

Bonsai Treehouses

Call to architecture practices, landscape architects, engineers, interior architects and designers

2026 Theme: Together



Project Outline

Bonsai Treehouses is a public exhibition of miniature architectural treehouses taking place in Oxford Square in Connaught Village this summer.

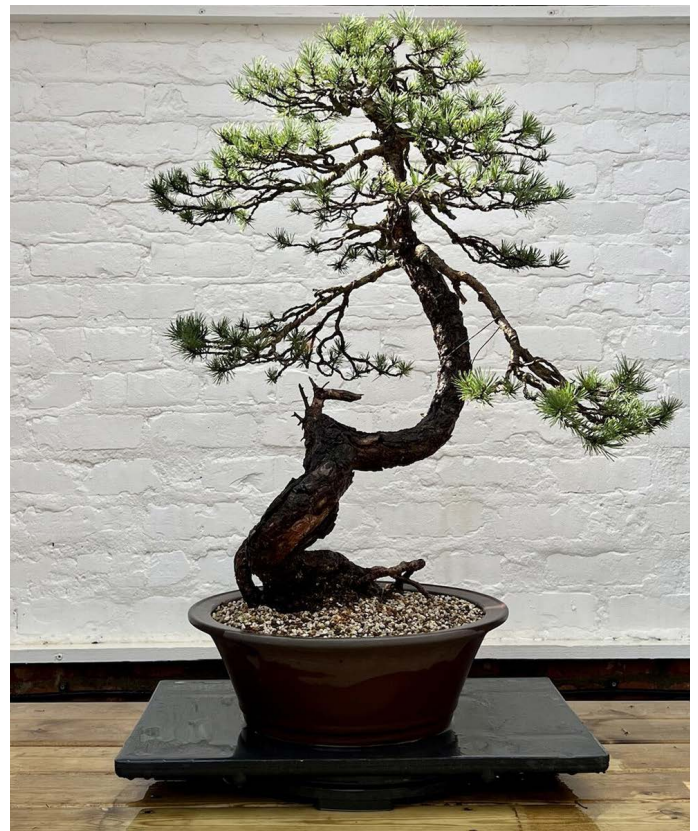
This project, created in collaboration with curator Paolo Cocco, explores how creative imagination can be scaled down, adapted, or reinterpreted when confronted with the constraints, aesthetics, and philosophies of bonsai cultivation, challenging artists, architects and designers to reimagine spatial and structural concepts through the lens of miniature living landscapes.

The exhibition will place miniature treehouse-inspired structures across a designated outdoor route. All installations will respond to the theme Together, using the bonsai species form, ecology, or symbolic associations as the catalyst for design.

Visitors will be invited to explore how creative practitioners negotiate balance, proportion, adaptability, and environmental harmony when working at an unexpected, miniature scale.

The experience will be supported by a surrounding wall exhibition featuring information about the display, the design narrative behind each structure, and the participating architectural practices will be shared on each plinth.

Advising the project is Peter Warren, a bonsai specialist based in the UK, who completed his six-year apprenticeship in Tokyo under bonsai master Kobayashi Kunio. Peter will be sourcing bonsai and advising on their care as well as running workshops during the course of the exhibition.



Invitation to participate

We invite each practice to design and fabricate one miniature treehouse structure, at a scale compatible with the bonsai's perceived scale, i.e. if that treehouse were built on a non-bonsai tree of the same species, responding to the theme Together.

Each design should consider how architecture can coexist with or be inspired by the living form of the tree whether structurally, conceptually, or symbolically.

Participants will design and build their treehouse structures off-site, and then come to site to install them on their plinths. You are able to utilise the space on the top your plinth as part of the design.

There will be a limit to the number of participants we can accept, so the exhibition will be created on a first come first served basis. Similar to The Gingerbread City® exhibition, participation fees allow us to use the funds from the exhibition ticket sales towards our charitable projects.





Public engagement

Public programming will be created to encourage visitation and engagement within the exhibition. The programming will be interactive, educational and inspiring for a wide ranging public audience.



Audience

Built environment professionals
Design professionals
Leaders in the industry
Cultural visitors
Families
Adults
Schools
Tourists

Auction

You can choose to enter your bonsai treehouse into our summer auction to help raise further funds for the Museum of Architecture.

Impact

We anticipate 20,000+ visitors over the course of the run.

The precedent project, The Gingerbread City® stats are:

- 75+ pieces of press coverage
- 1.18M estimated views
- 131M publication wide audience figures
- 815K social views
- 12.6K Facebook shares
- 18.7K Instagram likes
- 18K YouTube views
- 196K TikTok followers
- 103 percent growth of Instagram followers



Considerations

Participants must comply with the horticultural guidelines, including the restrictions and care plans set by the bonsai specialist. Designs must not damage the bonsai, interfere with its health, or require invasive attachment methods. If your bonsai tree does not survive in the first two weeks of the exhibition, you will be responsible for replacing it.

All installations will be displayed outdoors for the full duration of the exhibition and must be durable enough to withstand weather, wildlife, and public proximity with minimal maintenance. For specific technical constraints and detailed environmental considerations, participants are invited to consult directly with the Museum of Architecture.

