

# CLERKENWELL DESIGN WEEK

LONDON 2019



A REVIEW

## CDW 2019

A sunny day in London town lifts the spirits and makes everyone happier. And this year, the weather was perfect. Dry, warm and sunny – what more could you ask?

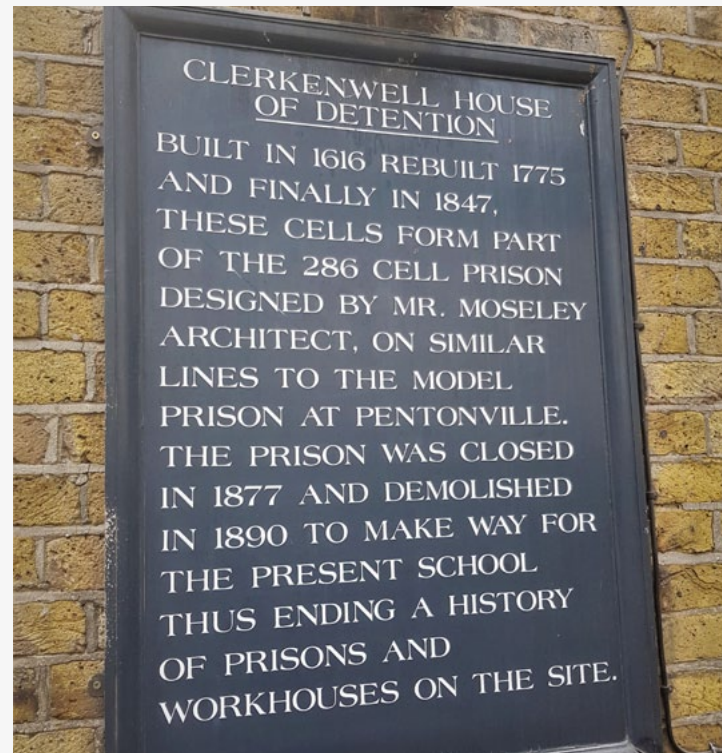
This was Clerkenwell Design week number 10. The show has matured nicely, like a good cheese. As the years have gone by, there is rather less clowning about and rather more serious business. It's the go-to event for the UK's office and contract furniture and furnishings industry.

That doesn't mean there wasn't a light-hearted side to the event. Herman Miller's Aeron Hockey, which looked more dangerous than it was, attracted energetic and noisily enthusiastic capacity crowds all week – and of course, there was plenty of parties and socialising.



The show was much bigger this year. As well as the seven temporary indoor and outdoor exhibition centres, including the House of Detention – a disused prison dating from 1616 – there were 139 companies exhibiting in permanent showrooms, 11 pop-up showrooms and 26 Fringe exhibitors.

There were more shared showrooms this year, including Your Workspace, KI and The Gallery, spreading the high costs of permanent showrooms in the area and generating more footfall; a trend that is likely to accelerate.



## Words and photos - John Sacks

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5a Wilmington Square, Clerkenwell, London, Wc1X 0ES

Tel: +44 (0) 7688 1928 E: info@jsacs.com W: www.jsacs.com

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## Trends

Manufacturers are increasingly broadening their product offerings. Desking companies offer soft seating and enclosures; steel storage manufacturers have added wood production. Framework agreements and direct dealings with specifiers and end users looking for one-stop-shops are turning specialists into generalists.

Open shelving systems were everywhere, most looking very similar. Several companies had discovered Portuguese cork and were promoting its environmental benefits and using it for seating and tables.

Other than that, there was plenty of emphasis on acoustics, high tables, enclosures, soft seating and 'shabby-chic' retro furniture for co-working spaces.



Products from Bisley's new wood factory



## The companies

Humanscale were in their new, very large, showroom presenting several strong environmental stories, including their new Smart Ocean chair made using materials from discarded fishing nets and their "Declare" policy of openly listing the composition of all their products.



Humanscale's story of chairs made from discarded fishing nets

Wagstaff, the UK super dealer, turned their well-designed showroom into an attractive grouping of exclusive brands mostly from Scandinavia and Italy under the name Umbrella + Friends.



Bla Station from Sweden in the Umbrella + Friends showroom

Davidson Highley were showing several new ranges of their attractive and colourful seating configurations.



Chime by Davidson Highley

Wilkhahn's Timetable Lift designed by Andreas Störko was one of the cleverest products at the show. A rechargeable, mobile, electrically-operated, sitstand table which, at the press of a button, converted into a magnetic whiteboard.



Wilkhahn Timetable Lift



The WorkSpace showroom showed the latest model of HotBox – a soft lightweight bag with a well thought-through design.

HotBox 3



The recently rebranded WorkStories business showed a beautiful table made from solid feathered oak and chairs in their new showroom while Boss Design were one of the companies whose product offering has expanded across a number of categories, including sitstand tables.



Solid oak table from WorkStories



ACDC electric SitStand from Boss Design

The Frem showroom was busy with their own version of an open shelving system – Novus, the American Sedia Systems innovative flexible plywood auditorium system and a wide range of acoustic products from EzoBord.



Frem Novus Wall System



Sedia Systems auditorium seating



EzoBord acoustics





Gresham cleverly combined open shelving and their Rise Squared sitstand tables into an attractive system while, unworried about acoustic issues, Verco presented their new Kurt enclosure, which uses easily moveable screens made from net curtaining stretched over timber frames. Quite a remove from the company's heritage wood-framed chairs.



Verco's Kurt meeting area



Kinnarps Vagabond

Kinnarps has followed the recent example of companies such as Workstories in presenting a group of brands under an one name – usually incorporating the word Work. Kinnarps' version is Workplace House, which sounds strange to English ears with its Dickensian connotations. They even had a mobile table – Vagabond – with an overhead timber gantry to carry lighting.



Rock by Allsteel



KI's 800 Series

Dauphin celebrates its 50th anniversary this year and they showed a revival of their very first chair, the 1000 Classic, designed by Jessica Engelhardt. At £450, it's a little pricier than when the model was first launched.



Modus coffee table



Bark chair from Icons of Denmark

Portuguese cork featured in the Icons of Denmark's showroom with the Bark chair designed by Rikke Hagen and also for coffee tables at Modus.

The UK designed and manufactured, posture-enhancing, Standing Chair from osteopath, Si Freedman was a new seating concept – a lot more comfortable than it looked.



Dauphin 1000 Classic



The Standing Chair

By Bailey's association with Allsteel, a member of the USA's massive HNI Group, was represented by their Rock chairs designed by Yorgo Lykouria of Rainlight Studios in London. KI took a large, two storey, pop-up showroom – KI House – which attracted plenty of traffic. Their new 800 Series open shelving system was one of the more interesting versions of this newly-fashionable product category while the British company, Sixteen3 – one of the first companies into the sector – had added tables and bench seating to their system which was launched last year,



Sixteen 3



## And finally...

The Umbrella + Friends showroom also displayed London-based MetroNaps' 'Energy Pod', a reclining lounger with a wraparound visor, complete with "specially composed rhythms" to facilitate relaxation and designed for napping in the workplace.





John Sacks

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London, June 2019



"Advising office furniture businesses around the world"