“LFA on-location: Meet this year’s Pews and Perches designers”
Podcast Transcript – LFA Building Sounds

Eliza: Hello and welcome to Building Sounds, the podcast exploring the stories, people and projects that shape London's built environment. I'm your host, Eliza Grosvenor, Head of Programme at the London Festival of Architecture.

2024 marks 20 years of the Festival, so for this June, we're bringing you a special series of podcasts which highlight the unique and exciting people and organisations we're proud to be working with, we're proud to be working with. To do this, we tasked each of the LFA team to take you on site to share some of the projects they've been working on over the course of the last 12 months.

For the first conversation, I'm handing over to Katya, who'll be guiding you through the fifth and final edition of the Pews and Perches benches, located around the docks and exploring ideas of rest and play. Over to you, Katya.

Katya: Thanks, Eliza. Now, in its fifth and final edition, the Pews and Perches benches aim to improve London's public realm, celebrate emerging architectural talent and connect people with the buildings and spaces around them, all while championing sustainable design.

We're going to hear from each of the design teams behind the benches. The conversations can be listened to from the comfort of your own home. However, for the best experience, we recommend seeing the benches on site as part of a self-guided walking tour.

As you walk between the benches, you'll be able to pause the episode and restart at the next location. We'll be starting with From Trash to Treasure, located in front of the University of East London's campus, and work our way around the Docks across the Connaught Bridge, finishing up with Submarine Cables at the Floating Gardens. When you're ready, our first designers, Katie and Siraaj, will reveal the inspirations behind their bench, From Trash to Treasure.

Siraaj: My name is Siraaj and I am an architect, and I teach postgraduate architecture at the London School of Architecture. I also direct a programme called Accelerate at Open City.

Katie: I'm Katie Fisher my pronouns are she/her and I am also an architect and the co-chair of the Young Trustees of the Architecture Foundation.

Siraaj: The name of our bench is From Trash to Treasure, located just outside of University of East London opposite City Airport. As we were approaching the competition, two things that really intrigued us were the opportunity to work with young people in the Royal Docks to kind of check in with them, get a sense of what they felt about their area and try and integrate that into our design, take that into account and work with young people. And then the other thing which you can kind of get from the title is that we wanted to try to use recycled material, or we wanted to reintroduce material into a cycle of kind of purpose and use in a creative way.

Katie: We were really keen that our bench could be totally demounted and each part could be used somewhere else. For example, the tiles could become coasters or the whole thing could be rearranged quite easily into a planter. The sort of key materials, let's say, are this compressed, recycled plastic, which is essentially sort of household waste, and the second sort of key material which I'm really excited about are these timber tiles, and we've sourced this beach, which used to be a basketball court floor, then went on to be a restaurant floor. Unfortunately, because of the pandemic, the restaurant had to close down, but now this floor is part of our bench and I just think that's really, really exciting.

Siraaj: And these ideas kind of came to us from taking a kind of a walk around site. We saw materials that were not being used, construction materials kind of like lying around different places, because the Royal Docks is kind of in this process of constant evolution and development and we thought, you know, how can we creatively reintegrate them? And a lot of you know, a lot of it was plastic and timber. So we immediately started trying to think about how can you, you know, how can you reuse plastic in a creative way? And well, we found this technique. Really, the idea is that you kind of cut all of these bottles down to shreds, melt them and then compress them into a kind of shape.

Katie: I guess it looks like marble really. There's some really beautiful veins of colour that come through. We really were taking inspiration from the built environment around us and everywhere and you see this all over London these kind of pavement tiles, these concrete pavement tiles, pavement tiles and our

bench essentially is sort of an abstraction of that form of the tile and how that could be stepped up in a sort of cube-like way.

Siraaj: Our aspiration was to use recycled materials in this circular economy. We've both noted how difficult it's been. How you know, it would have been so much easier and straightforward if we used off-the-shelf products that had been, you know, that hadn't been used before, which is, I guess, typical of the construction industry. But to use kind of reclaimed material, recycled material, and put it back into use rather than just kind of letting it waste or go to landfill, it has been a real challenge that we've had to work around with regards to lead time, with regards to material sourcing, with regards to what we can creatively do with it. It should be way easier. If we're really serious about reducing the carbon cost of the construction industry, these processes need to be far more efficient and more readily available.

