

## MASS STUDIES SELECTED FOR 23<sup>RD</sup> SERPENTINE PAVILION

The first visuals and the conceptual framework revealed

7 June – 27 October 2024

Press View: Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> June from 9am to 12pm

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

Sponsored by Goldman Sachs



*Serpentine Pavilion 2024 designed by Design render, exterior view - © 2024 courtesy: Serpentine*



*Mass Studies Minsuk Cho, Photo by Mok Jungwook*

Serpentine is delighted to announce that Seoul-based Korean architect Minsuk Cho and his firm Mass Studies have been selected to conceive the 23<sup>rd</sup> Pavilion. Mass Studies' Pavilion will be unveiled at Serpentine South in June 2024 with Goldman Sachs supporting the annual project for the 10th consecutive year. The Press View will take place on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

This innovative commission, which began in 2000 with Dame Zaha Hadid, has presented the first completed UK structures by some of the most significant names and emerging talents in international architecture. The Pavilion has evolved over the years as a



participatory public and artistic platform for the Serpentine's pioneering, interdisciplinary, community and education programmes inviting both established and emerging architects or artists from around the world.

Titled *Archipelagic Void*, the 23<sup>rd</sup> Serpentine Pavilion will consist of five 'islands' designed around an open space. Mass Studies envisions a void defined by a series of smaller, adaptable structures located at its periphery, intertwining with the park's natural ecology and its temporal conditions. These structures will consider the specificity of the site, forming a constellation that shapes a singular central circular void.

The central void will perform like the *madang*, a small courtyard found in old Korean houses, accommodating rich spatial narratives ranging from individual everyday activities to large collective rituals supported by specified peripheries throughout the changing seasons.

Around the void, each structure of this multifaceted pavilion will be envisioned as a "content generator" each serving a purpose. The *Gallery* will act as the welcoming main entry, extending Serpentine South's curatorial activities outside, while the *Auditorium* will serve as a gathering area. A small *Library* will feature to the north of the Pavilion The *Tea House* will honour the Serpentine South's historical role as a tea pavilion. The *Play Tower*, the most open space, will feature a net-scape.

Assembled, the parts become a montage of ten spaces surrounding the void: five distinct covered spaces and five open, in-between areas, each acting as a threshold that seamlessly integrates with the surrounding park and Pavilion activities. Illuminated by varying natural light conditions, these flexible spaces will welcome audiences and live programmes.

Positioned on the east lawn of the Serpentine South, the Pavilion interacts with the South gallery, surrounding nature, the lawn's subtle incline, and the movement of people and traffic in its vicinity. Each of the five structures consist of two walls sitting on plinths of varying heights which are used as covered or uncovered park benches or tables, depending on their relationship with the ground. Simultaneously, each component creates a trajectory to various directions in Kensington and Hyde Park, embodying a site-specific urban response and infusing a new energy into the Serpentine lawn.

Each segment of the Pavilion will be unique and oscillate between small and big, narrow and wide and low and tall, yet is the same at the centre to create a circular void. Each part forms an arc at the centre, one fifth of an eight-meter diameter circle, creating a continuous concentric spectrum between openness and enclosure.



The *Archipelagic Void* will fluctuate between the vernacular and the modern. As in many places, traditional Korean buildings are built to be assembled and disassembled like a pavilion, supported by stone plinths. The wood structure is clad with natural fiber and mud. The primary material of the project is locally sourced ash grey limestone, Douglas fir timber, and tensile membranes. The timber structures are supported by low-carbon concrete precast footings, identical yet varying in height to adapt to the slope. The structure explores modern joinery techniques, allowing for effortless assembly and disassembly.

**Minsuk Cho, Architect said:** “We are honoured and grateful to be chosen as the next Serpentine Pavilion Architect. We began by asking what can be uncovered and added to the Serpentine site, which has already explored over 20 highly charged iterations at the centre of the lawn, from a roster of great architects and artists. To approach this new chapter differently, instead of viewing it as a *carte blanche*, we embraced the challenge of considering the many existing peripheral elements while exploring the centre as a void. It also begins to address the history of the Serpentine Pavilion. By inverting the centre as a void, we shift our architectural focus away from the built centre of the past, facilitating new possibilities and narratives.”

