

## “How can temporary built projects create a more sustainable and equitable city?” Podcast Transcript – LFA Building Sounds

**Eliza:** Hello and welcome to Building Sounds, the monthly podcast brought to you by the London Festival of Architecture, exploring the people, projects, and stories that make up our city. I'm your host, Eliza Grosvenor, head of programme at the festival. In the last episode, we explored the Waste Not Want Not installations, that formed part of the London Festival of Architecture 2023 programme. Joined by each of the designers, we discussed how creative reuse of materials can be a catalyst for innovative and boundary pushing design.

In this episode, we'll be sticking with some of our built projects and thinking about what are the essential factors to consider when designing for the public realm and how built temporary installations can be a valuable tool for testing ideas and pushing us towards a more inclusive city for all. We'll be joined by the designers of our most recent LFA commissions in the City of London, both of which are still up to visit. The projects are *Common Ground* by Urban Radicals and Saqgra and *On Tenterground* by ciao.ciao design.

Before we speak to the designers, I'm joined by Lydia Allain Chapman, who oversees the built projects in the festival. Lydia, to start with, could you give us a quick overview of what LFA Built projects are and how they fit into the program each year?

**Lydia:** Yes, of course. So LFA has a number of built projects that provide an anchor to the program across the city, and, really, are the part of the program which allow us to have a physical and tangible impact on the city of London.

It's one of the ways in which we can really bring those conversations about the built environment and about our city into the public space and invite the public to participate in those big questions.

**Eliza:** I think you've touched on something really interesting there – it's not just about a project that is there and looks nice and is something that people can just have a look at and walk by, but it's something that has a real impact on the area it's sits in and kind of thinking about the space and the environment around it. What is the sort of impact that you hope that projects like these have? And obviously as a festival we have a mission around trying to get towards more of

inclusive, sustainable, equitable city. How do you see the projects fitting into that?

**Lydia:** Well, whilst some of our built projects are permanent, the majority of the projects that we are working on at the moment are temporary interventions within public space that kind of pop up during the festival and then are re-homed or recycled after the summertime.

And the impact we hope to have with these is not only to change the sort of feel and experience of one space for one moment. But to really use the festival as this kind of temporary vehicle to kind of reimagine spaces and push the boat out a little bit further. We get away with doing more exciting and innovative things, um, because we do them on a temporary basis.

And what that does is that paves the way for examples of long-term change. So for example, pedestrianisation, as we've done in a number of projects. Most recently in Summerstown in 2022, provides a kind of case study for a council to look at how a street could be reimaged for the future and how it could be used and used to kind of consult community and public about these changes. And also have a case study and an example to kind of garner support for a new scheme.

**Eliza:** I think that's exactly right, and I think a lot of people think change in the city, particularly on a practical physical level, is quite difficult. And I guess this is an opportunity to try that out. Do you think – and I think I probably know the answer to this already – but from your perspective, do you think these projects actually can have a genuine impact both temporarily and long term on the communities you mentioned, on the areas you mentioned, and kind of with the different councils and areas that we're working with and changing how they can rethink about the local area, the wider city?

**Lydia:** Yeah, I definitely think there are many layers of how these projects can have an impact and one of them is that kind of long-term permanent change, but I think there are lots of ways in which you can kind of use the festival to create that moment. So I, I think a good example of something we've done this year is a competition. We ran in Edgware, which was all about considering kind of the High Street, which is at the cusp of going through major redevelopment.

And through the competition we were able to appoint a local team, a local collective, to reimagine certain space and install sort of creative improvements and interventions across the High Street. And I think the impact on the community

there was to see – it's one of the first times, a project like this has been delivered in that town centre – to sort of see that there's been care and attention sort of, driven into, into that town to show that people are thinking creatively about what the best solutions are for the future of, of Edgware. And also to really interact with a team who live and know the local area really well and be able to kind of have a conversation both, you know, verbal conversations, but actually using the built projects as a conversation, to sort of work out what works, what doesn't.

And actually one of the things that's come out of it was that the, the sites that were chosen by the team, you know, really seemed to be the sites that, in that particular project needed a lot of love and care and attention with the community. And so I think that provides very useful knowledge for people looking at, at, at the future development of Edgware, but actually also just on a kind of really immediate level shows the community, the investment in the town, and, invites them to participate.

