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# 04

That's a wrap for Clerkenwell Design Week 2023! The bustling three-day event returned to showcase the best of the best with an environment of busy manufacturers' showrooms to architects throwing open their doors to other happenings in and around pockets of EC1. The sun shone brightly for the 14th anniversary of the show, making for a thoroughly enjoyable walk around captivating installations, exhibitions, talks, workshops, and showrooms.

Clerkenwell Design Week (CDW) has always been a great opportunity to discover cutting edge designs and concepts from all over the world - and this year was no different. With a new record turnout of 35,000 visitors, the show was the ideal setting for industry professionals to network/connect with people from various sectors. With more than 130 showrooms, 10 exhibition venues and 200 exhibitors to visit, there was something for everyone.

Naturally, a key highlight was the array of contemporary designs in the renowned Old Sessions House. Originally built as a courthouse and referenced in Dickens' *Oliver Twist*, this centuries-old space has been refurbished to create a beautiful backdrop for all things design, with exposed plasterwork, aged stone, arched windows, and breath-taking chandeliers. The Grade II listed building housed many showstopping brands, such as Humanscale, CLESOM, Dyson and KI, giving visitors the opportunity to explore and seek inspiration from their surroundings.



INTROD

UCTION



06

# USM

USM, a Swiss family-run business since 1855, had a strong focus on the “durability, versatility and timeless design” of its products. As a modular furniture system, USM can be continuously remoulded and reshaped to fit into different environments and spaces, giving that ultimate sense of modularity. Its Haller system is a practical, simple, yet modern furniture solution with no better way to store and organise all items. This design is not only perfect for home storage but many different types of workplace environments too. With its core values in sustainability and craftsmanship, USM aligns perfectly with the values of the modern designer through the choice of materials, minimal environmental impact and commitment to overseeing the manufacturing process.

For this CDW event, at its showroom on Central Street USM hosted a panel discussion for the book *Office Shock - Creating Better Futures for Working and Living*. The panel included the book’s co-author Joseph Press, Colin Macgadie, chief executive officer at Hubl and USM’s own Ian Weddell. With a packed showroom, the discussion looked at the future of the office and what a post-Covid workplace could and should look like. The discussion was then opened up to the audience, which resulted in greater knowledge sharing among this professional audience around subjects such as to what extent a physical office is even necessary. This was then the perfect setting for like-minded individuals to converse and swap ideas afterwards.



