

LONDON DESIGN FESTIVAL

THE EDIT

With more than 300 events and a theme of 'Lose Yourself in Design', this year's London Design Festival will be bigger and more inspiring than ever – and perhaps a little more daunting. That's why Ruth Sleightholme has enlisted some expert help

We asked 10 diverse stars of design and decoration to recommend the events and products in the London Design Festival that, in their opinion, are not to be missed. Each person has impeccable but distinct taste, and has chosen a wide and surprising variety of activities. Whether you prefer to select a favourite and copy their schedule, or to cherry-pick from the list, stumbling across last-minute or hidden gems as you traverse the city is the very essence of LDF, so keep your schedule relaxed and expect to be surprised. >



Maria Speake

Maria Speake founded the architectural salvage and interior-design business Retrouvius with her partner Adam Hills, over 20 years ago. Retrouvius will be designing a showcase at Decorex with Timorous Beasties and keeping its warehouse open as part of the new Queen's Park Design District.

MARIA'S PICKS:

A product: 'Wooden Table' series by Peter Marigold, at **Gallery Libby Sellers.** 'These tables (right) are not made of wood, but are cast in plaster or metal from wax impressions of wood, so "wooden" becomes a sort of pun. I love what Libby does and the designers she chooses to commission.'

A product: 'The Intelligent Boot' (right), at **Tracey Neuls.** The shoemaker's spent the past six months researching how and what makes the perfect boot, and has brought the final design into limited production. 'Tracey has a similar philosophy to Retrouvius: constantly re-examining the traditional and using familiar materials, and it is pertinent to note that LDF does not just include interiors.'



A gallery opening:

House of Illustration. 'This is a wonderful museum, recently opened in King's Cross. It plans to celebrate the medium - from political cartoons to storybook illustration. The first key exhibition, on Quentin Blake (left), coincides with LDF, showing unseen, rare works, as well as his roughs and storyboarding.'



An installation:

The designer Fabien Cappello recently installed a huge over-bar light in the top-floor bar at **Ace Hotel** in Shoreditch. 'Fabien always has an original approach, sensitive to materials and narrative. This seven-metre-long, perforated-steel light should be spectacular. It will be a good stop-off at the Shoreditch Design Triangle.'

Bill Amberg

Bill Amberg is a London-based designer whose medium is leather. Although most famous for his bag designs, he has a seemingly inexhaustible energy for collaborations, which has seen him involved in dozens of projects requiring leather - walling, flooring, furniture (right) - often working as something of a mentor for emerging designers. This year Bill is leading the Queen's Park Design District.



BILL'S PICKS:

An installation: Bocci's lighting installation at **Mallett.** 'Bocci creates some beautiful, imaginative lights (below), but in a very contemporary vein, while Mallett is an incredibly grand antiques showroom, so the combination will be interesting - and photogenic. Lighting is in a good place right now, with advances in technology and opportunities in materials, so the mixture of old and new will be particularly satisfying.'



A project:

The Wish List, with AHEC and Benchmark, at the **V&A.** Every year, the American Hardwood Export Council invests in a project for London Design Festival. This year, its project has paired 10 major design names with ten up-and-coming designers, who will work together to create an object in wood that the senior designer has always wanted for themselves, from a pencil sharpener to a dining table. 'I have done a lot of work with Benchmark, and I am impressed with the quality - they are simply fantastic makers and joiners. So to see what they can do once harnessed to those ideas will be intriguing. The designers will include Terence Conran, Norman Foster and Zaha Hadid.'

An exhibition:

Ceramics in the City, an annual showcase at **The Geffrye Museum.** 'Ceramics (right) are in a really interesting place. It has always been a good medium for self-expression and experimentation, but right now we have particularly good ceramicists. The Geffrye Museum is also a wonderful place to visit.' >

