

Landscape and Nature

Taking inspiration from Kazakh traditions

The central structure is surrounded by a stunning computer-generated panorama

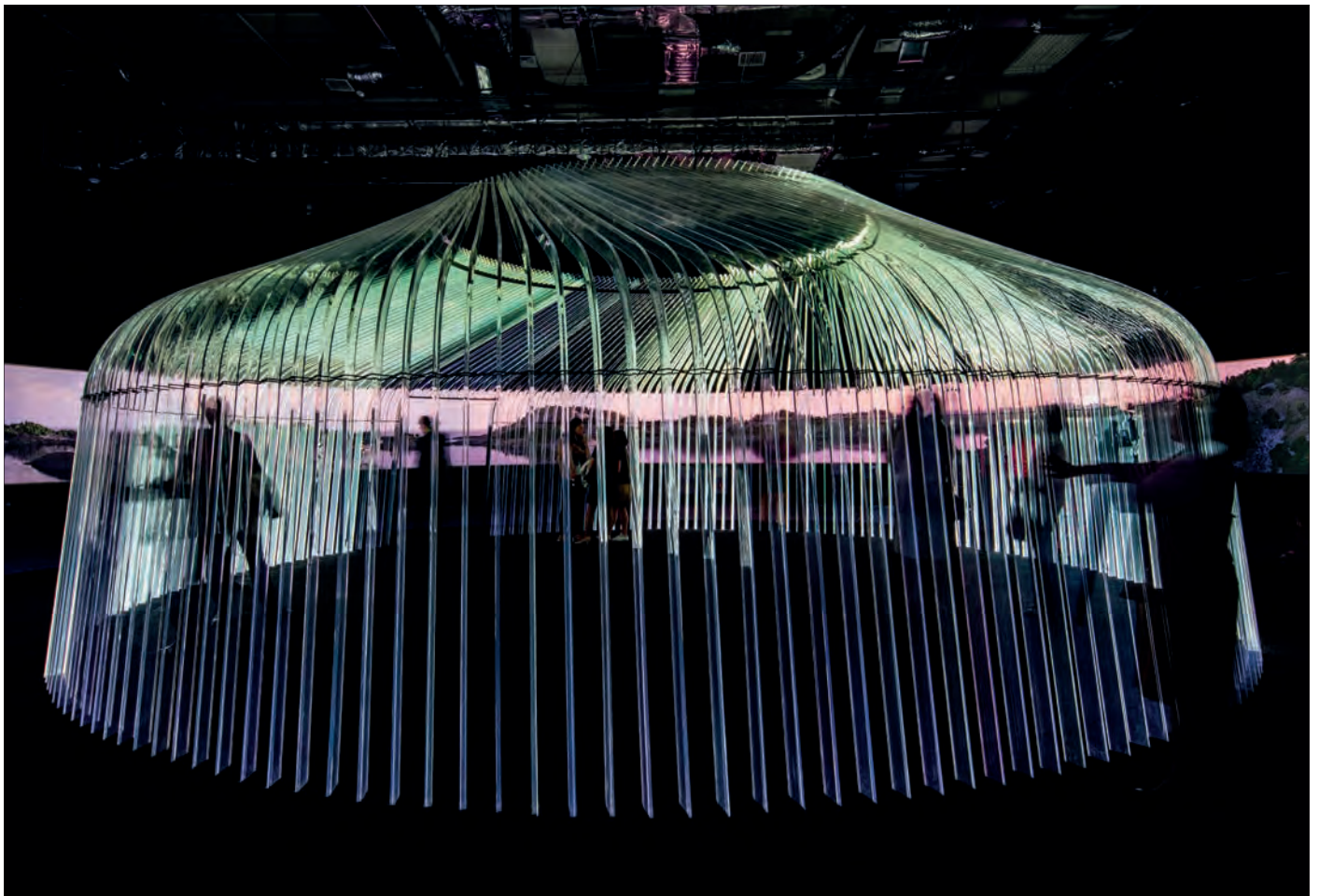
Khan drew on the architectural traditions of the Kazakh yurt to create the striking structure which greets the visitor at the end of the dark corridor.

“I chose the yurt not just because of the connections with Kazakhstan, but because the yurt is a symbol of human ingenuity. It is a very simple form of architecture yet it also symbolises a sophisticated relationship between mankind and the environment. It is a moveable structure, light in weight, which can find its own environment. In many ways it suggests an archetype of the way we should live in the future.”

Asif Khan

“Our Earth is truly special, located at just the right distance from the sun for water to flow. This shapes the climate, the landscapes and the natural world around us.

As one of over half a trillion planets in our Milky Way Galaxy, the Earth is a member of a rare but elite planet group that can harbour life and harness the energy from its Sun.”



The central structure is surrounded by a stunning computer-generated panorama portraying a unique digital and universal landscape examining the natural world around us. The entire panorama, if unfolded, would be 60 metres long. Its creation required enormous computational power, involving 8,000 computers and a solid month of rendering to create. Its creators estimate that it would have taken fourteen years to develop on one computer. At 155 minutes of computer generated imagery, the panorama represents the equivalent of an entire feature film developed in CG. 22 projectors are in use in the Pavilion to create a continuous landscape – one that Asif Khan describes as ‘primordial’.

“I have been asked why CGI – why didn’t we just film a landscape? But I wanted to construct an image of a world that doesn’t exist but that we can relate to, one that looks as convincing as a world and so beautiful you want to go there. And in many ways our own future direction may well be a virtual world. I want to remind the visitor that in the beginning was the sun, that the earth can exist without human beings, that the earth relies on nature, that the relationship between earth and humans is only tertiary. And what is important is how we mediate that with what we build, how we use energy.”

Asif Khan

The 200 polycarbonate spokes that make up the yurt-like structure are designed to respond to human touch with light and sound. Every touch has a reward. The installation itself also interacts with the surrounding panorama depicting the natural world as it moves through day and night and a series of climate changes.

The specially commissioned soundscape created by Brian Eno consists of layers of music that are triggered by the amount of human activity in the space, adding additional energy to the visitor experience and combining unique and innovative design, engineering, science, music and light to provide a fully immersive experience.

“All around you is a 12-channel sound installation from Brian Eno. The score for the landscape is constantly changing and this is sound with no beginning and end. The whole installation is interactive, so as visitors touch the sides of the yurt the landscape and the sound changes. The sound track is layered and immersive, the panorama has continuity from day to night. The way that the yurt responds to inhabitation means that every visitor will have a different experience of sound and landscape.”

Asif Khan

The installation itself also interacts with the surrounding panorama

Opposite page: Central structure of the UK Pavilion, this page: The central structure is surrounded by a computer generated panorama

