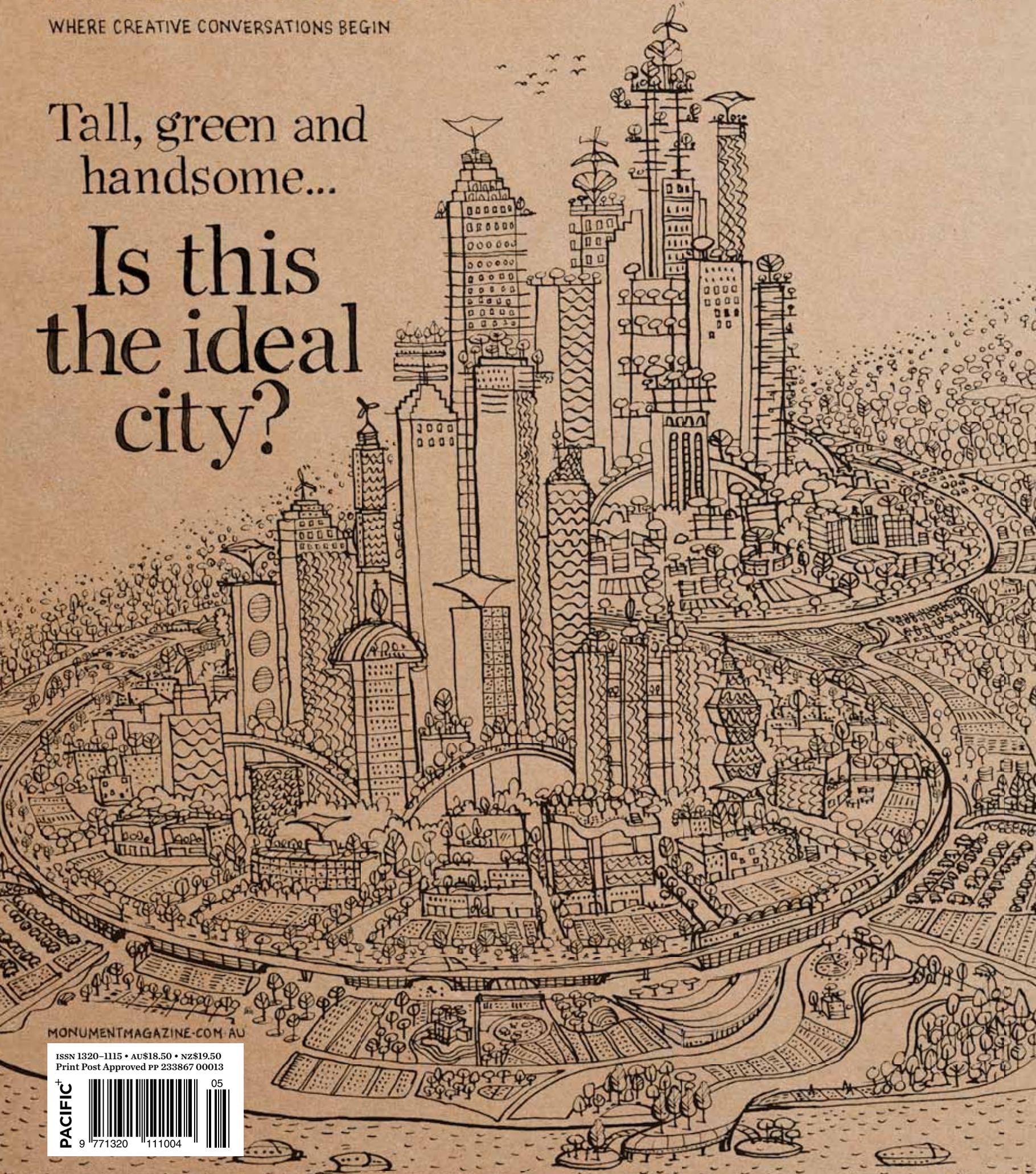


MONUMENT

110

WHERE CREATIVE CONVERSATIONS BEGIN

Tall, green and
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the ideal
city?



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Putting TOUGH TIMES IN THE EUROZONE on a HAVE FAILED TO SLOW games THE CREATIVE MINDS AT WORK face IN THE UK CAPITAL

WRITER *Elias Redstone*
PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY *Cameron McNee*



SIMON WAY



CORBIS

enhancing them and stitching them together with specific, detailed interventions. This can be seen in muf architecture/art's ongoing strategy, 'Making Space in Dalston', and the approach of the young urban design team taking charge at south London's Croydon Council, headed by Vincent Lacovara and Finn Williams. According to Williams, urban solutions must come from people rather than be imposed top-down. This is a rather radical approach following New Labour's urban renaissance projects.