Image of USM showroom



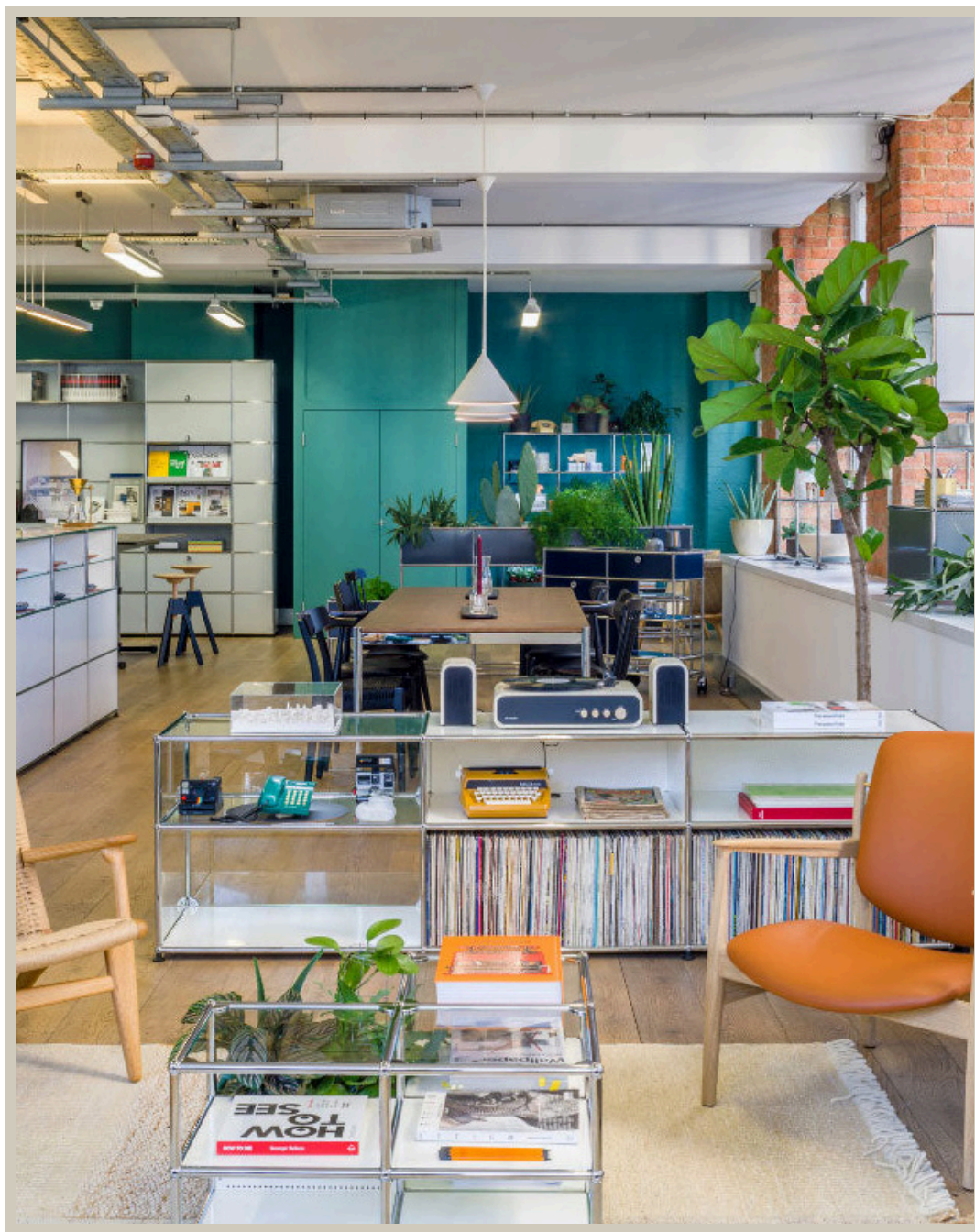


Image of USM showroom



Leading designer and manufacturer of high-performance ergonomic furniture, Humanscale's main driver is to improve the comfort of our work lives. With a prime position in Old Sessions House, CDW provided Humanscale with the perfect platform to showcase its design process and the results of its carefully considered manufacturing journey where function, simplicity and sustainability are paramount. One of the main focuses was showcasing the newest addition to its ergonomic chair collection: the Path chair, designed by Todd Bracher. Path is the world's most sustainable and inclusive task chair on the market, adapting to all body types without users having to make manual adjustments. Path takes the hassle out of sitting comfortably at work by responding to the individual user's body and

movements. The chair itself contains almost 22lbs of recycled materials, mostly made up of plastic bottles and ocean plastic. The textile options for this chair are from 'Eco Knit' which is made from 100% post-consumer recycled polyester. Old Sessions House was also the location of ICON magazine's talks programme including an exclusive discussion between Todd Bracher and ICON editor-in-chief Jessica-Christin Hametner. The two talked about the design story that led to the development of the Path chair as well as Bracher's other designs to date. With over two decades' experience across both Europe and North America, the audience was granted the opportunity to hear how science and design combine in Bracher's unique approach to product design.

# HUMAN SCALE





Freedom desk chair - Humanscale





Path chair - Humanscale

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THEMES

Clerkenwell was a hive of creativity and talent, with all exhibitors showcasing the latest interior trends and design inspirations. Themes that flowed through the three days included nature, illumination, texture and sustainability. There was an underlying sense of companies' commitment to the environment through their installations and activities during CDW. The event's participants had truly embraced the social, global, economic, and environmental influences on design.