Katie: We need to change the building blocks of how we're approaching construction at the moment, because the systems that we're using at the moment aren't working. They're not working for, um, the climate, they're not working socially. I think what's really exciting about this process is we've now gone through it and we've sourced these recycled materials and, although it was a bit alien to us to begin with, now we've done it once. I think we have the confidence to do it again on a bigger scale. The more people go through these processes with recycled materials, the easier it's going to be.

Siraaj: University of East London and UTC have been absolutely incredible in this process in that they have opened their doors, they've allowed us to conduct a workshop with their year 11s. I don't think we would have really pulled it off without their help and support throughout the process.

Katie: Siraaj and I are very passionate about platforming unheard voices and young voices, particularly those who are living or working or going to school in that area, particularly as young people are being designed out of our cities, they're not being listened to, being designed out of our cities, they're not being listened to. And we really wanted to integrate the, the hopes and thoughts and aspirations for the area um, and capturing the thoughts of the future of the area, really the people who are going to be inheriting this space and who this space is. You know what legacy is that space leaving for these people? And so we have

integrated those thoughts and ideas and aspirations of what young people in that area want for the future of the Royal Docks.

Siraaj: It took quite a long time for us working with these young people to communicate to them that they have a voice in this process and that that voice will be taken seriously.

Katie: We're really passionate about empowering agency and people to feel like they have the agency, to have a voice in their built environment. And you know particularly young people who are often, you know, as I say, they're being designed out of cities because the city doesn't belong to some people, it belongs to everyone.

Siraaj: Working with young people in bringing about the next stages of development in the built environment is really important. It's reminded me that sort of a part of being an architect is this process that you're always learning, you're always learning new things and, um, I haven't built, physically built anything for so long. I've been sort of teaching and working with Open City, with Accelerate, um, and you're, you know, you're building pedagogy or you're building, you know, educational structure or you'll build, you're sort of managing a team, whatever. But they're kind of to go back to being an architect, the physical act of making. It's been so incredible. Like we've made, we've made mistakes, you know things have gone wrong, obviously things haven't all gone to plan, but for those in those instances you learn so much and, um, it's just been fantastic. It's just been a really exhilarating process working with Katie. We've been really supportive of each other. Obviously we were friends before this and so there's this kind of new dimension of us kind of working together and being friends in this kind of creative way and it's been, it's that's just been like great and I think that if, yeah, I, I would. I I've been reminded in a really nice way that a part of being an architect is that you never stop learning and that you don't take things for granted, and this process has been a huge, huge learning curve.

The process has been incredible, but I don't think we would have pulled it off without the support of a few organisations Katie mentioned that've collaborated with. That would be. Sustainable Design Studio have been fantastic. Rory had been incredible in communicating with us. Charlie and Mole Club have produced these gorgeous tiles and I would really recommend anyone who's interested in recycled plastics to check them out and they're doing incredible things. Utc and Andrew Tan have been just fantastic in allowing us to engage with their young

people and run a workshop in the school and the University of East London based in the Royal Docks. Paul and all the guys who have opened the doors and let us use the workshops there. The CNC laser cutting machines.

Jin: I'm Jin.

HoSung: I'm HoSung.

Jin: We are the designers behind Studio Underbar, an independent design collective we established last year. We are thrilled to introduce our very first build project to you.

HoSung: The bench is called. Now is the Time to Moor Off.

Jin: Located at the northern side of Connaught Crossing. The narrative of this project is deeply intertwined with the role of the sugar industry in shaping the character and context of the Royal Dogs. We started from researching the history of Royal Dogs. We also visited the dog museum just to gain information. So not too far from where our bench is located you can kind of oversee the sugar refinery. So we experimented by utilizing the global industrial byproduct as building material, as well as engaging with the industrial history of the local area.