There is a strong support network for the creative industries in London. There are numerous venues for the presentation, consumption and debate of architecture across the city, from the Royal Institute of British Architects to the more independent Architecture Foundation and the biennial London Festival of Architecture. The London Design Festival brings attention to local and international design every September and has inspired the rival Clerkenwell Design Week, sponsored by Jaguar, in a neighbourhood cluttered with furniture showrooms. With the help of the Design Museum, various galleries and agencies, London is adept at promoting its home-grown design talent. Design studio Barber Osgerby was commissioned to design the Olympic torch, while a major retrospective of the work of Thomas Heatherwick's studio is being held at the Victoria & Albert Museum, ensuring that some of the bright young things from the 1990s and 2000s are now established names.

Now the next generation that has been successful in negotiating the challenges and opportunities of the economic downturn is about to reap the benefits. "My sense is we are already seeing the beginning of the end of the economic downturn in London," says architect David Kohn. "So those who have been successfully delivering nimble smaller projects are well placed to work at a larger scale."

LONDON 2012. The Olympic Games are upon us with a cluster of shiny new sporting venues. Major building projects are also taking shape across the city, from Renzo Piano's Shard to a 67 acre construction site in Kings Cross. After a slowdown in the late 2000s, development is moving again. At the same time, Londoners have re-elected their Conservative mayor, Boris Johnson, who has been responsible for urban interventions with corporate backing such as the popular Barclay's Bike Hire Scheme and the more curious ArcelorMittal Orbit by Anish Kapoor. There is even a new Emirates Airline cable car crossing the River Thames.

This is all taking place against the backdrop of the worst recession the UK has seen for a generation and the continuing Eurozone

economic crisis. Architects and designers across the board have to rethink their approach to seeking employment and developing projects. Many young designers in particular are adopting new models of practice and seeking opportunities out of the crisis. Materials are being reclaimed. Labour is being crowd-sourced. Abandoned sites are being occupied and, as rents continue to rise, shared studios are increasingly common. Waste is seen as wasteful, and a renewed interest in sustainability and collaboration is evident in projects across the city.

At an urban level, there is a healthy trend for designers to adopt a more incremental approach to redevelopment by taking the good qualities that already exist in neighbourhoods,



Outside influence

A graduate of London's Royal College of Art, Max Lamb's furniture designs are inspired by the topography and industrial heritage of his native Cornwall

and money. It is generally faster and cheaper for the designer to be in control of design, development and production when scales are small. As a result the products created by the designer in the workshop environment are often more human, and thus more interesting.

Where do you see the future of London as a design hub?
 There is very good energy here and it is certainly an attractive city for designers and artists. That said, I can't predict my own future, let alone the future of London. I have my nose to the ground and am doing my best to stay just above the surface.



WOODWARE

Why are you based in London?

By default. When I graduated from Newcastle in 2003 I had an exhibition of my student work in London. [Designer] Ou Baholyodhin was a judge for one of the design awards and offered me a job as interior and furniture designer. A year later I was studying Design Products at the Royal College of Art, followed by one year designing for Tom Dixon. Since 2007 I have been running my own practice from an old shoe factory in Tottenham, north London.

How is the design scene changing in London, and why?

London is becoming more international, if that is possible, as more foreign designers and design practices are setting up offices in London. The demand for studios and workshops has forced many designers, including myself, to move further afield, to the fringes

of the city. At the same time, London appears smaller, but this is more to do with me getting to know the city, the people and the 'scene' better.

What does sustainable design mean for you?

To design and make an object that the user will appreciate, respect and thus want to keep for a long time. An object that has material value, functional value and sentimental value.

What has been the impact of the economic downturn on design in London?

Spectators and consumers of design have inevitably become more discerning, critical, and demanding. And rightly so. I've noticed more designers are getting involved in the workshop/production aspect of their practices, the reason for which is possibly twofold; economy of time



MAX LAMB'S LONDON WORKSHOP

ARCHITOUR

See map p82



REINURNAVY

Lloyd's of London Richard Rogers completed his high-tech masterpiece in 1986, complete with a metallic facade and external services.



Battersea Power Station A true London icon, Sir Giles Gilbert Scott's power station ceased operating in 1983. After many unsuccessful regeneration proposals the building remains an impressive industrial ruin.



London 2012 Velodrome This new venue for indoor track cycling, designed by Hopkins Architects, is already proving one of the most popular buildings in the Olympic Park.



Centre Point The office tower designed by Richard Seifert was one of the first tall buildings in the West End when it was built in 1964.



LONDON 2012 VELODROME



COCA COLA BEATBOX MODEL



FUTURE MEMORY MODEL

Marching to a new beat

Working between design and architecture, Asif Khan and Pernilla Ohrstedt are known for experimenting with possibilities of space and materials. They recently received their first high-profile commission in London – an interactive, musical pavilion at the Olympics, the Coca Cola Beatbox

Q Why did you start working together?

