

PRESS RELEASE

Designing London National Park City An Audio Journey Along Regent's Canal

A new audio journey by There Project, with sound design by Deborah Ridley
Commissioned by National Park City Foundation for the London Design Festival 2020

Available from Friday 18 September

Accessible 24/7 with own phone and headset via www.thereproject.org

Recommended starting point: Islington Tunnel, London N1 8AP

[We encourage listeners to experience the audio journey outside or on location, but it can be tuned into from anywhere in the world. This is an experience designed for individuals to enjoy using their own phone and headset. Nevertheless, please observe current social distancing guidelines.]

Duration: approx. 60 minutes

Press enquiries:

Please contact Justine Boussard, 07554665220, thereproject11@gmail.com

Twitter @ItsThereProject

Instagram @there.project

Link to images

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Q87Tp3O3FUGbbp8I5L1T4kAHul54VEPD?usp=sharing>

Project statement

What if cities were designed as spaces for both people and wildlife to thrive? What if we thought like coots or peregrines? This London Design Festival, There Project takes you on an audio journey through one of London's iconic landscapes - the 200-year-old Regent's Canal. Taking a bird's eye view, it questions whether design can help us become more ecocentric.

Starting at the Islington Tunnel, listeners will follow 15-year-old conservationist and wildlife writer Kabir Kaul, as he guides us on a walk East towards the Kingsland Basin Nature Reserve. Along the way, we hear from designers, thinkers, activists, and residents who are transforming our place in nature, and nature's place in our National Park City.

Catch this audio journey on your walk between London Design Festival destinations (Regent's Canal is a great green and blue link between King's Cross Design District and Shoreditch Design Triangle), or tune in from anywhere else in the world for an opportunity to take a deep breath, transport yourself to the canal, and think about your own relationship with wildlife in the city.

Although this is not strictly a guided walk, we encourage everyone who can to go out and enjoy this audio journey outside, and if they can, on the Canal - recommended starting point is at Islington Tunnel (Colebrook Row, N1 8AP), walking East towards Kingsland Basin Nature Reserve (a leisurely 40mn walk). Please make sure to follow government guidelines on social distancing and outdoors gatherings to keep yourself and others safe.

Own smartphone and headphones are needed to access the content via thereproject.org

Highlights

- **Conservationist and London National Park City Ranger Kabir Kaul's** shares observations on the wildlife encountered along the canal
- Award-winning design practice **Studio Ossidiana** discuss the importance of making space for wildlife in cities, and how designers should be more like gardeners
- **Author Richard Smyth** helps us take a bird's eye view on human activity and shares excerpts from his book *An Indifference of Birds*
- **"Goatman" designer Thomas Thwaites** and **Climate Museum UK co-founder Bridget McKenzie** share their views on the role design can play in shifting mindsets and influencing ecocentric, regenerative cultures
- **Sabina Mohideen**, Programme Manager at Design Council, highlights the urgency to adopt an ecocentric mindset when designing urban spaces, learning from indigenous cultures
- Learn how the **Wildlife Gardeners of Haggerston** have restored biodiversity in their section of the Regent's Canal, turning the formerly industrial, undermaintained Kingsland Basin into a Nature Reserve - and their current fight for the needs of wildlife to be recognised in the planning process.
- **Gareth George, mooring ranger for the Canal & River Trust** and a boater himself, shares insights into how life has changed on Regent's Canal in the last decade

Themes explored

- **Designing a more ecocentric city:** For most of our history, we've mainly been designing for humans' benefit, and this has created a profound imbalance. To truly start regenerating, we need to learn to see the world from perspectives other than our own. Ecocentrism encourages us to see humans as part of a wider ecosystem, and invites us to challenge our inherited worldviews. Can we design for the benefit of other species too?
- **London Design Festival meets London National Park City:** How can the London design community respond to London National Park City's call to make the city greener, wilder and healthier? Who will join in to take on this ambitious collective design brief? This project aims to bring closer together two creative visions for London, and the communities behind them, starting with a conversation and a walk, and building up to a network.
- **Looking forward to the next 200 years of the Regent's Canal:** Turning 200 this year, Regent's Canal has served multiple purposes in its history, from its industrial past to its recreational and residential present. It is also a place of ecological diversity in the city. Originally constructed to serve industry, and therefore to serve human

can help us be more ecocentric & make our @LondonNPC greener, wilder and healthier:
thereproject.org

Suggested additional tags: @KauloftheWilduk @CanalRiverTrust @bridgetmck
@ClimateMuseumUK @RSmythFreelance @WGHaggerston @Thomas_Thwaites @L_D_F

NOTES TO EDITORS

Designing London National Park City is an audio journey conceived by There Project, with sound design by Deborah Ridley, for the National Park City Foundation

About There Project

A collaboration between design curators Justine Boussard and Sarah Turner, There Project was founded to grow the community of designers who use their skills and creativity to collectively imagine regenerative futures. Through installations and events, we hope to support them to make connections with others and put their visions into practice.