HoSung: We are using sugarcane bio-waste, which is also known as bagasse. The reason why I use the sugarcane waste is we try to relate the local historical context and also what has happened on the dock previously. Bagasse has recently gained recognition as a sustainable pulp.

Jin: By repurposing sugar by-product into a functional public setting. The bench sparks a dialogue between past and present, while reaching towards a speculative future that embraces the principles of the circular economy. So we sourced bagasse from two different local sources Tate & Lyle Refinery in the Royal Docks and Raya Grocery from Borough Market. So each of them provided us with diverse qualities of bagasse and unique background narratives about the material's origin.

HoSung: We also used jesmonite acrylic modified cementious composite as a binding material that could bind bagasse and finish our composite material.

Jin: So the sculptural design of the bench draws inspiration from mooring posts, so specifically those types called horn bollards found in the Royal Docks area, those types called horn bollards found in the Royal Docks area. So they are commonly used for securing marine ropes during ship mooring. So that's where the title of this project came from. It symbolizes a moment of pause and rest. So we wanted it to become an invitation to the public to contemplate the contemporary relationship between industry and its byproducts from a spot where you can overlook the industrial landscape of the site. Yeah, so basically we tried to reinterpret the horned bollards as a bench, and the bench has some kind of an armrest and also a long deck that two people can actually sit down on.

Jin: The bench, serving as street furniture, straddles the scales of both an object and infrastructure, playing with the dislocation of conventional design languages in a joyful manner. We had to address weathering issues, since the bench will be exposed to external air for a very long time. So many details were considered. For example, the gentle slope was introduced on the seating area to naturally shed rainwater. The surfaces have been treated with sealer. So, for all these technical considerations, we collaborated with Jason Cyrus from Lab 0A3, a fabrication studio.

Initially we wanted to build a bench on our own, hiring a workshop space, but then we realized that it involves a lot of like heavy casting, and also the mould making is very difficult and it needs some special skills to fabricate the bench.

And then we realized that it's not something we can do our own, because it's going to be a very heavy bench which involves risks. So we decided to team up with a collaborator and in fact, we think it turned out to be better, in a way, because we're learning how to collaborate with a like a model maker and fabricator in terms of delivering the project rather than doing everything on our own. So definitely we've learned a lot. This Pills and Purchase competition provided a really excellent opportunity for us. We're really excited to see how the installed bench brings conceptual thoughts to life in tangible moments and how it'll weather and how it will be, even even the damage. We can embrace that. It might give another exciting opportunity for us to to think what the bench could be in the next stage of its life, and we truly believe that straight furniture plays a meaningful role in urban environment and local communities.

So we're really hoping to be able to see how it's realized in real life.

HoSung: I really hope public sit down over there and look at the beautiful basin of the Royal Dock and, as the bench has the armrest, they bring some cup of tea and, using the armrest as a table, and enjoy the scenery and more themselves on the bench, stay there and really relaxing.

Maria: We are the North-Bound collective and our bench is the Flow Bench, and it's located at the Connaught Crossing at the Royal Docks. My name is Maria and these are my colleagues.

Yara: My name is Yara and I'm part of the North-Bound Collective team.

Pak: My name is Pak and I'm part of the team as well, and I'm currently a graduate engineer at Civic Engineers the team as well, and I'm currently a graduate engineer at Civic Engineers.

Margot: My name is Margot and I'm part of the team at North-Bound Collective, and I'm also a graduate structural engineer at Momentum.

Dima: My name is Dima and I'm a part one assistant.

Maria: We are the North- Bound Collective and we came together specifically for the London Festival of Architecture Pews and Perches competition. I approached my partners after seeing the brief online and we already knew each other because we recently graduated from the University of Sheffield and I believe that the combination of our diverse skills and the intersection of our fields would be ideal when embarking on this design journey, seeing as some of us studied architecture, landscape architecture and structural engineering.