**Eliza:** I absolutely love the idea of conversation, both in sort of the two different sides of it. I'm just thinking you've mentioned a couple of projects in there already, because obviously with some of the projects you only see the impact when you look back five, ten years, you need a little bit of time afterwards to see the real sort of change that that project has been able to have on the city. Are there any other examples that you think of LFA projects that have left a particularly strong legacy or have been super impactful at all?

**Lydia:** For me as we kind of go into next year, which is our big anniversary, something that really sticks in my mind is the project on Exhibition Road in 2008 where there was a major sort of temporary pedestrianization with multiple pavilions by different architects of small and large scales that it sort of reimagined that street, which at the time was heavily congested, dangerous for tourists and for visitors, and very polluted. And I think you can see in the, the scheme that was then brought around in 2012 and, and completed. So you can see the, the gap in, in time that it takes. You can see the real impact not only in the fact that the, the road was reimagined and the traffic was very much deprioritized and pedestrians prioritized, but even some of the kind of physical markings on the ground translate into that final scheme.

And I think for me, that's a sort of major example of where, where a temporary project that happens during the LFA can just have this really strong mark on the city. Whilst not every project is going to be as simple and every temporary moment will be the right solution for that space. I think that's a really clear way in which these projects can have a huge tangible legacy.

**Eliza:** For this conversation, we're obviously thinking about two projects in the City of London that are part of the festival for this year. Can you give a bit of an overview of how these two particular projects came about and what is the impact that you're hoping these projects have?

**Lydia:** So the two projects – Common Ground and On Tenterground – that we've been working on with the City of London came about through collaborations with the business improvement districts.

So in this case, both Cheapside Business Alliance and Aldgate Connect, the festival has a relationship of working with the business improvement districts in The City to really tap into their sort of priorities for the public realm and to deliver temporary projects supporting young architects.

So these were direct commissions that came out of sitting down with the BIDs and identifying what they needed and what was a key priority for them. So in the case of Cheapside, that really was thinking about sustainability within The City, which is a major concern. And also thinking about kind of creating spaces in London that can be used by everybody.

And over in Aldgate, their strategy of the public realm was used to kind of inform a brief, which was all about sort of setting up spaces for cultural and social exchange. In both cases, the brief was also informed by LFA's overarching theme of In Common, which sort of has been woven through all of our, our projects. And for the built projects, especially, those are thinking about our common spaces, our public space, our kind of, you know, public living and working rooms, as it were, and thinking about how those spaces can be sort of reclaimed almost, by the users and residents of The City. And I think both of these projects demonstrate that really well.

**Eliza:** I agree. And I think one thing that's really nice that you just touched on is that both these projects are in the City of London, but they're both exploring very different things. And I think that's one of the really beautiful things with the competitions. It, it's not just the same thing everywhere. It's really responding to the context it's in geographically with the communities around, with the clients that we're working with. I think there's something that, it's not one size fits all. It's really responding to the time, the location in a way that works without specific local context, which I think is really beautiful. And we're going to chat to the designers of these projects in a second, but before we do, what makes you so

passionate about these projects and to make sure so many of these opportunities are there each year?

**Lydia:** Well, these projects are full of creativity and sort of blue sky thinking and dreaming really about the future city.

I think part of my passion for them comes from wanting to run competitions or commission young architects, so really bringing in these new designers and new voices to the industry and giving them an opportunity to have a mark on their city. I think that's the way in which we are going to get new solutions, and really kind of get the best quality design in the future is by always ensuring that that young architects are invited to contribute to these kind of physical conversations.

And I think these projects are amazing way of doing that. But yeah, I really, I really admire working with commissioners, you know, such as the, the business improvement districts because they're really thinking forward. They're thinking about the future, and they're not just thinking about the challenges that we might be facing now, or the opportunities for developing the cities that, you know, we might be presented today, but also thinking forward about how proactively, how we can shape the city rather than just being reactive to the kind of difficulties that we might rub up against on a day-to-day basis.