A We both really enjoy working together. We met while studying at the Bartlett School of Architecture in London. Asif went on to do a diploma at the Architectural Association and then started his own practice, while Pernilla moved to New York to work at Storefront for Art and Architecture. We finally started working together last year mainly because we both see eye-to-eye when it comes to what design should be. We understand where we are coming from and are able to throw ideas about with very few words. We also share a lot of skills and aesthetic sensibilities.

Q How do you define your practice?

A It is a collaboration to do brilliant and challenging things together. Our practice is focused around a creative output that involves architecture and product design, but without limiting ourselves to these fields. Every project allows us to use a different set of tools. Some of which we are knowledgeable about, and sometimes we bring in collaborators to allow us to achieve the result we want. For example, we won a design competition coordinated by the Architecture Foundation to design a pavilion for Coca-Cola at the Olympics. Our proposal was to design a building that functions as a musical

instrument, and to develop the design we have worked closely with musicians, programmers and a mechatronics engineer.

Q What opportunities are there for young architects and designers in London?

A The way to see it is that there are countless potential clients in London. Most don't even know that their business needs a designer or architect. The trick is for the next generation of architects to develop a mindset where they feel they have something to offer, so they create their own opportunities and not wait for the phone to ring. Too often you see talented people complain about not getting good projects, but there are projects everywhere waiting to happen. It takes an observant designer to realise the opportunities around them and, in our experience, the economic downturn has led to designers being more entrepreneurial in their approach to work.

Q How does the city inspire you?

A It is mainly the people here that inspire us. We sometimes think about moving elsewhere but know we would always want to come back to London. It is a good place to produce work.

Communal creativity

A collective of architects, designers and artists, Assemble has been responsible for inspired temporary projects in London that include the transformation of a garage into a cinema

ASSEMBLE IS A COLLECTIVE of young architects, designers and artists committed to the creative re-use of urban spaces. Recently graduated and predominantly working for larger practices, they started working together to step away from their computer screens and get their hands dirty making things. Their self-initiated projects show a keen eye for identifying the potential of overlooked and abandoned sites for projects, an ability to make the most from very little and an enthusiasm for engaging and working with communities.

The collective first came together in 2010 to convert a derelict petrol station on Clerkenwell Road into a temporary cinema with a minimal budget, basic materials, and a do-it-yourself approach to construction. The intention was to show one potential approach to transforming the thousands of derelict petrol stations in the UK.

The following year the collective became a Community Interest Company and gave itself a name in order to receive a grant to help deliver the ambitious Folly

Assemble shows a keen eye for identifying the potential of overlooked sites, an ability to make the most from very little and an enthusiasm for engaging and working with communities.

for a Flyover. Located under a motorway flyover, this temporary canal-side arts and community venue was constructed by a team of volunteers over four weeks, using donated and reclaimed materials.

Assemble have recently launched Sugarhouse Studios in an abandoned signwriter's workshop in east London. Located near the Olympic park, the studios provide a temporary base for the collective, alongside a cinema and cafe, until the building is demolished in 2013. Their aim is to address the lack of public amenity in an area that's undergoing rapid physical and economic change.

Assemble are in the middle of a busy summer. As well as programming the Sugarhouse Studios, they are completing a public realm commission to redesign a town square in south London and a temporary festival theatre.



SUGARHOUSE STUDIOS, HOME TO ASSEMBLE



ASSEMBLE MEMBERS MARIA LISOGORSKAYA, LOUIS SCHULZ, AMICA DALL AND AARON TAYLOR

Room with a view

Awarded Young Architect of the Year in 2009, David Kohn has collaborated with artist Fiona Banner to create *A Room for London*, a boat-inspired structure currently installed on the roof of the Southbank Centre

Q How are current economic conditions dictating new or different kinds of creative work in London?

A Recent years have seen a significant reduction in public spending on capital projects and a retraction of bank lending to speculative commercial projects. Consequently, across the board, clients are more risk-averse and likely to develop projects in a piecemeal fashion. This can either mean delivering projects incrementally with small gains accumulating into larger results, or using smaller projects to test the viability of more ambitious ones.

Q What are other challenges of practicing architecture today?

A There has been a gradual shift away from the dominant 20th century model of architects being professionals with protected fees, towards a free-market business model. Practice has shifted, and is continuing to shift, towards those services clients and end users need, as opposed to prioritising aspects of design exclusively valued by a traditional architectural community. This includes collaborating across disciplines, carrying out extended research prior to executing built work, and consulting with a wide variety of stakeholders.

Q What benefits have you found from collaborating with other disciplines?

A Collaborations are an excellent way to better understand what it is you are trying to do, what motivates you and what is surplus to requirements. A good collaborator will question your

assumptions, require you to compromise and take you outside your comfort zone. It's like a very fast learning curve that gives you much to ponder for long after the project has ceased.

