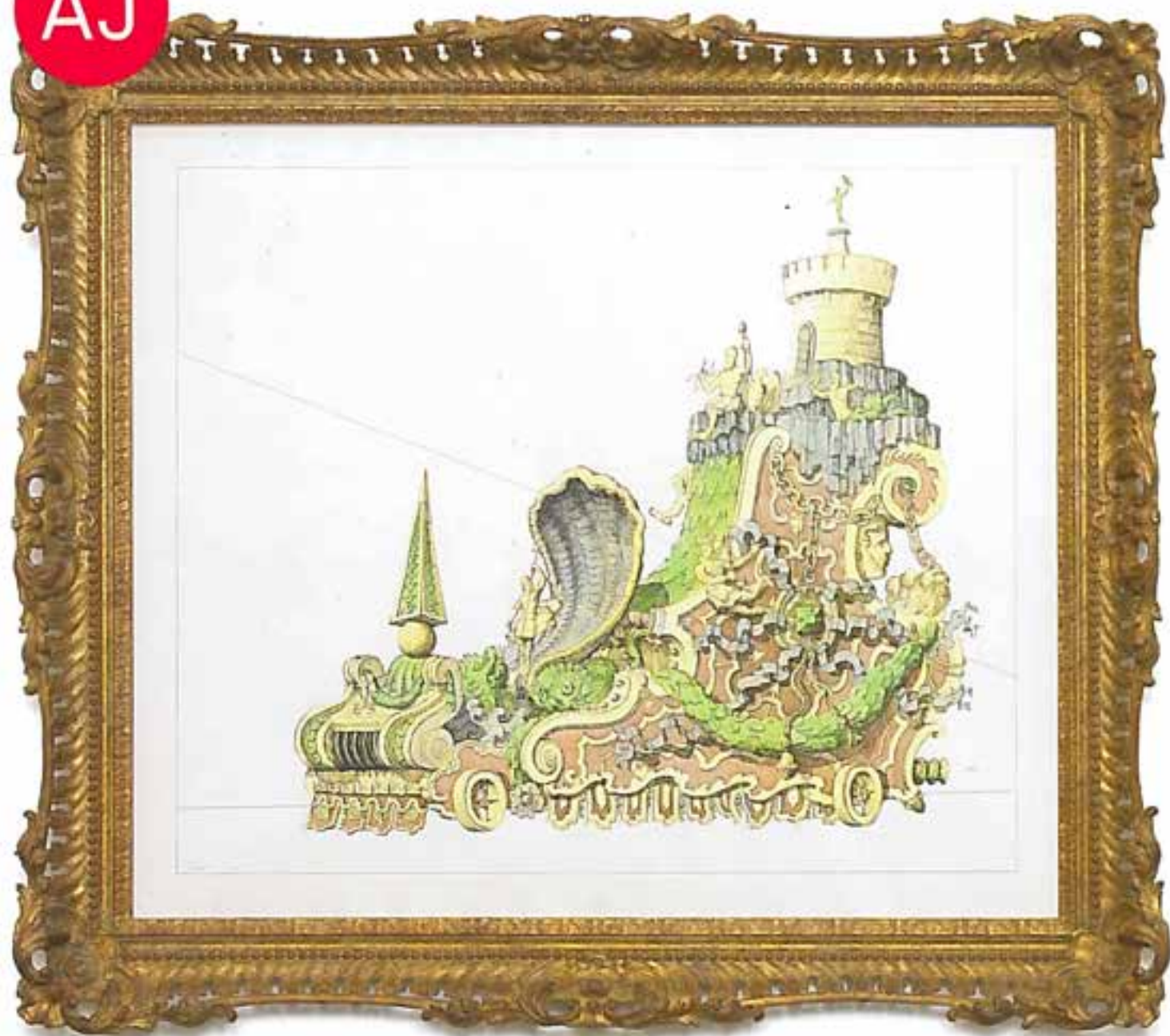


AJ



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Reimagining Mayfair

Four multi-disciplinary teams propose fresh ways to invigorate London's historic and opulent West End

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REIMAGINING MAYFAIR

A ROYAL ACADEMY OPEN COMPETITION IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE AJ

TIMELINE

- April Call for entries
- July Shortlisting session
- August 'Mid-term' crit
- September Public presentation

SHORTLISTING TEAM

- *Simon Beames* partner, youmeheshe
- *Cynthia Grant* director, Limehouse Transport Design
- *Kate Goodwin* Drue Heinz curator of architecture, Royal Academy of Arts
- *Jeremy Melvin* curator, World Architecture Festival
- *Rory Olcayto* acting editor, The Architects' Journal

