

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **THEASTER GATES'S DORCHESTER INDUSTRIES AND PRADA GROUP ANNOUNCE THE DORCHESTER INDUSTRIES EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN LAB**

Design Lab to Amplify Work of Emerging Artists and Designers and Develop a New Nexus of Creative Energy on Chicago's South Side

**Milan and Chicago, 1 September, 2021** - Dorchester Industries, the design and manufacturing arm of Theaster Gates Studio, in partnership with Rebuild Foundation and Prada Group, today announced the launch of **Dorchester Industries Experimental Design Lab**, a three-year program that will serve as a platform for artists of color, creating opportunities to amplify their work, invest in their development and expose them to great organizations interested in working with diverse talent. Anchored on Chicago's South Side, the Experimental Design Lab – which will be international in reach and relevance – will act as a space of exchange, training, critical feedback and exposure for future designers.

Created and developed in partnership with Prada Group, the Experimental Design Lab is a first-of-its-kind initiative aimed at empowering emerging and established designers of color. Through design awards and public programming, the Experimental Design Lab will act as a think tank that will amplify the work of promising young designers of color in the areas of fashion, furniture, industrial and graphic design, and the arts while providing a platform for exhibitions, performances and public dialogue.

*"I'm thrilled to collaborate with Prada Group to generate a new hub of design energy on the South Side by engaging a network of skilled designers, artists and intellectuals around our first cohort of awardees and their projects,"* said Theaster Gates, founder of Dorchester Industries and Rebuild Foundation and Co-Chair of the Prada Diversity & Inclusion Advisory Council. *"For too long, our creative communities have possessed the talent but lacked exposure and opportunity. Now more than ever, today's leading creatives must elevate the work of emerging designers of color and connect them to great companies interested in diverse talent."*

Each Experimental Design Lab awardee will be nominated by leaders across the fashion, art and design industries. The Experimental Design Awards will honor rising designers who have shown extraordinary creative potential. Award recipients will receive financial support as well as creative opportunities to foster relationships with leading global companies and their networks through annual activations and workshops in New York, Chicago and Los Angeles.



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*“Prada is extremely pleased to be working together with artist and social innovator Theaster Gates to advance our shared goal of equipping the next generation of creative leaders and designers with the skills, network and support that will allow them to grow their artistic influence and professional development”*, said Malika Savell, Chief Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Officer Prada North America.

*“The Dorchester Industries Experimental Design Lab is a critical step in the right direction to ensure that leading design companies have a pipeline of talented creatives who bring with them their diverse experiences and backgrounds”*, said Lorenzo Bertelli, Prada Group Marketing Director & Head of Corporate Social Responsibility.

In collaboration with Gates’s Rebuild Foundation, awardees and guests will have the opportunity to engage in public programming at RETREAT – Rebuild Foundation’s latest activation providing space for artists to collaborate and create – strengthening the ties between designers and surrounding communities as part of the organization’s mission to empower artists on the South Side.

The first cohort of awardees will be selected and announced in October 2021. To learn more about the program, visit [www.dorchesterindustries.com](http://www.dorchesterindustries.com)

#### **Dorchester Industries**

Dorchester Industries is the design and manufacturing arm of Theaster Gates’s Studio. Dorchester Industries has a dual mission: to create beautiful products with meaning, and to train employees to pursue careers in the building trades and creative industries. Dorchester Industries fellows harness the power of their craft to contribute to culture-based, artist-led, neighborhood-driven community revitalization in traditionally underserved neighborhoods.

#### **Theaster Gates**

Theaster Gates (b.1973) lives and works in Chicago. Gates creates work that focuses on space theory and land development, sculpture and performance. In all aspects of his work, he contends with the notion of Black space as a formal exercise – one defined by collective desire, artistic agency, and the tactics of a pragmatist. Gates is a professor at the University of Chicago in the Department of Visual Arts and the Harris School of Public Policy and serves as the Senior Advisor for Cultural Innovation and Advisor to the Dean. He has recently exhibited and performed at TANK Shanghai, Shanghai, China (2021); Prada Rong Zhai, Shanghai, China (2021); Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France (2019); Sprengel Museum Hannover, Germany (2018); Kunstmuseum Basel, Switzerland (2018); National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., USA (2017); Art Gallery of Ontario, Canada (2016); Fondazione Prada, Milan, Italy (2016) and Whitechapel Gallery, London, UK (2013). Gates has been the recipient of numerous awards and honors including the Arts Mundi 6 Prize (2017); the Légion d’Honneur (2017); the Nasher Prize for Sculpture (2018); the Urban Land Institute, J.C. Nichols Prize for Visionaries in Urban Development (2018); the World Economic Forum Crystal Award (2020); and an Honorary Fellowship from the Royal Institute of British Architects (2021). Gates was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 2021.

#### **Prada Group**

Pioneer of a dialogue with contemporary society across diverse cultural spheres and an influential leader in luxury fashion, Prada Group founded its identity on essential values such creative independence, transformation and sustainable development, offering its brands a shared vision to interpret and express their spirit. The Group owns some of the world’s most prestigious luxury brands, Prada, Miu Miu, Church’s, Car Shoe and the historic Pasticceria Marchesi.



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