**Eliza:** It's really starting off, I think why, why built projects exist in the festival and how they kind of fit into the wider sort of mission that we have, as a festival. And I'm just thinking, looking forward to the future, what's next for built projects, commissions, competitions with the festival. Is there anything you want to say on that? Obviously we're going into a special year next year, which is going to be really exciting, but what does that look like for built projects?

**Lydia:** Well, I think as is evident over the last couple of years, LFA are actually taking on more and, and more built projects and we are also managing to get ourselves into more and more different parts of London.

And so I think for me, I'm excited to bring built projects to parts of the city, which may be LFA has not been to before, or maybe have not had this kind of the same interest of an investment of public, public art and, and, and architectural kind of, um, love and care really. And I think what I really want to do is make sure that there is a full spectrum of ways in which we can impact the city from the very permanent and, you know, ensuring that creative ideas and interesting teams get, get permanent commissions of the city whilst also ensuring that we are providing

opportunities for the very inexperienced and newly, freshly qualified architects to really build their first project and launch their careers in the public realm. So, I, for the future, I want to make sure that we have a full spectrum of design challenges and scales and scopes.

I think a great provocation for us to be thinking about as we move forward in the next couple of years, and I think that that touched on a really lovely point: London Festival of Architecture is for the whole of London. We really want to be getting involved and thinking about and empower anyone who wants to be involved in that conversation to be part of it and it, it's not just for architects, although obviously we work with a lot of architects in their emerging stages on these projects.

It's for anyone to really be thinking about how we can shape a better city. And I think this is, these projects are such a gorgeous way of doing that.

**Lydia:** Absolutely. I think whilst we talk a lot about architects, because you know, when we talk about the built projects more and more we see sort of multidisciplinary teams coming together to deliver these.

And actually I think that's a really exciting progression of these projects actually. While architects are always involved, we can have teams that are full of other creatives and, and also people who are really experts in working with communities and co-designing. And I think that is definitely another way in which I see these competitions developing. Looking more and more about how these can be well integrated projects that, that are used for consultation as well as sort of design and build.

**Eliza:** I think that's absolutely beautiful, and I think a lovely way to end this conversation and start exploring the two projects that we've just heard about.

I'm now joined by Nasios and Marwa to explore Common Ground, which is one of the latest projects that we've got in the City of London.

To start with, could you both introduce yourself and tell us a little bit about your project?

**Nasios:** Hi, I am Nasios. I'm part of Urban Radicals. We are a duo of architects and designers. Together with my partner Era Savvides, we set up the practice in 2019. We've done competitions, we've done projects for the LFA. We've curated and designed the Cypress Pavilion for the 17th Architecture Biennale, and we just finished another research project in Venice.

We also teach.

**Marwa:** And my name is Marwa. I'm also part of a duo, so my, alongside my co-founder, Niall Bridgeman, we founded Saqqra, we are interested in decolonizing and decarbonizing construction industry and just wider conversations around architecture. And yes, we both teach, so we teach at Kingston and UEL, and we're both writers as well.

**Eliza:** Amazing. And you just mentioned your two separate duos. How did you come together on working on this particular project and can you give us a bit of an intro to the project?

**Marwa:** So we, Saqqra, were invited through Urban Radicals to collaborate with them on this project quite a while ago now, maybe about end of last year.

So that's how the collaboration came about. And the project itself, I think we were always interested in similar themes, so we were interested. And we were helped a lot by the location of the site as well. But in this idea of history and reusing material, particularly in a public realm context, I think urban articles have worked in public realm quite a bit with the LFA before, so they were some somewhat familiar with the process and we thought it'd be interesting to think about reclaiming materials, from initially from nearby sites and to kind of weave that into a narrative around history and kind of tie it into the Bow Churchyard church, and bring kind of an awareness to Christopher Wren's anniversary on that building as well, and the reconstruction of that church.

**Nasios:** So we put in a, an application for, uh, an LFA competition last year for the Notting Hill Festival. And we thought of working together, as a theme was on equity and public space. And that kind of stemmed some conversations about what interventions could be in Notting Hill, but broader thematics of how can we make things for the city, which tell a story.

And I guess what kind of continued was this idea of the salvaging or reusing and finding meaning in pieces that are often like, kind of get chucked away as waste and rethinking how this could be used. And they have like a value and a sentimental value as well, not just material value. In the installation, you probably see some of these ceramic copings that were used from previous buildings that were interpreted into like backrests.

