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Press Release

## AWARD-WINNING ARCHITECT FRANCIS KÉRÉ TO DESIGN THE SERPENTINE PAVILION 2017

23 June – 8 October 2017

Sponsored by Goldman Sachs

Press images at [serpentinegalleries.org/press](http://serpentinegalleries.org/press)



**Diébédo Francis Kéré**, the award-winning architect from Gando, Burkino Faso, has been commissioned to design the Serpentine Pavilion 2017, responding to the brief with a bold, innovative structure that brings his characteristic sense of light and life to the lawns of Kensington Gardens.

Kéré, who leads the Berlin-based practice Kéré Architecture, is the seventeenth architect to accept the Serpentine Galleries' invitation to design a temporary Pavilion in its grounds. Since its launch in 2000, this annual commission of an international architect to build his or her first structure in London at the time

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of invitation has become one of the most anticipated events in the global cultural calendar and a leading visitor attraction during London's summer season. Serpentine Artistic Director Hans Ulrich Obrist and CEO Yana Peel made their selection of the architect, with advisors David Adjaye and Richard Rogers.

Inspired by the tree that serves as a central meeting point for life in his home town of Gando, Francis Kéré has designed a responsive Pavilion that seeks to connect its visitors to nature – and each other. An expansive roof, supported by a central steel framework, mimics a tree's canopy, allowing air to circulate freely while offering shelter against London rain and summer heat.

Kéré has positively embraced British climate in his design, creating a structure that engages with the ever-changing London weather in creative ways. The Pavilion has four separate entry points with an open air courtyard in the centre, where visitors can sit and relax during sunny days. In the case of rain, an oculus funnels any water that collects on the roof into a spectacular waterfall effect, before it is evacuated through a drainage system in the floor for later use in irrigating the park. Both the roof and wall system are made from wood. By day, they act as solar shading, creating pools of dappled shadows. By night, the walls become a source of illumination as small perforations twinkle with the movement and activity from inside.

As an architect, Kéré is committed to socially engaged and ecological design in his practice, as evidenced by his award-winning primary school in Burkina Faso, pioneering solo museum shows in Munich and Philadelphia, and his immersive installation in the 2014 exhibition *Sensing Spaces* at London's Royal Academy.

Building on these ideas, Kéré's Serpentine Pavilion will host a programme of events exploring questions of community and rights to the city, as well as the continuation of **Park Nights**, the Serpentine's public performance series, supported by COS. Now in its third year, **Build Your Own Pavilion**, the digital platform and nationwide architecture campaign supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies, will invite young people to consider the relationship between architecture and public space, to ask critical questions about the future of their cities and to design the cities in which they would like to live.

Kéré's design follows Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG), whose 'unzipped wall' structure was visited by more than 250,000 people in 2016, making it one of the most visited Pavilions to date. Four commissioned Summer Houses in 2016 by Kunlé Adeyemi – NLÉ (Amsterdam/Lagos), Barkow Leibinger (Berlin/New York), Yona Friedman (Paris) and Asif Khan (London), attracted almost 160,000 visitors.

**Diébédo Francis Kéré, architect of the 17<sup>th</sup> Serpentine Pavilion, said:** "As an architect, it is an honour to work in such a grand park, especially knowing the long history of how the gardens evolved and changed into what we see today. Every path and tree, and even the Serpentine lake, were all carefully designed. I am fascinated by how this artificial landscape offered a new way for people in the city to experience nature. In Burkina Faso, I am accustomed to being confronted with climate and natural landscape as a harsh reality. For this reason, I was interested in how my contribution to this Royal Park could not only enhance the visitor's experience of nature, but also provoke a new way for people to connect with each other."

**Serpentine Galleries CEO, Yana Peel, and Artistic Director, Hans Ulrich Obrist, said:** "We are thrilled to reveal the designs for Francis Kéré's Pavilion, which highlight the power of simplicity by reducing architecture to its core elements, modelled in harmony with the natural context of Royal Kensington

Gardens. This Pavilion will be a space of conversation, collaboration and exchange. We share Kéré's belief that architecture, at its best, can enhance our collective creativity and push people to take the future into their own hands."

