

COVE PARK

11 October 2021

MEDIA RELEASE

FUTURE BY DESIGN

CELEBRATION EVENT: Cove Park, Friday 29 October 2021, 3-7pm

A celebration of Future By Design and the spectacular new Outdoor Classroom at Cove Park and its sister landscaping installation in Accra's largest public park. This special event highlights the work of the 27 young professionals in Ghana and in Scotland involved in Future By Design.

The recently completed Outdoor Classroom is a major commission designed collaboratively for Cove Park's 50-acre rural site by architectural scientist [Mae-ling Lokko](#) and architect Tom Morton ([Arc Architects](#)) with young professionals and students in Ghana and Scotland. The event offers an opportunity to visit the Outdoor Classroom at Cove Park, to meet Tom Morton and the young professionals that worked directly on the structure and landscaping around the Classroom, and to hear from Mae-ling Lokko about the simultaneous design in Ghana of a landscape installation in the southwest corner of Accra's largest public green space, [Efua Sutherland Children's Park](#).

Appointed to this project in collaboration with [erz](#), [The Mackintosh School of Architecture/Glasgow School of Art](#), and [Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh](#), the participating young professionals from Scotland will take part in a Pecha Kucha at Cove Park from 4pm on 29 October 2021. This will also involve their counterparts in Ghana, connected to the [Ashesi Entrepreneurship Centre](#). The event showcases the work of all the young professionals and highlights the impact upon their practices of collaborating internationally on an innovative architectural and environmental project.

See the video [Future By Design: exploring the architecture of climate chaos](#), for an overview of the Scottish project.

Background to Future By Design

'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 and Future By Design Team, Scotland.

'The experience (with Future by Design) made it easier for me to break out of my comfort zone and achieve goals I normally would not have thought of. Whilst working on the project, I was given certain tasks which I was not used to but since

I had a friendly and patient environment, I had enough guidance to execute those tasks effectively. I met people from various backgrounds but we were able to find common interests, connect and work together towards a main goal. Reflecting on my experience on this project, I am extremely glad to know that I made a substantial effort in battling a problem in our environment whilst gaining skills and making wonderful memories.”

**Kenneth Korah, Ashesi University Engineering Student
& Future by Design Team, Ghana.**

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, brought together Ghanaian-Filipino architectural scientist Lokko and Scottish architect Morton for the first time. Lokko led on the development of landscape installation in Accra, and Morton on the Outdoor Classroom at Cove Park.

Future By Design focuses on the urgent issue of 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. A great deal of research and collaboration has taken place across the various disciplines the young professionals specialise in, with the ambition of creating spaces in which conversations and public programme around water flooding and climate change can continue.

The purpose of the project was to explore the future of place design in the era of climate change. Young designers will spend their careers over the next 30 years to 2050 dealing with the impacts of climate change. The project identified that this will require radical changes in construction technology, design strategies and working processes. Construction technology will move away from cement, metal and plastic to bio-composite materials including timber, bamboo and mycelium. Design strategies will move to more flexible, adaptive approaches integrating landscape and building design, illustrated by a post-farming generative Scottish Rainforest and rejuvenated urban park. Processes will become co-creative with Architects and Engineers working in broad cross-sector teams, ours including 17 different disciplines and community volunteers.

Ghana and Scotland face similar challenges from rising sea levels, and intensification of flooding and rainfall, largely fuelled by current development and construction activities. The project highlighted the north-south inequalities in capacity to mitigate these challenges, in part the legacy of the empire.

A notable finding of the project was the leading role of disempowered groups in the transition to a low-carbon future. In Scotland there was strong leadership from women in challenging established sector norms that impede progress, while in Ghana the young people who live on the local streets found personal pathways through inclusion in project delivery.

The two sites tested contrasting challenges for future designers across the globe, shining a light on a sector that is behind the curve in a just transition to a low carbon future, but it found a generation of young designers focused on the social and environmental effects of construction, who are ready to make the change we all need if we are to keep the planet as a safe home for all.

The Outdoor Classroom

The hybrid, eco-sustainable Outdoor Classroom was designed through a series of on-line and on-site workshops, involving the young professionals in Ghana and Scotland. Collaboratively, the group developed a complex Scottish Larch Gridshell structure with Morton. Following the installation of this structure, work on site then included extensive planting, using local flora, immediately around and within the open classroom itself, a process that was led by [Rachel Bailey Garden Design](#), an RHS award-winning studio based in Helensburgh, with volunteers from the local area. The final stage of the build has involved the installation of bespoke mycelium blocks, developed by Lokko at Cove Park and through workshops with local young people. Highlighting mycelium's potential as a building material, these pieces will be placed within the bank of ground adjacent to the Classroom, creating benches for visitors and structures through which plants can grow and integrate further with the site.

The Landscape Installation, Efua Sutherland's Children's Park

Through a series of hybrid design workshops and public builds, this public landscape installation was developed with students from Ashesi University's 2021 Mobile Lab, volunteers and interdisciplinary professionals from art, agriculture, architecture, wetland ecology and the culinary arts. Within Accra's largest public green space, the Efua Sutherland's Children's Park, a flood-prone zone was strategically chosen as an urban hotspot for seasonal flooding due to shifting urban water flow and change in rainfall patterns. Following mapping and field workshops identifying native flora, the installation was developed around the park's gutter system to slow down, store and use water discharged into the park. The project includes the construction of mounds made with layers consisting of gravel, coconut peat and existing soil as well as ten plant beds for seasonally rotating a variety of plants including rice, bokoboko, okra and lemongrass. Together with the park's staff, park neighbours, and people-on-the-move network, a longer-term programme leveraging the installation as an urban test-bed for agricultural, art and ecology workshops in relation to urban climate change patterns is being developed.

FUTURE BY DESIGN - PUBLIC PROGRAMME

The Outdoor Classroom offers an inspiring new space for artists on residency at Cove Park, and local communities in Argyll 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 continuing series of online projects, curated by the young professionals in Ghana and Scotland, exploring themes connected to Future By Design and the future of water, will run during the autumn this year.

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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