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Helidon Xhixha**

**London Design
Biennale**

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London Design Biennale: A glimpse of what utopia could look like

The first London Design Biennale opens today – Robert Bevan explains what you can expect

ROBERT BEVAN | 6 hours ago | 0 comments



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Wednesday, 7 September 2016 12:33 PM

In pictures: The London Design Biennale takes place at Somerset House



A man takes a camera phone photo of Celine Xhixha as she poses next to an installation entitled 'Bliss' created by her step-father, Helidon Xhixha, who is representing Albania at the London Design Biennale at Somerset House on September 6, 2016 in London, England. The first London Design Biennale runs from 7-27 September at Somerset House and features over 30 countries and territories. Nations from six continents will present newly commissioned works that explore the theme Utopia by Design. (Carl Court/Getty Images)

<http://www.arabianbusiness.com/photos/in-pictures--london-design-biennale-takes-place-at-somerset-house-644754.html#.V9ADH8egCJU>



Helidon Xhixha Echoes Global Concerns With 'Bliss', London Design Biennale

August 31, 2016



Acclaimed artist Helidon Xhixha has been selected to take over the central courtyard of Somerset House during the inaugural London Design Biennale this September. Representing his home country of Albania, his work "Bliss" will focus on the political and economic issues that Europe is currently facing.

A highly important source of inspiration for Xhixha's design is that of the late Renaissance artists' interpretations of the Ideal City especially with regard to their iconography. Repeatedly, artists attempted to create their own visual representation of utopia, with the recurring theme throughout these works being the use of concentric circles. Xhixha has returned to these ideas and applied the use of concentric circles into his own sculpture.

The shape of the sculpture, with its benches oscillating outwards from the center, draw clear inspiration from the Renaissance ideal cities. The benches offer a place for interaction and engagement with one another, reflecting the need for a sense of community and unification within society. Sitting on the benches and looking into the central mirrors, we are forced into a position of interaction with the people around us and with our own reflection. Xhixha's structure reflects not only ourselves, but the others who chose to sit on the benches promoting engagement with each other.

His 'Iceberg' sculpture, which addressed the subject of climate change, became the first installation to be given permission to travel along the Grand Canal at the Venice Biennale and was featured in The New York Times, The Guardian and CNN.

His work is currently being shown in Pietrasanta, Tuscany where he has for the first time put his work into marble. Creating a softer and distilled manipulation of light this new work is a dramatic contrast to his usually sharp steel sculptures.

The London Design Biennale is being produced by the team behind the London Design Festival. The curated, three-week long Biennale will overlap the Festival, bringing a new international element to London, complementing its citywide programme of commissions and partner events every two years. Sir John Sorrell, Ben Evans and Dr Christopher Turner are president, executive director and director of the London Design Biennale.

Helidon Xhixha
London Design Biennale
Somerset House – 7th – 27th September 2016

www.londondesignbiennale.com | [@londonbiennale](https://twitter.com/londonbiennale) | [#LDB16](https://www.instagram.com/londonbiennale) | [#BlissLDB](https://www.instagram.com/londonbiennale)

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TIRANA TIMES

Helidon Xhixha claims public medal at London Biennale

Tirana Times September 23, 2016 11:08 <http://www.tiranatimes.com/?p=129201>

Story Highlights

- "I have been working on 'Bliss' for the past twelve months. These have been tumultuous times and working on a piece such as Bliss, which addresses the issues of migration currently facing the world, feels very timely," says the Albanian artist



TIRANA, Sept. 22 – Albanian contemporary artist Helidon Xhixha has claimed the public medal at the first London Design Biennale with his “Bliss” site-specific sculpture installation, beating artists from 36

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Editorial

New projects and collaborations



By Anna Balzani
Editor in chief
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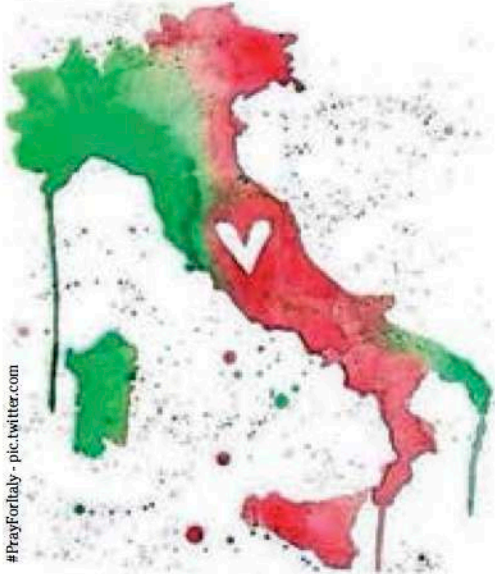
Together we evolve, is one of my beliefs.

Together with others we develop a greater awareness of who we are and who we want to become, of what we want to do and the way we take to achieve our goals; through confrontation and open dialogue with those who are different than us we gain new skills and, at best, new sensibilities. For me all of this always represents an opportunity. Maybe this is the reason why I am enthusiastic about the new proj-

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La solidarietà di Firenze e della Toscana per le vittime del terremoto nell'Italia centrale

By A.B. e C.I.



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Presidente della Fondazione Spadolini on page 22

Sonia Bergamasco: an eclectic Italian actresses Godmother of the 73rd Venice International Film Festival



Alessandro Schinco photographer

By Viviana del Bianco, Journalist

At fifty years old, Sonia Bergamasco is one of the most eclectic and versatile Italian actresses with a remarkable

ability to act. She will be the godmother of the opening and closing nights of the 73rd edition of the International Film Festival in

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Helidon Xhixha Shining Rock The exhibition in Pietrasanta and the London Design Biennale



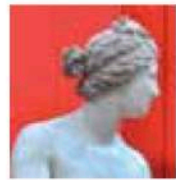
Helidon Xhixha and his wife Mara

By Luca Beatrice
Art Critic

When you see the word rock written, you think of something very powerful. A sound, more than anything, because the word is particularly linked to music. But above all rock is also a stone. Mountains. Boulder. Raise your eyes in front of you above the square of Pietrasanta and you will see the Apian Alps overlooking the Romanesque-Gothic architectural style of the church and bell tower. White stretches

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The many lives of Venus "Venere dei Medici" The beloved sculpture by Napoleon



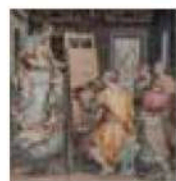
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Daria Derakhshan The Florentine graphic designer and her pop soul



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L'Accademia delle Arti del Disegno onora da oltre 450 anni un'antica tradizione



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LEONARDO GORI

ENLIVENING THE CULTURAL LIFE OF FLORENCE FOR TWENTY YEARS

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Silvano Campeggi

L'artista fiorentino che ha conquistato Hollywood



By Olga Mugnaini
Journalist for La Nazione

"Maestro va bene così?" Una bionda, sensuale e svampita Marilyn Monroe, già famosa ma non ancora un'icona di bellezza, si offre a seno

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By Luca Beatrice
Critico d'arte

Continued from page 1

that seem to be covered by everlasting snow when, in fact, they are slabs of marble worked on by man for centuries. Because of this characteristic, it is considered a unique place in the world. Every time an artist arrives in Pietrasanta they are called to confront with the evocative power of the stone. It is impossible to try and escape such fascination and to not accept the challenge, well aware of the fact that it wouldn't be so easy to bend such a tenacious and proud material under domination, a material so indispensable to art nowadays.

Helidon Xhixha is certainly one of the most interesting sculptors on the contemporary scene today and during the last few years its work has established itself for the originality of the sign and the processing of the material. He mostly used steel which he bent, modeled, enjoying its mirroring surface that absorbs everything that surrounds it until it divides, multiplies every image that comes into its way. He placed his large sculptures in the historical center of Matera, on the San Servolo Island in the Venetian lagoon, at Madama Palace in Turin, and recently he faced an international audience in London where he was widely appreciated. This is what they call emerging, highly appreciated by the critics. It wouldn't have been difficult to simply choose an anthology of the most famous and beautiful works to place in one of the most beautiful squares in Italy. But Helidon is a man who loves challenges, something that can also be seen in his biography as a struggling artist, used to always be questioned.

I met him in **Pietrasanta** while he was working on his new pieces. We entered the belly of Henraux together, where the marbles he had chosen appeared as if relaxed, almost defenseless and fragile – something incredible for a block weighing several tones – awaiting for the machines to forge the artist's will and to help translate his thoughts. From this place I came up with the title for this article, *The Rock*, because the power expressed by the naked rock has no equivalent; it corners you, it prevents you from finding shortcuts or refuge. At least in the beginning it's more powerful than you. To be able to fight this battle there is need for muscles and brains, intelligence and power, not being afraid to take risks or to plunge in.

Nowadays the role that the sculpture plays on the scene of the contemporary art needs to be clarified theoretically. What needs to be mentioned first of all is that the maturing process of a sculptor is long and complex. There is no place for improvising here, it is a journey with different milestones to reach, and one needs to understand the language, the forms and the materials. Compared to other fields, whether it is painting or conceptual art, the path is longer, and for this reason sculpture needs more complex and articulated times. Sculpture is coexistent with continuity, with the reflection over the classic, and the break from the old ways, abandoning tradition, descending from the pedestal and attempting to always retrace new semantic imbalances.

More than any other artistic genre, in order to last, sculpture needed to modify itself genetically, becoming a hybrid between the ancient essence, the object, the installation, the urban intervention until reaching Land Art and Earth Art. If in 1946 Arturo Martini – provocatively – called sculpture “the dead language”, he certainly didn't have in mind how many more revolutions would be achieved in the second part of the twentieth century. When standing before the works



Helidon Xhixha exhibition on the main square of Pietrasanta, credits continiartuk

Helidon Xhixha

Shining Rock

The great exhibition in Pietrasanta and the London Design Biennale



Helidon Xhixha in his studio, preparing the sketch for London Design Biennale

of Xhixha, realized out of marble, bronze, but also with tested steels, you can feel the vitality coming out from every bent form. His works are monumental excerpts that enchant, play between cold and hot, reveal a vision of the world and of an art that is entirely contemporary.

Italiano

Scrivi rock e pensi a qualcosa di molto potente. Un suono, soprattutto, visto che la parola si lega in particolare al mondo della musica. Ma rock è anche, e soprattutto, roccia. Montagna. Masso. Alzi gli occhi davanti a te, sopra la piazza di Pietrasanta e vedi le Alpi Apuane che sovrastano l'architettura in stile romanico-gotico della chiesa e del campanile. Distese bianche che sembrano di neve perenne e invece sono lastre di marmo sulle quali l'uomo ha lavorato da secoli. Per questa caratteristica, si tratta di un posto unico al mondo. Ogni volta che un artista arriva a Pietrasanta è chiamato a confrontarsi con il potere evocativo della pietra. Impossibile tentare di fuggire da tale fascino e non accettare la sfida, ben consapevoli che non sarà facile piegare un materiale così tenace e orgoglioso al dominio del progetto, indispensabile all'arte di oggi.

Helidon Xhixha è certamente uno degli scultori più interessanti nel panorama contemporaneo e il suo lavoro è stato capace di imporsi, in questi ultimi anni, per l'originalità del segno e l'elaborazione sul materiale. Ha utilizzato soprattutto l'acciaio che ha piegato, modellato, sfruttando la sua superficie specchiante che assorbe tutto ciò che lo circonda fino a sdoppiare, moltiplicare, ogni immagine che incontra nel cammino. Ha collocato le sue grandi sculture nel centro



Helidon Xhixha, rendering of his installation for London Design Biennale

The **London Design Biennale** will be held between September 7th and September 27th, 2016. Helidon Xhixha will participate at this first edition where the main theme is the utopia through design, representing his country of origin, Albania, with an installation that is inspired from the ideal city of Plato. The installation of Helidon is exhibited in the Somerset House square together with two other countries, United Kingdom and Nigeria.

