

Press Release
17th April 2026



Experience Design Where it is Made: Open – Design Week Frankfurt RheinMain transforms the region into a design experience

Ten days, four cities, more than one-hundred venues: during the Open – Design Week the region opens the doors of studios, companies, and institutions from May 5th to 14th, showcasing how and where design is created. As the centrepiece of World Design Capital 2026, this new format offers far more than traditional exhibitions: during this open-door week, visitors can experience design processes right where they are created – from workbenches to creative agencies. More than one-hundred studios, companies and research institutions will take part. In addition, curated themed spaces, such as Massif E and Danziger Platz – both key hotspots within the local creative scene – will host a wide range of events. High-profile specialist formats, such as Creative Industries Day, World Industrial Design Day and the Forward Festival, will round off the programme. Conceived as a long-term catalyst, Open – Design Week is set to become an integral fixture in the regional calendar beyond 2026.

Hands-on innovation: the Open – Design Week concept

Open connects the region across city boundaries. In Frankfurt, Offenbach, Darmstadt and Wiesbaden, studios, agencies, workshops and companies will offer insights into their work on dedicated focus days. *Open – Design Week* invites residents and visitors alike to discover the places they walk past every day without realising what is being created there. Whether in a backyard studio in Offenbach, a high-tech laboratory in Darmstadt or an advertising agency in Frankfurt – the focus is on direct engagement with the designers at their workbenches or screens. The focus days invite people to rediscover their own city or a neighbouring one by bike or on foot, experiencing design as a tangible part of everyday life.

World Design Capital
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Four cities, four focal points: the Open – Design Week and its focus days

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- 09 June | Frankfurt: Urban design, communication and brands (featuring, among others, Meso, hauser lacour, Studio Wagner:Design)
- 10 June | Offenbach: The diversity of creative production and the design business (featuring, among others, Madhat, formwandler interactive)
- 11 June | Darmstadt: Industrial design, technology and research (featuring, among others, Riese & Müller, Merck, Artefakt design)
- 12 June | Wiesbaden: 'Design Walk' through the city exploring themes of societal change (featuring, among others, 3Deluxe, Scholz & Volkmer)

Thematic Hubs: the five "Spaces"

During *Open*, five overarching themed spaces – the Spaces – will serve as hubs for discourse and networking between experts and the public:

Museum Angewandte Kunst, Frankfurt: Next Generation Space

Dedicated to design education, cultural production and sustainable consumption, the Next Generation Space highlights how emerging designers are addressing key future challenges. The WDC-Hub brings together emerging talent and initiatives, including the Hessen Design Competition, the International Gender Design Network and the Form Follows Friendship exchange programme.

Massif E, Frankfurt: Worldwide Creative Space

The former E-Kinos (cinemas) in the centre of Frankfurt will become a vibrant meeting place for international design culture. Exhibitions, talks and film screenings will bring designers, creatives and the public together at events such as the Forward Festival, one of the leading conference and festival platforms for creativity, design, communication and digital art.

Kaiser Karree, Frankfurt: Creative Industries Space

Here, the focus is on the role of design within business and the creative industries. Events and exhibitions will demonstrate how design drives new business models, entrepreneurship and innovation. The venue will host, among other events, the 9th Creative Industries Day alongside exhibitions on the creative industries.



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Danziger Platz, Frankfurt: Shared Resources Space

The Shared Resources Space at Danziger Platz provides 500 m² of floor space for temporary use as a central hub of *Open*. It brings together the young design talents from the RAFT Collective with key players from architecture and business. The exhibition *Constructive Alps* illustrates how sustainable architecture and shared resource models can foster new forms of urban coexistence.

Designhaus Darmstadt – Innovative Industries Space

From 11 to 13 June, Designhaus Darmstadt will present an accompanying exhibition showcasing the city's design scene. As an open meeting place, it provides a platform for exchange, networking and dialogue within Darmstadt's creative community.

International appeal and highlights

Alongside the open days and the *Spaces* programme, a series of high-calibre specialist events will complement *Open – Design Week*. The programme kicks off with Creative Industries Day (05 June) and the World Heritage Festival at Mathildenhöhe (06 - 07 June), which celebrates 125 years of design history with the exhibition *A Step Ahead / Einen Schritt voraus*. World Industrial Design Day FRM (WIDD) on 10 June will underscore the societal significance of industrial design. Further highlights include the presentation of the WDC x Brompton Special Edition – the outcome of a nationwide competition for the folding bike specialists' ultra-light P Line. The *Form Follows Friendship* exchange programme will bring together young designers from Germany and the Netherlands to collaborate on topics ranging from AI to the circular economy. Towards the end of the week, larger public events will take centre stage, including the Forward Festival and the TOKONOMA Open Air craft fair.

What is WDC 2026?

The World Design Capital® (WDC) is an initiative of the globally recognised, non-governmental World Design Organization (WDO)® that honours cities using design as a driver for economic, social, cultural and environmental progress. Frankfurt RheinMain (Germany) has been awarded the title for the year 2026 under the theme *Design for Democracy. Atmospheres for a Better Life*. In previous years, the title has been awarded every two years to the following cities: Turin (Italy), Seoul (South Korea), Helsinki (Finland), Cape Town (South Africa), Taipei (Chinese Taipei), Mexico City (Mexico), Lille Métropole (France) and Valencia (Spain), as well as most recently San Diego (USA) and Tijuana (Mexico) as the first binational designation, and Busan (South Korea), selected as World Design Capital® 2028.

More information at WDO.org.



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