

Statements by the teams

Adjaye Associates

Adjaye Associates' proposal seeks, through a series of distinctive installations that unfold and spotlight the unique histories and qualities of the 17 bridges, to reimagine the bridges not as connectors, but as the heart of London itself.

We have assembled a diverse team of international artists, each of whom have been charged with bringing to life the unique qualities of a single bridge. Individually, each bespoke installation reveals a distinctive nuance about its host.

When considered holistically, they join to form a cohesive stitching for London's heart, a vibrant new epicentre anchoring the two banks. The installations are supplemented by a series of urban pavilions – including lookout towers, loggias and a new auditorium - running alongside both banks. These pavilions increase cohesion and clarify Adjaye Associate's broad curatorial vision, while providing new infrastructure capable of supporting a new pedestrian-accessible cultural hub.

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The tides of the Thames, its depths and its currents, are a direct force of nature.

They have been this way for hundreds of thousands of years.

Ever since the construction of the city, London has been an attempt to move away from the natural forces that have defined the place.

We want to reveal the river as a breathing, pulsing organism and so illuminate the age and the tides of this ancient estuary.

We want to illuminate the river walls as a constant thread of light through the city that gently illumines the expanses of foreshore exposed at low tide.

When the tide is low, the underbellies of the bridges are revealed by lighting.

At high tide, the lighting shifts to illuminate the elevations of the bridges.

The river and its tidal changes remind us that our lives play out not in the urgent context of minutes or hours, but in the slower, deeper context of thousands of centuries.

It feels a good time to illuminate exactly that.

Diller Scofidio + Renfro

As urban dwellers in a 24/7 global economy, we are desensitised to natural cycles, like the setting of the sun and the ebb and flow of the tides. ***Synchronising the City*** aims to align

the metabolism of the city and its inhabitants with the lost pulses of nature at a time of day that nature and culture intertwine and daylight submits to electric light. To mark the Magic Hour when the sun has crossed the horizon and the sky starts to dim, the bridges along the Thames will slowly fill with light like a vessel with liquid until they are full at the end of 'civil twilight,' which will be punctuated by a Night Kiss-- a beam of light momentarily directed to the sky. The precise timing of each bridge will mark its geographical position and render the rotation of the earth visible while drawing the meandering form of the river virtually in the sky. As the chiming of church bells once served to gather villagers, the civic-scale lighting ceremony will celebrate a new form of urban collectivity.

Leo Villareal with Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands

Leo Villareal, the artist who created The Bay Lights (a monumental public art installation on San Francisco's Bay Bridge), architects Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands and curators Future\ Pace present a transformational artwork, in three stages, designed to enliven the Thames using dynamic light.

First, Villareal's ambitious composition integrates light and colour on the 17 bridges, from Tower Bridge to Albert Bridge, creating a sensitive, interactive and site-specific interplay with the river.

Second, a strategic scheme along both banks will control commercial lighting and introduce the setting for future cultural projects.

Third, additional proposals include a ground-breaking partnership between the MBNA Thames Clippers and artists Random International, immersive installations by Japanese technologists teamLab and other opportunities that foster community and diversity.

This project applies contemporary artist-created software to provide a kinetic programme harnessing the universal power of light and inviting meaningful and accessible public engagement at the heart of London.

Les Éclairagistes Associés

Why will the bridges be illuminated progressively?

The switching on of the lights on the bridges is regulated to follow the ideal line of demarcation between light and shadow (twilight).

Why will there be lampposts 'planted' in the waters of the Thames?

The lampposts are the symbol of artificial lighting designed for the great cities of the world. Their reproductions create a second pathway that plots the course of the river.

Why do the lampposts 'emerge' from the water?

The river is a mass of living water whose depth varies according to the tides. This vertical mobility of water sees the lampposts visible to a greater or lesser degree

Why are the lampposts all different?

Because each lamppost is a faithful reproduction of original lampposts from around the world. This collection of lampposts realises a project which characterises the city of London as the capital of exchanges between different cultures.

Sam Jacob Studio and Studio Simon Heijdens

The Thames Nocturne

The Thames Nocturne forms a ribbon of light connecting Chelsea to Wapping. Light itself is used as a medium to create weaves of light forming a volume in space. This volume is choreographed by live data read from the Thames itself creating an ethereal display that ebbs and flows in register with the river.

Within the river's dark space, the Nocturne's purity of light and geometry contrasts with the city's endless variation.

The Nocturne is a simple gesture showing us the richness and complexity of London's relationship to the River Thames. The Nocturne registers the natural and manmade flows that have been the constant characteristic of London and the Thames since its first settlement.

The bridges are revealed as diverse figures in the urban landscape, their individual character revealed though monochromatic light that subtly shifts, their architectural form seeming to wax and wane as the tide rises and falls.