



Press release
January 2019

AMERICAN TULIPWOOD PAVILION SHOWCASED AT THE DESIGN MUSEUM AS PART OF DAVID ADJAYE: MAKING MEMORY

A collaboration first presented in 2008 by the American Hardwood Export Council and Sir David Adjaye will be part of an exciting new exhibition at the Design Museum, London. **Sclera**, originally commissioned for the London Design Festival, will be one of seven projects featured in *David Adjaye: Making Memory*, which runs 2 February to 5 May 2019.

British-Ghanaian architect Sir David Adjaye OBE will explore the role of monuments and memorials in the 21st century through seven of his projects. He will examine the idea of the monument and present his thinking on how architecture and form are used as storytelling devices. This exhibition shows that contemporary monuments are no longer static objects in a field – plaques, statues or neo-classical sculptures – but are dynamic and complex spaces that serve a wider purpose.

A fragment of the Sclera pavilion will be showcased in one of the exhibition rooms. The original Sclera was an elliptical 12 x 8 metre American tulipwood outdoor pavilion located near the river Thames on the Southbank Centre Square. Inspired by the human eye, it was an exploration of form and space, and was designed as a public room in the heart of the city that could be simultaneously calming and uplifting – an immersive urban monument about slowing down in order to see and understand the world better. The fragment at the Design Museum, which has been replicated following the original drawings by craftsman makers Benchmark, measures 4.5 x 3.4 metres and will invite visitors to get a glimpse at what the original experience inside the pavilion was like, and to explore the look and tactility of the tulipwood.

“Working with tulipwood timber allows to really bring out a series of positive and negative forms together. The architecture looks opaque and solid as you approach it, you think it’s a sealed room that dissolves as you enter. You realise that it is a moment where your heightened feeling of light and air are brought into the fore and the visual world is taken away from you,” says Sir David Adjaye.

“I wanted to think about the role of sacred spaces, respite spaces, quiet monuments that played a certain role in our cities and maybe have now become more formal as religious spaces. I wanted to really find a way in which we could make a space that didn’t have the connotations of religion or formal monuments but one that could just allow citizens to retreat from the bustle of everyday life. Timber, such as tulipwood, brings a sense of calm and being amongst nature when surrounded by it.”

“We are delighted that Sir David Adjaye OBE has selected Sclera as one of the monuments to be included in the Design Museum’s exhibition. Sclera was our first structural experiment with American tulipwood, as well as our first collaboration with the London Design Festival. We have since gone on to push the species’ boundaries through research and various other landmark projects with LDF,” says David Venables, European Director of AHEC.

Sean Sutcliffe, Director of Benchmark furniture commented, “Making the Sclera structure for the David Adjaye Show at the Design Museum gave us an opportunity to use American tulipwood at scale and in a really beautiful installation. We always welcome the opportunity to make things with tulipwood, not just because it works really well; both machining and handwork are a joy, but significantly because tulipwood is a massively undervalued resource. It is plentiful in the North American forests, fast growing and highly sustainable as a material. It has good strength to weight properties and good stability. Quite why it has been historically so undervalued is a mystery to me, but at this point in time it is a good value hardwood.”



American tulipwood is one of the most prolific hardwood species from the U.S. hardwood forests and is unique to North America. In 2008, American tulipwood had mostly been used for indoor applications, so Adjaye's preference for this species for outdoor use was significant. Adjaye exploited one of American tulipwood's key characteristics: to create the pavilion's wooden flooring of extremely long strips set along the greatest length of the ellipse. The extensive stretch of single-piece floorboards accentuates the wood's varying natural hues, inviting visitors to walk the full length of the pavilion. These regular flooring strips contrasted with the walls and ceiling to bring out the dynamic effect of light filtering onto the wood surfaces.