EXPERT PANEL

- *Charles Saumarez Smith* (chairman) secretary and chief executive, Royal Academy of Arts
- *Matthew Carmona* professor of planning and urban design, The Bartlett
- *Craig McWilliam* executive director, London estate, Grosvenor Britain & Ireland
- *Jeremy Melvin* curator, World Architecture Festival
- *Rory Olcayto* acting editor, The Architects' Journal

TEAM 1 — DK-CM and PABLO BRONSTEIN with support from PROJECT CENTRE

Founded in 2012 by *David Knight* and *Cristina Monteiro*, *DK-CM* is an architecture and research studio based in East London. The practice's work extends from bespoke furniture design to masterplanning, urbanism and policy. Argentina-born, London-based artist *Pablo Bronstein* combines interests in art and architecture with performance, installation and sculpture through a wide range of media.

TEAM 2 — ANDREW PHILLIPS with VOGT and HENRY COLEMAN

Following 15 years working with David Chipperfield, *Andrew Phillips* established his own London-based practice in 2013. The practice is currently working on projects in London, Luxembourg, New York and the Gulf states. *Vogt Landscape Architects* was founded in Zurich in October 2000. Today the company has three offices across Europe, employing landscape architects, architects, product designers and horticultural experts. Royal Academy postgraduate *Henry Coleman*'s practice centres on an interest in the decorative impulse and in the qualitative change of an object or space.

TEAM 3 — EPR ARCHITECTS with RICK WHEAL, KATE MALONE and JAMES ULPH

Founded by Cecil Elsom in 1947, *EPR Architects* works across architecture, master planning and interior design. With a team of more than 120, EPR's portfolio includes residential, workplace, hotels and public building projects. *Rick Wheal* is a consultant to Arup, with specialisms in renewable energy, passive design and sustainable development. Ceramicist *Kate Malone* graduated from The Royal College of Art in the late 1980s. Her work uses bright, vibrant colours, often with crystalline surfaces. *James Ulph* is director at Flowers Gallery on Cork Street in Mayfair. The gallery opened in 2000 and has sister galleries in London's East End, Los Angeles and New York.

TEAM 4 — WESTON WILLIAMSON + PARTNERS with YINKA SHONIBARE and UNCOMMON

Founded in 1985, *Weston Williamson + Partners* is a multidisciplinary architectural and urban design practice. Projects include the Jubilee Line Station at London Bridge, Paddington Crossrail Station and the New England Biolabs headquarters in Boston. Working in painting, sculpture, photography, film and performance, *Yinka Shonibare*'s work examines race, class and the construction of cultural identity. *Uncommon* is a landscape consultancy run by Deborah Nagan and a small team in London's Waterloo. It undertakes commissions in London, the UK and abroad.

What comes to mind when you think of Mayfair? The fine suits of Savile Row, the galleries of Cork Street, the luxury shopping of Bond Street, hedge funds or, perhaps, the most expensive houses on the Monopoly board? Mayfair is all of those things, but much else besides.

Largely built up in the 18th century, Mayfair is currently in the middle of some of the biggest transformations in its history. The American embassy is soon to depart Grosvenor Square for Battersea, while Crossrail will shortly arrive at Bond Street/Hanover Square.

At the same time, escalating rents and redevelopment are threatening many of the area's long-resident tailors and art dealers.

Meanwhile, beginning on site next year, the Royal Academy of Arts (RA) is undertaking an ambitious redevelopment to transform its Burlington Gardens building. With support from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the David Chipperfield Architects-designed project will see new galleries, a dedicated learning studio and the reinstatement of a double-height lecture theatre. A 'link' bridge will unite Burlington Gardens and Burlington House, creating an arts campus of just over two acres in the heart of central London, ready for the RA's 250th anniversary in 2018.

As these plans have developed, the RA has become increasingly interested in the area of Mayfair to its immediate north – how to foster new ideas for its future and at the same time forge new connections in the local community. This provided the spur for an open call, organised in partnership with *The Architects' Journal*, for

architect-led, multidisciplinary teams to put forward speculative ideas for reimagining the area bounded by Old Bond Street to the west, Clifford Street to the north, Savile Row to the east and Burlington Gardens to the south.

