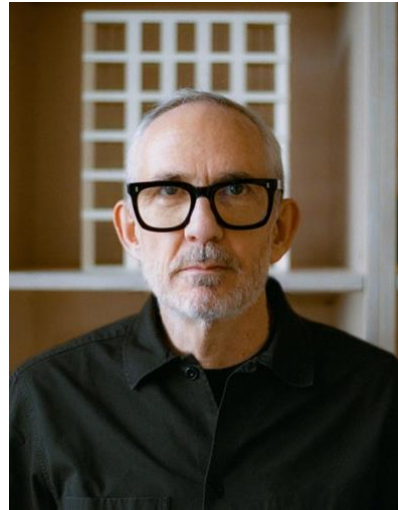




**Architect Níall McLaughlin Headlines Extensive Talks Programme
at Clerkenwell Design Week's 15th Edition
19 - 21 May 2026**



Conversations at Clerkenwell- Michael Anastassiades (left), Níall McLaughlin (centre), Lara Bohinc (right)

As [Clerkenwell Design Week](#) (CDW) marks its 15th anniversary this May, the festival brings discourse and ideas to the fore. Five extensive talks programmes spread across EC1 will bring together the sharpest voices in architecture and design, cementing CDW's status as one of the world's most compelling platforms in the A&D sector for debate and discovery.

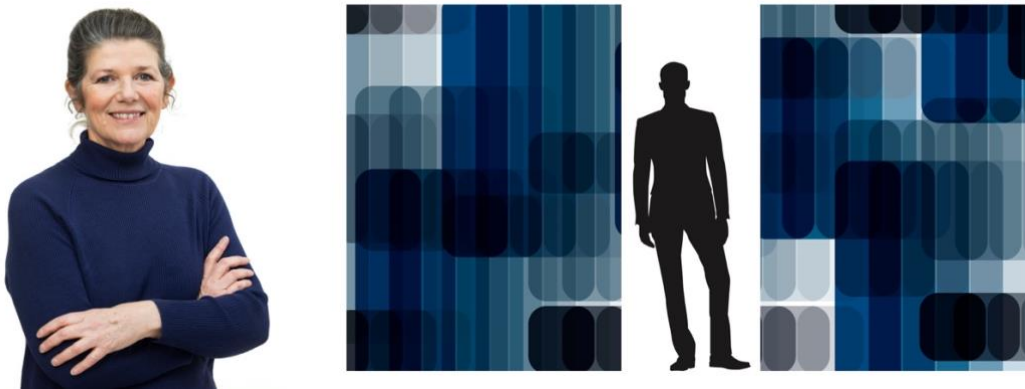
Conversations at Clerkenwell: The Power of Ideas

At the heart of CDW's talks offer is **Conversations at Clerkenwell**, the festival's official programme which has partnered with paint brand **Dulux Trade** this year. Curated by Katie Richardson, the programme is housed in the extraordinary setting of the Church of Design at St Bartholomew the Great - one of London's oldest and most atmospheric buildings. Each of the festival's three days opens at 11am with an intimate one-on-one interview with some of the most significant names in contemporary design.

Award-winning, Cypriot-born British designer **Michael Anastassiades** opens the series on Tuesday 19th May, with a conversation covering his celebrated lighting work, limited-edition collections and solo exhibitions at museums and galleries around the globe. On Wednesday 20th May, the spotlight falls on **Níall McLaughlin**, the architect awarded the RIBA Royal Gold Medal in 2026, who will walk through an outstanding portfolio that has reshaped British architecture over three decades. On Thursday 21st May, Slovenian furniture designer **Lara Bohinc** reflects on her singular approach to materials, her wide-ranging collaborations and the new collections that continue to push her practice forward.



Conversations at Clerkenwell's partnership with **Dulux Trade** has already sparked chromatic synergy. A competition - **Rhythm of Blues** - invited designers to create artwork for the talks stage inspired by Dulux's Colour of the Year Palette and the theme 'Meeting of Minds'. The winning entry, by Leigh Bagley of The Graphic Pattern Studio, is a work he describes as "a layered conversation between colour, geometry and people - symbolic of the blending of voices and perspectives gathering at the talks stage, where ideas overlap and evolve." It's an apt metaphor for everything that CDW's talks represent.



Marianne Shillingford, Creative Director at Dulux Trade, (left) hosts three talks on colour and paint; Leigh Bagley's winning design for Dulux's Rhythm of Blues competition (right) for the talks stage during Conversations at Clerkenwell

Dulux Trade's Creative Director Marianne Shillingford extends the partnership across three sessions of her own, exploring the global colour story for the year ahead, how to use colour to make life better in a world of AI, and the true nature of paint and what it actually does when it dries.

