

COVE PARK

1 September 2021

**MEDIA RELEASE
FUTURE BY DESIGN**

The Launch of Cove Park's Outdoor Classroom, a major commission designed collaboratively by Mae-ling Lokko and Tom Morton with young professionals and students in Ghana and Scotland.

Preview Event to be attended by Mae-ling Lokko, Tom Morton, and Chris Stark, CEO, UK Committee on Climate Change.

Cove Park was announced as the winner of [British Council Architecture, Design, Fashion's Future By Design](#) open call in March 2021. This initiative, designed to inspire and promote a global dialogue around climate change, with a specific emphasis on engaging young people, has made possible an innovative new **Outdoor Classroom**, to be located on Cove Park's 50-acre rural site, overlooking Loch Long on Scotland's west coast.

Future By Design brings together Ghanaian-Filipino architectural scientist **Mae-ling Lokko** and Scottish architect **Tom Morton**. This collaborative project focuses upon the impact of climate change upon water, recognizing flooding as a phenomenon that is highly dramatised by climate chaos and the biodiversity crisis in both Ghana and Scotland. Working together for the first time, Lokko and Morton have designed the hybrid, eco-sustainable Outdoor Classroom through a series of on-line and on-site workshops, and in close collaboration with young professionals (architects, landscape designers, engineers and designers) in Ghana and Scotland. In Ghana, the students and young professionals are connected to the [Ashesi Entrepreneurship Centre](#), and in Scotland to [The Mackintosh School of Architecture](#) (Glasgow School of Art) and the [Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh](#), and to architecture and engineering companies throughout the country.

The development of the Outdoor Classroom explores the future of design in an era of climate change and water crisis. A great deal of research and collaboration has taken place across the various disciplines the young professionals specialise in, with the ambition of creating through the Outdoor Classroom a space in which conversations and public programme around water flooding and climate change can continue. Work on site has been undertaken to prepare the land for extensive planting around the gridshell construction of the classroom itself, which, during the final stage of the installation, will incorporate mycelium panels being grown at Cove Park.

This work has taken place in parallel with the collaborative design of a landscape installation in the southwest corner of Accra's largest public green space, [Efua Sutherland Children's Park](#). Designed in response to flooding conditions and the

shifting urban water flow and change in rainfall patterns, the installation aims to slow down, store and use water discharged into the park, employing high water retention soil media and flood tolerant flora. The team in Ghana were joined by local young people for the terraforming and planting stage of this major project.

The Outdoor Classroom offers an inspiring new space for artists on residency at Cove Park, and local communities in Argyll and Bute and beyond. During the summer, Cove Park devised a series of **Future By Design Workshops** in collaboration with the Scottish cohort of young people, exploring themes connected to the design of the classroom, the processes and materials employed, and the site itself. Working primarily outdoors, these workshops anticipate a new direction for Cove Park's engagement programme and the closer integration within it of the site, the landscape and its natural resources, within our overall programme. A series of four public events, exploring themes connected to Future By Design and the future of water, will take place following the launch of the Outdoor Classroom, and will be curated by Lokko, Morton and the young professionals connected to this project.

'Future by Design has been a wonderful reintroduction into the world of collaborating in person. I have learnt about the existence of Scottish rainforests, collaborated with botanists, jewellery makers, architects and filmmakers, and had the rare opportunity to physically build my design on site. I have gained confidence in my skills and knowledge and have learnt to adapt to changing influences. I am excited to see how the project evolves!'

Catherine Browne, Landscape Architect Assistant & Future By Design Team, Scotland.

A Preview Event for the Outdoor Classroom will take place at Cove Park on Saturday 18 September 2021, from 3.00-4.30pm.