# NATURAL RE'S CALL ING

A prominent theme displayed around Clerkenwell was nature. It was apparent that the use of woods, natural textures and materials had proved popular amongst many designers, pushing the boundaries of sustainability and what it means to connect with the natural world on a deeper level. Studies have even found that exposure to natural materials, such as wood, stone, natural textures, and plants themselves can reduce stress, increase productivity, and improve air quality. There are near endless colour palettes, textures, and patterns to be inspired by as natural materials and those inspired by nature continue to grow both in importance and demand as strongly evidenced during CDW. In respect to this, a few highlights included the work of manufacturers Ercol and Dare and photographer Gareth Gardener.



# 19

British furniture manufacturer Ercol, which has its manufacturing base just over 90 minutes away from London, uses sustainably sourced ash and oak timber for its chair legs with all wood sourced in Europe and the US. Ercol likes to focus on the natural progression of the tree itself as these inherent features give variations of grain and colour, making each piece of wood unique.

Being an architectural photographer, Gareth Gardener took a more abstract approach with his exhibition entitled 'Double Vision'. The exhibition harboured a unique aspect to trend for embracing the natural environment. Rather than being 'made' of natural products, the alluring display focused on capturing imagery of natural environments, something Gardener describes as being 'between meticulously staged photography and spontaneous reportage'.



Marino chair - Ercol contract





Gareth Gardner - double vision exhibition

# DARE

Established in 2009 by designer Sean Dare, the company that bears his surname has a mission to "create beautiful pieces of furniture which become an important element of the space they occupy". All furniture pieces are created to fit seamlessly into an interior without dominating but at the same time also making a statement - not an easy task but Dare manages it effortlessly. Many of Dare's collections are manufactured with timber frames. As a company, Dare has achieved a 'Chain of Custody Certification', which verifies that the timber gathered for products is checked at every stage of processing to meet all standards of the FSC (Forest Stewardship Council). One of our favourite pieces was the Katakana armchair. Influenced by Japanese symbology, the chair also gives a very strong mid-century modern look. Its strong angular arm shape mixed cleverly with the solid timber frame. With such a minimalist look, this design creates a soft presence in any interior and is ideal as part of a dining set or as a vanity chair.

# STUDIO





Dare Studio - Toi armchair





Dare Studio - Edgar lounge chair

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GO  
GREEN  
OR  
GO  
HOME

Like many professional communities, designers are well aware of the importance of reducing the negative impact on the environment. To this end, CDW showcased an array of environmentally aware products and installations over the course of the three days, something that brings the design community even closer together. It was refreshing to see the focus on sustainable design within the number of talks and events taking place, where the effects on designers, consumers and other stakeholders was discussed. Topics ranged from a sustainable workplace to eco materials and green architecture, all with one clear focus: how can we help the environment and stay as eco-friendly as possible. Continuing its presence at Milan Design Week, Blå Station had a strong presence at Clerkenwell Design Week too. The Swedish

family-run business is driven by perfectly blending aesthetically pleasing form with function, through the inspiration of the late 60s and 70's. Some notable products at Blå Station's showroom include the classic Max chair, one of its newer pieces with one of our favourites being the Jackless Wood Side Table. This piece has been produced completely out of a single sheet of wood veneer on top of recycled paper - completely minimising the carbon footprint of the item. Another highlight was the revamped and extended showroom space of Bisley. The space showcased the British manufacturer's products for both the home and the workplace and the convergence of the two. Bisley also demonstrated its sustainable credentials in terms of logistics, manufacturing, and the supply chain.