Tulipwood is sourced from the Eastern United States, where the hardwood forest area is expanding at a rate of one football pitch every minute, and already exceeds 110 million hectares, equivalent to the combined area of France and Spain. This makes the material both sustainable and environmentally friendly, especially as it is one of the most abundant American hardwoods - accounting for 7.7% of the total standing volume in U.S. hardwood forests. Every year, even after harvest, the volume of tulipwood in the U.S. forest grows by 19million m³, the equivalent of over 19 Olympic swimming pools per day.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

American Hardwood Export Council (AHEC)

AHEC is the leading international trade association for the U.S. hardwood industry, representing the committed exporters among American hardwood companies and all the major U.S. hardwood product trade associations. For over 25 years, AHEC has been at the forefront of international wood promotion, successfully building a distinctive and creative brand for American hardwoods. AHEC's support for creative design projects such as The Smile or The Wish List for London Design Festival or The Workshop of Dreams for Hay Festival [Spain] demonstrates the performance and aesthetic potential of these sustainable materials and provides valuable inspiration.

AHEC produces a full range of technical publications, available at www.americanhardwood.org

Follow AHEC on Twitter and Instagram @ahec_europe

With special thanks to

Allegheny Wood Products, Baillie Lumber Co., Bingham Lumber Inc, Boss Lumber Cooperation, Classic American Hardwoods, Collins Hardwood, Latham Timber, Northland Forest Products, Northwest Hardwoods, Parton Lumber and Thompson Hardwoods Inc.

The Design Museum

If you are interested in attending the press view for this exhibition, please email pr@designmuseum.org – no entry without confirmation of attendance.

The Design Museum is located in London and is the world's leading design museum. It makes the impact of design visible and is the only place in the UK where the design industry, education and the public can come together to change the way people think about themselves and the future.

Since it opened its doors in 1989 the museum has displayed everything from an AK-47 to high heels designed by Christian Louboutin. It is a registered charity that has staged over 100 exhibitions, welcomed over six 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. Leading architectural designer 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.

The Design Museum is European Museum of the Year for 2018; the Design Museum was one of forty finalists and the sixth UK winner in the award's 41-year history.

www.designmuseum.org

Adjaye Associates

Adjaye Associates is an award-winning global architectural practice founded and led by Sir David Adjaye OBE. Since Adjaye Associates inception in London nearly 20 years ago, Sir David and his team have increasingly focused on projects with an enriching social agenda, culminating in the completion of the Smithsonian National Museum for African American History and Culture on the National Mall in Washington DC. The practice has offices in London, New York and Accra and completed work in Europe, North America, the Middle East, Asia, and Africa. From temporary installations to museums to galleries and university campuses, Adjaye Associates projects throughout the globe are unified by their ability to offer a rich civic experience and to reference a wide cultural discourse.

www.adjaye.com

Follow Adjaye Associates on Instagram @adjayeassociates

BENCHMARK

Benchmark is one of Britain's leading furniture makers, widely regarded as the UK's powerhouse of craft. Founded 30 years ago, it has grown to become one of the country's most technologically advanced workshops. With a team of over 50 craftsmen and designers, Benchmark design and make their own furniture collection as well as commissioned projects. Combining contemporary technologies and values with traditional craftsmanship and high quality materials, Benchmark's furniture is made to last for generations. Twice winners of the Queen's Award for Enterprise in Sustainable Development, their sustainable credentials are second to none.

Sclera is one of several collaborative projects between AHEC and Benchmark. Other projects include The Wish List for London Design Festival, the Rotunda Serotina for Wallpaper* Handmade and Too Good to Waste for Interni's exhibition at Milan Design week.

www.benchmarkfurniture.com

Follow Benchmark on Twitter and Instagram @MadebyBenchmark



David Adjaye: Making Memory

02 February – 05 May 2019

the Design Museum

Media preview:

Tuesday 01 February, 09:00 – 12:00

RSVP to pr@designmuseum.org to attend

For further press information please contact:

Friends & Co
Christine Samuelian
Christine@friendsandco.co.uk
+44 (0)7957 203 037