Sevra Davis (Director, British Council Architecture, Design Fashion) and Francesca Bertolotti-Bailey (CEO, Cove Park) will introduce the Commission. Mae-ling Lokko, Tom Morton and members of the design team will be present. We are also delighted to be joined by Chris Stark. Chris will speak on the importance of Future By Design from the perspective of his role as CEO of the UK Committee on Climate Change.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. Mae-ling Lokko is a Ghanaian-Filipino architectural scientist and designer based in Ghana, whose work centres on the upcycling of agrowaste and biopolymer materials into high performance, clean building material systems for humidity control, indoor air quality remediation and water quality control applications. She is the Founder of Willow Technologies Ltd., Accra, Ghana (a building technology company upcycling agricultural waste for building applications and wastewater treatment, and a forthcoming Assistant Professor in the School of Architecture, Yale University, New Haven, USA).
2. Tom Morton is the only practicing Scottish Architect who is RIAS Accredited in both Conservation and Sustainable Design and has a long-standing experience in imagining and building radically sustainable infrastructure. He

has led multi-disciplinary teams on projects for national and local government, third sector organisations, commercial companies, community groups and individuals. He has delivered adaptive re-use, conservation, community and landscape heritage projects across Scotland, designed award-winning, affordable eco-houses and led UK government research into sustainable construction. Morton has worked closely with diverse community groups and third sector organisations, often developing long-standing, supportive relationships.

3. The young professionals and students collaborating with Tom Morton and Mae-ling Lokko have made a valuable contribution at every stage of this project. In addition to those connected to Ashesi Entrepreneurship Centre and Ashesi Design Lab, and The Mackintosh School of Architecture, the project includes young engineers connected to David Narro Associates, a young landscape designer working with ERZ, and a young botany student from the Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh.
4. Future By Design has involved a series of **Summer Workshops** at Cove Park, devised by Cove Park's Curator of Engagement, Emma Henderson, in response to the themes and processes involved in the development of the Outdoor Classroom. These free events, open to young people, their families and carers, were led by the young professionals, and supported by The Maple Trust and YouthLink Scotland. Support from Arts & Business Scotland, The Culture & Business Fund, will contribute to four live events around the future of water, co-curated by both Ghanaian and Scottish cohorts of young people, with the guidance and support of Morton & Lokko, and to be delivered by Cove Park following the launch of the classroom. The focus of many of the events and conversations will be the intersectionality of environmental, racial and social justice.
5. **Cove Park** is an international artists' residency located on an outstanding rural site on Scotland's west coast, one hour north of Glasgow. In the last 20 years, Cove Park has hosted nearly 4000 national and international artists, writers and thinkers working in all art forms and at every career stage. It is committed to supporting artists by offering the time, space and freedom required for research, peer-to-peer exchange and the development of new work, and fostering a stimulating context in which new ideas can be developed, tested and shared. Around 12 residents can take part at any one time, creating collective opportunities for the discovery of alternative approaches and the acquisition of new knowledge. In 2021 the organisation is focusing on revising its model and methodology to move away from being an artists' residency in the traditional sense and to evolve its core mission. Cove Park, under the new leadership of curator, producer and editor Francesca Bertolotti-Bailey, will embrace the idea of collective intelligence, that is at the very heart of any residency project, to its fullest extent. The range of disciplines and art forms, and cultural sectors, invited to Cove Park is expanded to include design, architecture, food, music, technology, the humanities and the hard sciences. We are convinced that artists' residencies represent a unique opportunity, and therefore have the responsibility, to facilitate the imagination of new radical ideas and their application to real-world issues. Residencies are controlled environments where private, professional and public life intertwine: the ideas generated within the residency can lead to the testing, practicing and evaluating of new types of behaviour, beyond individual residency time.

6. The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We build connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and other countries through arts and culture, education and the English language. In 2019-2020 we reached over 75 million people directly and 758 million people overall including online, broadcasts and publications. Founded in 1934 we are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter and a UK public body. We receive a 14.5 per cent core funding grant from the UK government.

The British Council's new programme The Climate Connection is taking place in the run-up to the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26), to bring people around the world together to meet the challenges of climate change. As part of the COP26 programming, the Architecture, Design, Fashion team commissioned Future By Design, led by Design Programme Manager Parvinder Marwaha, to support international dialogue, collaboration and action around climate challenges.

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For further information, images and to confirm attendance at this event, please contact:

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