**Bettina Korek, Chief Executive, and Hans Ulrich Obrist, Artistic Director, said: “...”**

Throughout the Summer and until October, the Serpentine Pavilion 2024 will become a platform for Serpentine’s live and events programme. It will feature *Park Nights*, the interdisciplinary platform for live encounters in music, poetry, spoken words, and dance, running alongside Serpentine’s Technology, Ecology, and Civic & Education activations.

This year’s Pavilion selection was made by Serpentine Artistic Director Hans Ulrich Obrist, CEO Bettina Korek, Director of Construction and Special Projects Julie Burnell, Director of Curatorial Affairs and Public Practice Yesomi Umolu, and Curator at Large Natalia Grabowska together with advisors Sou Fujimoto and David Glover.

Serpentine would also like to acknowledge the work and dedication of the late architect Richard Rogers to this yearly commission. Rogers was an integral part of the Serpentine Pavilion team and served as an Advisor since 2017.

The Pavilion is supported by Goldman Sachs.



## NOTES TO EDITORS

**Mass Studies** was founded in 2003 by Minsuk Cho in Seoul, Korea, as a critical investigation of architecture in the context of mass production, intensely over-populated urban conditions, and other emergent cultural niches that define contemporary society. Amid the many frictions defining spatial conditions in the twenty-first century, namely past vs. future, local vs. global, utopia vs. reality, and individual vs. collective, Mass Studies focuses on the operative complexity of these multiple conditions instead of striving for a singular, unified perspective. For each architectural project, which exists across a wide range of scales, Mass Studies explores issues such as spatial systems, building materials/techniques, and typological divergences to foster a vision that allows the discovery of new socio-cultural potential.

**Minsuk Cho** was born in Seoul and graduated from the Architectural Engineering Department of Yonsei University (Seoul, Korea) and the Graduate School of Architecture at Columbia University (New York, USA). After working in various firms, including OMA Rotterdam, he established Cho Slade Architecture in 1998 in New York City with partner James Slade. In 2003, he returned to Korea to open his own firm, Mass Studies.

Cho has garnered numerous accolades over the course of his career. Notable among these achievements are his first prize win in the 1994 Shinkenchiku International Residential Architecture Competition and the Architectural League of New York's Young Architects Award in 2000 for his contributions at Cho Slade Architecture. He also received two U.S. Progressive Architecture Awards (Citations) in 1999 and 2003. His work with Mass Studies earned two nominations for the International Highrise Award (Deutsches Architekturmuseum-DAM), once as a finalist in 2008 for Boutique Monaco and again in 2010 for S-Trenue. The Korea Pavilion at the World Expo 2010 Shanghai was honoured with the Silver Award in the "Pavilion Design" category from the Bureau of International Expositions, accompanied by a Presidential Citation from the Korean government. Cho co-curated the exhibition "Named Design" at the Gwangju Design Biennale 2011, in collaboration with Anthony Fontenot under the direction of Seung H-Sang and Ai Weiwei. In June 2014, Minsuk Cho received the prestigious Golden Lion Award for the Best National Pavilion while serving as the commissioner and co-curator of the Korean Pavilion at the 14th International Architecture Exhibition - la Biennale di Venezia. Cho was recognized further by receiving the Hwagwan Medal Order of Cultural Merit from the Korean government.

Mass Studies works has been presented in various exhibitions, including the Venice Architecture Biennale in 2004 and 2010, the Vitra Museum travelling exhibition "Open House" from 2006 to 2008, and a solo show titled "Before/After: Mass Studies Does Architecture" At the PLATEAU Samsung Museum of Art in Seoul in 2014. Mass Studies'



architectural designs and presentations are part of the collections and archives of the MoMA (New York), DAM (Frankfurt), Art Institute Chicago, and the Mokchon Architecture Archive (Seoul). Additionally, the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of Kenneth Frampton's canonical "Modern Architecture: A Critical History" (2020, Thames & Hudson) highlights Cho and his work in the added South Korea chapter. Minsuk Cho is also an active lecturer and speaker, participating in symposiums worldwide.