We think that's quite interesting, to imagine what else these building fragments could become.

**Eliza:** So you've mentioned materials, you mentioned history. What was the process in taking it from? All these ideas to what we see today. And I guess for people who aren't able to see it, could you maybe describe what it looks like as well?

**Marwa:** Yeah, so, to answer first point, about the process, I think working with reclaim materials is like, it's quite different to usual projects where you design something and then you make something to suit your design, we kind of started by looking at what we could source and what we could reclaim.

So the installation has several parts to it. It's got a cast element. So it's almost like a, you imagine like a precast concrete floor, except we're not using any cement in ours. We're using a lime base, so it's like a cement free thing. But we were always interested in casting something or bringing together the different aggregates or elements that we are reclaiming into like a whole. So making these seating modules out of these different parts and then binding them together in some sort of a cast form. So the process was sourcing all these elements to begin with and kind of, I guess reaching out to a lot of different manufacturers and suppliers and people I think the Urban Radicals have worked with before, having done similar things on other projects and seeing what waste products they could provide us with.

And they'd come back with tiles, like crushed. Terracotta tiles, some rougher aggregates and brick as well. We got quite a lot of brick. So having gotten all these different elements, it was then assembling them into some type of proposal that met the need for seating in a public realm.



**Nasios:** There was conversation between us to respond to the theme of accessibility. So the project called Common Ground takes the idea of texture in the street paving for the visually impaired, and basically raises it up. And it's, it's usually an element that is overseen, but we feel like it's really interesting to experience it without like necessarily being based on, on something visual.

So the idea of texture and touching and lifting it off the ground and literally like people could actually touch this off cuts this, crushed aggregates. That for us is the idea of the common ground. It's basically these kind of chunky blocks that have a kind of logical dimension of around 1.2 meters by 1.2, and they're kind of replicated and, and pasted around the side and slightly offset to allow for space to sit or to walk around.

And, we also have a vertical totem which tries to respond to a kind, the idea of the skyline and a little bit on the history of the neighbouring church. Amazing. And you've just mentioned the, some of the pieces that are in the sort of geographical context of the space.

**Eliza:** How much were you thinking about the, where the piece was going to be sat and how it was going to respond to the area, but also how it was going to rethink maybe public realm?

**Marwa:** We thought about quite a bit actually. The placement of it was something we always talked about in the very beginning. The context I think was always quite important, not just in terms of responding to the themes of like history and reuse, but also like making the square engaging with the square and specifically with the church and the large tree in the centre.

I think from the start we wanted it to be quite site-specific and there was a number of positions we explored where we wanted it to tie around existing trees and things like that. But for various reasons it kind of was massaged into different areas, depending on other uses and other things that were going on.

But we were always quite keen that it wasn't like a placeless thing, like a lot of public realm can be, in that it could just be like, a group of chairs that hasn't really got any connection to where it is. It's just there. So we wanted it to be engaging both on a visual level, that you learn something by looking at it, but also that it felt like it belonged in the square.

And I think where we've positioned it now, kind of facing the large tree, but also like the location of the totem relative to where the church entrance is, I think we'd imagine people with would read, you know, about the installation, and kind of

move around and then that way, see the entrance to the church and maybe go in there and that would start some sort of conversation.

And we'd also cast two of the ramp pieces with potential use to be reused in the church because we'd identified within the church that there was like step access, but no kind of ramp access within certain parts of the church. I mean, most of the church is accessible. So we wanted it to be informative and educational, but not just like a showpiece that afterwards it would go and do something else and serve a purpose, but also be useful and practical where it was positioned and kind of maximize your enjoyment of the square. I mean, we think the centre of the square is the nicest bit of, you know, with the kind of tiled flooring and the tree and the entrance. I think that was always, uh, something that attracted us to that, that part.

**Nasios:** If I can add to that, uh, early in the conversations we had this idea of like the common ground as a joint room for the city, like a tapestry, a carpet – whatever you want to call it. I mean, as Marwa mentioned, this has been like shifted around, uh, quite a bit during the process. But I think there's still something there that you can see people are actually sitting together in a form that. It is unified. They're not completely fragmented.

