

MARINA TABASSUM AND HER FIRM, MARINA TABASSUM ARCHITECTS (MTA), SELECTED FOR THE SERPENTINE PAVILION 2025

At Serpentine South

6 June – 26 October 2025

Press View: Tuesday 3 June, 8.30am–12pm

Press images available at serpentinegalleries.org/press

Sponsored by Goldman Sachs



Left: Serpentine 2025 Pavilion, designed by Marina Tabassum, Marina Tabassum Architects (MTA). Design render, interior view. Photo: © Marina Tabassum Architects (MTA). Courtesy Serpentine; Right: Marina Tabassum. Photo: © Asif Salman

Serpentine is delighted to announce that Bangladeshi architect and educator Marina Tabassum and her firm, Marina Tabassum Architects (MTA), have been selected to design the 2025 Pavilion, titled *A Capsule in Time*. Marina Tabassum's Pavilion will be unveiled to the public at Serpentine South on 6 June 2025 with Goldman Sachs supporting the annual project for the 11th consecutive year.

This unique and ambitious commission, which began in 2000 with Dame Zaha Hadid, has presented the first UK structures by some of the most significant names and emerging talents in international architecture. Throughout its history, the Serpentine Pavilion has grown into a highly anticipated showcase for emerging talent. The Pavilion has evolved over the years as a participatory public and artistic platform for Serpentine's experimental, interdisciplinary, community and education programmes.



Marina Tabassum Architects, which was founded following Tabassum's ten year partnership with URBANA in 2005, have completed architectural projects that are socially, politically and ecologically engaged. In addition to buildings sited in the city of Dhaka, its peripheries, and across Bangladesh, MTA's practice extends to researching environmental degradation within Bangladesh, a country that is particularly vulnerable and facing the impacts of climate change. The studio also focuses on architecture's role in addressing living conditions for marginalised individuals in the region with the aim to uplift the environmental and living conditions of the people they collaborate with as demonstrated by their celebrated Khudi Bari [Small House] (2020–ongoing). These modular structures were developed in 2020 for those living on the sand beds of the rivers Jamuna, Meghna and Teesta with the ability to be easily disassembled and moved when necessary.

Celebrated for her work that seeks to establish an architectural language that is contemporary while rooted and engaging with place, climate, context, culture and history, Tabassum's design will resonate with Serpentine South and aims to prompt a dialogue between the permanent and the ephemeral nature of the commission.

The 2025 Pavilion is elongated in the north-south direction and features a central court that aligns with Serpentine South's bell tower. Inspired by the tradition of park-going and arched garden canopies that filter soft daylight through green foliage, the sculptural quality of the Pavilion is comprised of four wooden capsule forms with a translucent façade that diffuses and dapples light when infiltrating the space. Central to Tabassum's design is a kinetic element where one of the capsule forms is able to move and connect, transforming the Pavilion into a new space.

Emphasising the sensory and spiritual possibilities of architecture through scale and the interplay of light and shadow, Tabassum's design also draws on the history and architectural language of Shamiyana tents or awnings of South Asia. Similarly kinetic in their function, these structures are made up of an external fabric supported by bamboo poles and are commonly erected for outdoor gatherings and celebrations. The openness of Tabassum's Pavilion welcomes the possibilities of unifying visitors through conversations and connections, live programmes and public convenings.

Marina Tabassum, Architect, Marina Tabassum Architects (MTA) said: “We are thrilled to be selected as the architect of this year's Serpentine Pavilion. When conceiving our design, we reflected on the transient nature of the commission which appears to us as a capsule of memory and time. The relationship between time and architecture is intriguing: between permanence and impermanence, of birth, age and ruin; architecture aspires to outlive time. Architecture is a tool to live behind legacies, fulfilling the inherent human desire for continuity beyond life. In the Bengal delta, architecture is ephemeral as dwellings change locations with the rivers shifting courses. Architecture becomes memories of the lived spaces continued through tales. The archaic volume of a half capsule, generated by geometry and wrapped in light semi-transparent material will create a play of filtered light that will pierce through the structure as if under a Shamiyana at a Bengali wedding. The Serpentine Pavilion offers a unique platform under the summer sun to unite as people rich in diversity. The stage is set, the seats are placed. We envision various events and encounters taking place in this versatile space that unifies people through conversations and connections.”