La **London Design Biennale** si terrà dal 7 al 27 Settembre 2016. Helidon Xhixha partecipa a questa prima edizione il cui tema centrale è l'utopia attraverso il design, rappresentando il suo paese di origine, l'Albania, con un'installazione che si ispira alla città ideale di Platone. L'installazione di Helidon, è esposta nella piazza di Somerset House insieme ad altri due paesi, Uk e Nigeria.

storico di Matera, all'Isola di San Servolo nella laguna veneziana, al Palazzo Madama di Torino, di recente si è misurato con il pubblico internazionale di Londra ottenendo ampi consensi. È quel che si dice un emergente, molto apprezzato anche dalla critica. Non gli sarebbe stato difficile limitarsi a scegliere un florilegio delle opere più belle e conosciute per collocarle in una delle piazze più belle d'Italia. Ma Helidon è uomo che ama le sfide, fatto che si può evincere dalla sua biografia di artista combattivo, abituato sempre a mettersi in discussione.

L'ho raggiunto a **Pietrasanta** durante la lavorazione delle nuove opere. Siamo entrati insieme nella pancia della Henraux, dove i marmi che ha scelto apparivano alla vista distesi, quasi inermi e fragili – incredibile a dirsi per un blocco che pesa diverse tonnellate - in attesa che le macchine forgiassero ciò che l'artista ha in mente e lo aiutassero a tradurre il pensiero. Da qui mi è venuto il titolo per questo testo, *The Rock*, perché la potenza che esprime la nuda pietra non ha uguali; ti mette all'angolo, ti impedisce di trovare scorciatoie o sotterfugi. Almeno all'inizio è più forte di

te. Per giocare questa battaglia ci vogliono testa e muscoli, intelligenza e potenza, non avere paura del rischio e della scommessa.

Dal punto di vista teorico, si tratta di chiarire quale sia, oggi, il posto che occupa la scultura nell'ambito dell'arte contemporanea. Va detto, innanzitutto, che il processo di maturazione di uno scultore è lungo e complesso. Qui non ci si può improvvisare, c'è da compiere un percorso a tappe, bisogna conoscere il linguaggio, le forme e i materiali. Rispetto ad altri ambiti, che si tratti di pittura o di arte concettuale, la decantazione è più lunga, per questo la scultura si prende dei tempi complessi e articolati. La scultura è sempre coesistenza tra la continuità, la riflessione sul classico, e la rottura con i vecchi schemi, abbandono della tradizione, discesa dal piedistallo e tentativo di rintracciare sempre nuovi sbilanciamenti semantici.

Più di ogni altro genere artistico, la scultura per resistere si è dovuta modificare geneticamente, diventando un ibrido tra l'antica essenza, l'oggetto, l'installazione, l'intervento urbano fino alla Land Art e alla Earth Art.

Se nel 1946 Arturo Martini definiva - provocatoriamente - la scultura “lingua morta”, non aveva certo in mente quali altre rivoluzioni si sarebbero compiute nella seconda parte del XX secolo. Di fronte alle opere di Xhixha, di marmo, di bronzo, ma anche i più collaudati acciai, la vitalità sprizza da ogni piega. Sono stralci monumentali che incantano, giocano tra freddo e caldo, rivelano una visione del mondo e dell'arte pienamente contemporanea.



<http://www.gettyimages.co.uk/event/the-london-design-biennale-takes-place-at-somerset-house-667108387>

The London Design Biennale Takes Place At Somerset House

In This Album: [Celine Xhixha](#), [Maria Levene](#), [Hugo Malcomson](#)



The London Design Biennale Takes Place At Somerset House

In This Photo: [Hugo Malcomson](#)

17 -month-old Hugo Malcomson is reflected as he is photographed exploring an installation entitled 'Bliss' created by Helidon Xhixha who is representing Albania at the London Design Biennale at Somerset House on September 6, 2016 in London, England. The first London Design Biennale runs from 7-27 September at Somerset House and features over 30 countries and territories. Nations from six continents will present newly commissioned works that explore the theme Utopia by Design.

(Sept. 5, 2016 - Source: Carl Court/Getty Images Europe)



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London Design Biennale 2016 | Albania

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Albanian Institute New York (Administering Body)

Team: Helidon Xhixha (Artist); Mara Firetti (Relationship Manager)

Dino Korca (Curator)

The Albanian Institute New York is pleased to announce that it will represent Albania at the inaugural London Design Biennale at Somerset House this September. More than 35 countries will be participating in the Biennale, taking place from Sept. 7 to Sept. 27,

Taking over the entirety of Somerset House, including The Edmond J. Safra Fountain Court and River Terrace, the London Design Biennale will explore big questions and ideas about sustainability, migration, pollution, energy, cities, and social equality. You will see engaging and interactive installations, innovations, artworks and proposed design solutions — all in an immersive, inspiring and entertaining tour of the world.

Situated on the banks of the River Thames in the heart of London, the former royal palace is a world famous cultural center and is one of London's most visited attractions with more than 3.2 million visitors in 2015. The Biennale will run in partnership with Somerset House and is supported by the Mayor of London.

The Biennale will present an extraordinary opportunity for the most ambitious nations and provide a prestigious, global stage for the world's leading contemporary design and design-led innovation that address the 2016 theme in celebration Thomas More's Utopia.

"We chose the inaugural theme, Utopia by Design, to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the publication of Thomas More's classic, and to reflect on the rich history of the modernist design it inspired. Design teams from over thirty countries will exhibit ambitious installations that explore how architecture, design and engineering might contribute in some way to making the world a better place and our cities more liveable.

The utopian impulse allows us to escape the blinkers of the present and dream, telling stories about alternative futures that ask important questions about the world in which we live. The London Design Biennale will feature some of these provocations, which aim to provoke real change by suggesting inspiring or cautionary futures." said Christopher Turner, Director of the London Design Biennale.

Albanian design installation — a monumental sculpture by Helidon Xhixha — has been chosen by the Team behind the Biennale to occupy Somerset Houses's dramatic courtyard space, which will make it one of the most prominent pieces at this global event.


#LDB16 #Design #ArtDesign #Architecture #London

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<http://london.carpediem.cd/events/401299-london-design-biennale-2016-albania-at-somerset-house/>

BLOUINARTINFO | Sneak Peek at London Design Biennale 2016
BY LISA CONTAG | AUGUST 29, 2016



T: Albania: Helidon Xhixha
Artist Helidon Xhixha has created a concentric ensemble of columns and benches made of stainless steel, which will be arranged in the courtyard of Somerset House. The empty space at the sculpture's center is intended to point to both Renaissance city planning and French philosopher Louis Marin's theory that every political system has a utopian dream at its center. The sculpture will serve as a retreat and meeting point for visitors.

ALBANIAN INSTITUTE NEW YORK (ADMINISTERING BODY); DINO KORÇA (CURATOR); MARA FRETTI (RELATIONSHIP MANAGER); OTTOSTIMM, GRUPPORETI (SUPPORTING BODIES); © HELIDON XHIXHA

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First-Ever London Design Biennale Opens

✍ Ellen Himefarb

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Inspired by the famed art and architecture biennales in Venice, London debuts its own version, welcoming thinkers and designers from 37 countries.

For close to a decade, London and Milan have been locked in an unofficial rivalry for the title of “world design capital.” As Milan’s A-list Salone grew ever more chaotic, London’s coherent programme of events expanded to include even Italian loyalists.

The unstated battle will finally come to a head when Somerset House – the new hub of the London Design Festival – launches the first-ever London Design Biennale, borrowing characteristics from the successful art and architecture biennales in Venice.

The three-week biennale, subtitled Utopia By Design, gets a 10-day head start on the annual Design Festival. The idea behind it is to invite a wider discussion on the state of design and trial solutions for the future – for a large international audience of the sort not even Venice can claim.



Albania's installation in the Somerset House courtyard.

Back in the courtyard, Albania's **Helidon Xhixha** has installed a series of stainless-steel benches radiating out from a mirrored core. It is meant to be a place for physical, intellectual and spiritual reflection – and sounds rather like a metaphor for the biennale itself. Then again, it might simply be a great selfie backdrop. You decide.

London Design Biennale is on view at Somerset House at the Strand, London WC2R 1LA, and runs September 7 to 27. *London Design Festival* is city-wide and is on from September 17 to 25.

<http://www.azuremagazine.com/article/first-ever-london-design-biennale-opens/>



Utopia, steel and self-analysis - 'Bliss', by Helidon Xhixha

20.09.16

'Bliss', one of only two works selected for installation in the courtyard of Somerset House, will be on display over the course of London Design Biennale, 7 - 27th September. Plinth writer Emily Watkins spoke to the artist about his motivations and how creating a piece which centres on the state of Europe has evolved over 12 months in the making.

Emily Watkins We'd love to hear about the process of creating your newest work, 'Bliss', installed in the Somerset House Courtyard. I understand that it took more than 12 months to create, and that it centres around the issues currently facing Europe. What are those issues, in your eyes?

Helidon Xhixha I have been working on 'Bliss' for the past twelve months. These have been tumultuous times and working on a piece such as Bliss, which addresses the issues of migration currently facing the world, feels very timely. Many of my pieces have reflection at their heart, but with 'Bliss', it feels more pertinent than ever.

EW Did you always imagine exhibiting 'Bliss' in the UK? Did its location effect the process of conceiving the work, considering the current political climate?

HX I began creating Bliss with the London Design Biennale and it's theme of Utopia very much in mind, and as far as I know I was one of the first to apply for the Biennale as it seems like such an important time for us to be addressing the concept of utopia.



'Bliss', at Somerset House Courtyard. Helidon Xhixha, 2016.

EW Reflection is a theme which has appeared in much of your work, and again in 'Bliss'. What is its importance, for you?

HX I love to work with steel as it allows the concept of reflection to be conveyed so simply and effectively. With Bliss, and the Biennale theme, we are given a moment to reflect on what I suspect will continue to be one of the most poignant and challenging issues of our time, that of migration. On the one side we have the ongoing tragedy of displaced people coming to Europe seeking safety, a haven, a better place. On the other side we have the people of Europe reflecting on this tragic situation.

EW How did you begin using steel in your sculpture?

HX When I began working as a sculptor I originally started out using glass when I was a student. I then discovered steel and completely fell in love with it. I continued to favour it because of the effects of the light. When you are working with steel it keeps moving, it comes alive, it changes according to where it is placed, what time of day it is, where the sun is. It gives a reflection of your own surroundings and of yourself. Last year I worked in Pietrasanta where I produced work in marble. Working with a medium that absorbs light instead of reflecting it is also interesting to me.

EW Many of your pieces tackle an important issue - climate change, the state of Europe, etc. Do you believe art should impart a message?

HX I believe that art provides an extremely powerful platform for ideas and discussion. It is possibly one of the most important ways we can communicate and leave something with people. Art allows us the freedom of interpretation. I think great art always challenges, raises important issues and provokes thought and debate.

EW I understand that much of your inspiration comes from the Renaissance utopian trope of the Ideal City. Is 'Bliss' a proposition for a perfect city?