How do we get from here to there? We believe design is at its most powerful when it is a collaborative endeavour, reinventing our relationship with things and one another in a world that needs to produce less. Previous projects include Non Pavilion, an installation using augmented reality storytelling to raise awareness of the dangers of growth-driven economics, co-curated with Studio MiCat and Proud Studio and commissioned by the Victoria and Albert Museum for London Design Festival 2019. For London Design Festival 2020, There Project will be delving into long time thinking and ecocentrism, for London National Park City.

thereproject.org

Twitter @ItsThereProject

Instagram @there.project

About National Park City Foundation

The National Park City Foundation (NPCF) is the charity behind London National Park City.
www.nationalparkcity.org/

London National Park City (LNPC) is a place, a vision and a movement to improve life in London by making London greener, healthier and wilder. www.nationalparkcity.london/

We want to get more people out and about for much more of their time, and to shape a new identity for London and Londoners reflecting the capital's natural assets and how they underpin the culture and heritage of the city and the health of its people.

Following a six year grassroots community-led campaign, London became the world's first National Park City at a City Hall Summit hosted by London Mayor Sadiq Khan on 22 July 2019. <https://www.nationalparkcity.london/launch>

London National Park City is backed by businesses and a majority of political leaders across parties including London councillors and London Assembly Members. Lead candidates in both the 2016 and the postponed 2020 London Mayoral elections, rearranged for May 2021, have supported London National Park City.

Current projects include:

- London National Park City Rangers: <https://www.nationalparkcity.london/rangers>
- The National Park City charter devised with World Urban Parks and Salzburg Global Seminar: <https://www.nationalparkcity.org/charter>
- London Mayoral commitments and 99 #WhatIf ideas for the next London Mayor to make London greener, healthier and wilder: <https://www.nationalparkcity.london/ideas>
- The Prize to Transform the Future to reimagine and visualise the future of the London City Region: <https://www.prizetotransformthefuture.org/>
- 100 Voices showcasing hundreds of diverse voices about improving life in London: <https://www.nationalparkcity.london/gathering>

About London Design Festival

Established in 2003 by Sir John Sorrell CBE and Ben Evans CBE, London Design Festival celebrates and promotes London as the design capital of the world . London Design Festival has since earned the reputation as a key calendar moment of London's autumn creative season, alongside London Fashion Week, Frieze Art Fair and the London Film Festival, attracting the greatest thinkers, practitioners, retailers and educators to the capital, in a citywide celebration. www.londondesignfestival.com

#LDF20

Twitter @L_D_F

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About Canal and River Trust

The Canal & River Trust cares for and brings to life 2,000 miles of canals and river navigations across England & Wales. We believe waterways have the power to make a difference to people's lives and that spending time by water can make us all healthier and happier. By bringing communities together to make a difference to their local waterway, we are creating places and spaces that can be used and enjoyed by everyone, every day.

www.canalrivertrust.org.uk

Twitter @CanalRiverTrust

About our speakers:

Kabir Kaul

Kabir Kaul is a 15-year-old conservationist, wildlife writer and a passionate advocate for London's biodiversity. He is an ambassador for the Cameron Bespolka Trust, RSPB Youth Councillor, London National Park City Ranger and Director of Environment & Conservation for Middlesex Heritage. He has also created a popular interactive map, *Nature Reserves of London*, showing every nature reserve and designated wildlife site in the capital. Through blogging, writing, public speaking and social media, he brings focus and awareness to the many green and blue spaces in the capital, which he calls the 'Wild Side' of London, and how Londoners can make a difference for the wildlife on their doorstep. Kabir has been interviewed by several media outlets, including BBC Radio 4, BBC Springwatch, *Time Out London* and ITV London News, and has received a number of awards, including the BTO Marsh Award for Young Ornithologist 2019, and the Prime Minister's Points of Light award earlier in March 2020.

Kaulofthewild.com

Twitter: @Kaulofthewilduk

Instagram: @kaulofthewilduk

Studio Ossidiana

Studio Ossidiana is an award-winning practice in architecture, design, and research led by Alessandra Covini and Giovanni Bellotti. Founded in 2015, the practice is always in search of new material expressions to translate visions into engaging spaces and objects.

Playfulness, tactility, and inclusivity play a major role in the studio's projects: stories are told and objects are brought to life through materials and spaces that call for action, discovery, and wonder.