Use of natural or sustainably sourced materials is strongly encouraged.

Key Dates

Deadline to enter: 18 June

Deadline for Peter Warren to source your bonsai tree: 8 June

Installation on site: 29 June TBC

Exhibition opening: 3 July TBC

Opening to the public: 4 July TBC

Exhibition closing: 30 August



Participation fees

The Museum of Architecture is a registered charity (1154120). Participation fees go to fabricating and installing the exhibition, maintaining the treehouses, and exhibition materials. MoA will cover the costs of the team (all paid at least London living wage), and all other running costs with ticket sales.

Participation in Bonsai Treehouses

Option 1:

Peter Warren will source a young bonsai tree and pot for you (valued at £250), and MoA will provide a plinth. You will have the opportunity to speak with Peter about the species of trees that are available. Your tree will be photographed for you ahead of being delivered to a central London collection point before the installation date, allowing you time to create your treehouse. Guidance on caring for your bonsai tree while it is with you, will also be provided. This option is available until 8 June.

Option 1 fee: £350 + vat for the tree, pot and plinth to be invoiced by MoA

Option 2:

Work with Peter Warren to source a larger, more mature bonsai tree (pay Peter directly for the tree and pot). MoA will provide a plinth. This option is available until 8 June.

Option 2: £100 + vat for the plinth to be invoiced by MoA

Option 3:

Purchase your own bonsai tree (with free advice/review from Peter Warren). MoA will provide a plinth. This option is available until 18 June.

Option 3: £100 + vat for the plinth to be invoiced by MoA

The participation fee includes:

1. Instructions and advice for caring for your bonsai
2. A plinth for your display
3. Care for your bonsai tree throughout the exhibition
4. Working with MoA's PR team to promote your work in the exhibition
5. An allocation of free tickets to the exhibition
6. An allocation of free tickets to the opening event

****Participation in The Gingerbread City 10 year anniversary exhibition *Early Bird Rates* if you sign up now with Bonsai Treehouses!****

30 x 30 plinth	£250 + vat
60 x 60 plinth	£350 + vat
180 x 60 plinth	£500 + vat

Email office@museumofarchitecture.org to confirm your participation.

Project Partners

The Museum of Architecture (MoA)

MoA is a charity dedicated to finding new ways for the public to engage with architecture and to encourage entrepreneurship within architectural practice in order to stimulate learning, collaboration and action. MoA provides opportunities for architects to work with other industries and communities to be better informed about the places and people for which they are designing.

MoA began in 2006 and as a place where people come to learn about what is currently happening in architecture through exhibitions, events, talks, and public installations. MoA's programming provides insightful information for both the public and architects alike, linking architecture to contemporary culture to make it accessible to all.

MoA's family programming, School for Creative Thinkers, draws from nature to teach young people about design solutions. By using ideas around biomimicry with animals, plants and bugs that children are already excited and familiar with, we can share STEAM concepts that give a deeper understanding of our built and natural worlds.

Paolo Cocco

Paolo Cocco is a multidisciplinary museum interpretation specialist with over a decade of experience bridging scientific research, cultural storytelling, and audience engagement. Holding a background in natural sciences (BSc), animal behaviour and evolution (MSc), and extensive research experience in Ecology, Evolution, and Behaviour, Paolo has developed innovative interpretative strategies across prestigious institutions including the Science Museum, RBG Kew, and the Natural History Museum in the United Kingdom and the Trento Museum of Science and Corporea (Città della Scienza) in Italy.

Specializing in translating complex scientific concepts into accessible narratives, Paolo has led groundbreaking exhibition projects such as 'Queer Nature' and 'Our Future Planet', demonstrating expertise in collaborative interdisciplinary work that connects art, science, and public understanding. With experience spanning international contexts and diverse audience demographics, Paolo combines rigorous research methodology with creative communication approaches, consistently prioritizing clarity, cultural sensitivity, and visitor-centered design.

A polyglot with professional experience across three countries, Paolo brings a unique perspective to interpretation development, emphasizing the power of storytelling to illuminate scientific discovery and inspire public curiosity.

Connaught Village

A unique destination for shopping and socialising, Connaught Village is a leafy village in the heart of the West End. From luxury goods to artisan food, designer boutiques, art galleries and exclusive restaurants – this select neighbourhood combines tradition and the now. Stroll through the quaint village of pastel-coloured houses, a mix of Georgian and 60's architecture or relax in the gardens of the one of London's most desirable communities.

The village is central, just minutes from Oxford Street and Marble Arch, but peaceful and relaxing. As part of the Hyde Park Estate, the area is a rich blend of architectural heritage and exclusive green squares. Connaught Village is a true community in the heart of the city. From the traditional pubs, community events, the neighbourhood is a welcoming combination of independent retailers, fashion boutiques, restaurants, beauty specialists and magnificent galleries.

Peter Warren

Peter Warren is arguably the country's leading bonsai professional and completed his six-year apprenticeship in Tokyo under bonsai master Kobayashi Kunio. Warren teaches and works with bonsai collectors around the world and his work has been exhibited at the highest level, including in Japan. He has a studio and nursery in London.

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