Yara: What we really liked when we saw the site is kind of how we can kind of reconnect that bench to people living along the Royal Docks and it kind of

sparked the idea that maybe this bench can be, you know, part of a bigger journey and part of kind of the identity of people living on the area. Kind of the whole design sparked from the idea of identity and designing the waterfront thing. So we basically were thinking we want to utilize existing materials happening on the site and one of that materials was paddle boards. So we're thinking using that as a primary seat for the bench, as well as kind of using reclaimed bricks, because it was in abundance in that area.

Dima: The brick base is curved because it follows the form of a wave, basically, and then also building on the history of the royal docks and the history related to shipping and water, because water, water is so abundant in that area, it just made sense to work on that theme.

Maria: After visiting the site and seeing the water sports in progress, we were also inspired by posters that were posted around the site that were discussing the problems that the community of the Royal Docks is currently facing. These posters were highlighting the fact that people feel disconnected from the waterfront, so we invited people to come along one day and draw on the surfboard itself what the Royal Docks mean to them and reconnect with the waterfront.

Dima: To allow people a sense of ownership in that area, so it's kind of like the bench belongs to them rather than like standalone art piece that doesn't have any relation to the context, and I think working on that context was one of the main drivers of the bench.

Maria: We tried to create a literal and metaphorical space of inclusivity and diversity, which is why you can see that the low and the high bench are placed with a distance between them, fully designed and put there in order for people with mobility needs to take that space and be included within the design. We had the opportunity to attend a community forum at the Royal Docks and present. We received great feedback and it was really interesting to see the community be invested in our design proposal. As a group of recent graduates, that was a really great opportunity for us as a collective. We also attended a mentoring session hosted by Narrative Practice and there we had the opportunity to consult professionals that are at a later stage in their careers, which was quite helpful in developing our proposal and seeking out manufacturers.

Pak: One of the main challenges that we initially encountered within our design is how to actually allow this bench to be constructed and deconstructed easily on site, and one of the final solutions that we came up with is that, for the actual curved leg of the bench, we would essentially be detaching it into four equally units, which would be all prefabricated off site, which then allows it to be easily bolted on-site for the usage for the duration of its lifetime and, when the time is right, the bench can be detached and be shifted elsewhere, but not as a whole heavy unit, which would increase the actual costings and also the timeframe of how much effort is needed to move things around.

Essentially, we are all still graduates. Everything is a very massive learning curve to us, which is a very great opportunity for us to actually get our hands on the nitty-gritty from start to finish. Right now, everyone's working at different paces. Everyone's getting different experiences in life. I think, with this project, not only it has allowed us to see things in a bigger picture, but it's allowed us to be more independent and confident with our projects as a whole.

Margot: In general in engineering and architecture, when you first start out, what tends to be the case is that it's a long time before you're able to see something that you've designed in the real world. Unique opportunity because it kind of goes through all of the stages of design and then all of the stages of production and all the logistics to do with managing production and all the logistics with sourcing materials, and it kind of throws you somehow like in the deep waters and forces you to do all of that quite quickly as a team. In that sense, we were quite fortunate to be able to participate in a project like this.

Dima: I think it's really cool how we kind of get to take on every single role. So, for example, I've been mainly working on like the admin and like sourcing the surfboard and like sending emails, which usually I wouldn't really do. I can't just be like drawing and attending side visits. But I think doing all of those different roles I think has taught us a lot, like a lot of things in such a small period of time, um, and I think it's just really cool how we got to design it and then see it built and we'll be like we'd be involved in every single part of that.

Maria: So yeah, massive, massive learning curve I think one of the reasons why our group is able to collaborate so well is exactly because each one of us has different experiences and a unique set of skills. Some of us are working in bigger practices, some of us in smaller ones.

Yara: some of us are graduate engineers, others are working within architectural practices, so the combination of this wide range of skills and knowledge has been very helpful in realising our design and actually making it happen, I think it's probably a call for all young designers to actually be involved in any competitions and anything's happening through the LFA, because I think it's a great opportunity to develop further skills and test things and collaborate with creative people, because we wouldn't have done that if we were not interested and we're not curious about the design and where can that get us?

