

# interior designer

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Photography courtesy of Rob Jones

# FLEX AND CONNECT

**SLEEP & EAT BROUGHT TOGETHER THE HOSPITALITY DESIGN COMMUNITY WITH A THEME THAT SHIFTS AND EVOLVES AS THE INDUSTRY GROWS, WITH FLEXIBILITY, GROWTH AND CONNECTIVITY AT ITS CORE**

**Sleep & Eat 2019 confirmed its position as a leading hospitality design and innovation event in Europe.**

Across the two days in November, Sleep & Eat offered designers, architects, operators and owners a unique chance to hear from industry leaders, discover new products and expand their thinking, bringing the community together to celebrate the role of great design within the most successful hospitality enterprises around the globe.

In a conference that was generally acknowledged as the best yet, it was frequently standing room only. Amar Lalvani, CEO of Standard International; Christoph Hoffmann, CEO of 25Hours Hotels; and the winner of this year's AHEAD Outstanding Contribution Award, and Josh Wyatt, CEO of NeueHouse delivered inspirational keynote speeches. Panel discussions included international designers, hospitality directors and industry influencers. Alex Michaelis of Michaelis Boyd remarked on a shift away from shiny and new, claiming: "It's important to let things age and wear [in hospitality] as this is key to making people feel at home". Yuna Megre of MEGRE INTERIORS

offered that "instead of scrambling to keep up with digital tools and creating 'interiors' for social media, designers should create from their emotions". Design maverick, Johannes Torpe, made the case passionately for the desirability of creating 'unearthly' places on Earth. Editor Jade Tilley had the chance to chat to Jonathan Ashmore, Founder, ANARCHITECT before he stepped into the conference zone, when they caught up over the studio's impressive slate of work and the vast differences of working in the Middle East and here in the UK. Jonathan is a firm believer in heritage and locality of projects within places, and his love of Dubai and appreciation of what can be achieved there is honourable. Jonathan formed one member of the panel on hand to discuss 'Guilt Free Experiences' within hospitality and what it means to be truly sustainable from end to end of a hospitality project. No mean feat and one challenge that Jonathan takes seriously.

This year, the popular socialising spot, the Sleeper Bar, was joined by a co-working space, The Hub, designed by the London arm of Wilson Associates and, for the first time, the VIP Lounge was designed to be an immersive experience in its own

right. Named "Gather", it offered an astonishing flora-inspired space centrally illuminated to suggest a fire, around which visitors congregated in their droves.

Michaelis Boyd were responsible for the transformation of the Sleeper Bar, a giant, rugged, raft style pit stop that oozed ease and sophistication. Inspired by 'The Man Who Planted Trees' Alex Michaelis commented on the design, "To address this year's theme of Social FlexAbility, we were inspired by 'The Man Who Planted Trees', a short story by Jean Giono that celebrates the power of the natural environment. The tale describes a shepherd's long and successful effort to single-handedly reforest a desolate valley in the foothills of the Alps in the first half of the 20th Century."

"Working primarily in timber to highlight the different textures of the noble material— from dark stained shingles, Elm plank countertops and seating made from petrified wood, to a tree at the bar's centre— this year's Sleeper Bar is a study in sustainability; it investigates the afterlife of the material through scale, layering, adaptability and recycling. This has led us to create a space that caters to all walks of life, adjusting to the needs of





Set by twenty2degrees.  
Photography courtesy  
of Will Stanley

each individual, making the bar a rich experience for every visitor."

The Sleep & Eat Hub by Wilson Associates took another interpretation of the Social FlexAbility theme, offering a bolthole from the thrum of the main floor. With a range of comfortable and contemporary seating by Knightsbridge furniture on display, sat atop rugs by Jennifer Manners, whose work this year took recycling to another level with rePURPOSE, taking discarded plastic and reworking into soft, plush, hand-knotted rugs. The entire hub was lit up by Astro lighting whose 'Eclipse' perfectly fitted with Wilson Associates' theme. Juan Carlos Rodriguez Artigas, Design Director of Wilson Associates, said just before the event, "A circle is a powerful thing as it evokes a sense of connection, equality, equilibrium, balance, unity and safety. We are keeping this at the forefront of our mind, especially when it comes to the items that will be installed. Our goal is for the

stand to be completely sustainable; every product will have been used, or will be used again. As a circle represents a cycle, we want to be able to maintain the geometry of recycling." Spending some time in the VIP Lounge Jade had the opportunity to chat to Yuna Megre, who had come on board to design the space for the 2019 event. Yuna's vivacious, can-do attitude is infectious and her work ethic is infused throughout her studio of almost entirely female designers (with the exception of one male). Yuna believes in empowering her designers within her studio to push boundaries and explore the unusual through design and the VIP lounge ambience follows through in this belief; it was at once dark and moody, neon tropical and vibrant, and overall, a great space to sit and congregate with industry peers. One of Jade's personal highlights within the VIP Lounge was the 3D floral wall foliage, which involved Yuna's team cutting out individual

petals and soaking the fabric in glycerine, then sandwiching two layers of the fabric and shaping the petals into the stunning florals you saw climbing the walls. The effect was part Alice In Wonderland and part art installation, along with the light feature, which gave the effect of an uber-trendy campfire.

Moving on into the main space where this year's event theme of "Social FlexAbility" explored the power of hospitality to stimulate human interaction in our age of digital isolation. It proved to be just the opportunity that six international architectural and design firms needed to create intriguing and diverse concept installations. Maria Tibblin & Co, HAT Design, twenty2degrees and Miaja Design Group created guestroom sets, and SpacelInvader and NAME Architecture designed a bar and restaurant respectively.

Over 160 design-led suppliers - established and up-and-coming manufacturers, artisans and fit-out companies - chose Sleep & Eat 2019 to showcase their products and launch new collections.

Familiar brands included Bang & Olufsen, Grohe, Chelsom, and Perrin & Rowe. Newcomers included Ammique, Marie Martin, Eichholtz, ILIV Contract Textiles and Absolute Lifestyle.

As is its tradition, Sleep & Eat presented two awards for best-designed stands. Hospitality artwork suppliers, Verdigris Art, with artist in residence, Marcus Aitken, was awarded Best Stand, and luxury wallcoverings manufacturer, Arte, was the recipient of the Best Space-Only Stand Award. Angela Dapper, Principal at Grimshaw and a judge of the Awards, said: "It was great to see another successful year for Sleep & Eat, one of the highlights and most enjoyable shows in the hotel design calendar. It's brilliant to get an update from suppliers whilst enjoying the showcase of design."

Sleep & Eat 2020 will take place on 17 - 18 November, at London Olympia.

[www.sleepandeatevent.com](http://www.sleepandeatevent.com)



Juan Carlos Rodriguez Artigas,  
Design Director of Wilson Associates



Yuna Megre designed the VIP Lounge