**Richard Gnodde, Vice Chairman of the Goldman Sachs Group Inc. and CEO of Goldman Sachs International, said:** "We are delighted to support the Serpentine's Summer Pavilion programme for a third year running. Francis Kéré's design this year promises to celebrate the diversity, vibrancy and collaborative potential of communities, something we value deeply at Goldman Sachs."

**David Glover, Technical Advisor said:** "The Serpentine Pavilion is about the opportunity of using everyday materials and techniques in innovative and creative ways that challenge our perception of architecture. Francis Kéré and his team have achieved this by creating a Pavilion that, through the use of colour and form, will continually morph under the influence of light, shadow, its users and the surrounding park to surprise and delight the visitor."

The annual Serpentine Pavilion commission has become an international site for architectural experimentation, presenting projects by some of the world's greatest architects, from Zaha Hadid in 2000 to Bjarke Ingels Group in 2016.

The brief is to design a 300-square-metre Pavilion that is used as a community hub and café by day and a forum for learning, debate and entertainment at night. Each Pavilion is sited on the Serpentine Gallery's lawn for four months and the immediacy of the commission makes it a pioneering model worldwide.

The selection of an architect, someone who has consistently extended the boundaries of architectural practice but is yet to build a structure in London, is led by the curatorial approach that guides all Serpentine programming: introducing contemporary artists and architects to the widest public audience.

The Serpentine Pavilion is among the top ten most visited architectural and design exhibitions in the world. There is no budget for the project, which is realised through sponsorship, in-kind support and the sale of the Pavilion.

Technical Advisor: David Glover

Engineering and all technical services: AECOM

Goldman Sachs is headline sponsor of the Serpentine Pavilion 2017.

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**Notes to Editors:**

**Diébédo Francis Kéré** is the principal architect at **Kéré Architecture** based in Berlin, founded in 2005. Kéré was born in 1965 in Gando, Burkina Faso, west Africa and trained at the Technical University of Berlin. Kéré Architecture has been recognised nationally and internationally with awards including the Aga Khan Award for Architecture (2004) for his first building, a primary school in Gando, Burkina Faso; LOCUS Global Award for Sustainable Architecture (2009);

Global Holcim Award Gold (2011 and 2012); Green Planet Architects Award (2013); Schelling Architecture Foundation Award (2014) and the Kenneth Hudson Award – European Museum of the Year (2015).

Projects undertaken by Francis Kéré span countries including Burkina Faso, Mali, China, Mozambique, Kenya, Togo, Sudan, Germany, and Switzerland. He has taught internationally including the Technical University of Berlin and he has held professorships at the Harvard Graduate School of Design and Accademia di Architettura di Mendriso in Switzerland.

Kéré's work has recently been the subject of solo exhibitions: *Radically Simple* at the Architecture Museum in Munich (2016) and *The Architecture of Francis Kéré: Building for Community*, Philadelphia Museum of Art (2016). His work has also been selected for group exhibitions *Small Scale, Big Change: New Architectures of Social Engagement*, Museum of Modern Art, New York (2010) and *Sensing Spaces*, Royal Academy, London (2014).

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### **Serpentine Pavilion History**

Serpentine Pavilion architects to date are: Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG), 2016; selgascano, 2015; Smiljan Radić, 2014; Sou Fujimoto, 2013; Herzog & de Meuron and Ai Weiwei, 2012; Peter Zumthor, 2011; Jean Nouvel, 2010; Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa, SANAA, 2009; Frank Gehry, 2008; Olafur Eliasson and Kjetil Thorsen, 2007; Rem Koolhaas and Cecil Balmond, with Arup, 2006; Álvaro Siza and Eduardo Souto de Moura with Cecil Balmond, Arup, 2005; MVRDV with Arup, 2004 (un-realised); Oscar Niemeyer, 2003; Toyo Ito and Cecil Balmond - with Arup, 2002; Daniel Libeskind with Arup, 2001; and Zaha Hadid, who designed the inaugural Pavillion in 2000. Serpentine Summer Houses architects in 2016 were: Kunlé Adeyemi – NLÉ (Amsterdam/Lagos), Barkow Leibinger (Berlin/New York), Yona Friedman (Paris) and Asif Khan (London)

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