

CLERKENWELL DESIGN WEEK

LONDON, MAY 2025



A Review

The Show

This year's Clerkenwell Design Week show in this tightly knit, charismatic and historic district in central London, was busy and buzzy. Although most of the offerings were of office and contract furniture, there were many others with related products, ranging from lighting, flooring, wallcoverings, textiles, ceramics and architectural services. The venues are a mixture of permanent showrooms and temporary spaces in easy walking reach of each other, decked out in their finery and presenting the best of exhibitors' latest products, all welcoming visitors with a friendly smile, and refreshments for the weary. Happily, the weather was mostly sunny, with a couple of brief showers, allowing outdoor displays to thrive.

Clerkenwell - the name comes from the Clerks' Well, where parish clerks performed mystery plays in the Middle Ages – dates back to the 12th century. The area, which was once known for its monastic institutions, later became a hub for watchmaking and clockmaking, earning it the nickname "Little Switzerland". Today, it's a trendy locality, with a mix of tech startups, boutique firms, and gastropubs.

CDW has become a vibrant showcase, not only for British manufacturers, but also for copious numbers of overseas companies from across Europe, and further afield. The streets buzzed with attendees, pubs overflowed with exhibitors and designers toasting collaborations, and late-night parties spilled into Clerkenwell's cobbled streets, cementing the event's reputation as a celebration of design and community.



Credit: clerkenwelldesignweek.com



Credit: clerkenwelldesignweek.com



Words and photos - John Sacks

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The Trends

Amid the bustling showrooms, several key design trends emerged. Continuing the direction seen since Covid, many companies' products had a strong residential feel with plenty of curvy, plush, soft seating and natural, earthy colours. Solid timber featured strongly, often beautifully machined and finished.

While sustainability was a recurring theme, many exhibitors relied on vague claims rather than concrete goals. Exceptions such as [Humanscale](#) were notable for detailing carbon-neutral timelines or circular production methods.

Once again, there were many, many booths, pods, phone boxes and other enclosures of every shape and size. Few stood out as anything with great originality except, perhaps, those from [Kabin](#), and [Conker Living](#), designed by Jag Virdie. Both companies' products are manufactured in the UK.



The Companies and their Products

[Spacestor's](#) large busy showroom near Farringdon Station, concentrated on ways of dividing and creating spaces. *Palisades Grid* used steel tube, panels and plants to provide multifunctional environments.



Changes in technology have meant reduced emphasis on physical storage of paper-based records, and [Bisley's](#) attention has moved away from what was a vast range of different steel cabinets, to a much broader product profile. This high table, for small meeting groups, *Grounded*, designed by Perch Studio, was one example.



Roberto Primaceri is a traditional, UK-based, furniture artisan, who uses beautiful natural materials, such as the solid American walnut for this table and shelving unit set.



[Dams](#), the large Liverpool-based manufacturer, showcased their new *Social Spaces* division, with this A-Frame meeting table, and an attractive bench with solid timber legs. Another bench system on display was *Lux*, from Goole-based [Elite Furniture](#).



The Allermuir division of [Senator Group](#) showed this Yoso furniture group in black, from designer Samuel Wilkinson and Curve seating, designed by SmithMatthias.



Curve seating for Allermuir, designed by SmithMatthias



Senator table and Allermuir's Yoso chairs designer Samuel Wilkinson

Another UK maker, [Mobili](#) from Skipton in North Yorkshire, presented their acoustic enclosure, the Chameleon Cubby Study Pod. [Boss Design](#), which has recently been acquired by Okamura of Japan, enjoyed lots of attention in their very busy showroom, which included a wide range of interesting products, including this Mango focus booth, for individual working. Northampton-based [FREM Group](#) showed this beautifully crafted Signature Executive desk.



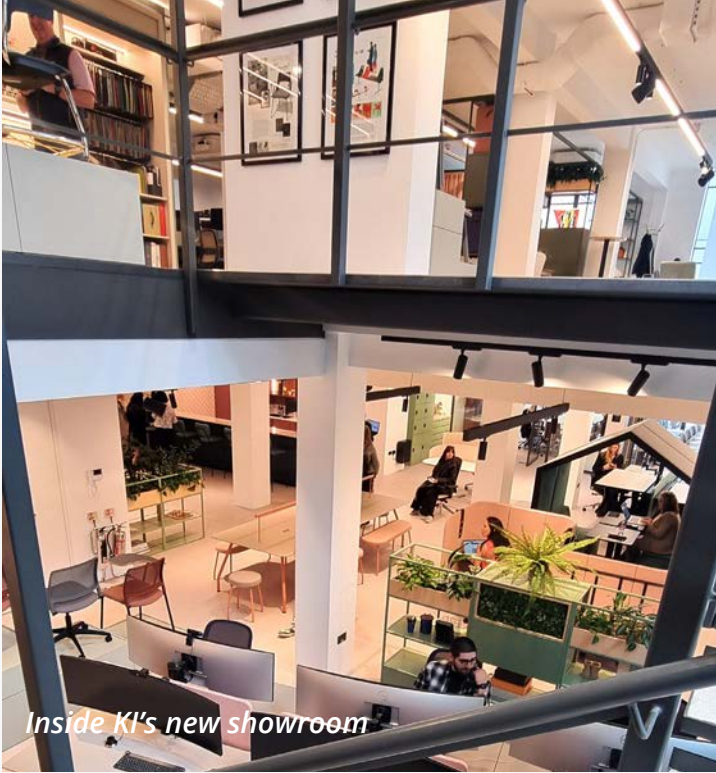
Mobili Chameleon Cubby Study Pod



Mango focus booth from Boss Design Christian Horner



Signature Executive Desk from Frem Group



Inside KI's new showroom

KI's new showroom in the Goswell Road was very special. Large enough to justify the detailed map the company presented, it was eye-catching, beautifully designed, and full of interesting products including these *Passel* height-adjustable workstations.