Working across multiple scales, Studio Ossidiana blurs the boundary between architecture, design, art, landscape, and urban strategies. Studio Ossidiana is based in Rotterdam, working with an international team of architects, designers and researchers, and is involved in projects across the Netherlands, Italy, Turkey, and the US.

studio-ossidiana.com

Instagram @studio_ossidiana

Bridget McKenzie

Bridget McKenzie is a researcher and creative curator in culture, learning and environment. She has been director of Flow Associates since 2006, after 14 years in roles such as Education Officer for Tate and Head of Learning at the British Library. She is an advisor for Culture Unstained and co-founder of Culture Declares Emergency. She presents and publishes internationally on possibilities of Regenerative Culture. She is founding director of Climate Museum UK, a new CIC which stirs and collects the emerging response to the Earth crisis.

climatemuseumuk.org

Twitter @bridgetmck @ClimateMuseumUK

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Richard Smyth

Richard Smyth is a writer and critic. His work appears regularly in *The Guardian*, *The Times Literary Supplement*, *The New Statesman* and *The Literary Review*. His non-fiction books include *A Sweet, Wild Note: What We Hear When The Birds Sing* (Elliott & Thompson, 2017) and, most recently, *An Indifference Of Birds* (Uniformbooks, 2020).

richarddsmyth.com

Twitter @RSmythFreelance

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Wildlife Gardeners of Haggerston

'The Wildlife Gardeners of Haggerston are creating a blue/green corridor connecting the Lea Valley with inner London for the benefit of people and wildlife. Our towpath and aquatic planting is a pilot project that can be replicated along the full length of the Regent's Canal. This new vegetation, between Kingsland Road and Whitmore Road bridges, is habitat for wildlife. We now have nesting swans, regular visits from kingfishers, herons, cormorants and most recently a reed warbler. Below the surface the plants clean the water from industrial and residential pollution. We have visiting critically endangered European eel and the Kingsland Basin is a thriving spawning ground for many fish species. We participate in British Dragonfly Society surveys and record for GiGL. The Woodland Trust donate hundreds of saplings for towpath hedging and we harvest Buddleia for brushwood bundles to

create artificial waterway banks. We have successfully applied for two rounds of funding from the GLA for Biomatrix's brilliant floating islands. We regularly litter-pick the towpath and canal to keep everything shipshape and the Canal and River Trust have sponsored us for a Green Flag Award. Transforming the canal so that it functions ecologically like a river would mean that rather than needing to escape London to experience the countryside we would have the countryside on our doorsteps.

wildlifegardenersofhaggerston.org

Twitter: @WGHaggerston @wildhackney

Instagram: @wghaggerston @growngals

Sabina Mohideen

Sabina has more than 15 years' experience working in the built environment sector and is an advocate for the crucial role our landscapes and open spaces play in social and environmental resilience. In her work, she promotes the sector's role in creating equal access, opportunity and experiences for all, with sensitivity to a diversity of ages, abilities and social and cultural backgrounds. She has a particular interest in how the design of our built environment can engender the values we want to encourage in society.

Sabina is a Programme Manager at Design Council, where she provides support to public and private sector clients through a variety of design advice programmes in the UK. She previously worked for the Landscape Institute, the chartered body for landscape architects, where she developed her expertise in developing and managing built environment competitions, as well as awards and events programmes and was instrumental in setting up its Diversity and Inclusion Working Group.

Thomas Thwaites

Thomas Thwaites is a designer interested in the social impacts of science and technology. He holds an MA in Design Interactions from the Royal College of Art, and a BSc. in Human Sciences from University College, London. His work is in the permanent collections of the Victoria & Albert Museum in London, the Banque De France (Cite de l'Economie in Paris), and the Asia Culture Centre in South Korea. His work is exhibited at major galleries and museums worldwide, including at the National Museum of China, the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Seoul, the Science Museum (London), the Cooper Hewitt in the USA and La Triennale di Milano (Italy). He has spoken at numerous conferences, including TED and Design Indaba, as well as at universities and businesses worldwide. Press includes features in national newspapers including the New York Times, Sueddeutsche and The Financial Times. He has presented a four part television series, aired on Discovery Channel. He is the author of two books; *The Toaster Project*, and *GoatMan*. *The Toaster Project*, documents Thwaites' attempt to make an electric toaster from scratch. *Goatman* describes his project to take a holiday from being human by becoming a goat. Both are published by Princeton Architectural Press, and have been translated Korean, Japanese and Norwegian.

thomasthwaites.com

Twitter @Thomas_Thwaites

Instagram @themassofoe

Gareth George, Canal and River Trust

Gareth George is mooring ranger for the Canal & River Trust. As a boater himself, he joins us on the audio journey to share insights into how life has changed on Regent's Canal in the last decade.