So I think think we definitely encourage all young graduates and professionals to collaborate and to kind of go to different competitions and try different things, because it can work out and, even if it doesn't, it's such a fulfilling process. It's demanding yes, it requires so much time, but it's demanding yes, it requires so much time, but it's definitely um fulfilling and it definitely pushes you out of the comfort zone. We had the opportunity to get contributions from from Mitchelmersh, so we got three bricks from them and we, like we, we highly thank them for this opportunity, because it's really hard to get and these bricks were highly sustainable and highly recycled bricks, which is exactly what we were looking for.

Maria: We would also like to thank the community of the Royal Docks itself and everyone that attended our participatory activity and engaged with our design process.

Dan: We are the designers of On the Cobbles, which is in Thames Barrier Park. I'm Daniel Stilwell.

Vareria: My name is Valeria.

Didi: My name is Dimitrina Mitreva, but everyone calls me Didi.

Dan: We are a non-profit collective which is people from a wide range of backgrounds, lots of different ideas, lots of different skills, and all of these things kind of bring together, teaching and learning from each other.

Didi: We drew our inspiration from the Royal Docks rich history as a thriving hub for trade, looking back at how the dock appeared in its shipping heyday, with countless cargos of boots passing through, encased in rough timber crates.

So the design of the bench echoes this transitory character of the dogs, resembling a stack of steel-bended boxes dropped on the promenade while temporarily forming a place for Passerby to roam and ruminate.

The name of the bench on the cobbles comes from a Docker slang term meaning standing on a cobble street for decades, waiting outside the dog gates for work. So our intention was to create a bench that allows a glimpse into the times of manual labour and handcrafted work. On looking back at the historical context of industrial progress, we really wanted to provide the storytellers in the community with an opportunity to preserve their memories of the area. And to achieve these, organized a series of guided workshops where local community groups carved ceramic tiles featuring their stories to be displayed on the benches of public galleries. On the benches of public gallery, the clay we used is grokd clay, which utilizes already pre-fired particles, so potentially from a broken pottery from the past, which we thought was quite poetic for the community to use. Mark it with the fingers and the ideas to display the voices behind the changes. In Royal Docks, the ceramic tiles became a permanent record of the captured stories of people frozen in time.

Dan: The clay workshops themselves have opened up some unexpected opportunities. With local resident groups We've made some great connections. We met some elderly residents that were involved in the building of the Thames Barrier who have been really excited to share their stories on that process, along with meeting the new generation that's just moved to some of their new builds housing in the area. So just getting to learn London and compare those two viewpoints and bring those two communities together.

Valeria: One of the kind of key points was we were really keen on making like a fully dismantled structure, kind of following the idea of the circular economy, and we chose to use reclaimed sleepers as a kind of reminiscent gesture towards again the past of the Royal Docks and how there used to be a railway going all the way to the edge of the water. The two materials kind of combine different time periods and timelines into one piece which is transitory in its sense as it's not a permanent structure, which also kind of reminds us of this period where it was a thriving hub. The sleepers could be seen as a modular element and then using screws making it fully demountable also creates this opportunity for the afterlife of the materials. Once the bench is dismantled, a few pieces could be put

together and make a chair, like a stool somewhere, and then the rest of the sleepers could be used as plant pots or just as like a seating space somewhere else pots or just as like a sitting space somewhere else.

Dan: We also cut and constructed the bench ourselves, so that was lots of messy, noisy weekends with power tools in people's gardens.

Valeria: Often, like in architecture you don't actually get to build the stuff is, you're almost slightly distant from the actual product and almost even the other materials itself. So you kind of plan everything, you're trying to control it with drawings and things like that. Then when it actually comes to building it, there's always something that you might not have thought of or something might turn out in a slightly different way.

Didi: We felt the empowerment from building and making it with our hands. Learning for using tools and listen to the materials properties was really essential to our project. I think in the course of this project we found out some reservations and gaps between the designers and local community and we strongly believe that collaborative acts enrich the experience and the final built outcome for all those involved in the process. So we use this competition as a real opportunity to spread Poacea's vision on collaborative engagement, fostering these intercreation between the designers and local people who can unveil their preferences and requirements.

