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## Furniture for sitting competition

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As part of London Festival of Architecture 2012, RIBA London is inviting architecture students, recent graduates and emerging practices from across London to create one-off public benches in a new entertainment destination.

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### Concept

Long before festivals as we know them today, Pleasure Gardens were summertime venues where people from all walks of life converged to listen to music, admire paintings, stroll, drink, flirt and immerse themselves in culture. The following written circa 1850 describes a Pleasure Garden,

"On entering the turnstile, the Grand Quadrangle lay to the right, shimmering with thousands of variegated lamps hung among the foliage of the trees and festooned from branch to branch in tasteful patterns....Beyond the Quadrangle, at the eastern end of the gardens was a large space in front of the firework tower where scenic displays of various kinds were held."

The Royal Docks in east London will be transformed into a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Pleasure Gardens in time for the 2012 Games.

### Site

This 60,000 sqm brownfield site is being developed by the production company London's Pleasure Gardens, winners of the Mayor's Meanwhile London competition. This high profile site is part of the Olympic Last Mile route and will operate as a new world of culture and entertainment for two years until it is permanently developed.

RIBA London is working with London's Pleasure Gardens to deliver innovative structures, new landscapes and public spaces.

### Brief

Working to the LFA theme 'Playful City', we are inviting you to create one of fifty benches to be installed at waterside locations around the dock. Visitors will be offered fantastic venues and events; they'll also need a place to sit and rest – public furniture fit for a festival.

If your design is one of the winners, we will give you £150 to make your bench over Easter 2012. This will be a chance to participate in a unique project and showcase imaginative designs to the public and the many festival producers involved.

### **Winning entries**

As well as having the satisfaction of your bench being realised and showcased to an international audience, your work will be featured in a Wallpaper\* online picture gallery and your name will be displayed on the bench via a small RIBA London plaque.

### **Eligibility**

The competition is open to students and recent graduates from RIBA validated schools of architecture and emerging architectural practices (established less than two years ago) in London. We want architectural designers to use their skills to improve on the basic bench.

### **Specifications**

Each bench must offer a comfortable seat for a minimum of 2 adults. We are looking for pieces that function for visitors (are not purely sculptural) and are realistic to the brief (do not become pavilions or follies). They must be safe, durable and offer a low-cost design solution.

### **Practicalities**

- **Budget:** if successful, the £150 fee will need to cover all associated production costs - materials, transport and construction. You can use salvaged materials or seek in-kind materials sponsorship to reduce expenses. You will manage the budget.
- **Payment:** half of the fee will be awarded in February on receipt of a signed agreement in which you commit to provide a bench as per your submission and any revisions as requested by London's Pleasure Gardens. The remaining fee will be given in May after delivery and approval of the bench.
- **Health & safety:** on delivery the bench will be checked to ensure it is safe for public use. You may be asked to make modifications but on sign-off the bench will be the property and responsibility of London's Pleasure Gardens.
- **Durability:** the Pleasure Gardens site will exist for 2 years; however it is understood the benches will last for the duration of the 2012 Games and as long as possible after that time. You should consider the longevity and appearance of your design.

### **Timeline**

Dec 2011	Launch of competition
Feb 2012	Notification and arrangements
April 2012	Production (over Easter)
June 2012	Benches available for public use

### **Key dates**

Mon 30 Jan	Submission deadline – entries to be received by 2pm
Fri 3 Feb	Judging at the RIBA
17 or 20 Feb	Site visit (winners opt for one day)
Mon 30 April	Delivery of bench with waterproof cover to the Royal Docks
Fri 1 June	The Pleasure Gardens open to the public

### **Submission**

An A4 sized hard copy entry should be delivered or posted to Laura Broderick, RIBA London, 66 Portland Place, London, W1B 1AD. This should include:

- 1 x A4 cover page: full contact details and information about stage of study / practice
- 1 x A4 page: hand or computer drawn 3D key design visualisation
- 1 x A4 page: construction detail drawn to scale, with key dimensions noted
- 1 x A4 page: outlining materials, budget and production process

### **Judging**

Entries will be judged by RIBA London, London's Pleasure Gardens, Wallpaper\* and Studio Weave. Judges will be looking to select designs which will delight and engage the public as well as communicating a realistic build for the brief and budget.

## FAQs

### Can I submit in a team?

- Yes, though if successful the budget of £150 is per bench not per person.

### Can I submit more than 1 design?

- Yes, each individual or team may submit up to 3 designs, but a max of 1 design will be awarded.

### Can I submit electronically?

- No, due to the volume of submissions we expect and the nature of assessing design work we ask for you to submit hard copies.

### Can I provide additional support material?

- No, additional material such as CVs and portfolios will be discarded.

### Can RIBA London provide workshop space?

- No, the RIBA is not able to provide this support. You will need to find a suitable space in which to construct the bench, for example the workshop at your architecture school. Low cost workspace is available to hire at The Redundant Architects' Recreation Association (RARA) in Clapton / £15 day includes use of tools:  
<http://www.r-a-r-a.com>

### Will there be any technical assistance?

- Yes, but only on the designated site visit day when Strong & Co and architects will provide guidance based on the drawings you have submitted. We will not be able to answer any other technical questions by phone or email.

### How will I be notified and will there be feedback?

- Successful entrants will be notified by email. Unsuccessful entrants will also be notified by email though unfortunately we will not be able to offer feedback.

### Will the bench be returned after the festival?

- Unfortunately not, as some benches will be kept to enhance the site; others may need to be removed if they become damaged.

### Will the design images I submit be published?

- To help share and promote the project, work submitted in this competition may be published in online or print format by RIBA London and our media contacts. We may also ask you for digital versions of drawings if appropriate.

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## Weblinks

[www.londonpleasuregardens.com](http://www.londonpleasuregardens.com)  
[www.lfa2012.org](http://www.lfa2012.org)  
[www.architecture.com/ribalondon](http://www.architecture.com/ribalondon)  
[www.strongandco.net](http://www.strongandco.net)  
[www.designforlondon.gov.uk/what-we-do/ideas/meanwhile-london](http://www.designforlondon.gov.uk/what-we-do/ideas/meanwhile-london)  
[www.silvertown-quays.com](http://www.silvertown-quays.com)  
[www.thelollipopshoppe.co.uk/archives/850](http://www.thelollipopshoppe.co.uk/archives/850)

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## Contact

Laura Broderick, Architectural Communities Manager, RIBA London:  
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