

Press Release:

Manchester Museum announces South Asia Gallery Designer

Manchester Museum, part of the University of Manchester, would like to announce the appointment of **Studio C102 and Mobile Studio Architects** as the design team for our new permanent South Asia Gallery, which will open in August 2022.

In collaboration with the British Museum and the South Asia Gallery Collective, **Studio C102 and Mobile Studio Architects** will join Manchester Museum on its journey to create an exceptional new co-curated and co-designed space. These two studios have formed an exciting new consortium to deliver this project.

At 372m², the gallery will be the first and largest permanent gallery in the country dedicated to exploring the stories, experiences, cultures and contributions of South Asian diaspora communities in the UK. It will bring together lived experience and world-class collections, including loans from the British Museum, in what will be the largest permanent gallery in the Museum. At its centre, there will be a performance space for generating and sharing new perspectives and stories.

Studio C102 and Mobile Studio Architects have a people-centred approach and track record of delivering co-designed projects, creating generous and joyful places where people want to spend time and connect. The Museum's South Asia Gallery Collective, made up of diaspora community members, were an important part of the appointment process. They highlighted **Studio C102 and Mobile Studio Architects'** commitment to nurturing ideas, co-curation and their thoughtful approach to dealing with sensitive subjects.

The South Asia Gallery will bring extraordinary objects from the British Museum to Manchester, to be displayed alongside the very best of Manchester Museum's own South Asian collections, including the natural sciences. The visually stunning gallery will welcome visitors with beautiful displays and a dynamic contemporary take on South Asian and British Asian culture.

Esme Ward, Director of Manchester Museum, said:

'We are delighted with this appointment. Studio C102 and Mobile Studio Architects have shown their commitment to being open, accessible and inclusive in their approach. With their collaborative spirit and dedication to co-design, this gallery will be a brave and bold space; a place for emotional connections and new perspectives.'

Kyriakos Katsaros, Studio C102, and Chee-Kit Lai, Mobile Studio Architects, said:

'Studio C102 and Mobile Studio Architects are excited to be working with Manchester Museum, the South Asia Collective and the British Museum to co-design the new South Asia Gallery. The new gallery will inspire the South Asian diaspora community to connect with its own heritage and open up Manchester Museum's doors to new audiences.'

Hartwig Fischer, Director of the British Museum, said:

'This is a very exciting development in the design of our Partnership Gallery with Manchester Museum, and I look forward to seeing how the consortium works with the South Asia Gallery Collective and colleagues in the creation of this important and innovative space.'

The South Asia Gallery developed in partnership with the British Museum is a keystone of *hello future*, an exciting new £13.5 million project to transform Manchester Museum. The two-storey extension will also include a new Exhibition Hall dedicated to major temporary shows and extraordinary projects. The rest of the Museum is being reshaped to create a stunning new Lee Kai Hung Chinese Culture Gallery, further displays, shop, café and new entrance.

hello future is supported using public funding by Arts Council England and supported by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, The University of Manchester, and the generosity of numerous philanthropic supporters.

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Notes to Editors

About Manchester Museum

Manchester Museum, part of The University of Manchester, first opened in 1890. It is the UK's largest university museum with a collection of about 4.5 million items from every continent. Its combination of the academic and the popular is what makes the Museum so distinctive and lies at the heart of its widespread appeal. The Museum's vision is to build understanding between cultures and a sustainable world. Every year over half a million people visit. Over the next three years, Manchester Museum is working towards an exciting new £13.5 million project *hello future*, to transform and develop the Museum becoming more inclusive, imaginative and relevant to the diverse communities it serves.

The Museum will remain partially open during this time and in 2022 will become a bigger, more inclusive and imaginative Manchester Museum.

The *hello future* transformation includes:

- A new Exhibition Hall
- South Asia Gallery
- Lee Kai Hung Chinese Culture Gallery
- Redisplayed galleries
- New entrance and visitor facilities with focus on inclusive and accessible design

[@mcrmuseum](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/museum)

About Studio C102 and Mobile Studio Architects

Studio C102 and Mobile Studio Architects have formed a consortium to collaborate on the design and delivery of the South Asia Gallery project. The consortium will be headed by the two studios' respective principals.

- Studio C102 was founded by Kyriakos Katsaros in 2013 and is based in Dalston, East London. The studio works on the principle that good design should be accessible to everyone and not just limited to the few. Studio C102's recently completed projects include the fit-out for a new gallery in Deptford for architectural photographer Gareth Gardner.

Principal Kyriakos Katsaros has previously taught at The Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL, and is currently a Visiting Lecturer at the University of Brighton. www.studio-c102.com

- Mobile Studio Architects was founded by Chee-Kit Lai in 2010 and is based in Dalston, East London. The studio has extensive experience in the design of exhibitions, with a portfolio of academic and public engagement shows. Mobile Studio Architects was awarded The ARUP Prize for Emerging Talent in Architecture, at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition in 2016.

Principal Chee-Kit Lai is a Senior Teaching Fellow at The Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL, and also holds a part-time position as Director of Exhibitions at The Bartlett. www.themobilestudio.co.uk

About The British Museum's National Programmes

The British Museum has a national presence, working with hundreds of partner organisations across the UK each year through its wide-ranging National Programmes activity. This includes single-object Spotlight Loan tours, touring exhibitions, Partnership Galleries, as well as both short-term and long-term loans, with the lead support of the Dorset Foundation in memory of Harry M Weinrebe. In 2019/20, over 2,800 objects were loaned to 105 venues in the UK, reaching 10 million people outside London. National Programmes also facilitates knowledge exchange programmes and trainee schemes to help young people to break into the museum profession. The Museum will continue to develop partnerships across the UK as part of its commitment to sharing the collection as widely as possible.

Further information:

For further information, please contact georgina.young@manchester.ac.uk

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