Dan: We used the opportunity to support social enterprises with environmental and social aims, such as the forest recycling project that supplied the reclaimed scaffold boards that formed the base of the bench, and they're big advocates for reclaiming and repurposing of waste products in East London.

Eugenio: The collaboration for this project is Panta Rhei Collaborative with Miles Dean, and the name of the bench is 66CO2.

Bene: Panta Rhei Collaborative is a network of architects, urbanists and researchers working in different conservations from London, as well as Berlin

and Zurich, and in this project, Eugenio and myself, Bene, are involved. We wanted to challenge traditional models of working and pool resources collectively to be able to work with multiple people and across disciplines on different design projects. This is how the collaboration with Miles began. We realized that we had shared interests challenging the use of existing resources and processes in construction towards more sustainable and novel forms of craft and design. Miles brings, for example, experiences from the fabrication and contracting side. Eugenio has worked through the technical delivery of several reuse projects, and I bring a more, let's say, theoretical approach from academia.

Eugenio: Working both in the design and contracting sectors of the construction industry, we realised basically how much waste is produced that does not re-enter the cycle of reuse, especially with concrete. Concrete gets a lot of bad press for its poor ecological footprint, and there are not very many solutions to date for reusing it in its solid or virgin form, and so we wanted to question these prejudices around concrete and see if we could suggest new futures within the circular economy for this material. Seeing as the expansive regeneration that is currently in process in the Royal Docks area. These developments inevitably will produce a lot of waste, and so we wanted to see if we could take some of that waste and work with it to give something back to the docks public realm.

Miles: We think that if we are to turn towards reusing more of our existing building stock rather than building anew, we need to begin thinking equally as much about how buildings are taken apart, in addition to how they're put together 66CO2, is unapologetically made of concrete, and we fought really hard to keep concrete as almost the only element, starting from the processes involved in construction and demolition and the materials and also the sources that we could find to procure this material.

We had to look for what we could make it from before we realized what it looked like, and this led us to the two parts of the bench, which are the concrete cores, which form essentially the legs of a bench, and the concrete pavers that form the seats, and we had a wonderful partner in Wellcome Trust who invited us to one of their sites that was in demolition to give us these, and then also the London Borough of Newham is doing a lot of regeneration work donated the pavers to us.

Eugenio: And the concrete brings a lot of different character with it, and that's something that we're quite proud the bench expresses we also wanted to use the concrete as a mass that can be worked with, playing with finishes, the surfaces,

maybe exploring, honing, hammering or polishing the the material, and also highlight the tectonic qualities of that material, distinguishing cast surfaces from cut ones to achieve a sort of variety of textures, and also highlight the different densities that the material can take, and actually use that process of responding to the existing material and its qualities to inform the final design.

Miles Yeah, it's kind of a unique situation where the aggregate that we see on these cores is, in some ways, what other designers and other products are out there spend a lot of time and energy trying to create with terrazzos and exposed finishes.

Eugenio: It made us realize sort of how fragmented the construction industry currently is in that sense, because it makes it so difficult to sort of identify and facilitate potential channels of communication for reuse of materials when you have all this sort of leftover waste on construction sites or even just for small bits of work occurring, even if it's just investigative works that structural engineers will carry through early stages of projects, and it's like, well, where is all this material going? Early stages of projects, and it's like, well, where is all this material going? And if there were some way that we can sort of bridge those gaps between these different channels of communication? We know that the royal docks is an area that is undergoing a lot of regeneration and change, and I think change is also an opportunity to explore new ways of doing things, and I think that's also what we wanted to explore through our design. How can we design something that poses a completely new way of working with waste material? I mean, this is essentially a prototype, for you know something which could be scaled across the City of London as a sort of model for repurposing waste and designing a whole load of new urban furniture.

Bene: The concept of teamwork is what defines our approach in this project, and our experience is that the methodology of exchanging ideas, especially this time with dealing with the topic of reuse, often creates an atmosphere that can positively have an impact on the outcome of the project of the design, and I guess we all hope that you see this approach also from studio green, and the bench is submarine cables, which is located on the floating gardens at the roly-poly.

