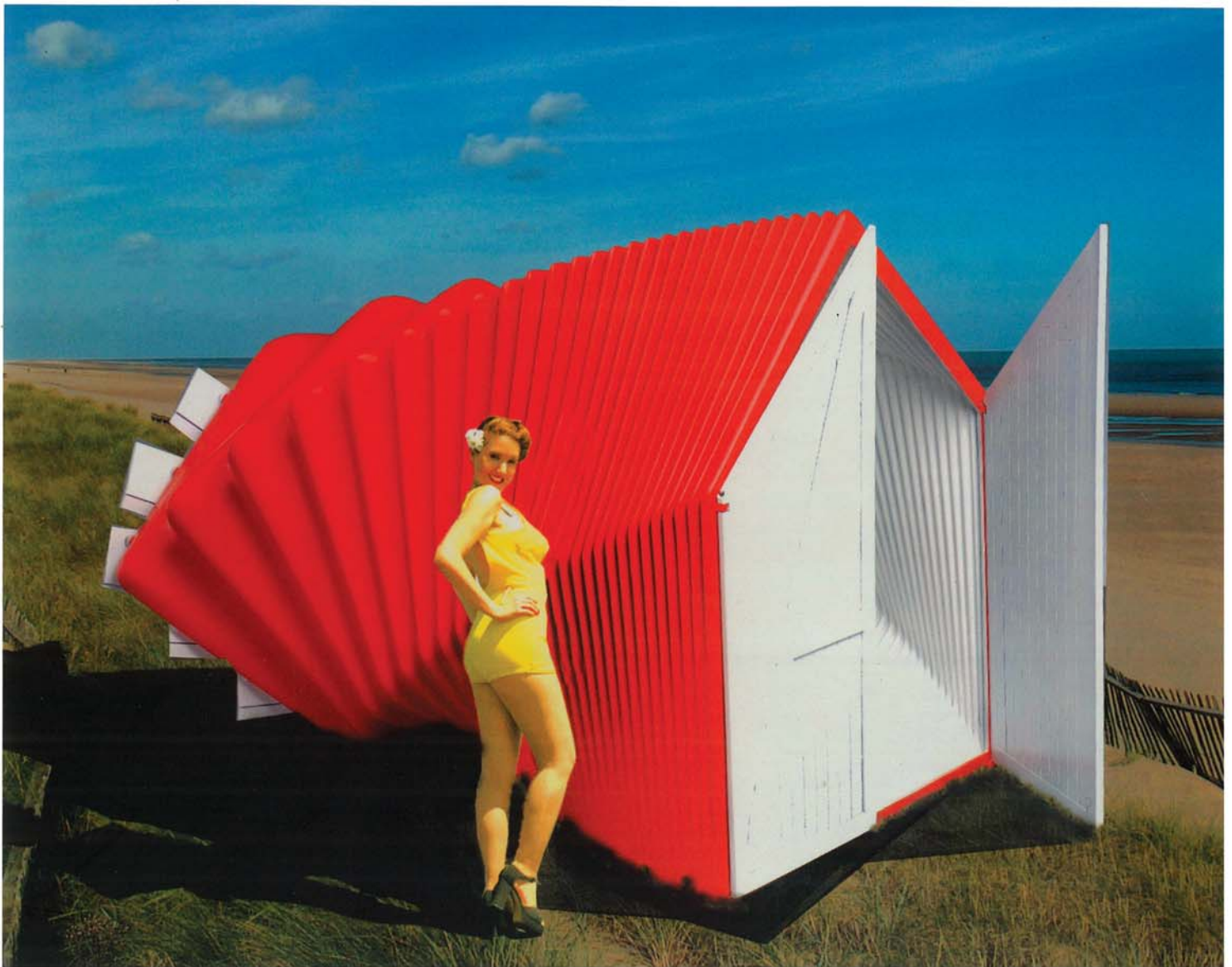




BATHING BEAUTIES

Re-imagining the Beach Hut for the 21st Century



thirteen

www.bathingbeauties.org.uk
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BATHING BEAUTIES WINNERS

EYES WIDE SHUT

by Feix&Merlin, UK

We became very interested in coastal architecture because of its uniqueness, both in terms of the extremes of the physical conditions, but also because of the positive influence that exciting new architecture could have on the coastal economy. We are fascinated by the role that design plays within the complexities of urban and rural regeneration. This issue is becoming more and more important as people become concerned with the carbon emissions of flight travel and interested in spending their holidays on these shores. There's a desire to return to an idea of the traditional British seaside holiday, but with a fresh and novel approach.

Perhaps what interested us most about the Beach Hut is how, once inside, the experience of being on the beach changes. Your neighbours disappear from view, noise and wind dissipates until all that is left is you and the great expanse of the sand, the sea and the horizon.

The site on the Mapplethorpe south promenade is particularly unusual in that the huts look out onto two views, one of the beach to the front, and one to the rear of the town behind. We were interested in how we could respond to the idea of capturing the two views, reflecting a fleeting moment, framing them in the minds eye, and recording them to memory.

Eyes Wide sHut became a picture frame Beach Hut featuring two ornate hand crafted timber frames, one to the front and one to the rear. These frames carry floor to ceiling mirrored glass panels reflecting the view back on itself as if someone had taken a picture of the view and put it in the frame.

From the outside the mirrors are reflective, but from the inside the panels are completely transparent, allowing clear unobstructed views front to back, whilst retaining complete privacy within.

The internal floors, walls and ceiling are covered in full height, full width images of a magical forest clearing. An escape from the hot beach into a quiet cool woodland, the big windows at either end allow a voyeuristic peep out back into the real world.

In the empty plot next to the hut we have designed a new garden. The big mirrored frames of the beach hut can slide out, completely opening up the hut front and back, and in so doing enclosing the garden, creating a private courtyard, completely reversing the situation.

We like the idea that people using the hut & garden can enjoy having the opportunity to be completely hidden away from sight whilst still being able to view the world outside.

'Ooh you could get up to all sorts in there'.