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Bisley showroom on Dallington Street



Blå Station - Jackless wood table and Max chair





# FLOKK

Flokk is another firm with a huge focus on the environment. Known as a 'House of Brands', Flokk offers a huge range of seating solutions, tables, and accessories for the workplace – with the main vision for the company being 'inspiring great work'. Flokk makes sure that its resources and manufacturing processes are energy-efficient and produce minimal waste. In 2011, Flokk published its first sustainable report (GRI format), which examined every aspect of the company focusing on the overall impact it has on the environment. This report has helped the company set ambitious long-term targets for what it can do to reduce its impact on the climate. One of its classic products is the HÅG Capisco, with its distinctive customisable seating arrangement. It was originally inspired by a horseback rider's posture and how that would help in a workplace setting. This led to the chair having a saddle seat and a unique back shape, which creates endless seating options, whether sat or half standing. These varying positions encourage individuals to move around more towards what they find comfortable, with the aim being to help posture.



Flokk - HÅG Celi



Flokk - Tion task chair

LET  
THERE  
BE  
LIGHT





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Lighting once again had a strong showing at Clerkenwell Design Week and was explored in many forms, from floor lamps to chandeliers and delicate table lights. One of the main places to discover a plethora of lighting was the subterranean House of Detention. This former Victorian prison was illuminated with the array of international lighting brands, standalone installations, and upcoming brands.

Lighting has the power to completely transform a space and how people perceive it from the energising power of cool LEDs to warmer, more relaxing tones. Back in Old Sessions House, family-run firm Chelsom Lighting celebrated its creativity in lighting design. Following its 75th anniversary, Chelsom released its newest collection, Edition 28 featuring a range of different decorative lighting styles.

Also, one not to miss at Clerkenwell was Curiousa Lighting. Its bold and bright designs could be seen at the British Collection where the company cleverly combined organic shapes and historical references into a modern aesthetic. Each element is hand-assembled with products featuring 70% recycled glass. The company's Wave collection was a real showstopper, mixing earth tone hues with bright bursts of reds and yellows, along with multiple shapes and sizes brought together to form a large chandelier.





Chelsom lighting - Glass quilt



Curiousa studio - Wave chandelier





# TOM

Tom Kirk is another innovative lighting firm which exhibited at CDW. It specialises in the design and manufacture of decorative light fixtures and fittings for both residential and commercial interiors.

With a workshop in South-East London and harnessing a true sense of craftsmanship, this is British manufacturing heritage at its finest. All materials are locally sourced within the UK, including polished brass, copper, and steel used to create the unique and crafted fixtures. One of our highlights from the Tom Kirk display was the Reed Light with options as a table, wall, and floor light. The delicate and minimalist structure of the light adds a soft and warm atmospheric hue to any interior, aided by the dimmer switch.

# KIRK



Tom Kirk - Reed table light



Tom Kirk - Reed wall light

WEAVING  
FOR  
WARD





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Texture is an essential part of creating a domestic or commercial interior and there was inspiration aplenty at this year's CDW from boucle to velvet.

Texture can add depth, create balance and overall add visual weight to any space, whether through a rug/carpet, on a sofa or through curtains. Texture is a must need force that should not be reckoned with!

Kirkby Design is one creative textile brand that is pushing the boundaries when it comes to texture. It has been creating cutting-edge fabrics, wallcoverings, and accessories for over a decade, developing a reputation for its interplay of texture including chenille, boucle, velvet and wool to create daring designs. Like many companies exhibiting at CDW, Kirkby makes a conscious effort as far as the environmental impact on the planet goes, working alongside its suppliers to source and explore new recycled yarn developments to be included in new products.



