

More Sculpture than Structure

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"We are interested in relaxing the boundaries between inside and out," says Kazuyo Sejima, one of the founding partners of leading Japanese architecture practice SANAA who along with Ryue Nishizawa designed the ninth commission in the Serpentine Gallery's annual series of Pavilions.

Conceived in 2000 by Serpentine Gallery Director, Julia Peyton-Jones, the Serpentine Gallery Pavilion is an ongoing programme of temporary structures presenting the work of an invited, international architect or design team who have not yet completed a building in England. On that basis it is surprising to see the names of past invitees, with Zaha Hadid, Daniel Libeskind, Oscar Niemeyer, Rem Koolhaas and Frank Gehry amongst them.

With no budget, the commission relies on sponsorship from a diverse range of companies including material suppliers, Perspex Distribution to international construction company, Mace and title sponsor, NetJets Europe.

Open and ethereal, this year's Pavilion is essentially a polished aluminium ceiling sat atop a series of slender columns and has been likened to smoke drifting freely between the trees, a reflective cloud and a floating pool of water, marking this commission out as more sculpture than structure.

Unadorned with anything other than clear Perspex® screens used to wrap around the auditorium, those invited to the gallery's summer party, Jay-Z, Pharrell Williams and Thandie Newton amongst them, would at least be afforded some protection from the unpredictable English weather.

With views across the park left completely uninterrupted, the clear Perspex® walls offered form as well as function and reinforced the transparent and translucent nature of all SANAA structures.

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