Q How do your projects respond to environmental imperatives?

A We see environmental factors as being critical to all our projects and look to weave them into the narrative of each design. For example, our idea for *A Room for London* was that the craft beached on the roof of the South Bank would be self-sufficient and off-grid. The design was inspired by a boat captained by writer Joseph Conrad and evolved to include a mast with wind turbines, suggesting that the vessel was indeed powered by the wind, but in an unexpected way.



HETEROPTOPIA MODEL



A ROOM FOR LONDON MODEL



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DESIGNER INSIDER

Monument's top picks of London's culinary, hospitality and cultural destinations

Eat

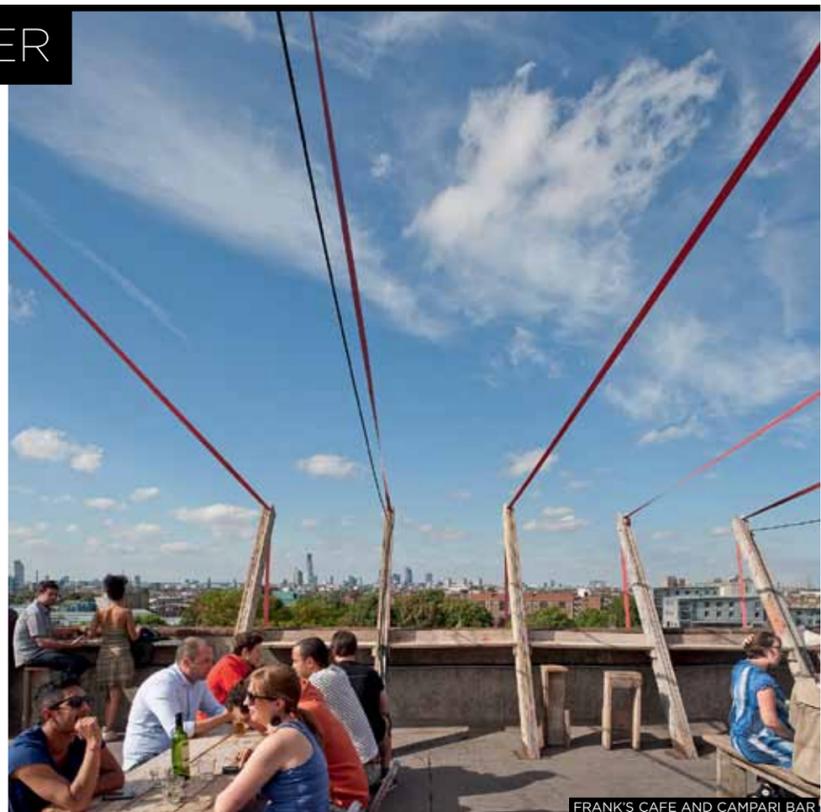
MARTIN CREED AT SKETCH

For the first in a series of artist-designed restaurants at Sketch, Martin Creed has created a dining experience that blurs the lines between art and design, food and function.

Sketch, 9 Conduit Street, Mayfair, London W1S 2XG



MARTIN CREED AT SKETCH



FRANK'S CAFE AND CAMPARI BAR

Stay

THE BOUNDARY

The twelve rooms in Terence Conran's hotel are dedicated to different legendary designers and design movements including Charles & Ray Eames, Bauhaus, Eileen Gray and Mies Van Der Rohe.

2-4 Boundary Street, Shoreditch, London E2 7DD



THE BOUNDARY

Drink

FRANK'S CAFE AND CAMPARI BAR

Designed by Practice Architecture, this pop-up venue first appeared on top of a multi-storey car park in 2009 and is now an annual summer fixture in south London.

10th floor, Peckham multi-storey car park, 95a Rye Lane, Peckham, SE15 4ST

Shop

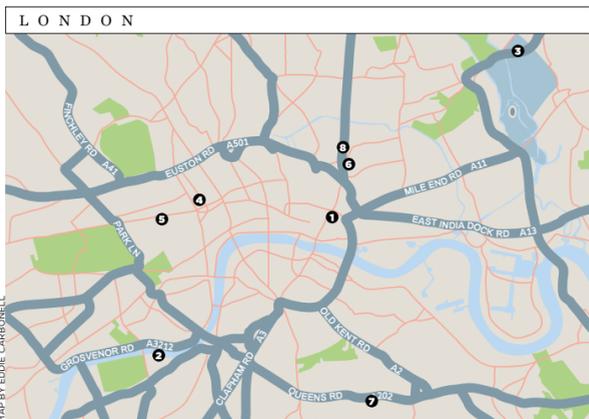
JASPER MORRISON SHOP

The discrete shop, adjacent to Morrison's studio in east London, presents a carefully curated selection of well-designed products from around the world.

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JASPER MORRISON SHOP



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