**Eliza:** I've definitely seen quite a few people get on it and as I've gone past, which is really lovely to see. And then I really love what you were both saying, which is around sort of it changing the way that that area works, both now, but also hopefully changing people's ways of thinking about how our space can be changed.

And it doesn't always have to be used in the same way, which I think is very much something that's in line with the festival, which is testing out ideas to move us towards a city that makes more sense and it's more inclusive, it's more equitable, it's more sustainable. Projects like this I think really help to sort of shift people's mindsets around them that in a way that is beautiful to look at and really tactile and really it is something that you can really enjoy, or sit and have your lunch at on a very simple level as well.

But also it helps it really think about the kind of future city that we want. And I'm just interested to know what, I don't know if you've thought about this at all, what legacy do you hope that the project will have both in the immediate area, both in the design of other public realm interventions?

**Marwa:** I think one of the, like the strongest points that it brings out is, is this idea of making visible things that are unseen. The idea of like the tactile ground that the blind kind of use around the city that no one else really notices apart from the visually impaired, so there's kind of that making visible that. But also I think the legacy of buildings like churches or buildings are not as used as maybe they once were or tend to be only congregated once a week or even maybe even less frequently. I think that we tried to make quite overt a message about spaces and places that are not really as trafficked as they once were or not as used and perhaps falling into disrepair a bit.

But then if you were to bring it to public realm context, I think you know, a lot of, like I was saying earlier, you don't really notice a lot of public realm, or we thought the idea of making something nice that makes people want to stay in linger a little bit more, a little bit different, and also kind of inviting the public into like a conversation.

I think people are always open to dialogues around sustainability narratives and rethinking these things. Like it doesn't just have to be the way that it's always been done. So we thought it was quite nice to create public realm seating that is inviting and wants you, like, makes you want to stay in a space rather than kind of leave it.

I guess particularly in the context of wider public realm design, which tends to be quite defensive. It was challenging, really, all of these points, all of these assumptions that we have about how we design space.

**Nasios:** It's nice to see. The something in The City which is inhabited by an everyday use rather than an ambition for use.

**Eliza:** Thinking about the collaboration or separately, is there anything that you've learned from this project that you might take forward within your individual or collective practices?

**Marwa:** I think the learning in working with existing stock of reuse material has been really, really valuable in terms of our practice.

We we're a research and design practice, so I think there's a lot of research that has gone into this project that could feed further strands of research, and we've gotten a fellowship to be in Venice in August, so we're hoping to develop some of

that thinking a little bit more and not necessarily with a view to a project, but just how we would do this process again. I mean it's always quite tricky when you're working with like existing materials so you don't know what you're going to find, which is part of the joy, but also like the challenge.

So we were thinking of ways of how like the construction industry could be better equipped to, you know, because I think more people would, would reuse things if there was more of a streamlined process of how do you get these materials. I think there was a lot of work on this project and time that was spent sourcing and hunting down these things and it's almost like you need the systems or something to facilitate access to those things a little bit easier.

**Nasios:** There's a lot of support in the idea of like conservation in the traditional like way, but I think it'd be also interesting if this framework could support a different type of conservation. Not, not in the historical sense, but in the way, like things that are overseen, not every day could be reused and upcycled. We would be interested in working with like councils or construction companies who, you know, they do have waste and material that often, like it's much easier to get chucked away because there's no one to close the loop or like a designer to think about. Okay, what, what can actually happen?

I think that's that's quite exciting as an idea like for us, like as architects or designers, to have value to something that will probably end up in, in the scrap or like in the bin. I think there is definitely will to do this is just having some sort of framework that we cannot do as practices.

**Eliza:** I can't wait to hear some of the research and everything that comes out from this. I think it's sounds really interesting and actually so needed, and I also think, so obviously it will help our planet and so many of the issues that are currently there, but I also think it could be really beautiful process, both visually, but also this sort of idea of thinking a bit more creatively perhaps about how we use materials. So do keep us posted, on that as that evolves in Venice.

But also I can see it being quite long-term project that I think a lot of people would want to be getting involved with and helping find those answers as well.

I think that's a really beautiful place to end that conversation. Thanks Nasios and Marwa.

We've now got *ciaociao design* in the studio to explore her project *On Tenterground*.