HX The Biennale theme of Utopia sparked inspiration for Bliss. Until the Renaissance there was no visual representation of Utopia, as it was a concept, a dream, an idyll. It was this theme that made me start to develop my own ideas for the perfect city. A place that people can be together, can interact, can reflect, that changes and evolves as time passes. The steel that I use helps enhance that evolution and fluidity.



Helidon Xhixha with his work 'Bliss', 2016.

EW What would an ideal city look like for you?

HX Sadly I'm not sure it could happen, but somewhere where everyone is safe and happy. It all emanates from an element of altruism. To me, the ideal city is about the happiness of the people in it, not only our own happiness but also the happiness of others.

EW 'Bliss' seems to be a public sculpture, with public interaction at its centre - both a micro city, and now part of the fabric of an existing one. It incorporates benches for people to sit on, and they become reflected in the body of the sculpture. Is this a piece about multiplicity? Togetherness? Or about self-analysis?

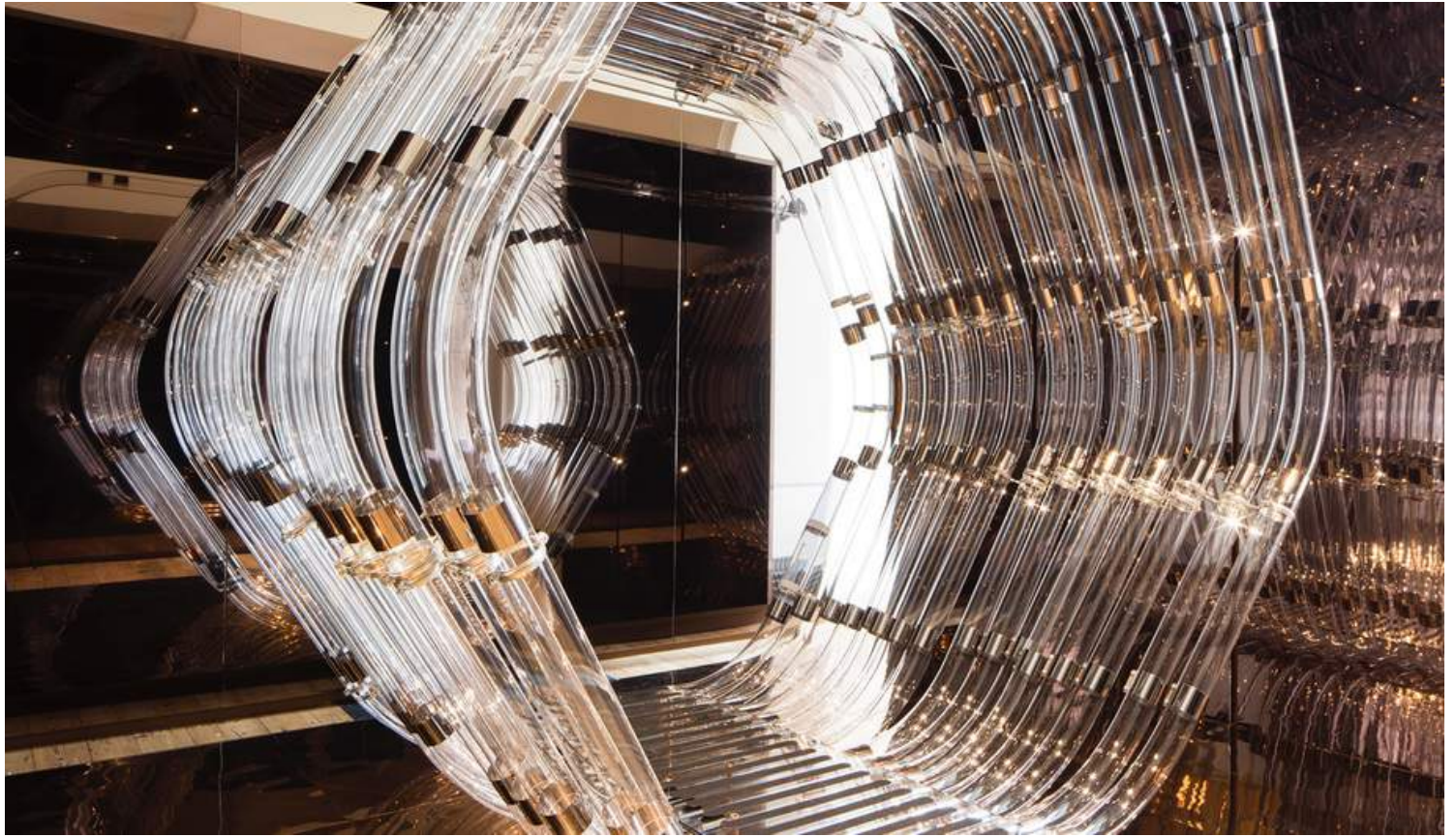
HX 'Bliss' is very much about all of these things. It is about how a perfect city should be. It should not about one person, there should be a consideration of the person sitting next to you. It is about reflection and self-analysis but also about bringing people together. One of the most satisfying things for me as an artist is seeing visitors interact with 'Bliss'. It can be something as simple as people sitting chatting, kids exploring the centre of the installation where you can find the map of Europe in amongst the steel pillars. And of course in this day and age to see visitors taking photos and selfies as their image reflects in the steel. People interacting with the art is very special to me.



'Bliss', at Somerset House Courtyard. Helidon Xhixha, 2016.



5 Provocative Exhibits at the London Design Biennale



Nigeria, Japan and Australia are among the countries with the most original and thought-provoking interpretations of Utopia, the theme of the inaugural London Design Biennale.

In formatting its [first design biennale](http://www.azuremagazine.com/article/first-ever-london-design-biennale-opens/) (on until September 27 – London’s team took its cues from the successful architecture event in Venice, including the pronunciation of “biennale” itself, which can sound silly when you’re announcing your whereabouts to friends and colleagues.

Yet the entrants, from 37 countries on six continents, took very seriously indeed the theme of “utopia,” inspired by Thomas More’s 500-year-old classic novel. And the experience of getting to all their presentations – scattered around the entirety of Somerset House, a sprawling manor at the city’s dead centre – was a sobering one.

Pushing the role of design to address and change alternate futures was the ultimate challenge, and interpretations were all over the map – a blessing for a country that’s taken steps, recently, to become more homogenous. Some even managed to look at once viable and beautiful, which was, let’s face it, an unwritten directive.

While some countries took a practical position (the United Arab Emirates proposed contemporary cooling and irrigation systems for its ancient waterways), others were theoretical, conceptual, even complacent (Lebanon recreated an entire Beirut bazaar with traditionally social barbers, communal noshing and shisha circles). Turkey entered a “wish machine” (pictured above) designed by the successful practice [Autoban](http://www.autoban.com.tr/) (with a giant, spiralling pneumatic tube that sucks up written requests and sends them spinning around the room).

Herewith, the highlights from the London Design Biennale:



4 Albania: “Bliss” by Helidon Xhixha (<http://www.helidonxhixha.com>)

What is a “utopia” if not a pleaser of crowds? Helidon Xhixha’s entry for Albania suggests that self-reflection and community are the two elements that make for a happy society amid unprecedented migration and economic uncertainty. And he’s packaged it in a delightful “community” of mirrored steel benches and columns – displayed, Renaissance-style, around a central void representing the utopia.

Together, the democratic arrangement is eminently selfie-friendly while also inviting visitors to look at themselves and their neighbours in a new way. It’s an attractive proposition. Naturally, Xhixha scored a prime spot in the grand courtyard of Somerset House, and it’s one of the first things you notice.



Photographer: Ed Reeves

<http://www.takepart.com/photos/utopia-design/>

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BIG ISSUES

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9 Artists Working Toward 'Utopia by Design'

Innovations on display at the London Design Biennale address some of the toughest problems facing the world.

SEP 17, 2016 | Sean Eckhardt

If we could turn the world into utopia, what should we change? That's the question innovators from 37 countries are answering at the inaugural London Design Biennale, whose theme is "Utopia by Design."

The exhibition, which runs at Somerset House until Sept. 27, features installations that present forward-thinking, artistically engaging solutions to some of the toughest social and environmental challenges facing the world. Following are nine designs aiming to make the future more efficient, more sustainable, and more just.



Helidon Xhixha, 'Bliss'

Albanian designer Helidon Xhixha arranged stainless steel columns and benches to create a space that encourages a sense of empathy for refugees forced to leave their homes because of war and sectarian violence. The columns are etched with an outline of the European continent.

Photo: Ed Reeve

It's a London thing

Review | Words [Justine Harvey](#) and [Colin Martin](#)



London Design Biennale: Referencing utopian city planning, Albania's installation, above, by Helidon Xhixha, is an arrangement of columns and benches which aim to facilitate democratic discussion.

Since the 1960s, London has consistently maintained a reputation for producing exciting, cutting-edge design – and designers. Two recent events have further cemented the British capital as a breeding ground for fresh talent and ideas.

Now in its 14th year, the [London Design Festival](#) was held from 16–24 September, hosting hundreds of events to “celebrate and promote London as the design capital of the world and as the gateway to the international creative community”.

The festival programme includes over 400 events and exhibitions staged by hundreds of partner organisations across the design spectrum and from around the world, such as the London Design Fair and Focus/16, Decorex and 100% Design.

Also, the inaugural [London Design Biennale](#) was held at Somerset House on The Strand over a three-week period, modelled on Venice's architecture and art biennales. In the slideshow above, we highlight some of the key projects, themes, ideas and trends which will no doubt filter through into everyday design.

However, in 2016 the spotlight was on [Design Junction](#), following its move to five new sites within the regenerated King's Cross Creative Quarter; this proved a resounding success, attracting around 27,000 visitors.

See the slideshow above for images from London Design Festival and London Design Biennale, and for some of our favourite furniture and lighting from the Design Junction event.

LONDON DESIGN FESTIVAL

To make sense of the burgeoning number of city-wide events, the London Design Festival designated seven design areas to the myriad events: Brixton Design Trial; Brompton, Islington and Queen's Park Design Districts; Chelsea and Clerkenwell Design Quarters; and Shoreditch Design Triangle.

The festival also commissioned architects



London Design Festival: Satellite Architects designed a striking 70m wide by 7m high GRID

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CULTURE · DESIGN

Bliss: check out Albanian artist Helidon Xhixha's winning entry at the London Design Biennale



Discover *Bliss*, Albania's installation at the inaugural London Design Biennale earlier this month by artist Helidon Xhixha, which took home the event's Public Medal award.

Working within the Biennale's theme of "Utopia by Design", Xhixha explores the possibility of true happiness born of equilibrium, with an emphasis on cohesion and communality, particularly in the context of a migration crisis.

Bliss takes as its starting point the layout of a Renaissance city, constructed around a central core. Making use of reflective surfaces – characteristic of Xhixha's work – the installation serves both as a space for interaction between people and for personal reflection, placing emphasis on the need for a cohesive society.

TEXT:
Elise Morton

CULTURE · DESIGN





THE GOOD LIFE / ART & COLLECTING / BLOGS

Review: London Design Biennale

9TH SEPTEMBER 2016 by ALEX MATCHETT

Alex Matchett wanders through worldly installations at the design gala, pondering over Utopia's ever-moving horizon.

<http://www.spearswms.com/review-london-design-biennale/>

London is not Utopia and despite the city's inaugural Design Biennale title you are not going to find anything pertaining to such inside the granite casing of Somerset House. However the 37 interpretations of 'Utopia by Design' create a wave of strivings and graspings that it is impossible not to get swept into.

