

Press release
15 September 2016

MINI at the London Design Festival 2016. MINI LIVING “Forests” installation by Asif Khan.

Munich/London. In cities like London and New York, affordable places to live are in short supply. House/flat shares or one-bedroom apartments that fall within a reasonable budget offer barely enough room for our everyday needs. At the same time, the world of work is also undergoing a period of change as workplaces go mobile and self-employment blooms. These developments have led to “third places” – those that lie between work and home – growing in importance. At the London Design Festival 2016, MINI is collaborating with Asif Khan, whose installation **MINI LIVING “Forests”** explores three interpretations of these “spaces between spaces”. They are each designed to encourage specific uses: relaxation, getting together or productivity. The design of the three spaces uses plants to improve city living.

“As an urban brand, MINI is well aware of the challenges affecting cities and of the complex ways in which mobility, architecture and the people who live in cities interact,” explains Esther Bahne, Head of Brand Strategy and Business Innovation at MINI. “The MINI LIVING ‘Forests’ installation reflects our understanding of the ‘creative use of space’ when it comes to shared urban areas. And it sees us continuing the conversation on future city living which we started with the ‘MINI LIVING – Do Disturb’ installation at this year’s Salone del Mobile in Milan.”

The city as an extension of our personal space.

Third places already provide important contact points in our modern urban society. They are places where we meet and relax, or places offering certain services, which are generally privately owned and food/drink-related. Freelancers, for example, often use cafés as offices and restaurants as meeting rooms. As a result, these venues do not fulfil their purposes as such, instead merely performing add-on roles. And many are not open to all or places you can make your own. At the London Design Festival, MINI and Asif Khan are putting forward an alternative approach to third places as we currently know them, creating spaces which can be accessed by the public, used as desired by each visitor and tailored to the needs of our urban society. What makes this fascinating is their focus on “activating” potential spaces in the city, at the same time as offering its population new ways to use them. “Increasing urban density around the world requires us to find new creative avenues for utilising the space we have and the potential it offers,” says Oke Hauser, Creative Lead for MINI

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LIVING. “The invigoration of our public spaces and the way they link in with our private spheres provide particularly broad scope for re-thinking our cities and our approach to urban planning.”

MINI is using the motto “Your Side of Town” to urge people visiting the installations to discover the city and the ways in which its spaces can be used, and to bring them to life to their own benefit.

The concept.

MINI joined forces with London-based Asif Khan, who investigated the “third places” theme by using urban greenery to design a series of installations. “My response to the theme is inspired by the Japanese concept of ‘shinrin yoku’, which literally means ‘forest bathing’. It means every sense switches to absorb the forest atmosphere, what you hear, what you smell, even the feeling underfoot. On another level, we use plants as a tool to assert our personal space at its boundary with public space, whether on our desk at the office or at the perimeter of our home. The project brings these two ideas together for visitors to experience new sensations within the city,” says Khan.

The three installations are located within walking distance of one another in Shoreditch, London, forming a network that visitors can explore and experience. Their clear material language creates a deliberate contrast to Shoreditch’s urban setting. They are all rectangular forms, with walls made from several layers of transparent, corrugated polycarbonate. The green of the plants shines through the walls and offers an early indication of the fascinating setting inside. From the inside, the materials of the walls construct a purposefully diffused connection with the outside world and, as a result, generate an intimate, private space amid the hustle and bustle beyond.

Connect. Create. Relax.

The three rooms that make up the installation differ in both external size and intended usage. Inside as well, each installation greets the visitor with a unique landscape. The **Connect Space** is a place for meeting up and catching up – spontaneously or pre-planned. A large table forms the centrepiece of the room, which can be used as an evening dining area, for example. The plants both allow



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visitors to immerse themselves deeply in the forest ambience and play their part in an extremely intense communication experience.

The **Create Space** offers the best possible ambience in which to focus on work; it represents an island of creativity and productivity. The flexible arrangement of furnishings inside means the space can be used in a variety of ways. One wall reveals a terraced landscape, providing the ideal backdrop for pitches and presentations, for example.

The **Relax Space** welcomes visitors with an abundance of plants. It offers space in which to take a step back, switch off from the hectic nature of everyday life and relax. Visitors enter via the underside of the installation. Once inside, a bench invites them to take a breather. The vertical space draws the eye upwards, prompting a change of perspective and an avenue for contemplation.

MINI’s exploration of third places and the solutions that improve urban life will continue later this year with the launch of a new, long-term initiative in the U.S. A/D/O, a 23,000 square-foot (2,000+ square meter) space for design in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, will introduce a diverse programme of resources for creative professionals, including a prototyping studio, in-house accelerator and open workspace. Built for designers, yet open to the general public, A/D/O will cultivate a platform for dynamic discourse that seeks to become a prolific source of ideas for the future.

The MINI LIVING “Forests” installation is open to the public and available for use during the London Design Festival (17 – 25 September).

Location addresses:

Vince Court, N1 6EA

Charles Square Gardens, N1 6HS

Corner of Pitfield Street and Charles Square, EC1V 9EY

Opening times*:

17 September: 10.00 – 20.00 hrs

18 September: 10.00 – 18.00 hrs



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19 September: 08.00 – 20.00 hrs

20 September: 08.00 – 22.00 hrs

21 September: 08.00 – 21.00 hrs

22 September: 08.00 – 20.00 hrs

23 September: 08.00 – 20.00 hrs

24 September: 10.00 – 20.00 hrs

25 September: 10.00 – 18.00 hrs

* All times are GMT.

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The BMW Group

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In 2015, the BMW Group sold approximately 2.247 million cars and nearly 137,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax for the financial year 2015 was approximately € 9.22 billion on revenues amounting to € 92.18 billion. As of 31 December 2015, the BMW Group had a workforce of 122,244 employees.

The success of the BMW Group has always been based on long-term thinking and responsible action. The company has therefore established ecological and social sustainability throughout the value chain, comprehensive product responsibility and a clear commitment to conserving resources as an integral part of its strategy.

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