Chão, to start with, could you introduce yourself and tell us a little bit about your project?

**Chão:** My name is Chão - chaos with the 's' missing. I'm a chartered landscape architect and currently also founding director of ciaociao design. I set up my company three years ago, actually it was for an LFA competition. I've been working in the landscape architecture industry for 10 years and I'm very interested in art and landscape and all design related stuff.

I come from China, so I'm a minority woman, living and working in London. It was quite challenging when I started life in London, but I feel there's a big difference now than 10 years ago, and I'm really happy about that.

**Eliza:** I couldn't agree more and I think it's really interesting and hopeful to see the changes happening. It could be a little bit quicker, but it's people like yourself creating like beautiful projects and the work that you do that hope you help helped move that forward. Speaking of that actually, as part of LFA2023, you've created a beautiful project for us. Can introduce project and maybe tell us where the initial inspiration for the project came from?

**Chão:** Yes. So the project I got in touch by LFA and Aldgate BID in January. They are working together with London Metropolitan University performance art students. And they came to me, they gave me a brief, basically the MA students are looking for a space to do workshops, performance and so on, and they wanted to have a landscape setting or an installation setting that can act as their stage, or they can do workshops underneath and so on. So I guess the first thinking is, okay, something that brings people together and has to be in open space and I have to do research about the space. And I found out that a lot of Aldgate East area, they used to be tenterground.

Tenderground is a name describing like people put tender frame to hand and dry cloth, wool cloth. And I looked a bit more into it and I found out that a hundred years ago Jewish people moved to London and they settled in Aldgate East Area. They brought a lot of techniques and they brought their skills to do tenterground, tenter frames to hang their clothes and after this process, they would make the clothes and then they got distributed around.

This whole process was the economy of Aldgate East area, including Petticoat Lane. So I find this connection really, really interesting because one of the client is also Aldate BID. They are keen to kind of activate this whole Aldgate area. And I

think connecting something historic from the space back to the space and then creating new space out of this same story will be really, really interesting.

The other layer of this story is that the students were thinking about doing some performances. Some of them are from East Asia and some of them are from other places. I found that it's a lot of coming together, so I was like, okay, maybe we do something like, almost like a stage and then people can gather around and you can communicate and do design, and do whatever workshops, and do performances: it is a common ground to bring people together.

**Eliza:** You've got all of these amazing ideas and way of thinking about what this piece is going to be. What was the process of taking all these ideas and then turning it into the final piece?

**Chão:** As a landscape architect, I always like to look at the site from different angles, looking at the context, looking at people who live there, looking at history, sometimes look at the soil, look at the geography, and I think that is the most important thing.

How create something new related to what it is before. And that's why I looked into history and found something really interesting about it. The initial vision was like super, super ambitious. I was thinking about like using the tender frame to go across the whole park, which literally make it a modern tender ground.

It's the people who make the space, they'll give you lots of ideas and about practicality. So because of the scale is really big, came up with this idea about scaffold because it's modular and people are skilled to do it and it's really easy to fix it together. You don't need to do any work on site. Well, you have to do some work on site, but you don't have to kind of do the melding, the metal and stuff fixing together. So that's, I think it was a brilliant idea.

**Eliza:** How's it been working with students? I don't know if that's something that you are familiar with, working in that way, or if it was a new experience for you?

**Chão:** Working with students is another layer. The timing has been really challenging because halfway in between we had change the site, and I found this really interesting, like sometimes the students will push me. But then, we'll, I'll push back a little bit and in the end we find the common ground – common again! And if you see the final piece, there are a lot of student work on the installation itself, and you can really see the collaboration together.

I would like to add as well, one student, his name is Paul, suggested a workshop about cabbage, which is not like scaffold, but like food that people sometimes don't want and sometimes they get wasted and using that as a tool to kind of educate people about sustainability ideas. And I think it's quite interesting. Maybe I don't explain it well. I don't know. What do you think, Eliza?

**Eliza:** You explain it really well, and it's actually something that we should be all thinking about massively these days, and it just got me thinking when you've been creating this piece, but also any other work that you do, at different scales, but particularly when designing in the public realm, what are the sort of priorities that you have in mind when designing a piece like this, and thinking about who will use it, how it will fit into that particular space. What are the things that you are really making sure are really key in your design?

