

Roca London Gallery

Urban Plunge

New designs for natural swimming in our cities
curated by Jane Withers, Wonderwater

Roca London Gallery
11 September 2014 – 10 January 2015

Launching to coincide with the **London Design Festival** (13-21 September 2014), Urban Plunge explores both existing schemes and future visions for river swimming in the heart of our cities.

Commissioned by Roca London Gallery, it showcases international design and architectural projects that transform urban rivers into public leisure spaces, giving people an exciting new, water-level perspective on their metropolis.

Curator Jane Withers, a design consultant and co-founder of Wonderwater, has selected five key projects to illustrate architecture and design's role in radically changing river usage, challenging our attitude to the urban water environment.

Urban Plunge shows drawings, models and photography that document these projects, including Denmark's scheme to transform Copenhagen harbour from an industrial and transportation junction into the city's cultural and social centre. The sculptural Harbour Baths (Julien De Smedt Architects) have already proved an incredible success in bringing new life to the harbour area, while HOW | House of Water (Tredje Natur), is a visionary idea for a new island for Copenhagen harbour dedicated to education about water and the environment

Urban Plunge is showing two UK schemes, one for a series of permanent central London river bathing stations - Studio Octopi's Thames Baths - and the other, King's Cross Pond Club (Ooze & Marjetica Potrč), a temporary pool on the King's Cross development site opening this autumn that will create an enclave for public use in the private land under construction. The water will be purified through a natural process using wetland plants to create a refreshing and clean swimming experience only 15 minutes' walk from King's Cross station.

+ POOL in New York (Family New York & PlayLab), is already a phenomenal success story having surpassed its Kickstarter fundraising target to create the world's first river water-filtering floating swimming pool proposed to live in the middle of the East River in New York City. In addition, the + POOL team has launched a Dashboard for the public along with Google Drive, a digital tool that will monitor New York's water quality on LIVE time. + POOL is scheduled to launch in 2016.

Capturing the zeitgeist for natural swimming experiences around the world, the projects reveal imaginative ways to enrich urban water experience and humanize our cities. They also act as a wake-up call to make us realize that what we flush down the toilet or pour down the drain impacts on our water environment and thus on the quality of urban life.

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Jane Withers says: "I am delighted to see that companies like Roca are questioning our neglect of this most vital resource and championing a new water culture. The possibility to change city rivers, from undervalued thoroughfares to places where we can swim, offers amazing opportunities for new urban experiences and wellbeing, as the projects showcased in Urban Plunge demonstrate. Roca's We are Water Foundation and their support of public exhibitions and events like this can really bring awareness to influencers and those who can make a difference to the way we treat our water."

Roca London Gallery manager Eva Woode says: "We are very proud to be able to give this important global survey a platform. We are organizing several talks during the run of the exhibition that will enable people to hear how architects and designers are finding solutions to enable swimming in our cities. We hope that the exhibition will inspire people to think differently about water and that it will help contribute to finding ways of improving urban life."

Events Programme:

Monday 15th September, 6- 8pm

Urban Plunge: New Designs For City Swimming

Marking the opening of the exhibition Urban Plunge, a panel discuss the role of the capital city's waterway and raise the question *Will we soon be swimming in the Thames again?* Featuring key voices in shaping the future of natural bathing stations, the panel will explore what it takes to make the river a leisure space and how innovation in design can develop a new cityscape for London.

RSVP here: <http://bit.ly/SSMNcr>

For further information please contact Athina at Theresa Simon & Partners
athina@theresasimon.com +44 (0)207 734 4800

Notes to editors

About Roca

Roca is a company specializing in the design, production and marketing of products for bathroom spaces as well as ceramic floorings and wall coverings used in architecture, construction and interior design. The firm has more than 21,100 employees and 76 production plants and is present in more than 135 countries around the world.