We asked the teams to think about physical interventions to the public realm – such as managing pedestrian and traffic flow, or public art commissions – but also more ephemeral activities like festivals or markets that enhance the character of the area without necessarily altering it physically. We were particularly interested in

the cross-pollination between the area's cultural and commercial sides, a characteristic which has shaped its rich history and is also the key to its future.

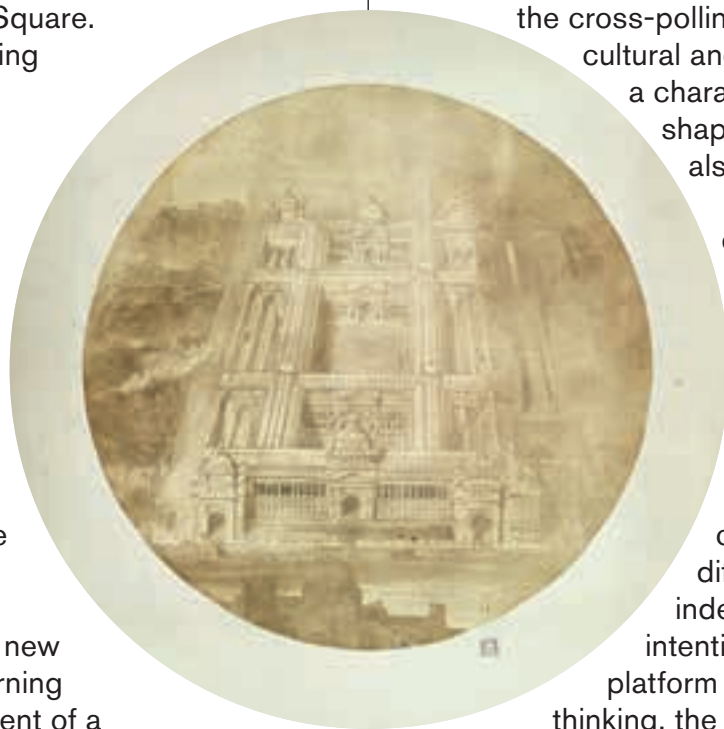
Following an open call for entries, we selected four teams to work up their ideas in early July. As well as architects, the teams included artists, urbanists and landscape designers and this led to each of the proposals considering the brief in a different way than if working independently. True to the

intention of the project being a platform for new and speculative thinking, the ideas the teams put

forward were bold and imaginative, but also grounded in a thoughtful consideration of the historical context, commercial pressures and the possibilities of culture to invigorate and inspire.

At the public presentation on 19 September and over the following weekend when the projects were on display at the RA, we saw an important discussion about the future of Mayfair begin to take shape. We are very excited to see what emerges from it over the next few years.

Owen Hopkins, architecture programme manager at the Royal Academy of Arts



Reimagining Mayfair

EPR Architects with Rick Wheal, Kate Malone and James Ulph

A UNIQUE CULTURAL QUARTER EPR ARCHITECTS WITH RICK WHEAL, KATE MALONE AND JAMES ULPH



The proposal seeks to return the urban environment to use by people, rather than vehicles

EDR

EPR Architects' proposal is to transform the area to the north of Burlington Gardens into a unique cultural quarter, integrating art, craft and commerce. Our plans consider both the feasibly practical and the poetic.

Burlington Gardens evolved from a garden space into an urban space with clearly defined edges. However, the character of the space has been eroded over time. It is EPR's intention to create a square, a reinterpretation of Rome's Piazza Navona, where public buildings ▶



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and public spaces merge in continuous public realm, where the art and craft are integral and part of a processional route of London squares.

Team member Rick Wheal finds that 'one of the major criticisms of the urban environment is that the streetscape is designed for vehicles, not people. Our aspiration is to reverse this imbalance through visually engaging people with roads and pavements, and only allowing cars and vans to pass through at specific times.'

The underused fifth elevation has been reimagined as Burlington Gardens to create a new level of public realm

– interlinked sky gardens and Lunardi-inspired balloons give the visitor a new perspective of London and define this area of reimagined Mayfair.

The artist Kate Malone sees urban space through the eyes of a visitor. 'A visitor to a place or area consciously or unconsciously might have a list of needs: to enjoy or take pleasure, to use, to learn, to give, to take, to share, to better oneself, to add to a place, to form a habit or routine, to make a difference, to leave a mark,' she says.

Go to www.reimaginingmayfair.org for more information, videos and sketches of the proposal. ■



Right The project investigated the processional routes of London squares
Opposite The architects look to occupy Burlington Gardens' 'fifth facade' with a series of sky gardens

