

Press Release
15 January 2026

WDC Signature Formats – Ambitious and Fostering Connections

The WDC signature formats are flagship events of the WDC annual programme, creating diverse platforms for citizens, culture and business alike. At the heart of these formats is the focus on networking and co-creation across design, technology, communication, mobility and civil society. All WDC signature formats are aligned with the five key themes – with the exception of the *WDC Hub*, which serves as a festival centre and permanent point of contact for World Design Capital 2026, connecting with a variety of themes.

WDC Hub – A Space in the Making

Dates: 24 January to 30 November 2026

Venue: Museum Angewandte Kunst Frankfurt / Frankfurt Museum of Applied Arts

The *WDC Hub* at the Museum Angewandte Kunst Frankfurt is not a finished place, but a space in the making – the central hub of World Design Capital Frankfurt RheinMain 2026 and an invitation to engage with design as a social practice: to reflect, co-create and discuss. Designed by studio formagora, the *WDC Hub* will offer space for questions, exchange, workshops and social encounters.

Two interconnected areas – the forum and the foyer – provide the spatial framework. The forum functions as both a platform and a place to linger: non-commercial, accessible and flexible. It will be a meeting point for visitors, project partners, international guests and the WDC team; a starting point for discovering the programme; and a space for spontaneous exchange, focused work or discussion.

The foyer complements this open setting. The works presented here are deliberately not conceived as finished exhibitions, but as insights into processes, lines of inquiry and open designs. Pop-up exhibitions, project-specific interventions, temporary installations or individual works will enter into dialogue with the space and its audience.

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Opening: Saturday, 24 January 2026, from 10 a.m.

On 24 January, a varied programme will invite visitors to explore and engage: from the international live link-up as part of the 24-hour conference *re_Design Democracies* (2-4 p.m.), to a talk with Vera and Ruedi Baur as well as Christopher Dell and Barbara Lersch, and workshops such as *Collective Paper Aesthetics* by Noa Haim, alongside guided tours of the exhibitions.

The official opening will take place at 4 p.m., led by Matthias Wagner K, Carolina Romahn and *studio formagora*, followed by a reception with mulled wine and snacks in the museum's courtyard. Admission is free – all are warmly welcome.

WDC Pavilion – A Mobile Meeting Point at Multiple Locations in the Region

Dates: April to September 2026

Venues: Bad Homburg 13-26 April, Kelkheim 4-17 May, Offenbach 25 May - 14 June, Wiesbaden 22 June - 12 July, Rheingau 17-30 August, Darmstadt 7-27 September 2026

From mid-April 2026, the mobile *WDC Pavilion* will tour the region for around six months, bringing the themes of World Design Capital Frankfurt RheinMain 2026 to life. Between April and September, it will visit cities including Bad Homburg, Offenbach, Wiesbaden, Darmstadt, Kelkheim, and the Rheingau.

The pavilion is a temporary public space where visitors can meet, try out new things and experience design as a societal force. It was conceived and realised in collaboration with ConstructLAB, an international network of architects and designers specialising in participatory architecture and social design. ConstructLAB is developing the pavilion as a flexible, modular structure that adapts to each location, with the final design to be unveiled in early 2026.

The site-specific programme follows a modular weekly structure: on weekdays, the focus will be on educational formats such as workshops with schools and joint projects with local clubs, cultural and educational institutions. At weekends, the pavilion will become a vibrant community hub, offering workshops, performances, music, talks, installations and interactive formats that encourage exchange, participation and engagement. Each location is supported by a ConstructLAB residency, creating a continuous creative undercurrent. In collaboration with WDC programme partners, site-specific activities will invite visitors to actively help shape the future of the region.

Related thematic focus: Rethinking Learning, Exploring Design

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WDO WORLD
DESIGN
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WDC Campus – Young Talents at Work

Dates: 15 April – 9 August 2026

Venue: Museum Angewandte Kunst Frankfurt / Frankfurt Museum of Applied Arts

The *WDC Campus* is a central future-focused project of World Design Capital Frankfurt RheinMain 2026 at the Museum Angewandte Kunst. This comprehensive format provides students, graduates and start-ups with a platform to present innovative projects and visions for a sustainable future regarding society, the economy and politics, while connecting universities, companies and cultural practitioners across generations.

The campus will serve simultaneously as a workshop, laboratory, forum and festival where young talents concentrate their creative energy to tackle issues such as climate change, social justice, health, mobility, governance and democracy in an interdisciplinary way. University projects are presented in a large exhibition and a range of formats, organised across different thematic areas of WDC 2026: Work; Building & Housing; Education; Health; Industry; Consumption; Culture & Media; Mobility; Public Space; and Sport.