Roca, world leader in the definition of bathroom spaces, collaborates with highly prestigious designers, architects and interior designers such as R. Moneo, D. Chipperfield, Z. Hadid, Herzog & de Meuron, Schmidt & Lackner, and J. Mariscal, among others. Additionally, it works incessantly to develop and promote initiatives that aid environmental conservation. Roca's commitment has led to ongoing developments in new products focused on water conservation.

www.roca.com

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Roca Galleries are part of Roca's international strategy and a concept that expresses present-day realities and future challenges. Design, innovation, sustainability and well-being are Roca values expressed in the Galleries, they also convey a desire to maintain an ongoing dialogue with society and professionals who share an interest in shaping the future of bathroom spaces. The various Roca Galleries in Barcelona, Madrid, Lisbon, Shanghai and London are a vehicle for expressing this desire, while providing a meeting place and area for interior decorators, designers and architects worldwide.

First opened in October 2011, the Roca London Gallery is the result of a cooperative effort with the Zaha Hadid Architects studio. The Roca London Gallery is a functional and flexible area where the Roca product showroom shares its space naturally with exhibitions, presentations, professional meetings and events of interest that further enrich the sociocultural offering of London.

Roca London Gallery, Station Court, Townmead Road, London, SW6 2PY
W: www.rocalongallery.com T: 020 7610 9503
[@rocalongallery](#)

We Are Water Foundation

The We Are Water Foundation is an initiative of Roca, which from its very beginnings has been committed to the environment in terms of both its products and its production processes. The foundation has two key goals in mind. The first is to promote awareness and encourage debate among the public and organisations on the need to create a new culture for water, to enable the equitable development and sustainable management of the world's water resources.

The second is to carry out a whole host of actions to counter the negative effects of the lack of adequate water resources. The foundation's fields of activity include involvement in infrastructure, education, health and research, concentrated in the world's most deprived areas.

<http://www.wearewater.org/>



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Jane Withers/ Wonderwater

Jane Withers is an independent curator and design consultant based in London. Through her exhibitions, writing and teaching she aims to promote a deeper understanding of design's constructive and humanizing influence on our world.

Jane has curated critically acclaimed exhibitions on architecture, design and sustainability internationally and a number of projects focusing on water. Author of 'Hot Water' on bathing design, in 2008 she co-curated 1% Water and Our Future at Z33, exploring the mounting water crisis and ideas for the future. She collaborated with Science Gallery Dublin on Surface Tension: the Future of Water in 2011, touring to Eyebeam New York and Kitchener Museum Canada.

In 2012 she co-founded Wonderwater with Kari Korkman, an initiative devoted to raising awareness of global water issues and designing the future of water that has staged projects for World Design Capital Helsinki, Beijing Design Week and London Design Festival among others.

Jane established her own design consultancy in 2001 and consults internationally on design strategy and development for companies, brands and institutions. She writes extensively on design, architecture, innovation and culture and is regularly invited to speak at conferences internationally. She has been a visiting lecturer at Design Academy Eindhoven and Kingston University and is Visiting Lecturer at the Royal College of Art. In 2012 she was awarded an Honorary Fellowship by Westminster University for services to design and the environment.

www.janewithers.com
www.wonderwater.fi



The London Design Festival

The London Design Festival is a key constituent of London's Autumn creative season, alongside London Fashion Week, Frieze Art Fair and the London Film Festival. Established in 2003 its role is to celebrate and promote London as the world's design capital and gateway to the to the International design community.

In 2013 the Festival attracted a dedicated – or direct – audience of over 350,000 people, from over 60 countries. There were 84 displays, talks and workshops at Festival's central hub at the V&A, while the five Design Districts (including Brompton Design District, Shoreditch Design Triangle, Fitzrovia Now and new Chelsea Design Quarter, Clerkenwell Design Quarter) hosted 148 events. It is estimated the participating companies generated in excess of £40m in new business revenue as a result of involvement in the festival for 2013.

