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WOMEN SHAPING THE ART WORLD

“

What is architecture other than framing new social interactions with dignity and beauty, providing a place to be together?”



LINA GHOTMEH

For Lina Ghotmeh—the celebrated French Lebanese architect who designed the 2023 Serpentine Pavilion in London, titled *À Table*—her practice is archaeological, unraveling secrets of the past to create a structure anchored in the future. Beyond a remarkable physicality, *À Table* is a call to collective dialogue around a shared meal—food as an expression of togetherness. A circular table and stools lining the building’s perimeter are an invitation to convene and exchange ideas. “What is architecture other than framing new social interactions with dignity and beauty, providing a place to be together?” she asks.

Bio-sourced and low carbon, the nine-sided scalloped timber pavilion in Kensington Gardens embodies Ghotmeh’s long-standing pledge to sustainability. “Like an archaeologist, I usually start from a specific site or physical reality,” says Ghotmeh, whose extraordinary new Hermès workshop,

Maroquinerie de Louviers, in Normandy, achieved France’s E4C2’s energy performance rating, the first for an industrial building. “By observing the local resources and materials, the surroundings, and the environment, I make creations that arise in symbiosis with nature, enhancing the memory of the location. Every design we produce at my practice goes through a fascinating journey of deep historical and material research.”

Up next: “The architecture of the contemporary art museum in Al Ula will immerse visitors in a creative journey, interweaving the natural environment, agriculture, and art to reveal the heart of contemporary culture,” says Ghotmeh of her upcoming project in northwest Saudi Arabia. “Through a series of garden pavilions, the museum presents a constant interplay between art and nature, capturing the essence of this unique place.” linaghotmeh.com —J.U.