



Airbnb Co-Founder and CPO Joe Gebbia Launches Samara, an Internal Design Studio

SAN FRANCISCO AND TOKYO — August 2, 2016 — Airbnb co-founder and CPO Joe Gebbia, today announced the creation of Samara, a multidisciplinary innovation and design studio within Airbnb. Conceived with the support of co-founders Brian Chesky and Nathan Blecharczyk, Samara will bring together design and engineering experts from Airbnb to create new ideas and build new services that support the Airbnb community.

As a graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design, Gebbia has always been impassioned by design and its power to reimagine the future. Inspired by the tenacious and hearty Samara seedling, the mission of this new design studio is to explore services and ideas that are consistent with Airbnb's values and vision. With experts from a range of backgrounds, Samara will explore architecture, product design, software engineering, and new economic models.

"Samara is all about generating new ideas and building products that serve the Airbnb community," said Gebbia. "Samara will give us even more space to apply what we've learned over the last eight years and create new services for connection, commerce, and social change within the expanding Airbnb community."

The team behind Samara has already begun its work with the launch of the Yoshino Cedar House. Designed and built for Kenya Hara's House Vision exhibition in Tokyo and created in collaboration with Go Hasegawa, a Tokyo-based architect, the house explores how architectural features can engender a deeper relationship between hosts and guests. Following the exhibition, Yoshino Cedar House will be permanently installed in Yoshino, a rural town in the Nara district of Japan, where it will be a bookable Airbnb that is maintained by the community. Proceeds earned from guests who book the listing will be used to strengthen the cultural legacy and future of the town, which has struggled as young people migrate away from rural communities.

As the Samara team worked to create the Yoshino Cedar house, the team explored new ways to merge the community with space for guests. And the end result -- a listing run by and for the benefit of a local village -- is the first Airbnb of its kind. The Samara team will closely monitor the progress of Yoshino Cedar House and consider expanding this concept to similar communities around the world.

"The Yoshino Cedar House is just one seed among many," Gebbia added. "Given the size and scale of the Airbnb community, the areas to explore are limitless."