LUtopia remains firmly nowhere, the ever-moving horizon, the illusory space in the designer's mind. The spaces here are in no way a set but they do pay homage to that. Some take the political entity of Utopia out of the frame, others use it as a keystone, but all empower the design agenda as a more suitable vehicle than pure policy. Brexit is more of a ripple now – although many spaces here have become receptacles of the initial splash.

There are many highlights, including Lebanon's street recreation *Mezzing in Lebanon*, India Design Forum's ethereal cosmopolitan *Chakraview* (pictured top) and Poland's irreverently post-modern *Cadavre Exquis: an Anatomy of Utopia*. However there are poor showings too: Sweden's 'Welcome to Weden' attempts to show it is not Ikea by putting holes in furniture and designing an unfortunate yellow 'we-we' logo; Australia's *Plastic Effects* is simply a table made of flotsam, a point well made but as unimaginative as its title; and Germany's *Utopia Means Elsewhere* appears arrogantly banal.

At the press launch director Christopher Turner talks of the utopian design as now being detached from the social blueprints of the 20th century however there are showings of the importance of that heritage, notably in the display from Russia he rightly credits as 'fantastic'. This space documents the 'lost archives' of the All-Soviet Institute of Technical Aesthetics (VNIITE). A project that ran from the 1960s until the fall of the Soviet Union, it aimed at realising utopian ideals in the everyday via a huge bureau of designers creating a holistic and functional vision. This is rendered on the walls of the display in blueprints and photos of prototypes of everything: from fire-engines to snow mobiles to hovercraft to phone boxes and bus stops. So much remained unrealised as the designs often exceeded production capability, but as the director Alexandra Sankova says, although this existed in a contrasting political and social paradigm the sense of innovation and inspiration is just as vivid.

'All the people represented here design history and heritage and contemporary things but some things you have to rediscover,' says Sankova. 'The projects were ahead of the time, production was not ready to produce these things and also decision makers were not ready to appreciate these things.'

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To see these designs now, in their first ever public display, and as they fade from living memory, is a privilege and welcome reminder that Russian design did not finish with the avant-garde and that the Soviet project existed far beyond totalitarianism and tractor factories. Sankova references the designers' own heritage and the avant-garde movement a generation previously: 'When they started they saw they needed something to be based on, and they were discovering their own history. That is what we're doing now because without knowing your own history you cannot move ahead, and our history was interrupted so many times that we're forgetting these sophisticated ideas. [There has been a post-Soviet sense of] "We don't need it, we don't need this old history, let's throw it away and start again, we're moving on." We want to put together all parts of this puzzle and tell the history.'

The social design concept of that history exists in Mexico's impressively futuristic 'Border City' project, designed by FR-EE and imagining a new metropolis on the Mexican USA border. Such international cooperation is also evident in Indonesia's showing, a revisiting of the Africa-Asia Conference that ran from 1955 to 1965 and that is re-imagined here as the 'Freedomé'; a public satellite providing a global library. There are smaller, arguably more post-modern, addresses to Utopia here too. Turkey's *Wish Machine*, designed by Autoban, invites you to watch your wishes fly around you in a tunnel made of vacuum tubes before disappearing into 'infinity', there's a great sense of fun and childhood wonder akin to posting your letters up the chimney at Christmas time. Although my inner dystopian cynic can't help thinking of how similar packages are posted through the Memory Hole inside Orwell's Ministry of Truth and so into oblivion.

The packaging of memory and wishes is movingly seen in Benjamin Loyauté's *le bruit des bonbons — The Astounding Eyes of Syria* installation for France. This features a short film interviewing Syrian émigrés talking about the objects they were able to bring with them and the food and sweets that remind them of home: small tokens of memory, the past and a lost country. Tiny objects that have bridged a chasm.

Adjacent are vending machines selling packets of small pink sweets modelled on an ancient Assyrian idol and named 'Louloupti'. Each costs £5, the proceeds going to help Syrian refugee families. The project itself is a thought-provoking design journey, laden with emotional heritage as well as a 'utopian vision' to assist through small sugared snacks. These small cellophane-wrapped gestures are brilliantly designed story containers.

Journeys of abstraction are evident too in Austria's display of stationary suspended lights (designed by Katharina Mischer and Thomas Traxler) which slowly dim and whorl when moved by those approaching, representing how Utopia is marred, and so invalidated, when touched; the arrogance of attainment rightly critiqued.

Outside in the courtyard sits the UK's entry *Forecast*: Three massive wind masts. The inspiration is our national pastime – the weather. The designers, Edward Barber and Jay Osgerby, say it references utopian sustainable energy and a nautical, journeyed, past. But one can't help thinking there's a very British evasiveness here. It's dark blue, perhaps a nod our maritime heritage but perhaps to somehow make it less present, to tone it down as if we're embarrassed to be at our own party. Yes it's huge and dominant, but, like the rain, we didn't really ask for it, we didn't actually want it, we just have this huge apparatus to help us talk about the weather, not actually deal with it. The real national pastime might be passive muddling shown by its indifferent rotating pieces, echoing the metronome of shipping forecasts, teaspoons stirring and batsmen changing ends. Message and media over any actual circumstantial policy. It's a suitable navy blue elephant whose wind meter picks up a heady Brexit breeze and all the other hot air that brings a humid end to summer. They should put it outside parliament once the Biennale finishes.

Just behind this astutely forlorn gauge is Helidon Xhixha's, sculpture *Bliss* (Albania). Known for his mirrored iceberg at the Venice Biennale last year, this piece has the same reflective make up but this time takes the shape of concentric brackets around a huddle of monoliths. 'The piece is saying "don't be worried of what is different. Embrace it"' says Xhixha through his translator and collaborator, Diego.

However, it has nothing to do with politics, he says: 'It's not judging the UK for initiating Brexit, but I do want to be an ambassador for making people think. Whatever you are going to do has consequences, not only now but in the future. It's not about Brexit or political boundaries – there are common problems everyone has to solve, Europe is England, England is Europe. I need to talk to people in a very simplified way, no matter what language you speak, no matter what religion you follow or where you're from, the message should be clear to everyone. When you sit here you understand you're part of the agora of the world, when see your reflection you understand that one day you could be the immigrant coming from Syria.' Xhixha also mentions his desire to have the piece placed outside, to reflect the past and present surmised in Somerset House, itself many sea changes of function.

Utopia now resembles a broken toy in the hands of politicians so we can be thankful that the theme of the London Biennale shows other forges in which to make our ambitions, be they abstract reflections or the industry of the practical. Technology is the engine of globalisation and this catalogue is nothing if not a reminder of that and the artistic mandate it inspires. With 37 different interpretations conclusion is elusive beyond blowing the dust of cliché from the concept and making it as perfectly unrealisable as ever. This inaugural London Design Biennale shows Utopia, and its wonderful uselessness, is a beginning and not an end.

The [London Design Biennale \(http://www.londondesignbiennale.com/\)](http://www.londondesignbiennale.com/) is on at Somerset House until 27 September

<https://itunes.apple.com/gb/app/spears/id899981712?mt=8>

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<http://www.shekulli.com.al/p.php?id=492264&zemrat-e-emigranteve-ne-europe-te-bliss-i-helidon-xhixhes>



Zemrat e emigrantëve në Europë te “Bliss” i Helidon Xhixhës

Valeria Dedaj | 13 Shtator 2016, 11:07 | Përditësuar 13:01



TEMAT KRYESORE

- **Artisti prezanton Shqipërinë në Bienalen e Dizajnit në Londër. Vepra e tij "Bliss" tenton të reflektojë rreth emigracionit të kësaj periudhe në Europë. Ai tregon se, shumë nga punimet e tij, mbartin reflektimin e zemrave të emigrantëve, por në këtë vepër, kjo ndihet më shumë se kurrë**

Nga Valeria Dedaj

Artisti i mirënjohur Helidon Xhixha ka instaluar skulpturën e tij "Bliss" në oborrin qendror të Somerset House, në Londër me rastin e inaugurimit të Bienales së Dizajnit në Londër. Ai përfaqëson vendin e tij, Shqipërinë, dhe vepra e Xhixhës është një nga tre punimet e zgjedhura për t'u instaluar oborrin e Somerset House deri në datën shtator. Helidon Xhixha është shprehur rreth veprës së tij se, "Bliss" na krijon neve një mundësi për të reflektuar rreth çështjeve aktualme të cilat po përballet sot Europa. "Të punuarit me këtë instalacion ka bërë të mundur që kjo çështje të vihej edhe më shumë në pah. Shumë nga punimet e mia, mbartin reflektimin e zemrave të tyre, me këtë vepër, ajo ndihet më shumë se kurrë". Burim i fortë frymëzimi për dizajnin e Xhixhës janë interpretimet e artistëve të

Rilindjes së vonë rreth qytetit ideal, veçanërisht në lidhje me ikonografinë e tyre. Në mënyrë të përsëritur, këta artistë u përpoqën të krijojnë perceptimin e tyre vizual të utopisë, ndërsa e veçanta këtyre punimeve ishte përdorimi i rrethëve koncentrike. Xhixha u është rikthyer këtyre metodave, duke aplikuar përdorimin e rrethëve koncentrike në skulpturën e tij. Forma e skulpturës, me stolat që lëkundin drejt qendrës, shfaq qartazi frymëzimin e tij nga qytetet ideale të Rilindjes. Stolat ofrojnë një vend për ndërveprim dhe angazhim me njëri-tjetrin, duke reflektuar kështu nevojën e krijimit të komunitetit dhe bashkimit brenda shoqërisë. Duke u ulur në stola dhe duke vështruar drejt pasqyrave, ne vendosemi në një pozicion ndërveprimi me njerëzit rreth nesh me apo pa reflektim tonë. Struktura e Xhixhës pasqyron jo vetëm veten tonë, por edhe të tjerët që zgjedhin të ulen në stola, duke promovuar kështu një angazhim me njëri-tjetrin.

"Bliss" në gjuhën italiane do të thotë (beatitudine), kuptimi i vërtetë i lumturisë që lind nga një ekuilibër i brendshëm. "Bliss" përfaqëson qoftë ata persona që kërkojnë, si refugjat Eldoradon e re por edhe në mbështetje të atyre personave që jetojnë në Europë dhe e kuptojnë nevojën për të ndarë një të ardhme më të mirë me atë që, pavarësisht fatkeqësisë, kërkon t'ia dalë mbanë për fëmijët e tij".

Qëllimi i Xhixhës në realitet është që të kuptohet se emigracioni është një koncept që përfaqon qoftë mobilizimin fizik të personave, por edhe atë të ndërgjegjes dhe eksperiencës. Ai mendon se, të gjithë janë qoftë mësues ashtu edhe nxënës, sepse siç i thonë, Xhixha shton se: Të mësuarit nuk ka fund.

