# Serpentine pavilion 2025 showcases Marina Tabassum’s kinetic wooden sanctuary amid contrasting Lego collaboration



Celebrating a quarter-century of innovative architecture on its lawn, London’s Serpentine Gallery is unveiling an extraordinary addition to its annual Pavilion series: a kinetic structure designed by Bangladeshi architect Marina Tabassum. Known for her sustainable architectural practices, Tabassum’s Pavilion, titled "A Capsule in Time," is set to redefine the landscaping of this cultural landmark when it opens to the public on June 6, 2025.

Tabassum, whose designs often draw from her experiences in the Bengal Delta, encapsulates themes of transience, memory, and community in her latest work. “Every time you think of an idea for the project, you realise, ‘Oh, that’s already been done,’” she reflects, touching on the unique challenge of developing something fresh for such a prestigious commission. This year's Pavilion, stretching 55 metres, features four wooden modules capable of movement, thereby allowing for a dynamic interaction between visitors and the gallery space.

In her design, Tabassum references the shamiana, the traditional tents used in South Asia for festive gatherings, likening the Pavilion to a “capsule in time.” Although she initially envisaged the structure clad in coarse jute, practical restraints such as fire safety standards and the unpredictability of British weather led her to use a sophisticated, translucent plastic that contrasts with her usual preference for raw materials. While effective in providing shelter and light, the final product bears a corporate sheen that diverges from the authentic warmth of her previous works in Bangladesh, where she frequently employs materials like woven grass and bamboo.

The Pavilion's innovative kinetic feature—a system allowing one of the entry points to close and open via hydraulic machinery—is a testament to modern engineering but serves to amplify the dissonance between Tabassum’s intent and the engineering realities imposed by prefabrication processes. Critics have pointed out that such features, whilst visually compelling, risk overshadowing the Pavilion's deeper narrative about community and unity. The architect desires the space to act as a sanctuary for dialogue in a world fraught with division, stating, “I would like this to be a space where people can come together, forget their differences, and just talk about humanity.”

Curiously, the Serpentine's 25th anniversary also features a second Pavilion designed by Peter Cook, which presents a stark, contrasting aesthetic to Tabassum’s calm offering. The “play pavilion” is marked by its bold, cartoonish forms that many observers find to be a clumsy attempt at whimsy, far removed from the thoughtful sophistication of Tabassum’s structure. Its sponsorship by Lego and Cook’s whimsical design, characterised as reminiscent of a “crumpled cheeseburger,” has drawn criticism for diluting the seriousness of architectural inquiry that the Pavilion project strives to promote.

Bettina Korek, chief executive of the Serpentine, stated that Cook was commissioned based on a long-held vision by the late Zaha Hadid, who believed in perpetual experimentation in architecture. However, this juxtaposition has triggered discussions about the gallery's thematic coherence and its respect for the nuances of design originating from the global south.

As the gallery prepares for the unveiling of Tabassum’s Pavilion, the discourse surrounding the two structures continues to evolve, reflecting broader conversations about inclusion, artistic representation, and the future of architectural experimentation. The ultimate fate of Tabassum’s Pavilion post-exhibition remains uncertain, though she has expressed a desire for it to be transformed into a library, enriching cultural discourse with a focus on Bengali literature and ecology.

