

VIENNA DESIGN WEEK 20th edition

2014

press release /
pressemappe

viennadesignweek.at

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20 years of VIENNA DESIGN WEEK

„A big birthday, a major anniversary, a milestone – first, you have to figure out what such a moment means to you personally. In the time it takes a person to grow up, the VIENNA DESIGN WEEK has evolved into one of Europe’s leading design festivals. As a platform that explores the role of design in society and the world, it has provided countless sources of inspiration, brought people together, commissioned projects, and discovered places – beautiful, critical, innovative, warm, international, and site-specific – each with its own unique character.

This anniversary is an opportunity for us to look back on what we’ve accomplished, to celebrate, and to look boldly toward the future.“

– Gabriel Roland, Director of the VIENNA DESIGN WEEK

For nearly two decades, the VIENNA DESIGN WEEK has been telling the stories behind objects, creating space for experimentation, and connecting designers with craftsmanship, business, the city, and society. In 2026, the curated festival with an international focus and appeal will take place from September 25 to October 4 and, with specially commissioned projects in various festival formats, will once again offer a cultural perspective on design at its 20th edition. Over ten days in the fall, the VIENNA DESIGN WEEK expects around 50,000 visitors at roughly 200 events at fifty locations scattered throughout the City Full of Design. The festival is open to everyone – admission is mostly free!

Anniversary tour and program preview

To mark its anniversary, the VIENNA DESIGN WEEK made guest appearances at selected design events across its international network in the run-up to the festival. Together with special guests and in close cooperation with local partners, the festival team organized events that carry the VIENNA DESIGN WEEK’s unique spirit beyond the city limits and give a taste of the anniversary edition in Vienna. The anniversary tour included stops in Brussels (Collectible), Rotterdam (Nieuwe Instituut), Milan (Fuorisalone), Mikulov (Křehký Mikulov), Frankfurt (World Design Capital Frankfurt RheinMain), London (Clerkenwell Design Week), and Logroño (Concéntrico). All projects featured in the anniversary tour will also be presented at a special showcase during the festival in Vienna.

In addition, plans for the upcoming edition of the VIENNA DESIGN WEEK include an anniversary exhibition designed as both a retrospective and a vision of the future, a multi-part symposium, and, of course, lively birthday celebrations.

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Luxembourg as GAST and a triple debut

The program put together by festival director Gabriel Roland and his team focuses on more than just the design of products. In exhibitions, interventions, workshops, talks, tours, and much more, contributions from areas such as social design, crafts, the circular economy, art, and architecture illustrate the essential role that the work of designers plays in living together in the city and around the world.

The festival is structured into several curated formats as well as associated outreach programs, talks, and site-specific emphases. Another important part of the program are the contributions created by external partners. Over ten days in the fall, the VIENNA DESIGN WEEK expects around 50,000 visitors at roughly 200 events at fifty locations scattered throughout the City Full of Design. The festival is open to everyone – admission is mostly free!

With Luxembourg as a guest in the format GAST and projects developed specifically for the festival format Debut by two German design schools – the Karlsruhe University of Arts and Design (HfG) and the Potsdam University of Applied Sciences – as well as the Regenerative Design Lab at the University of Applied Arts Vienna, the first festival segments with international appeal have already been confirmed.

This year's visual appearance of VIENNA DESIGN WEEK reflects the opulence of a milestone birthday celebration. Under the theme "20 Years – 20 Patterns", Studio Sirene is developing a visual world that is as wild as it is orderly, with its various elements being released in several stages leading up to the festival.

Open Calls – The Festival as an open platform

Through its open calls in the festival formats Stadtarbeit and Urban Food & Design, VIENNA DESIGN WEEK invites designers to submit their concepts and ideas. Selected projects will be allocated budgets and implemented as part of the festival.

Building on the research and development results from Biofabrique Vienna presented at last year's VIENNA DESIGN WEEK, the format Urban Food & Design – presented in collaboration with the Vienna Business Agency – focuses on the practical use of colors and pigments derived from bioregional resources. Through an open call, the VIENNA DESIGN WEEK and the Vienna Business Agency invited submissions of designs for workwear and experimental installations using the Vienna Colors. The results will be presented as part of the festival.

In the social design format Stadtarbeit, supported by the Erste Bank sponsorship program – Vermehrt Schönes! – design projects exploring the social role of celebration in light of the VIENNA DESIGN WEEK anniversary are being commissioned.

In addition to Urban Food & Design and Stadtarbeit, the PLATFORM format and the international group exhibition FOKUS also offer opportunities to become part of the festival. PLATFORM is aimed at brands, manufacturers, design studios, and domestic and international institutions that would like to present their work as part of the festival program.

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For the fifth edition of FOKUS, a guest curator will once again set a theme around which – framed by a specially designed scenography – outstanding design objects by emerging designers will be grouped. In 2026, the Swiss interior stylist, journalist, exhibition maker, and curator Connie Hüsser is putting together outstanding design objects on the subject of “The Essence of Lightness”.

Premieres and crowd-pleasers

The project TECH TALES, co-funded by the European Union and the Austrian Ministry of Arts and Culture, is celebrating its world premiere at this year’s festival. On public display for the first time is an interactive exhibition for children, which VIENNA DESIGN WEEK is co-organizing as part of a European consortium and which aims to inspire children to view the world from different perspectives through fairy tales presented in a contemporary setting.

The audience favorites Design Everyday and Passionswege will also return in early fall 2026 as a regular part of the festival. The Professional Breakfast, hosted in collaboration with EIT – Culture and Creativity, offers opportunities for targeted networking between designers and decision-makers from the business world. There’s already a chance to get in the mood for VIENNA DESIGN WEEK 2026: at the monthly motion design presentations at the Rado Boutique in Vienna, located at Kärntner Straße 18.

The festival’s governing association is a nonprofit organization that funds the festival and the organizational team’s year-round activities through a combination of public grants, sponsorships, and contributions from exhibitors. This ensures the organization’s independence and reflects design’s key role at the intersection of culture, society, and the economy. In the spirit of providing ongoing support for the festival, Tulga Beyerle and Lilli Hollein – the other two founding members of the VIENNA DESIGN WEEK – have recently rejoined the board of the governing association, following Thomas Geisler’s return.

The VIENNA DESIGN WEEK would like to thank all contributors and supporters, especially the City of Vienna’s Department of Culture and the Federal Ministry of Housing, Arts, Culture, Media, and Sports, whose funding makes the festival possible.

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General information

20th festival edition of the VIENNA DESIGN WEEK
September 25 to October 4, 2026

Press tour and festival opening
September 24, 2026

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Press Material

Texts and printable images for download will be updated continuously:
viennadesignweek.at/presse

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Auditors

Magdalena Hiller, Eva-Maria Titz

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