The network was launched in summer 2025 and runs over two semesters (Winter 2025/26 and Summer 2026). Its highlight will be the Campus Festival from 3-5 July 2026, followed by an exhibition involving around 40 universities with 250,000 students and international partners. Approximately 150 exhibits will be selected and strategically promoted. Panels, lectures, workshops and dialogue workshops will foster exchange between design, science, business, politics and the public.

Related thematic focus: Rethinking Learning, Exploring Design

Open – Design Week Frankfurt RheinMain. Open to New Ideas

Dates: 5-14 June 2026

Locations: Darmstadt, Frankfurt, Wiesbaden, Offenbach and surrounding region

The *Open Design Week Frankfurt RheinMain*, taking place as part of WDC 2026, demonstrates the transformative power of design processes. For ten days, the region will become an international stage for design. Agencies, studios, craft enterprises, young talents, as well as medium and large companies, will open their doors to provide insight into their work. Open studios, talks, and solo and group exhibitions will demonstrate how design not only drives economic strength and

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innovation, but also fosters social cohesion, resource-efficient solutions and future-ready projects

The week will open with the *Hessian Creative Industries Day*, bringing design and business together at the state level. The following weekend, the *Forward Festival*, one of Europe's most significant creative festivals, will make its debut in Frankfurt RheinMain, offering an international perspective. With the title *Form Follows Friendship – Co-Design as a Democratic Practice*, young Dutch and German designers will work in tandem to present the results of their cross-border, interdisciplinary collaborations.

The *Open Design Week* is supported by associations and institutions such as Hessen Design e. V., the Hessian Creative Industries Cluster (CluK) e. V., the German Design Council - Rat für Formgebung, the diplomatic network of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and iF International Forum Design GmbH. Design awards and emerging talent will also take centre stage.

Registration is open until 31 March 2026. Already, over 40 creatives, agencies and design-oriented organisations have confirmed their participation.

Module – Interdisciplinary Festival for Creative Experimentation

Dates: 13-16 August 2026

Venue: Kulturcampus Frankfurt

The *Module Festival* will take place as an interdisciplinary open-air event from 13-16 August 2026 at Kulturcampus Frankfurt. Under the guiding theme Design for Democracy, this free festival brings together music, design and societal topics in an open programme. International and regional artists, designers and local initiatives will transform the Kulturcampus – a place in transition and a symbol of community-oriented urban development – into a laboratory for creative experimentation.

Performances, film screenings, readings, participatory workshops, guided walks and installations will offer fresh perspectives on design and community. The programme will be complemented by audiovisual projections on surrounding buildings and a temporary radio station, created in collaboration with international online radio networks. The festival invites people of all generations to rediscover the potential of design, music and creative collaboration.

Related thematic focus: Engaging all the Senses

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Policy Days – Future Needs Design

Dates: 11-14 November 2026

Locations: Frankfurt, Wiesbaden, Offenbach

The *Policy Days* will take place from 11-14 November 2026 in Frankfurt, Wiesbaden and Offenbach, serving as the official World Design Policy Conference of the World Design Organization (WDO) within the framework of World Design Capital Frankfurt RheinMain 2026. Over three days, international stakeholders from politics, design, science and civil society will discuss the role of design as a strategic tool for societal and political transformation. The conference is structured around the themes of politics, administration and values, demonstrating how design can provide impetus for democratic processes, governmental action and social innovation.

The highlight of the conference will be the Design Assembly at Frankfurt's St. Paul's Church (Paulskirche) on 14 November 2026, where the results of the WDC year will be presented alongside the Design Action Plan Frankfurt RheinMain, a catalogue of measures to sustainably embed design in politics, administration and society. Transformation researcher Maja Göpel will give a keynote speech. At the same time, the Convocation Ceremony will bring together the international network of World Design Capitals and regional decision-makers, and will formally pass the WDC title to the next World Design Capital: Busan, South Korea. The *Policy Days* thus mark the conclusion of the WDC year, while simultaneously setting the agenda for a future-oriented design policy in the region.

Related thematic focus: Design in Dialogue – in Politics and Society

WDC Spotlight #anfangen

With the WDC spotlight #anfangen, World Design Capital 2026 makes the design potential of the Frankfurt Rhine–Main region tangible and visible. Monthly video episodes and an accompanying social media campaign showcase designers, projects, and initiatives that actively practise democratic design.

#anfangen is conceived as an open invitation to take action and demonstrate civic engagement publicly. In this way, Frankfurt RheinMain positions itself as an open, participatory, and future-oriented model region – well beyond 2026.

Note: A comprehensive selection of press images and further information on key collaboration partners, WDC events, the WDO, a collection of quotes, and an overview of highlight projects from the annual programme can be found here: media.wdc2026.org/press

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