For now, as the days countdown to the unveiling, the Serpentine Gallery's prestigious tradition of architectural innovation remains at the fore—a canvas for dialogue on beauty, diversity, and the evolving interplay of cultural narratives in contemporary design.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2025/jun/03/serpentine-movable-pavilion-marina-tabassum), [[2]](https://www.serpentinegalleries.org/about/press/marina-tabassum-and-her-firm-marina-tabassum-architects-mta-selected-for-the-serpentine-pavilion-2025/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2025/jun/03/serpentine-movable-pavilion-marina-tabassum), [[4]](https://hubemag.com/a-capsule-in-time-serpentine-gallery), [[5]](https://www.designboom.com/architecture/marina-tabassum-plans-kinetic-2025-serpentine-pavilion-design-london-01-28-2025/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[6]](https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2025/01/28/architect-marina-tabassum-2025-serpentine-summer-pavilion), [[7]](https://revistadinlemn.ro/en/2025/04/28/marina-tabassum-brings-wooden-staple-structures-to-the-serpentine-2025-pavilion/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[3]](https://www.serpentinegalleries.org/whats-on/serpentine-pavilion-2025-by-marina-tabassum/), [[4]](https://hubemag.com/a-capsule-in-time-serpentine-gallery)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2025/jun/03/serpentine-movable-pavilion-marina-tabassum), [[2]](https://www.serpentinegalleries.org/about/press/marina-tabassum-and-her-firm-marina-tabassum-architects-mta-selected-for-the-serpentine-pavilion-2025/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2025/jun/03/serpentine-movable-pavilion-marina-tabassum), [[2]](https://www.serpentinegalleries.org/about/press/marina-tabassum-and-her-firm-marina-tabassum-architects-mta-selected-for-the-serpentine-pavilion-2025/), [[3]](https://www.serpentinegalleries.org/whats-on/serpentine-pavilion-2025-by-marina-tabassum/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2025/jun/03/serpentine-movable-pavilion-marina-tabassum> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.serpentinegalleries.org/about/press/marina-tabassum-and-her-firm-marina-tabassum-architects-mta-selected-for-the-serpentine-pavilion-2025/> - Marina Tabassum and her firm, Marina Tabassum Architects (MTA), have been selected to design the 2025 Serpentine Pavilion, titled 'A Capsule in Time'. The pavilion will be unveiled at Serpentine South on 6 June 2025, marking the 25th anniversary of the commission. ([serpentinegalleries.org](https://www.serpentinegalleries.org/about/press/marina-tabassum-and-her-firm-marina-tabassum-architects-mta-selected-for-the-serpentine-pavilion-2025/?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://www.serpentinegalleries.org/whats-on/serpentine-pavilion-2025-by-marina-tabassum/> - The 2025 Serpentine Pavilion, designed by Marina Tabassum, features an elongated capsule-like form with a central court aligning with Serpentine South’s bell tower. Inspired by South Asian garden canopies, the structure comprises four wooden modules with translucent façades, creating a play of light and shadow. A kinetic element allows one module to move, transforming the space. ([serpentinegalleries.org](https://www.serpentinegalleries.org/whats-on/serpentine-pavilion-2025-by-marina-tabassum/?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://hubemag.com/a-capsule-in-time-serpentine-gallery> - Marina Tabassum has been announced as the designer for the 2025 Serpentine Pavilion, titled 'A Capsule in Time'. The pavilion will be unveiled at Serpentine South in London on 6 June 2025. Inspired by the transient nature of architecture, the design reflects themes of impermanence, memory, and time, drawing from Tabassum’s experience working in the Bengal Delta, where shifting rivers often necessitate the relocation of homes. ([hubemag.com](https://hubemag.com/a-capsule-in-time-serpentine-gallery?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://www.designboom.com/architecture/marina-tabassum-plans-kinetic-2025-serpentine-pavilion-design-london-01-28-2025/> - Bangladeshi architect Marina Tabassum, founder of Marina Tabassum Architects (MTA), was selected to design the 2025 Serpentine Pavilion, titled 'A Capsule in Time'. Opening on 6 June 2025 at Serpentine South in London’s Kensington Gardens, the pavilion commemorates the 25th anniversary of the series. Inspired by the ephemeral architecture of South Asia and the organic forms of garden canopies, the design features an elongated, north-south structure with four wooden capsules and a kinetic element that allows one capsule to move, transforming the space. ([designboom.com](https://www.designboom.com/architecture/marina-tabassum-plans-kinetic-2025-serpentine-pavilion-design-london-01-28-2025/?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2025/01/28/architect-marina-tabassum-2025-serpentine-summer-pavilion> - The pavilion will consist of four wooden capsule forms with a translucent façade. 'Central to Tabassum’s design is a kinetic element where one of the capsule forms is able to move and connect, transforming the pavilion into a new space,' says a Serpentine statement. Tabassum’s pavilion design is inspired by the history and architectural language of shamiana tents or awnings of South Asia. ([theartnewspaper.com](https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2025/01/28/architect-marina-tabassum-2025-serpentine-summer-pavilion?utm_source=openai))
7. <https://revistadinlemn.ro/en/2025/04/28/marina-tabassum-brings-wooden-staple-structures-to-the-serpentine-2025-pavilion/> - The pavilion's wooden structure will be elongated in a north-south direction, with a central courtyard that aligns with the Serpentine South tower. According to the sketches, the four wooden modules form an architectural ensemble that invites visitors to explore the space. The most technically interesting feature is the movable element—one of the wooden staples will be able to be moved and reconnected, thus transforming the configuration of the whole pavilion. ([revistadinlemn.ro](https://revistadinlemn.ro/en/2025/04/28/marina-tabassum-brings-wooden-staple-structures-to-the-serpentine-2025-pavilion/?utm_source=openai))