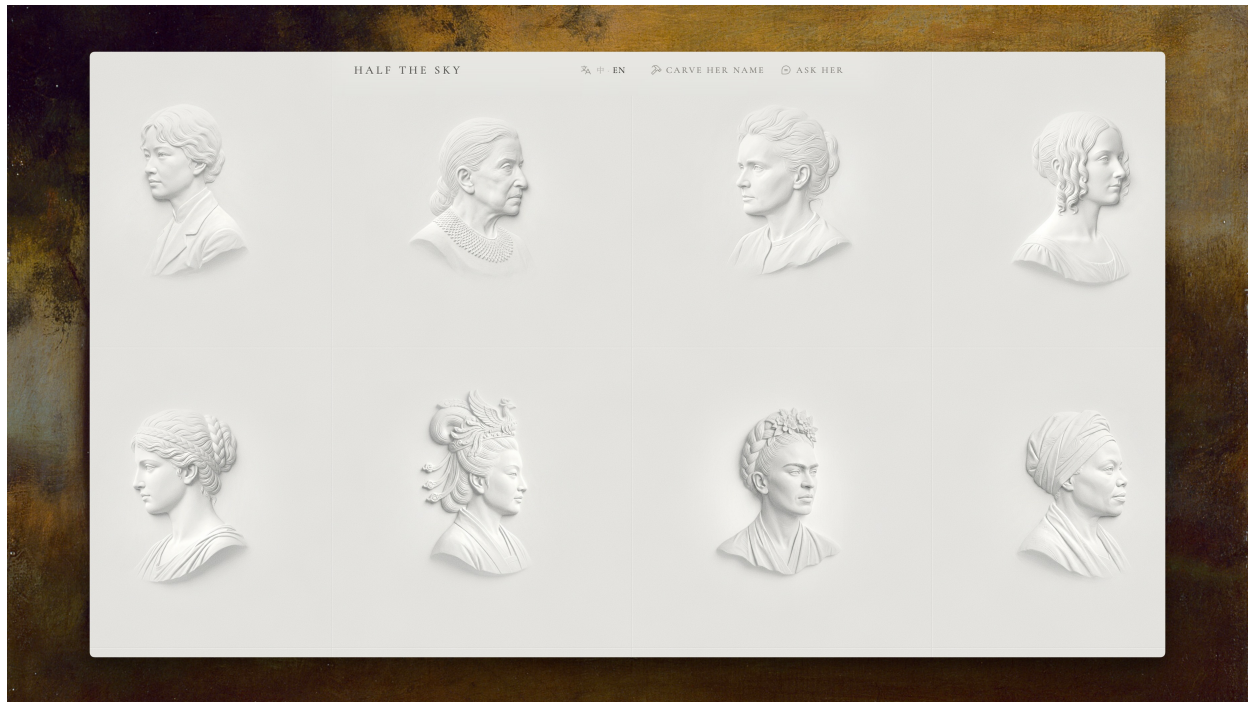


Half the Sky brings history into conversation at London Design Festival 2026

A free bilingual online exhibit lets visitors ask pioneering women from history about their work.



London / Portland, Oregon. Half the Sky, an online exhibit in which visitors talk directly with twenty four pioneering women from history, is part of the London Design Festival Partner Programme from 12 to 20 September 2026. Each woman is carved as a plaster relief and answers in her own voice, in English or Chinese. The work is free to visit at halfthesky.app and was designed, written and built by a single designer, Yuxuan Hou.

The wall spans six continents and four thousand years. Wu Zetian, who ruled Tang China as emperor in her own name. Ada Lovelace, who published the first algorithm written for a machine. Junko Tabei, who stood on the summit of Everest. Wangari Maathai, whose Green Belt Movement planted more than fifty million trees. Visitors can ask any of them what she built, what she proved, what it cost her, and what she would say to someone attempting something hard today.

Every conversation is grounded in the record. Behind each woman is a fact checked character card with linked sources, reviewed in three independent passes and published as an open dataset under a Creative Commons licence. Sixty six sources sit behind the twenty four cards, every link verified. Where history is uncertain, the women say so rather than invent.

The exhibit will grow during the Festival. On 18 September, eight new women join the wall, taking the collection from twenty four to thirty two. Visitors who return in the final weekend will find it a third larger than it was on opening day.

“There are so many women whose achievements have no equal, and they deserve to be remembered for what they did,” says Yuxuan Hou. “The name comes from the saying that women hold up half the sky. Spend an evening with these twenty four and you may find the saying undersells them. I wanted a place where anyone, in either language, could walk up and ask.”

The wall is fully bilingual because the women on it never belonged to a single language. A visitor in Chengdu and a visitor in Croydon can ask Marie Curie the same question and meet the same person.

Notes to editors

What: Half the Sky, an online exhibit of twenty four women from history rendered as plaster reliefs, each of whom can be asked about her work. Free, no registration, in English and Chinese.

When: 12 to 20 September 2026, open all day, every day of the Festival. Eight new women published on 18 September.

Where: halfthesky.app, and in the London Design Festival Partner Programme.

Open data: The character cards behind the wall are published at github.com/yuxuan-o-o/women-on-the-wall under CC BY-SA 4.0 for anyone building their own tribute.

About the designer: Yuxuan Hou is an independent digital product designer and builder based in Portland, Oregon. She holds an MFA in Interaction Design from the School of Visual Arts, New York, and her work has been recognised by the iF Design Award, the IxDA Awards and the UX Design Awards. This is her second year in the London Design Festival Partner Programme.

Images: High resolution images of the wall and of individual reliefs are available on request. No logos.

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