Bettina Korek, Chief Executive, and Hans Ulrich Obrist, Artistic Director, said: “*A Capsule in Time* will honour connections with the Earth and celebrate the spirit of community. Built around a mature tree at the centre of the structure, Tabassum’s design will bring the park inside the Pavilion. Its kinetic dimension will also harken back to the levitating element of Rem Koolhaas & Cecil Balmond with Arup’s Serpentine Pavilion 2006. We are grateful to all of our loyal supporters who make this groundbreaking commission possible and look forward to announcing a full programme of live events and public programmes that will bring people together around Tabassum’s visionary, spiritual and social structure. This is a milestone year for the Serpentine Pavilion Commission as we celebrate 25 years since the inception of this prestigious programme.”

Throughout the Summer and until October, the Serpentine Pavilion 2025 will become a platform for Serpentine’s live and events programme. It will feature *Park Nights*, the interdisciplinary platform for live encounters in music, film, theatre, dance, literature, philosophy, fashion and technology. Each year’s commissions respond to the unique architecture of the Pavilion, inviting audiences to experience the activated space.

Tabassum’s Pavilion will kickstart the 25th year of this historic commission and continue Dame Zaha Hadid’s ethos of pushing the boundaries of architecture. In her words: ‘There should be no end to experimentation’, and Tabassum’s Pavilion will exemplify this credo. This year, Serpentine will host a programme of events to reflect on the commission, its history and its future.

This year’s Pavilion selection was made by Serpentine CEO Bettina Korek; Artistic Director Hans Ulrich Obrist; Director of Construction and Special Projects Julie Burnell; Exhibitions Curator Chris Bayley; Curator at Large, Architecture and Site-specific Projects Natalia Grabowska; and Assistant Exhibitions Curator Alexa Chow, together with advisors Sou Fujimoto and David Glover.

In June, Serpentine will publish a catalogue to accompany the Pavilion. Designed by Wolfe Hall, it will bring together new and insightful contributions from the fields of architecture, art and poetry. Generously illustrated in colour throughout, it also features an extensive conversation between Marina Tabassum and Serpentine’s Artistic Director Hans Ulrich Obrist.

The Pavilion is supported by Goldman Sachs.

NOTES TO EDITORS

Marina Tabassum

Marina Tabassum (b. 1969, Dhaka, Bangladesh) is an acclaimed architect and educator who has received numerous international recognitions in the field of architecture. She graduated in 1995 from Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology. Prior to founding Marina Tabassum Architects (MTA) in 2005, Tabassum was a founding partner of the Dhaka-based firm URBANA between 1995 and 2005 with Kashef Chowdhury. In 1997, URBANA won the national competition to design the Independence Monument of Bangladesh and the Museum of Independence under



the Public Works Department and the Ministry of Liberation War Affairs. In her work, Tabassum seeks to establish a language of architecture that is contemporary yet reflectively rooted to place and prioritising climate, context, culture and history. Tabassum's practice remains consciously contained in size, undertaking a limited number of projects per year.

Tabassum is a Professor at Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands. She held the Norman Foster Chair at Yale University in 2023 and has taught as a visiting professor at numerous universities including the Harvard University Graduate School of Design, USA; the University of Toronto, Canada; and BRAC University, Bangladesh. She received an Honorary Doctorate from the Technical University of Munich, Germany, and served as academic director at the Bengal Institute for Architecture, Landscapes and Settlements between 2015 and 2021.

Tabassum's pursuit for the 'architecture of relevance' has won her numerous awards including the Soane Medal from the United Kingdom; Arnold Brunner Memorial Prize from the American Academy of Arts and Letters; the Gold Medal of the French Academy of Architecture; and the Jameel Prize from the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. She won the Aga Khan Award for Architecture in 2016 for the Bait ur Rouf Mosque and has served as a member of the Steering Committee of the Aga Khan Awards for Architecture from 2017 to 2022 and is a fellow of the Royal Society of Arts (RSA). In 2024, Tabassum was included in *TIME* Magazine's '100 Most Influential People'.

Tabassum chairs the Executive Board of Prokritee, a fair-trade organisation that promotes crafts and provides livelihood to thousands of women artisans of Bangladesh. She is the founding chairperson of the Foundation for Architecture and Community Equity (F.A.C.E), a non-for-profit organisation that focuses on climate adaptation and architecture's agency and responsibility in providing dignified living conditions for marginalised populations. F.A.C.E is currently working with communities to build mobile modular housing (known as Khudi Bari) in various geographically and climatically challenged locations in Bangladesh.

Tabassum's work is currently the subject of a travelling exhibition organised by Architektur Museum der TUM, Munich, showing in Lisbon and Delft. She has previously presented work at Whitechapel Gallery, London (with Rana Begum, 2019); Sharjah Architecture Triennale (2019); and Venice Architecture Biennale (2018). Her work has been published by ArchiTangle; Harvard Graduate School of Design; ORO Editions; and Lars Müller Publishers among others.