KI Passel height Adjustable tables

This Pearson Lloyd-designed *Parcs American Diner* for [Bene](#) was cosy and comfortable. The same design firm also created *PLC Tube*, a range of practical seating for [Modus](#), of Chard in Somerset.



Bene Parcs American Diner from Pearson Lloyd



IPLC Tube by Pearson Lloyd for Modus

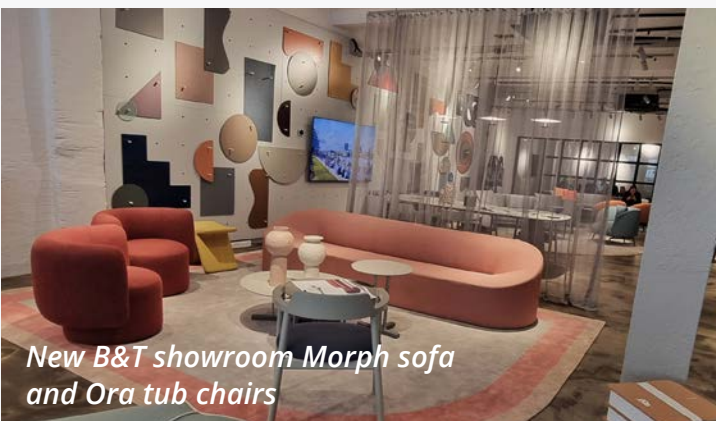
The Polish manufacturer, [.mdd](#), were one of the many companies which had set up new showrooms. .mdd's featured an attractive courtyard garden and these swivel chairs. Also originating from Poland were the pan-European giant, [Nowy Styl](#) whose products on show included these *Tapa* swivelling, modular, pouffes. [B&T Furniture](#) from Istanbul was another company which had moved; their new showroom in Goswell Road showed the *Morph* sofa and *Ora* tub chairs. The [Brunner](#) showroom looked its usual elegant self, in both the German products, and design ambiance.



Courtyard garden outside mdd's showroom 2



.mdd seating



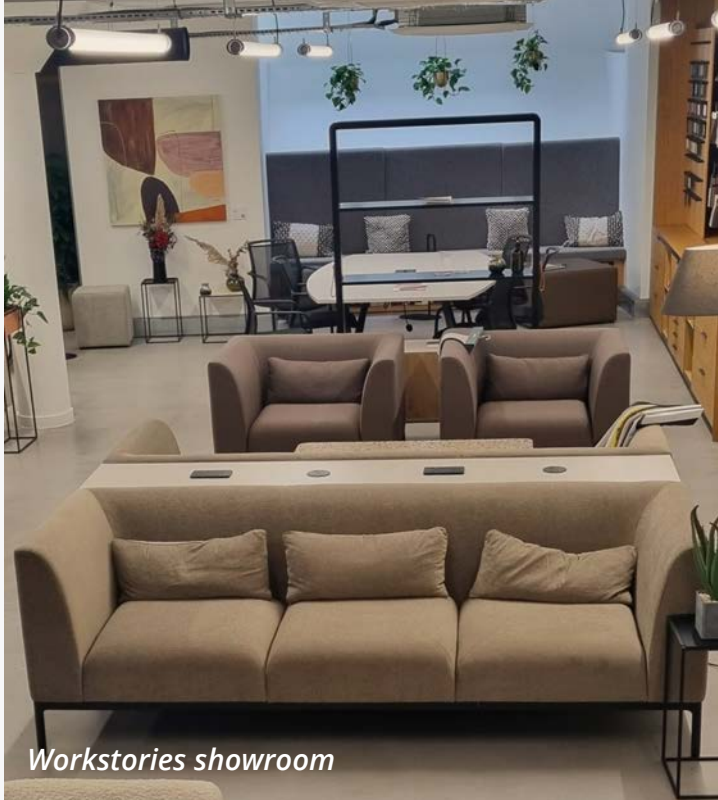
New B&T showroom Morph sofa and Ora tub chairs



Tapa modular pouffes from NowyStyl



Brunner Wave table Jens+Laub



Workstories showroom

[Workstories](#) large head office showroom in Northburgh Street displayed a wide range of products from their design team.

Great Sutton Street continues to be as busy as any for the show, with almost every building housing furniture and related showrooms on several floors. The Norwegian-headquartered group, [Flokk](#), with its collection of brands from across Europe, has an imposing presence. Its Swedish brand, Offect, showed the *Circlus* sofa designed by Mario Ferrarini. [Ocee & Four Design](#) in Old Street displayed the Henry Gurney *Alfi* sofa.



Circlus from Flokk



Alfi sofa designed by Henry Gurney for Ocee & Four Design

Amongst the Italian companies showing was [Lapalma](#), from Padua. These attractive *Jazz* shelving units were designed for them by Guiseppe Bavuso. The *Theo* shelving system, from designer Simon Pengelly, and this time, draped with biophilia, could be seen in the [New Design Group](#) showroom. The Netherlands was represented by [Ahrend](#) who presented the Basten Leijh-designed *Charge* seating collection.



The in-house design team at [NaughtOne](#) of Harrogate in North Yorkshire, now a member of the Miller Knoll empire, showed their *Rhyme* sectional seating line, while [Verco](#), from High Wycombe, launched the “*Four-legged Emma*” nesting chair.



NaughtOne Rhyme modular seating



Emma nesting chairs from Verco

The Clerkenwell Design Week show continues to delight visitors and exhibitors alike, attracting fans from all over the world to revel in the style, culture and charm of this delightful corner of London.





John Sacks

London, May 2025

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