Kirkby design fabrics





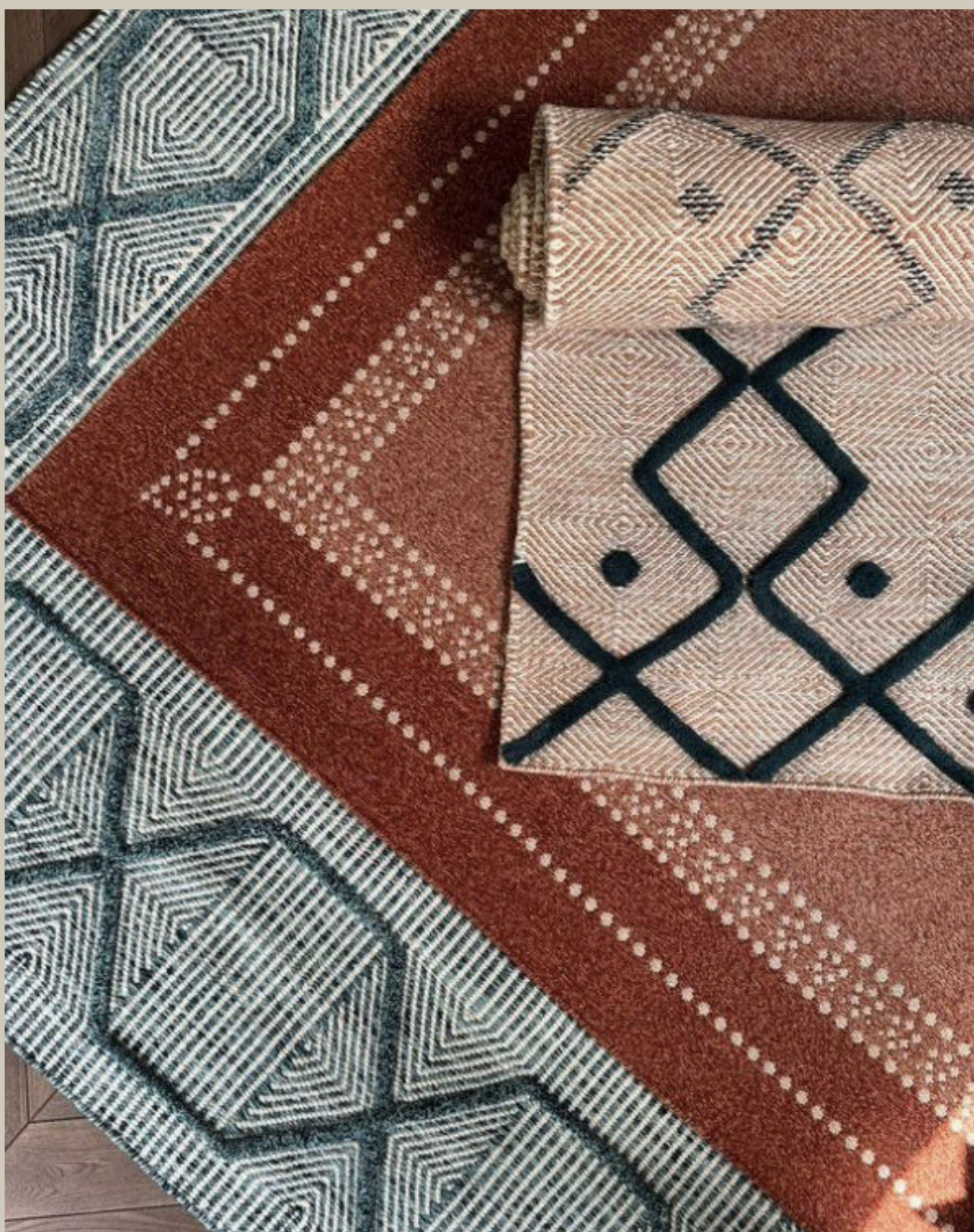
Kastall rugs



# HOLMES BESPOKE

Another company innovating in terms of texture is Holmes Bespoke. Founded in 2018 by Laylah Holmes this company specialises in bespoke hand-crafted rugs, carpets and home accessories for any luxury interiors. Through various weaving techniques, hand-tufting, knotting, looping and carving no two Holmes Bespoke designs are the same.

Holmes has a range of collections all showing different techniques, patterns and materials. Naturals, shore, abstract, leopard, elements and line up are a few collections Holmes Bespoke has created. The wide range of collections give the consumers endless options to decorate their interior.







Holmes Bespoke gallery image



Holmes Bespoke gallery image

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