Representative works include the Pixel House, Missing Matrix, Bundle Matrix, Shanghai Expo 2010: Korea Pavilion, Daum Space.1, Tea Stone/Innisfree, Southcape, Dome-ino, the Daejeon University Residential College, Space K Seoul Museum, Pace Gallery Seoul, and the Won Buddhism Wonnam Temple. Current in-progress projects include the new Seoul Film Center (Montage 4:5), the Danginri Cultural Space (Danginri Podium and Promenade), the Yang-dong District Main Street (Sowol Forest), and the Yeonhui Public Housing Complex. Recently completed projects include the restoration and extension of the French Embassy in Korea, the renovation and extension of the Osulloc Tea Museum, and the Osulloc Green Tea Factory.

Additional reference:

The Archipelago Conversations, Édouard Glissant, Hans Ulrich Obrist, iisolarii, 2022 (Sixth Edition) inspiring Minsuk Cho: "The purpose of architecture has always been to show, to claim space, and the monument is proof of that. Perhaps in our world today, our archipelagic world of Relation and rhizomes, the basis and the role of architecture will no longer be to show the monument, but to show the invisible. The aesthetic of the invisible brings us back to the aesthetic of the void and the infinite, which need not produce anguish, but hope. That could be the new ambition of architecture."

## Serpentine Pavilion

This pioneering commission, which began in 2000 with Dame Zaha Hadid, has presented the first UK structures by some of the biggest names in international architecture. The Pavilion is realised with the support of technical advisors Aecom. In recent years it has grown into a highly anticipated showcase for emerging talents, from Sumayya Vally, Counterspace (South Africa), the youngest architect to be commissioned, and Frida Escobedo (Mexico), to Diébédo Francis Kéré (Burkina Faso) and Bjarke Ingels (Denmark), whose 2016 Pavilion was the most visited architectural and design exhibition in the world. In 2022, *Black Chapel* was designed by Theaster Gates (US) and in 2023 *A Table* was designed by Lina Ghotmeh (France and Lebanon).

In 2021, the Pavilion programme evolved beyond its physical location for the first time and expanded with a series of Fragments placed across London. It also saw the launch of



*Support Structures for Support Structures*, a fellowship programme initiated by Serpentine that supports up to ten artists and collectives working at the intersection of art, spatial politics, and community practice.

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## About Serpentine

Building new connections between artists and society, Serpentine presents pioneering contemporary art exhibitions and cultural events with a legacy that stretches back over half a century, from a wide range of emerging practitioners to the most internationally recognised artists, writers, scientists, thinkers, and cultural thought leaders of our time.

Based in London's Kensington Gardens, across two sites, Serpentine North and Serpentine South, Serpentine features a year-round, free programme of exhibitions, architectural showcases, education, live events and technological activations, in the park and beyond the gallery walls.

The public art programme has emerged as a central strand of Serpentine's work with artists who are constantly expanding the possibilities of what public art could be today. Major presentations include a collection of Eduardo Paolozzi's sculptures (1987), Anish Kapoor's *Turning the World Upside Down* (2010), Lee Ufan presented *Relatum – Stage* (2018-19), Christo and Jeanne-Claude's *London Mastaba* in the Serpentine Lake (2018), *I LOVE YOU EARTH* by Yoko Ono (2021), Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster *In remembrance of the coming alien (Alienor)*, (2022), and Alexandra Daisy Ginsberg's *Pollinator Pathmaker* (2022 - ongoing).




Proud to maintain free access for all visitors, thanks to its unique location, Serpentine also reaches an exceptionally broad audience and maintains a profound connection with its local community.



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