**Chão:** I think one thing is people have to like it, and the second thing is whatever I'm creating, it has to be definitely related to the space itself.

It has to celebrate the space to be meaningful and then environmentally has to be very minimum impact. It's hard in certain times, certain projects when budget is tight, but I always try to push a limit sometime. We just have to sacrifice the aesthetic a little bit so that the environmental impact is a little bit less, I think is always a balance.

**Eliza:** Yeah, I think that's really interesting. And you mentioned earlier you got a background in landscape, in art. How do you sort of blend the two of those to make something that is something that people will enjoy, something that fits in the space and is sustainable as well?

**Chão:** I mean, I'm not quite sure if I'm the best person to answer this because I always have struggles. Sometimes I have the vision and it's really hard to

communicate. So a lot of times I use visual tools like 3D modelling, drawings, painting to make, to communicate the ideas.

**Eliza:** And, is scaffolding a material that you worked with before? Is this the first time that you were, you were working with scaffolding?

**Chão:** Yeah, it's the first time I've ever used scaffolding and it's really challenging. In the beginning, uh, because we've changed the design so many times. Some of the contractors just walked away, but in the end, I got a reliable scaffolder. There's a lot of testing ground, but there's no other way around. You just have to try and find out. If we never make a move, then the, the world will stay the same. It's a really good opportunity that I have the chance to explore and to make mistakes.

**Eliza:** How did this project compare to previous works, um, that you've done before? And is there any projects that you've done in the past that particularly stand out to you at all?

**Chão:** I mean it's completely different. This one is a temporary project. I always do permanent landscape work or design, so that's one is very different.

**Eliza:** It really ties into one of the things that we really aim to do with the festival, which is test out ideas and moving us towards a city and a society, which is more for sustainable, inclusive, and projects like this are a really interesting way of doing that, alongside getting some different new emerging designers, architects, artists out into the world as well.

It's all part of this drive towards a more inclusive, equitable, sustainable city. It's easy to design the same things it to keep doing what's been done before. But if we keep doing that, we don't test out new ideas. We're never gonna move forward to, if we talk about inclusive cities, equitable cities, sustainable cities, unless we're testing out new ideas and whether it goes well, whether it needs some improvements, unless we try, we're not going to move forward there.



So hopefully, even though it's a little bit of difficult process, you've had some real learning experiences that you can take forward. Perhaps with future projects. I don't know if you've thought about that at, how you'll take the learnings of this project on in the future.

**Chão:** I mean, absolutely. There's so many elements of it, like, apart from scaffolding, we also have other elements such as wind load we have to deal with because we are creating more these tenterframes. You have winds coming to the banner and which is causing a massive issue. So we try different angles to hand the fabric so that the wind comes slower and then we find the best solution to, so that we can use the minimum amount of weight to hold the structure down.

**Eliza:** You just got me thinking. So we talked a little bit about the lessons learned, that you've sort of taken already, but what is the legacy that you are hoping that the piece has in the area that it's in, or on the students that have worked with the project you've worked closely with on the project for future public realm design?

**Chão:** I guess it's quite like London. London is open and accepting all different culture and stuff, and this installation On Tenterground has very similar kind of ideas. It's open. You can bring anything underneath, any ideas, anything is welcome. I think that's, that's what's important.

**Eliza:** I think that that that idea of collaboration and bringing people who maybe usually wouldn't have worked together on a project like this is one of the things that I personally absolutely love about LFA and hopefully it's conversations or collaborations that can continue post the project itself as well, which I know is up for a few more months, so we've got plenty of time to be enjoying it.

Actually, on that note, do you want to tell people how long the project is up for, when they should visit, what they can do when they're there?

**Chão:** Yes, so the project is going to be there for the whole month and every single weekend there will be workshops going on.

**Eliza:** So I think that's all the time we have today. But a matter of thank you to our guests. Chão, Nasios, Marwa and Lydia. We'll be back with a new episode next month. Until then, if you like this episode, you can follow Building Sounds and Spotify our podcast, or wherever you find your favorite conversations.

You can also follow LFA on Instagram, TikTok Twitter, or head to the LFA website for all the up-to-date information on competitions, program and how you can get involved. Until next time.