Xhixha është nga ata artistë, i cili kërkon që artit t'i japë vlera sociale dhe jo të polemizojë me të. Këtë e demonstroi edhe puna e tij, që është përqendruar mbi fuqinë estetike, duke u përqendruar në aspektin social të tyre. "Për mua një artist e krijon gjithmonë punën, duke u nisur nga jeta e tij. Kur eci apo udhëtoj përpiqem të dëgjoj eksperiencën time dhe ndjesitë e atyre që më rrethojnë. Arti për mua është si një idiomë, nga forma e deri në shpirtin tim. Shpirtrat tanë, në fund, marrin informacion nga bota që ne krijojmë", është shprehur Xhixha për gazetën "Shekulli". Prandaj dëshira e tij, është që t'i qëndrojë larg psikologjisë dhe politikës, në mënyrë që arti që prezanton te publiku të jetë i pastër, të ruajë esencën në këtë këndvështrim. "Në këtë kuptim punoj mbi formën, mbi hapësirën për të arritur pastërtinë". Helidon Xhixha është mjaft aktiv në skenën ndërkombëtare të artit. Para disa muajsh prezantoi në qytetin e Pietrasantas në Itali veprat e tij, në cepat karakteristike të qytetit. Pietrasanta është qyteti ku Mikelanxhelo bëri rrugën e tij për të kërkuar mermerin, por vazhdon ende të jetë shtëpia e artistëve të nivelit, si Fernando Botero dhe Igor Mitoraj, prandaj kjo i dha Xhixhës kurajën të eksperimentojë me mermerin.

Rreth Bienales së Dizajnit në Londër

Bienalja e Dizajnit në Londër është prodhuar nga skuadra e Festivalit të Dizajnit të Londrës. Somerset House në Londër do të presë më shumë se 30 vende për 20 ditët e dizajnit. Prezantimet e punimeve të Dizajnit në Biennale do të bëhen nga data 7 deri në 27 shtator dhe do të ketë instalacione dhe ekspozita dizajni nga e gjithë bota. Tema është Utopia nëpërmjet Dizajnit: për të festuar 500-vjetorin e publikimit të klasikut të Thomas More "Utopia" (1516), nëpërmjet interpretimeve të secilit vend pjesëmarrës.

Biografi

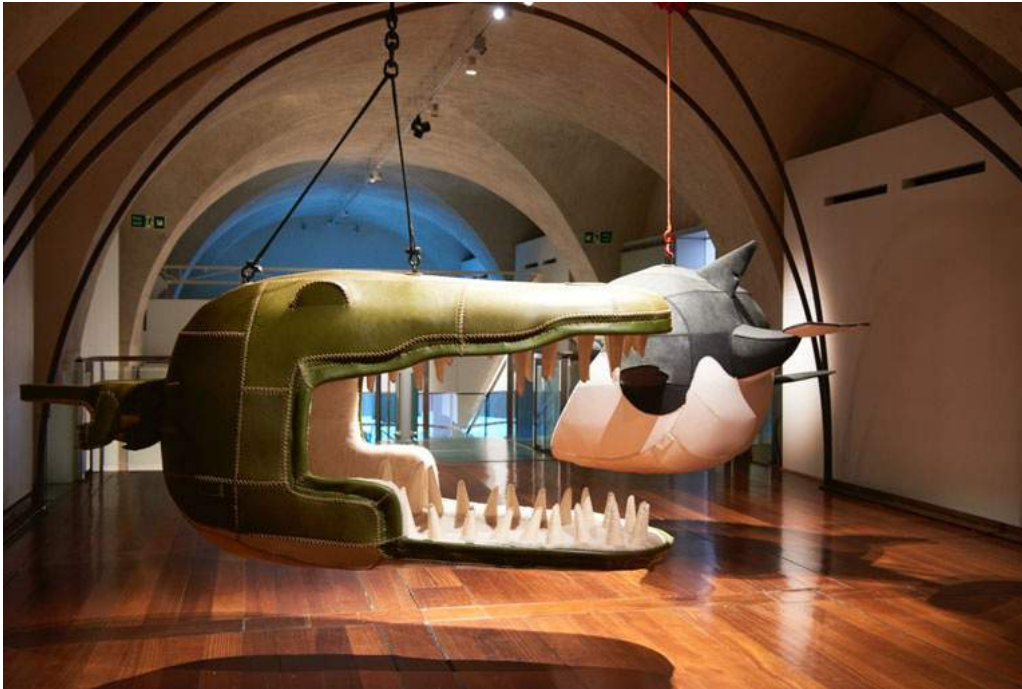
Helidon Xhixha (1970) ka lindur në qytetin e Durrësit. Ai rrjedh nga një familje artistësh. Fëmijërinë e kaloi me të atin Sali Xhixha në studion e tij, nga i cili trashëgon një pasion të fortë për artet e bukura, mbi të gjitha për skulpturën. Ndërsa filloi që të frekuentojë Akademinë e Arteve të Bukura në Tiranë, vendosi që të transferohet në Itali. Në vitin 1998, falë një burse studimi gjeti mundësi që të frekuentojë Universitetin Kingston të Londrës. Në vitin 1999 u diplomua në Akademinë e Arteve të Bukura në Milano, Brera. Në ambientin artistik njihet për stilin e tij, për përvojat e realizimit të menjëhershëm të skulpturës së çelikut inoks, me një teknik të re. Veprat e tij vazhdojnë të kenë një rol të rëndësishëm në arenën ndërkombëtare. Të panumërta janë ekspozitat e tij në Itali dhe në shtete të tjera si: në Amerikë, Dubai, Gjermani, Francë, Austri, Rusi, Angli, Zvicër etj. Ka realizuar vepra publike dhe ka ndërtuar monumente të shumtë. Arti i Helidon Xhixhës është një pikë vazhdimësie dhe kthimi në skenën ndërkombëtare të artit. Teknika e përdorur, zgjedhja e materialeve dhe gjuha plastike, që kanë marrë veprat e tij, shprehin gjithnjë e më shumë karakteristika të originalitetit, që e bëjnë këtë skulptor të ri vazhdues të traditës së madhe në gjysmën së dytë të viteve 900, që nga Richard Serra deri tek Anish Kapoor, si një studiues i palodhur dhe novator.

| News (/news)

10 Outstanding Pavilions at the London Design Biennale

September 20, 2016
By Mairi Beautyman

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"Otium and Acedia" at the South Africa pavilion, designed by Southern Guild (<http://www.southernguild.co.za/>) in collaboration with Porky Hefer. Photography by Bradley Lloyd Barnes, courtesy of London Design Biennale.

“Chakravier” presented by India Design Forum at the India pavilion. Designed by Avinash Kumar, Hanif Kureshi, and Rutva Trivedi, in collaboration with scenographer Sumant Jayakrishnan. Photography by Ed Reeve, courtesy of London Design Biennale.



“Bliss,” the sculpture defining the Albania pavilion. Designed by Helidon Xhixha and curated by Dino Korca. Photography by Ed Reeve, courtesy of London Design Biennale.



“Bliss,” the sculpture defining the Albania pavilion. Designed by Helidon Xhixha and curated by Dino Korca. Photography by Ed Reeve, courtesy of London Design Biennale.

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The Albanian artist Helidon Xhixha wins the London Design Biennale

📅 8 months ago ➔ Albanians, Helidon Xhixha



Albanian artist Helidon Xhixha won recently the public price of Biennial of Design in London, for his installation.

"I dedicate my victory to Albania and Albanians. In particular to those like me are presented with immigration ". So says for Top Channel shortly after winning the Biennale of Design London, the artist Helidon Xhixha, the favorite of the public in this edition where he stood with his work "Bliss", located in Somerset House Courtyard in the center of the British capital.



<http://www.ocnal.com/2016/09/the-albanian-artist-helidon-xhixha-wins.html>

His monumental sculptures of steel carries exactly the idea of a perfect city, where people can achieve a happy coexistence. His vision has materialized this work that manages to achieve interaction between visitors, free to sit down and see themselves or those nearby, reflected in steel.

At the heart of the installation, between columns, not coincidentally is also a map of Europe, Eldorado for thousands of migrants. The monumental works of Helidon Xhixha, born in Durrës and formed at the Academy of Brera in Milan, are already presented in collections, museums and squares of the most important countries of the world, from Miami to Switzerland, from Russia to the United States.



At last year's Biennale in Venice the magnificent installation - a steel iceberg sailed on Canal Grande not only wowed the criticism, but also conveyed a strong message on environmental protection.

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MONDAY, OCTOBER 03, 2016

London: Somerset House – London Design Biennale 2016 – Utopia by Design.



"De optimo rei publicae deque nova insula Utopia"
"Of a republic's best state and of the new island Utopia"
Thomas More 1516

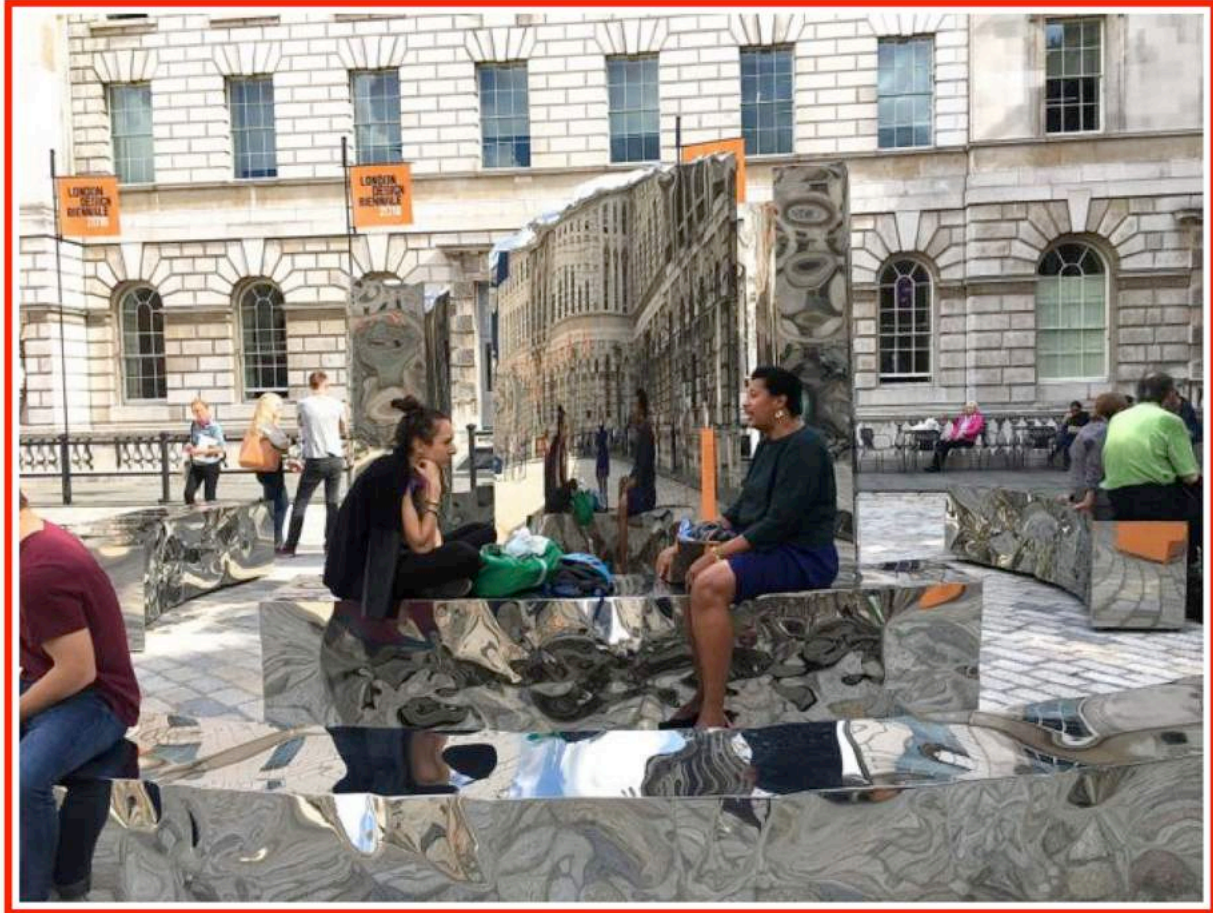
London: Somerset House – London Design Biennale 2016 – Utopia by Design.