Marina Tabassum Architects (MTA)

Founded in 2005, Marina Tabassum Architects (MTA) is an internationally recognised architecture and studio-based practice located in Dhaka, Bangladesh. MTA began its journey in the quest of establishing a language of architecture that is contemporary to the world yet rooted to a specific place. Standing against the global pressure of consumer architecture – a fast breed of buildings that are out of place and context – MTA is committed to rooting architecture to a place and is informed by climate and geography. Their work is well regarded as environmentally conscious, socially responsible and historically and culturally appropriate. Every project undertaken is a sensitive and relevant response to the uniqueness of individual sites, contexts, cultures and people.



With a focus on combining research and teaching, MTA invests in extensive research work on the impacts of climate change in Bangladesh working closely with geographers, landscape architects, planners and other allied professionals. Their focus of work also extends to the marginalised low to ultra-low income population of the country with a goal to elevate the environmental and living conditions of people.

Headed by principle architect Marina Tabassum, the studio engages talented architects and professionals with an interest in self-built projects, who are willing to push the boundaries of the conventional norms of practice. The associate architects who are responsible for research, design and management of individual projects work directly under the principal architect. The practice is consciously kept and retained in an optimum size and projects undertaken are carefully chosen and are limited by number per year.

MTA's process-based practice model is well regarded in the international scene of architecture as a Twenty First Century model. As such, MTA has presented works and research to numerous institutions across Bangladesh and internationally. In 2016, MTA received the Aga Khan Award for Architecture for the Bait Ur Rouf Mosque – a building distinguished by its lack of popular mosque iconography, an emphasis on space and light and its capacity to function not only as a place of worship but also as a refuge for a dense neighbourhood on Dhaka's periphery. The project was also listed among the top 25 postwar buildings of the world by *New York Times*.

Serpentine Pavilion

This pioneering commission, which began in 2000 with Dame Zaha Hadid, has presented the first UK structures by some of the biggest names in international architecture. The Pavilion is realised with the support of technical advisors AECOM. In recent years it has grown into a highly anticipated showcase for emerging talents, from Sumayya Vally, Counterspace (South Africa), the youngest architect to be commissioned, and Frida Escobedo (Mexico) to Diébédo Francis Kéré (Burkina Faso) and Bjarke Ingels (Denmark). In 2022, *Black Chapel* was designed by Theaster Gates (USA), in 2023 *À table* was designed by Lina Ghotmeh (France and Lebanon) and in 2024 *Archipelagic Void* was designed by Minsuk Cho and his firm, Mass Studies (South Korea).

In 2021, the Pavilion programme evolved beyond its physical location for the first time and expanded with a series of Fragments placed across London. It also saw the launch of *Support Structures for Support Structures*, a fellowship programme initiated by Serpentine that supports up to ten artists and collectives working at the intersection of art, spatial politics, and community practice.

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About Serpentine



Building new connections between artists and audiences, Serpentine presents pioneering contemporary art exhibitions and cultural events with a legacy that stretches back over half a century, from a wide range of emerging practitioners to the most internationally recognised artists, writers, scientists, thinkers, and cultural thought leaders of our time.

Based in London's Kensington Gardens, across two sites, Serpentine North and Serpentine South, Serpentine features a year-round, free programme of exhibitions, architectural showcases, education, live events and technological activations, in the park and beyond the gallery walls.

Public art has emerged as a central strand of Serpentine's programme. Major presentations include a collection of Eduardo Paolozzi's sculptures (1987); Anish Kapoor's *Turning the World Upside Down* (2010); Lee Ufan's *Relatum – Stage* (2018–19); Christo and Jeanne-Claude's *London Mastaba* in the Serpentine Lake (2018); *I LOVE YOU EARTH* by Yoko Ono (2021); Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster *In remembrance of the coming alien (Alienor)* (2022); Alexandra Daisy Ginsberg's *Pollinator Pathmaker* (2022–ongoing); Atta Kwami's *Dzidzɔ kple amenuveve* (Joy and Grace) (2021–22); Gerhard Richter's *STRIP-TOWER* (2024); Yayoi Kusama's *Pumpkin* at the Round Pound (2024); and Esther Mahlangu's mural *Umntu ngumuntu ngabantu* (2024).

Proud to maintain free access for all visitors, Serpentine also reaches an exceptionally broad audience and maintains a profound connection with its local community.

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