Other highlights include an inspiring conversation on **Designing with Purpose** led by Liz Bell, President of BIID (British Institute of Interior Designers); Dimorestudio, Giles Miller and Tatjana von Stein discuss **The New Luxury**; and Jessie Johnson from the Design Council presides over a panel on **Building Skills for a Regenerative Future**. Furniture brands Cozmo, Reddie, Lean Desk and SCP look ahead to predict **Furniture Futures**; author and journalist Katie Treddigen chairs a talk on the **Future of Fabric**; and Bompas & Parr, Jolie Studio Ltd and NORR11 explore what happens in design when intuition leads the way at the talk **Sensory Beings**. North End Design Studio and Archer Humphryes Architects discuss **Dining Design** with Harry McKinley, editor of Mix magazine, and artist and designer Paul Cocksedge shares his views on AI in **The Trained Hand: Craft, Intuition and the New Digital Makers**.

Think, Make, Change – Design Meets at The Luxury Edit

Design Meets presents narratives from leading brands and industry experts at new venue The Luxury Edit, hosted at Haberdashers' Hall. Roundtables examine how creative industries can drive meaningful social change and protect intellectual property in an age of AI and copycats, explore Clerkenwell's evolving identity and uncover the untapped power of music and acoustics in shaping spatial experience.



Hands-on workshops demonstrate how to reclaim creativity and human connection in an age of digital isolation and show how a bold generation of sustainability-focused graduates is turning green ideals into real-world practice. Autism and ADHD champion Piers Roberts leads a landmark panel discussion with neurodivergent designers, educators and entrepreneurs, making a compelling case for why neurodivergent skills and perspectives should be central to the teams creating the spaces of tomorrow. Additional forward-looking talks examine bespoke designs for the hospitality sector, furniture created from food waste, and Norwegian design philosophy.



Piers Roberts (left) leads a discussion on neurodivergent designers at Design Meets; designers Sophie Ashby, Alex Dauley, Jonathan Forster and Tom Bourne (centre) will focus on Designing Diversity at the Reddie showroom; Debika Ray (right) will moderate a talk on Working with Waste in Furniture Design.

Design Milk discusses Neurodiversity, Nature and the Next Generation

The editorial team behind online magazine Design Milk host **Design Dialogues** at The Charterhouse Chapel, covering a rich mix of themes. Wellbeing and neurodiversity are explored with conversations around autism's cognitive profiles, the post-neuro office, and creating workplaces for a workforce that no longer fully trusts the office environment.

Nature, materials and craft are also prominent topics - from the next phase of nature-integrated design that moves beyond biophilia, to reinventing materials through a lens of nostalgia, and the creative exchange between designers and artisans. Generational and cultural shifts are addressed through talks on designing spaces for Gen Alpha and building a design brand with integrity. Rounding out the programme are sessions on immersive spaces, the iterative design process, and a sponsored talk from Aquafil.

[d]arc thoughts on lighting design

[d]arc media returns to CDW venue Light for a fifth year of its acclaimed **[d]arc thoughts** programme of free-to-attend lighting-focused panels and presentations, sponsored this year by Ideolux. Talks span the full breadth of lighting design practice - from future-proofing systems for adaptability and longevity, and the art of crafting dark, atmospheric hospitality spaces, to why lighting design remains chronically undervalued.



Project-focused sessions bring theory to life, walking audiences through the creative and specification process on real-world schemes including the Radisson Red Lounge and a Tribute Portfolio Hotel in Germany. [d]arc thoughts concludes with a presentation from designer Benz Roos on the search for a more soulful approach to lighting design in the 21st century, exploring how designers can strike the balance between energy use, legibility and safety while staying within budget.

Volunteer-led network Interior Design Declares, supported by lighting control solution Casambi, hosts an informative session on its activities on the evening of Wednesday 20th May with a complimentary bar and networking.

A focus on commercial interiors

Commercial Interiors UK and its media outlet Design Insider host eight curated sessions for **Design in Focus** at CDW venue Commercial Design in the Park. The programme explores the ideas and forces shaping commercial interiors today, from product specification and design concepts to the evolving cultures of hospitality and workplace environments.

Highlights include a session hosted by Sanderson Design Group examining how colour and pattern are driving more expressive, emotionally resonant hospitality spaces; a discussion lead by The Contract Chair Company on the crossover between hospitality and workplace design; and a conversation between GROHE and Buster + Punch on achieving cohesion across fixtures and fittings. Design In Focus is as much about community as content - it has been curated to be an open, accessible destination for designers, specifiers, operators and industry leaders at every stage of their career.

Conversations across Clerkenwell

As well as the five main talks programmes, CDW's many venues and hundreds of [showrooms](#) across EC1 participating in the festival are hosting their own talks.