The theme of the first edition of the **London Design Biennale** was **Utopia by Design** which celebrated the **500th** anniversary of the publication of **Sir Thomas More's** classic, **Utopia** (1516). The first ever **London Design Biennale**, opened to the public for a three-week take-over of **Somerset House**. Installations, artworks, prototypes and designs from **37 countries** and territories came together in an entertaining and inspiring exploration of the role of design in our collective futures.

Above – Public Medal Award – Albania. In **The Edmond J. Safra Fountain Court**, the **Albanian** installation, entitled **Bliss** reflected the grandeur of the Neoclassical building of **Somerset House**.

<http://www.londondesignbiennale.com/>

<http://contessanally.blogspot.ae/2016/10/london-somerset-house-london-design.html>



**The Public Medal Award
London Design Biennale 2016 – Utopia by Design
Albania – Bliss**

<http://contessanally.blogspot.ae/2016/10/london-somerset-house-london-design.html>

Referencing utopian city planning, **Helidon Xhixha's Bliss** is a concentric arrangement of stainless steel columns and benches that are designed to encourage both self-reflection and solidarity. The mirrored surfaces of the taller columns create reflections, creating myriad opportunities for interaction. The circular layout of the benches aims to facilitate democratic discussion and exchange, demonstrating the need for community and unification in any ideal city. With reference to the current migration crisis, the core of the installation bears the engraved outline of **Europe's** borders, considered by many refugees as a modern-day **utopia**.



London Design Biennale 2016 – Utopia by Design
Dr. Christopher Turner - director

[DIVISARE \(/\)](#)

[HELIDON XHIXHA \(/AUTHORS/2144794198-HELIDON-XHIXHA\)](#) BLISS

A site-specific sculpture installation designed by Helidon Xhixha is a concentric arrangement of stainless steel columns and benches that are designed to encourage both self-reflection and solidarity, referencing utopian city planning.

Representing his home country of Albania, Helidon Xhixha's installation at Somerset House, wins the 2016 London Design Biennale Public Medal.

PHOTOS BY [ED REEVE \(/AUTHORS/2144742782-ED-REEVE\)](#)



[\(/projects/326477/images/5489692/zoom\)](#)

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Europe is in the midst of its largest migration crisis since World War 2, people fleeing War torn countries, suffering from poverty and famine, flood daily into what is so called 'Festung Europa'. Europe's border policies are such that allow for this influx of human population, the continent offers a humanitarian place for refuge and safety, whilst at the same time mounting pressure on the pre-existent inhabitants. Utopian thought comes as a direct response to the social dilemmas of the time, and as a reaction to a clear lack of alternative proposals. In its current situation, Europe is in need of utopian political theory as means for potential forms of solution to the imminent problems it faces. Xhixha's design installation 'Bliss' operates in response to these current affairs, looking at our civilizations constant need for utopian thought, because it guarantees the progression of society allowing for greater emancipation. Through Xhixha's

structure for the 2016 London Design Biennale, the artist has worked to address this current issue by including an outline of the border of Europe at the center of the piece. The very symbolic nature of this border as a modern day 'Shangri-la', ties in well with the necessity for utopian thought within our current time of change.

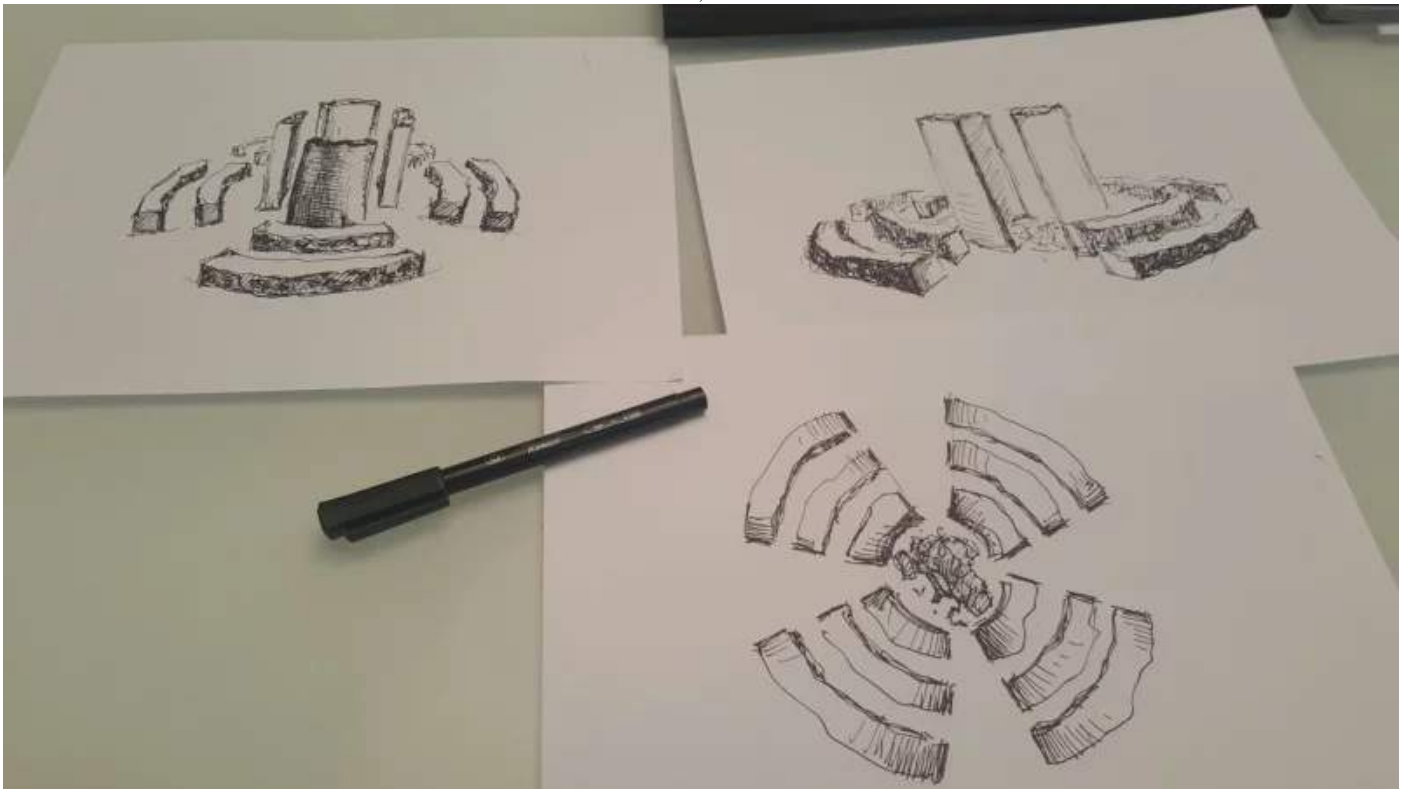


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As well as reflecting on this contemporary affair, in which Europe is redefining itself, the Albanian artist has looked back to far older ideas of utopian theory as a source for inspiration. In what is perhaps Plato's most influential work *The Republic*, the Greek philosopher worked hard to immaculately develop his 'Ideal City', which manifested itself in a fictional place called 'Kallipolis'. Arguably the most meaningful reading of *The Republic* is the analogy Plato tries to draw between the State and the Soul, the city and the individual. He believed that the fundamental morality for the perfect society was one based on the notion of justice; and thus to achieve social justice (within the state) each individual must have internal justice (within the soul). For Plato, the shape of the soul mirrored that of the state; one could not be complete without the other. Again Xhixha has taken inspiration from this notion of duality and pluralism. Four tall mirrors stand at the center of the design allowing the individual to gaze upon their own image, giving time for personal contemplation and allowing for people to address their mirror image and internal perceptions. As well as this function, the sculpture operates as a place where people can sit and interact with one another, engaging on a social level. This addresses the need for community within the ideal city. Clear parallels can be drawn here with Plato's Ideal City, a place of harmony between the external and the internal. Plato's ideal city, as with every utopia, has its totalizing aspects. Xhixha's structure as the utopian idea is imperfect in itself; the same could be said about modern Europe with its social stratification.

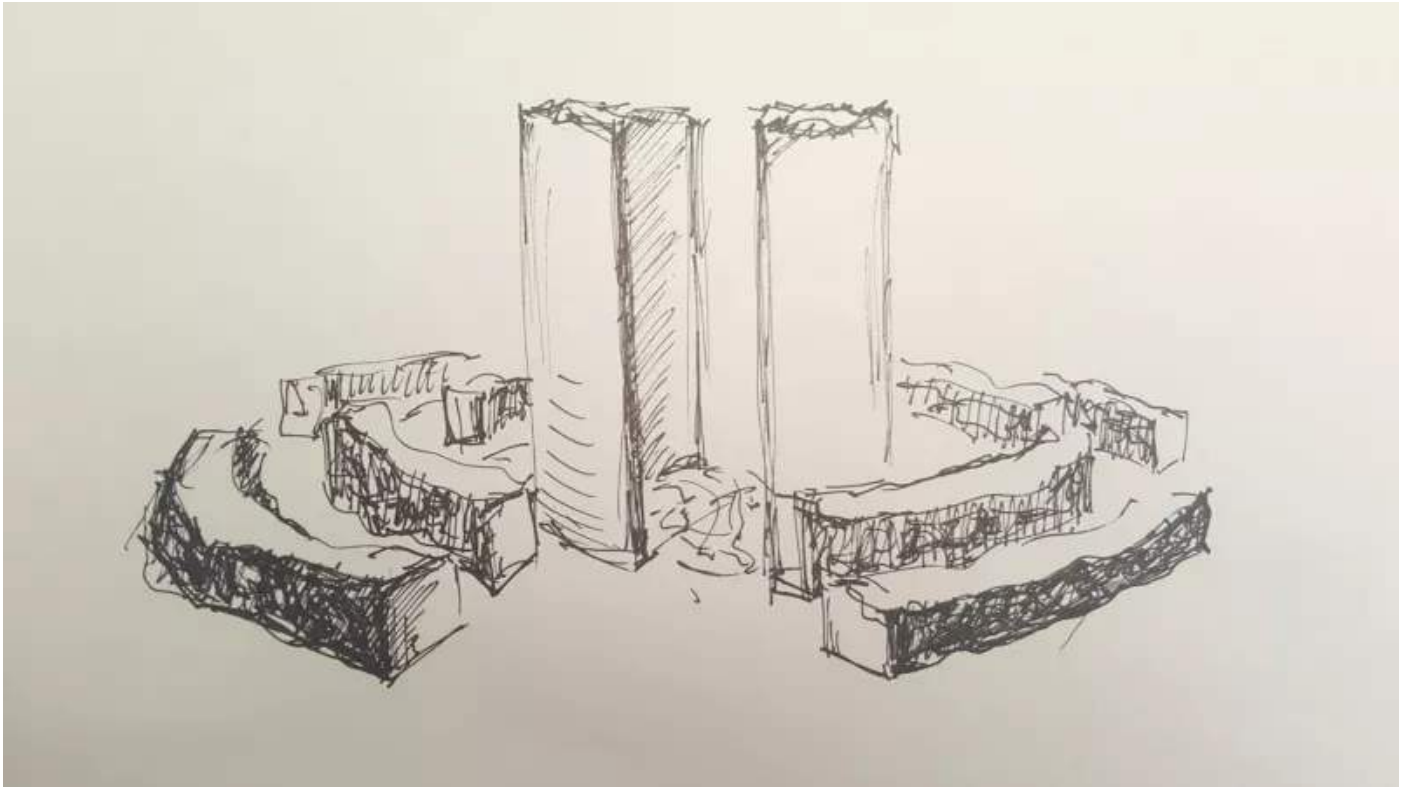


[\(/projects/326477/images/5493465/zoom\)](https://projects/326477/images/5493465/zoom)

© HELIDON XHIXHA

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Another, highly important source of inspiration for Xhixha's design is that of the late Renaissance artists interpretations of the Ideal City, especially with regard to their iconography. Repeatedly, artists attempted to create their own visual representation of utopia, with the recurring theme throughout these works being the use of concentric circles. Tomasso Campanella's 'City of the Sun', for example, uses circular rings make up the walls of the city as though they are layers, the same is true of Bartolomeo Del Bene's 'City of Truth'. The circle is a universal symbol with extensive meaning. It represents the notions of totality, wholeness, original perfection, the Self, the infinite, eternity, timelessness, all cyclic movement, God and more. The rich symbolic meanings that surround the circle makes it seem a fitting shape for any renaissance artist to adopt into their imagined, ideal society.