The London Design Festival at the V&A programme attracted an audience of 97,403, which is a 63% rise on the preceding week (31 August - 8 September). The Festival works closely with, and receives financial support directly from, the Mayor's Office – having transferred support from the London Development Agency. The Festival also receives support from Arts Council England as a National Portfolio Organisation 2012-15.

www.londondesignfestival.com



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Urban Plunge exhibition projects

Thames Baths

Studio Octopi
London, UK
2013 -ongoing

This concept for a series of river bathing stations in the heart of London will enable Londoners to enjoy views of the city while bathing in the tidal waters of the River Thames. Thames Baths aims to empower Londoners to reclaim ownership of their largest outdoor public spaces and re-establish an intimate and playful connection with the historic lifeblood of the city. Originally exhibited at the Royal Academy (2013) as part of London As It Could Be Now, organised by the Architecture Foundation and RSHP, for Urban Plunge Studio Octopi will exhibit a more developed concept for creating natural water baths in the Thames.

www.thamesbaths.com
www.octopi.co.uk

+ POOL

Family New York & PlayLab
2010-2016
New York, NY, US

When + POOL opens in Spring 2016, for the first time in over 100 years New Yorkers will be able to swim in clean river water in the heart of the city. + POOL is a project to build the world's first water-filtering, floating pool in New York. The initiative started with a simple goal - instead of trying to clean the entire river, start by cleaning just a small piece of it. + Pool filters river water through the walls of the pool so bathers can swim in clean water that meets both city and state standards. Float Lab, the mini, temporary floating science-lab version of + POOL's filtration system, was launched this April at Hudson River Park to collect data on river water quality. + POOL Dashboard (dashboard.pluspool.org), a new online platform, was introduced to transform a complex set of data from + POOL project into a playful and simple experience. Launched on Kickstarter, +POOL has captured the imagination of New Yorkers and established a new model for funding large-scale civic projects worldwide.

www.pluspool.org
www.playlab.org
www.familynewyork.com

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Copenhagen Harbour Baths

JDS Architects
Copenhagen, Denmark
2002-2003

Copenhagen's Harbour Islands Brygge is undergoing a transformation from an industrial and transportation junction into the city's cultural and social centre. The Harbour Bath design emerged out of a desire to extend the surrounding park onto the water while also adhering to practical needs of public accessibility, safety and programmatic demands. The Harbour Bath realises the transition from land to water as a terraced landscape.

www.jdsa.eu
www.jdsa.eu

Kalvebod Waves

JDS Architects
Copenhagen, Denmark
2008 - 2013

Kalvebod Brygge is inner Copenhagen's counterpart to the popular and packed Islands Brygge. Stretching along the waterfront between Langebro bridge and Bernstorffsgade, Kalvebod Bølge (Kalvebod Waves) provides a venue for water sports as well as relaxing sunbathing.

Faaborg Harbour Bath

JDS Architects
Faaborg, Denmark
2010-2014

The Faaborg Harbour Bath and Blue Base at the southern end of Fyn, is based on the idea of bathing in the sea and close to the elements within the city. The forked piers branch out seawards, creating swimming areas between them.

HOW | House of Water

Tredje Natur
Copenhagen, Denmark
2012 – ongoing

House of Water is a visionary idea for a new island for Copenhagen harbour dedicated to education about water and the environment. Commissioned by State of Green, Denmark's initiative for a sustainable future, House of Water combines typologies of Danish landscapes with Danish water technology. HOW is a development from Blue Vision (by Tredje Natur and PK3), a proposal for a series of artificial islands intended to transform Copenhagen's harbour into a recreational area in the heart of the city. Blue Vision proposes five zones in and around the harbour including *Krøyer's Puddle*, a harbour bath with heated inlet pools and sauna caves.

www.tredjenatur.dk

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King's Cross Pond Club

Ooze (Eva Pfannes & Sylvain Hartenberg) & Marjetica Potrc

London, UK

opening autumn 2014

King's Cross Pond Club is a temporary project that will operate on a brownfield site in the King's Cross Central development. The project creates an enclave for public use in the private land under construction, offering a place to swim and relax in a secluded atmosphere only a 15-minute walk from King's Cross station. The water for the swimming pool will be purified through a natural process using wetland plants. When the pool closes, the water will be filtered and used to irrigate the park under construction next to the site. Pond Club is set to run for eighteen months from autumn 2014.

www.ooze.eu.com

www.potrc.org