Jordan: The concept was born out of some historical analysis of the area. I'm not'm not from London, but have worked in London before and used to live up in London, and I think that the area of the Royal Docks is really interesting. There's a lot of development going on around the area and some of the I guess some of the maritime heritage and maritime character is being lost to new housing, which of course we need.

The historical analysis wanted to focus on trying to retain some of that memory. And so look specifically the area of silver town, named after a rich London merchant by the name of Stephen Silver, who brought his factories to that area back in the late 1800s, and they were known for producing clothing and eventually submarine cables, and so this company, for over 60 years, produced these submarine cables and they were known for not only the manufacturing production of these cables but also laying them, and they laid them in a number of different places, you know, across the channel, over in America, around Havana, south America, around Cuba and all along the kind of Western African coast, and so I think there's this really interesting heritage of this small corner of London that is known for creating this product, which is instrumental in connecting people and places instrumental in connecting people and places.

And so the bench itself, on one hand, plays on the nautical character of the area and so it has this wave-like form that is created by these linear sections of rolled stainless steel tubes and, on the other hand, also plays into this kind of historical analysis and this idea of submarine cables and these cables that connect people in places, and so these linear sections of steel are then connected by this rope that is looped along the kind of wave-like form of the steel. The main shape of the bench is this playful wave-like form which is used to evoke the water, the nautical theme and character of the site, and then the historic submarine cables are referenced by the rope material and that is woven and looped around the rising and falling linear sections of the stainless steel frame. It's been a really interesting process.

Something that I have spent a lot of time on is working with a local rigger, so I'm based in Bristol. Bristol has a really great maritime heritage, much like the Royal Docks, and so I have access to some good people with some real interesting knowledge around rope and rigging and splicing and all of these kind of new techniques that I'm learning about splicing and all of these kind of new techniques that I'm learning about. And so over the process of the design and the fabrication I've spent time working with a guy called Jay from Traditional Rooking who is excellent. He's so knowledgeable and he has really helped to refine the rope connections, the fixing. He's taught me splicing techniques. We have worked together using mock-ups to work through some of the challenges of fixing and

securing and tensioning the rope. So all of that has been super helpful in the design and fabrication of the bench.

Those kind of mock-ups and using his specialist knowledge to inform the, the final piece, the design of the bench, I'm hoping will encourage people to be drawn to it just by its kind of organic aesthetic and the wave-like form. I think that the rope and the material then that is used is kind of another layer of detail that people can appreciate once they get closer to it and might want to kind of touch, as it has that kind of tactile character. The rising and falling linear stainless steel tube sections offer an opportunity to kind of sit at the lower trough section of that wave and then on the other hand, just kind of lean or perch against the bench at the kind of peak section of the wave. So I'm hoping that there's kind of a number of different ways that the bench could be used and it would be great even you know, it would be great to see people how they use it in place. And I think that it does tie into the practice's ethos, this idea of being resourceful, of playful but also material conscious and all of that being wrapped up into design, that is, for everyday activities, looking at the use of recyclable and industrial materials.

So the steel frame of the bench has been fabricated by a company called Benchmark Design.

I used to work with one of the partners at a previous practice in a shared working space and so when the Pews and {erches competition came up and once I'd kind of had some ideas about the design, reached out to Ed at Benchmark and we had a number of workshop and kind of design sessions where we worked through. Some of the design of the frame and the concept. Benchmark have been really really great and their knowledge has been really useful. They really helped with the selection of the material. So we're using marine grade stainless steel, and using that for a number of reasons. You know, stainless steel is 100 recyclable. It's a super robust material with a kind of almost indefinite lifespan. There's minimal maintenance or degradation, and I think that it's also a good material for a marine environment. And so, yeah, benchmark were instrumental in helping to select the material and informing, like I say, the design of the frame to work with the rope and the fastening of the rope you've been listening to building sounds, the podcast brought to you by the London Festival of Architecture.

Eliza: We'll be back next month with a new conversation.

In the meantime, head to lfa.london to find out all the exciting news and updates from the Festival.

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Until next time!