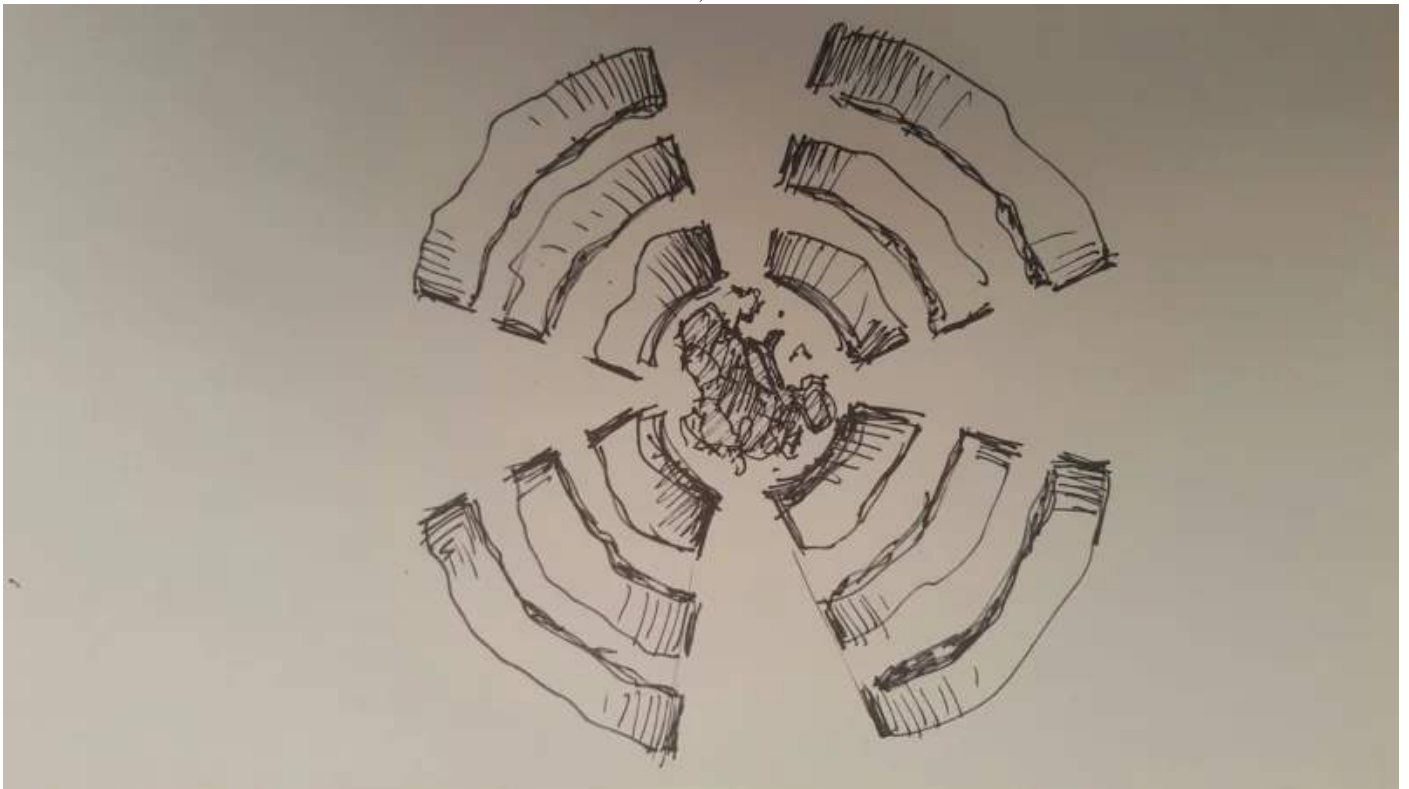
[\(/projects/326477/images/5493466/zoom\)](http://projects/326477/images/5493466/zoom)

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Xhixha has returned to these ideas and applied the use of concentric circles into his own sculpture. The shape of the sculpture, with its benches oscillating outwards from the center, draw clear inspiration from the Renaissance ideal cities. The benches offer a place for interaction and engagement with one another, reflecting the need for a sense of community and unification within society. Sitting on the benches and looking into the central mirrors, we are forced into a position of interaction with the people around us and with our own reflection. Xhixha's structure reflects not only ourselves, but the others who chose to sit on the benches.

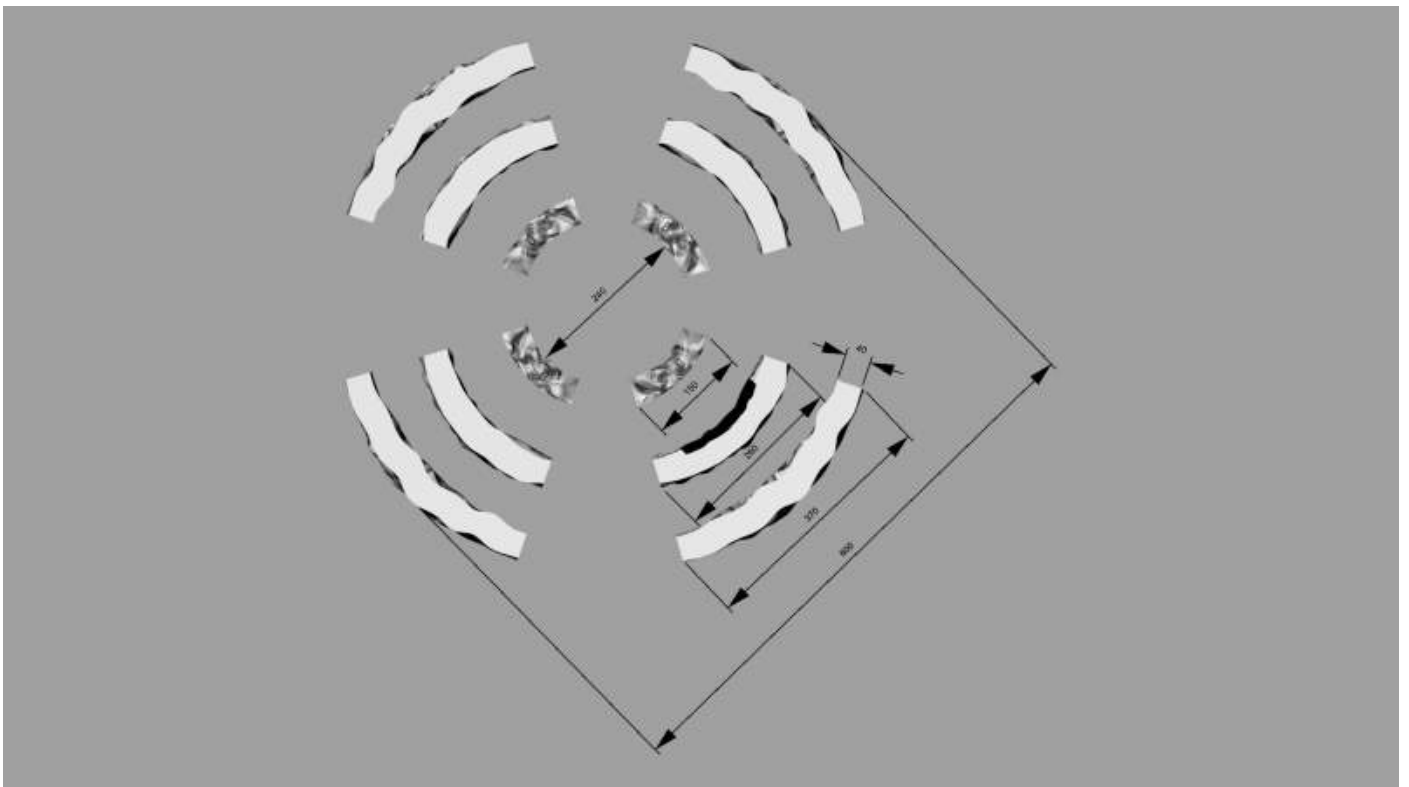
Xhixha's "Bliss" is a sculptor's attempt to answer the problems which Europe currently faces, it is a commentary on the individual as well as diversity within community, and references a rich history of utopian ideals.



[\(/projects/326477/images/5493463/zoom\)](/projects/326477/images/5493463/zoom)