Ceramic tile brand Marazzi's showroom (left) will host a talk on AI; Tomás Alonso (centre) will discuss his installation INTERIORS OF SPAIN at The Museum of the Order of St John; workplace solutions brand Sedus will host a talk at its showroom (right) on designing cross-generational offices.



The Museum of the Order of St John, one of the hidden historical spaces of London, is a new location for CDW in 2026, hosting design collections from Spain and Austria. At 11am on Wednesday 20th May, award-winning Austrian designer Theresa Obermoser and film maker Jack Sibson will discuss **Storytelling through Interior Design**. From 6pm, editor-in-chief of *Disegno* Oli Stratford hosts a talk called **El Salón** at the venue during which designer Tomás Alonso discusses his installation INTERIORS OF SPAIN, the complexities of working in an historic building and his thoughts on Spanish design's global reputation. At midday on Thursday 21st May, a talk celebrating **20 Years of Vienna Design Week** will be led by the event's director Gabriel Roland who will share insights into the legacy, craftsmanship and significance of Austrian design and how it continues to embody innovation and sustainability.

On Tuesday 19th May, the first day of the festival, ceramic tile brand Marazzi hosts a brunch panel to unpack **AI, Value Engineering and the Art of Working Smarter**. At 3.30pm, sustainable office pod brand Silen will host a panel discussion at the Welltek showroom entitled **Circular Workspaces: Are We Designing out Waste, or Just Hiding it Better?**, bringing together leading industry voices to explore how workspaces can move towards genuine circularity, moderated by design journalist Roddy Clarke on behalf of OnOffice magazine. Later that afternoon, fund-raising cycle ride Clerkenwheels will culminate at the new showroom of Australian-Indonesian sustainable furniture brand Reddie on Goswell Road. The motivation behind the initiative, which supports United in Design's Education and Outreach Programme, will be discussed at the showroom at 6pm during a talk on **Designing Diversity** moderated by journalist Grant Gibson. The following day, writer and editor Debika Ray will chair a talk at the Reddie showroom about **Working with Waste in Furniture Design** with Charlotte Fitzgerald from Universal Design Studio and Sofia Steffenoni from Materials Assemble.

At 3pm on Tuesday 19th and Wednesday 20th May, the Sedus showroom will host Hannah Nardini, founder of WKSpace who will deliver a presentation inspired by the question **How Can Workplaces Become Truly Inclusive across Generations?** Her conclusions, based on extensive research from over 50,000 people surveyed across the UK, will be discussed at a roundtable afterwards. Belgian flooring brand modulyss has curated a [programme of events](#) throughout the festival including talks on **Transparency in Sustainable Design** and **Customisation**, and a panel discussion on **AI in Architecture**. Vitra will host two 'In conversation with' talks. On Tuesday 19th May, Head of Design Nisan Tunçak will join designer Terri Pecora for **From Concept to Culture: The Meaning of the Plural Collection in Today's Design Landscape**. On Wednesday 20th May, she will be joined by Anne-Rachel Schiffman, Senior Interior Architect at Snøhetta, for **A Conversation on Ceramics and Architecture**.

Tours to educate and inspire

Industry bodies and media titles will offer visitors insights into high-profile brands and practices across EC1 throughout the festival. These will include the OnOffice Workplace Tour, Women in Office Design tours, RIBAJ Tours at CDW, a tour from SBID and the BIID CDW Exclusive Tour.

Clerkenwell Design Week 2026 takes place across EC1, London, from 19 - 21 May. More details about the festival will be announced in due course. For more information, please visit clerkenwelldesignweek.com – registration is now [open](#).



-ENDS-

PRESS CONTACT

For press enquiries, please contact Belinda Fisher, Berna Sermet and Jeroen Bergmans at Friends & Co: cdw@friendsandco.co.uk.

Press registration: please click [here](#)

NOTES TO EDITORS

Clerkenwell Design Week, 19 – 21 May 2026

Website: clerkenwelldesignweek.com | Instagram: [@clerkenwelldesignweek](https://www.instagram.com/clerkenwelldesignweek)

X: [@cdwfestival](https://twitter.com/cdwfestival) | Facebook: [@clerkenwell.design.week](https://www.facebook.com/clerkenwell.design.week) | Hashtag: #CDW2026

VISITING INFORMATION

- Visitors can register for their [FREE festival passes](#) now.
- All visitors require a visitor badge to access the exhibition venues and showroom events.
- Exhibition venues are open **10:00 – 18:00** on **Tuesday**, **10:00 - 21:00** on **Wednesday**, and **10:00 - 17:00** on Thursday. Showroom opening hours vary.
- Closest underground stations: Farringdon and Barbican
- Bus routes: 19, 341, 38, N19, N38, N41, 55, 48