contemporary design landscape.

The **Finale** sees a brand-new site-specific commission by Nigerian American designer Ini Archibong. *Mfon* — meaning ‘grace’ in Nigeria’s Ibibio language — is a large chandelier made from hand-blown Murano glass, and which visitors will experience alongside an ambient soundtrack that encourages reflection. The vastness of the new piece gives space to the varied experiences, identities and localities that make up a community while insisting on a powerful, unbroken connection.

Tim Marlow, Director and CEO of the Design Museum, said: “Exploring new perspectives on contemporary design is at the heart of our exhibition programme at the Design Museum and *The Nue Black Aesthetic* will enrich our understanding of what is happening in design today. It’s a thought-provoking and nuanced show that will invite visitors to consider how the Black experience is central to a designer’s practice and how design in the 21st century is shaped. We look forward to opening up important conversations with this landmark exhibition.”

Tiya Dahyabhai, Project Curator of *The Nue Black Aesthetic*, said: “It’s hugely exciting that visitors to our exhibition will get to see 16 of the most exciting and innovative designers working today. While some draw directly from identity and culture, others reshape design systems or redefine community impact. We’re grateful to each and every one of the contributing designers for collaborating with us on this vital show.”

The Nue Black Aesthetic runs at the Design Museum from 06 November 2026 until 08 August 2027. Tickets have gone on sale today.

The exhibition is supported by Cockayne Grants for the Arts, a Donor Advised Fund, held at The Prism Charitable Trust, and Pentagram Stiftung.

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Lead Image Captions: (Far left) LOOK 23, LABRUM, SS25 Designed by an Immigrant: Journey of Triumphs 2024 by Foday Dumbuya, courtesy of LABRUM. (Top right) ‘Strange Notes’ 2025 by Giles Tettey Nartey. Courtesy of Giles Tettey Nartey. (Bottom left) Born in Flames 2020 by Phoebe

Collings James, courtesy Mudbelly Ceramics. (Bottom middle) Braided rocking chair 2025 by Taiba Akhuetie, courtesy Taiba Akhuetie. (Bottom right) Open Code 2023 by Mac Collins, photo credit Megan Jepson.

Notes to Editors

W: designmuseum.org/exhibitions/the-nue-black-aesthetic

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About Charlene Prempeh

Charlene Prempeh is the founder of A Vibe Called Tech, a creative agency and art consultancy that is dedicated to approaching creativity through an intersectional lens. Charlene is a columnist and contributing editor at Financial Times HTSI and Design Editor at Esquire, writing about design, travel and culture.

After studying PPE at Oxford University, she began a career in marketing and worked at some of the UK's most prominent media platforms and art institutions, including the BBC, The Guardian, and Frieze. More recently, she launched A Vibe Called Tech to encourage a culturally diverse lens in design, technology, arts, and culture by spearheading partnerships, events, research, and workshops and through her journalism and consultancy work.

Since its establishment in 2018, A Vibe Called Tech has worked with brands including Gucci, Nike, Aesop, Acne, Faber, Frieze and institutions like Whitechapel Gallery, White Cube, RA and V&A East to deliver ambitious creative output that nourishes communities. In 2022, the agency launched Turned A, a cultural merchandising project which seeks to amplify key messages of the creative agency's projects and its Art Consultancy arm, established to help clients connect seamlessly with artists.

Charlene is a Non-Executive Director on the Tate Enterprise board, a trustee for Contemporary Arts Society and Turner Contemporary and Committee Chair for Frieze Connect. Charlene's debut book, *Now You See Me: An Introduction to 100 Years of Black Design*, was published in October 2023 and she is Curatorial Director for the 2026 edition of Design Miami in December 2026.

About the Design Museum

The Design Museum is a multifaceted museum, an ever-changing space for the public, industry and education to come together and explore new ideas.

A registered charity, the museum's innovative exhibitions, partnerships, research and learning programmes evidence how design can enable this planet and its inhabitants to thrive. Our landmark building in Kensington is the centre of our national network and a global hub for the transformative potential of design.



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