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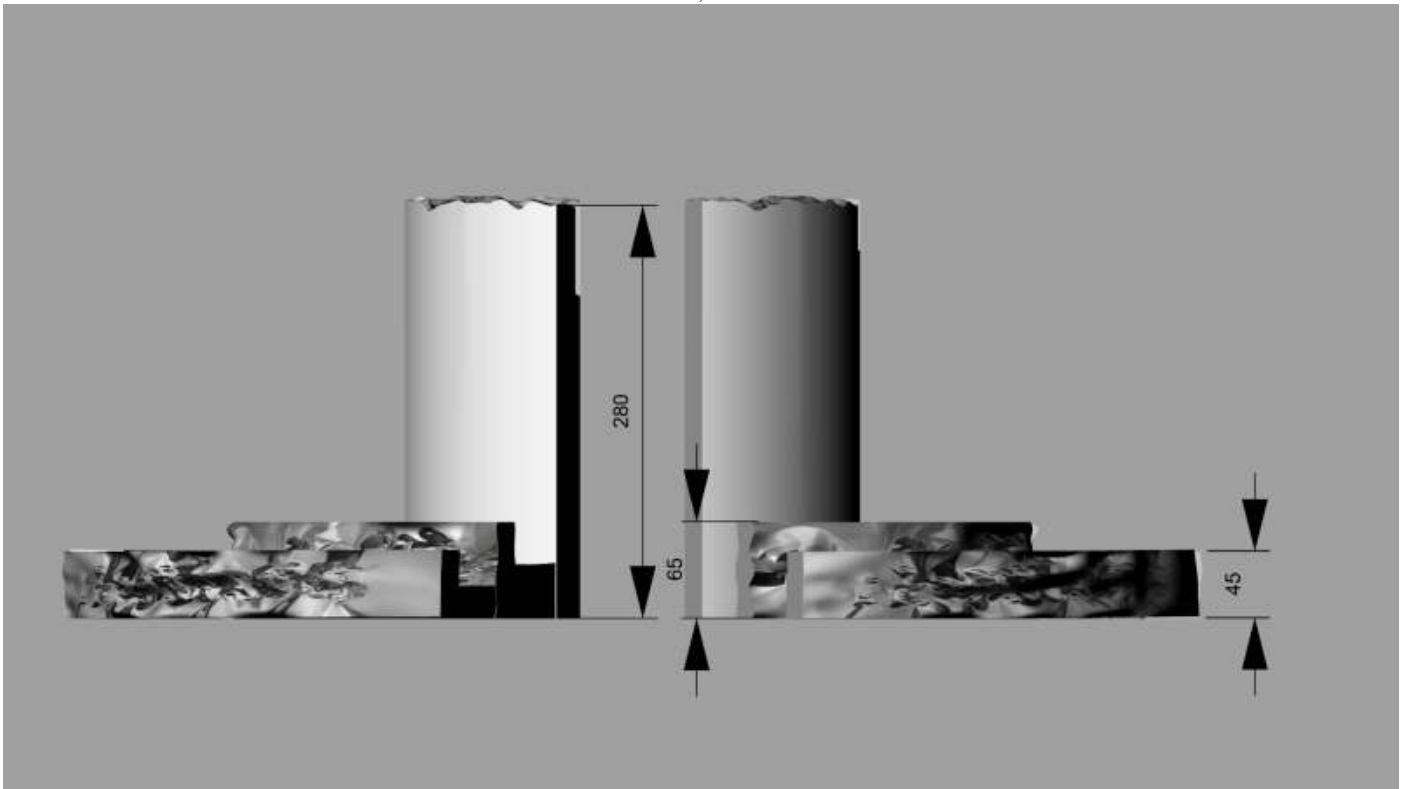
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PUBLISHED ON SEPTEMBER 23, 2016

LOCATION

UNITED KINGDOM - LONDON

DESIGNER

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PROJECT YEAR

2016

PHOTOS BY

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ATLAS OF ARCHITECTURE

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設計名人的風尚品味 蕭青陽、凌宗湧
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巡展看門道 2016大型設計裝置
Installation: Beyond the Site

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體現酒店美學精華
New Vision of Art Hotel

走在牆裡的文字版圖上
Walk on the Word Street

| 家具家飾 OBJECT |

歐風宮廷的衛浴單品
The Newton Bathtub

繡麗光林的燈飾
Light in the Satellites



逛展看門道 2016 大型設計裝置

INSTALLATION : BEYOND THE SITE

TEXT Dana Chen / AhMy Chan / Chelsea Wu PHOTO Al Rims

全球建築與設計週在展示發掘或未
來的趨勢之餘，帶來多樣的裝置與
以進取並設計和藝術的建築，轉變
者與會主地或設計者的理解。不
同於其商業於城區上，廣場或公園
裡的藝術裝置，建築與設計展的大
型裝置是在特定時間限地運作。「以
此一家」的創作特性，更讓這些大
型裝置在追求實用的設計範疇中，產
生了多元想像與內涵，彷彿是設計
範疇的物外之境，引人遐想。

移動這些裝置現場的裝置，不論
是由建築師、設計師還是藝術家
設計，皆透過一種重要的訊息——
空間的對話，創作者以傳統或新
材料形態，展現對空間的定義。
介入建築、廣場、社區，甚至來
到都會的新大衛小徑。「設計為
解決需求而生」的觀念轉化成
雕塑般的形式或裝置建築，更
融入聲音、氣味等元素，與
建築、設計、空間不再只有
之分，更出現跨域的驚人觸感。

以平行視角透視黎巴嫩
法籍建築師 Annabel Karim Kassir

2016 年六大設計裝置現場
空間定義
材料應用
社會議題

專題 | 2016 大型設計裝置

以平行視角透視黎巴嫩 法籍建築師 Annabel Karim Kassir SEE THE CHARMS OF LEBANON

TEXT Chelsea Wu PHOTO Annabel Karim Kassir

“
這是一個不斷進步、創新的城市，它早就在通往烏托邦的路上。
——法籍建築師 Annabel Karim Kassir



裝置藝術生來沒有正邪，發聲性卻極其
強烈；它是一本巨大的立體故事書。建
畢卻便是那讀書人。

寄託一份美好想像

烏托邦世界只是不切實際的妄想嗎？它
又會長成什麼模樣呢？九月的英國倫敦
設計雙年展 (London Design Biennale)
邀請 37 個國家以設計「設計烏托邦」為
題，讓設計師們直接與觀，向世人呈現
美好的明日世界。舉凡日本以「地球鄰
居」為概念，將從一種串連過去與未來
的旅程，義大利以聲起自讓象徵放下戰
爭的烏托邦世界，英國展現為國文化，
以原野風力發電作為時代能源足見未來
烏托邦，然而今年雙年展大獎得主——
黎巴嫩的策劃人 Annabel Karim Kassir
認為「進行式」便是烏托邦的具體實現，
我們必須先深刻地了解真實世界是什麼
模樣，才能夠到達心中的明日世界。

黎巴嫩——留在人們印象中戰火連連
的國家，又怎麼會是建築領域中的烏托
邦呢？阿拉伯的著名詩人 Kahlil Gibran 曾
說：「你們有你們的黎巴嫩建築，我有
我的黎巴嫩美聲。你們的黎巴嫩是每日
企圖解開的政治死結；我的黎巴嫩則是
巍峨高聳、直達藍天的山岳；你們的黎
巴嫩是形形色色的教派和政黨；我的黎
巴嫩則是舉世若石，追逐溪流，在廣場
上玩球遊戲的少年。」她下刻板印象與
政治議題，建築師 Annabel 希望帶著世
人從前對黎巴嫩的視野，進入真實的平
行視角，去看見黎巴嫩解為人知的美麗。
黎巴嫩有耶路撒冷 (Beirut) 有著「中東
小巴黎」的美譽，豐富的街地文化、夜
生活，以及白色、紅色連綿的市容讓黎
在碧藍的地中海與芬格的山影之間，她
猶記在貝魯特生活的二十年期，這座城
市最具魅力之處就在於人們天天在街道
上上海的音樂。

01

01 Annabel Karim Kassir
02 建築設計展在黎巴嫩

材料應用

THE SMILE 城市中的一抹微笑
London Design Biennale

01

今年倫敦設計週內，出現了一項大型木造地標，外形外觀彷彿向眾人展示迷人的微笑。這是由美國建築師 The American Hardwood Export Council 與英國建築事務所 Alison Brooks Architects、Anup 合作，探創新的建築、工程手法打造對當地人心引力定律的設計裝置——《微笑》(The Smile)。

以聯合書木材設計而成的裝置總共 36 公尺長，由 12 片交換層層木材 (CLT, Cross-Laminated Timber) 設計而成。

當體面與開放設計，讓每個階級空間可與校園、城市無縫連結；而兩側的孔洞，更讓《微笑》在夜間亮燈時產生溫暖的光束，就像是充滿溫暖笑聲的飛船板。這個位於當地學校 Chelsea College of Arts 廣場內的裝置，不僅在材質上突破近十年木材結構的技術，同時也創造了一個介於地標和遊戲場的互動裝置，為倫敦設計週注入更多建築材料設計和群眾互動的思考。



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INCIDENTAL SPACE
想像力的極限，技術的挑戰

02

15th Architecture Biennale in Venice

總部位於蘇黎世的建築師 Christian Kerez 打造了名為 Incidental Space 的裝置，位於今年威尼斯建築雙年展的瑞士館。部分缺空的屋頂使建築有了半開放式的性格。Christian Kerez 於內建造了一個有起伏外觀和海岸狀內部空間的建築模型，由此提出了關於建築如何生產，和經驗中有所爭議的問題。

如巨大柔軟雲朵的外形，實則為複雜的纖維水泥材質，其兩個開口允許遊客在空間內攀爬、空間外穿梭，這種矛盾的形式有意地使結構保持真實的結構空間，並且呼應威尼斯雙年展今年主場館的意象——一個女人站在沙灘中間的梯子上，眺望遠方。此裝置也藉由人在模型中攀爬所產生的高度，提供了建築新視角的觀念。

Christian Kerez 試圖探索外部界限：在今天的建築中可以實現什麼，包含技術可行性和想像力的極限，還有如何使用架構的媒介去思考一個完全抽象和邊界模糊的建築空間？這種想像空間如何可變化、如何產生？

Incidental Space 空間僅兩層米厚，用特殊開發的纖維纖維水泥板製成，看似毫無規則形式，起源於一個小的模型建立，其元素包括樓梯和牆面，接著用石磚覆蓋，目的是創造新的可能，將建築設計理解為一個智力冒險，即充滿風險。

社會議題



FORECAST 動盪時代下 風的嚮往
London Design Biennale

01

英國藝術家 Forecast 在今年九月首屆倫敦設計雙年展中，以 14 公尺高、7.5 公噸重的律律機殼，立於蘇塞特碼頭 (Somerset House) 中央庭院廣場並代表英國參展。設計師 Edward Barber 和 Jay Osgerby 與全球最具代表性的藝術與設計博物館 V&A 密切合作，創造了 Forecast。當風吹過時，Forecast 變成一個動力裝置，元件開始輕輕轉動。Barber 和 Osgerby 希望它為英國公民提供一個反思——目前我們身處的環境以及未來對這個國家的展望。

一個巨型風中儀，幫助城市居民在需求動盪時，辨別自己的方向。

與風一起舞動，喚起英國豐富的航海過去，和未來可再生能源的使用。歷史上，英國一直依靠風力來運輸、移民、貿易和勘探。如今也是風力發電的領導者之一。擁有世界上最大的海上風力發電場，Forecast 是由 Litestructures 與 Anup 和 Matt Macdonald 的工程師共同安裝建立。正如托馬斯在《馬托托》中寫道，「你不會放棄在暴風雨中的航程，因為你不能控制風。」這個裝置喚起了一股高空航行的浪漫形象，以及利用風力為地球的永續發展創造機會。

BLISS 理想城市中的危機與挑戰
London Design Biennale

02



© Haidun Xiaoha

歐洲正處於自第二次世界大戰以來最大的移民危機之中，而邊境政策允許這種外來移民的滲入，為其基礎和安全提供人道主義場所，都同時對原先存在的居民產生了壓力。

著名的藝術家 Haidun Xiaoha 在今年九月首屆倫敦設計雙年展上贏得了令人垂涎的公共獎章。作品 Bliss 專注於歐洲目前面臨的政治和經濟問題，並在今年倫敦設計雙年展期間於蘇塞特中央廣場展出。

Haidun Xiaoha 的雕塑 Bliss 四個視角立於中心，給人沉思以及檢視自身內部感知空間，除此之外，雕塑延伸出的長

橋作為人們休憩與互動的場域，靈感源自柏拉圖的理想城市，反映了在社會中暫存和統一的需要。以及外部和內部之間的和諧。坐在長凳上，望著中央鏡子，我們彼此與周圍的人互動。並反思自己的位置。Bliss 的結構不僅反映了我們自己，且也反映了選擇坐在長凳上主動彼此參與的他人。

烏托邦思想可以作為對當前社會環境的直接反應，並反應著明顯缺乏完善階段的社會情況。然而，在目前的狀況下，烏托邦在發展的問題，歐洲或許需要烏托邦政治理論作為解決潛在形式的手段。

