

Manufacturers draw back the curtain at Dutch Design Week 2023

TEXT BY CLAIRE BRODKA
17.10.23

At this year's fair, six Dutch furniture makers will band together for the first time in an exclusive exhibition that showcases sustainability dilemmas and invites dialogue. We get a sneak peek at what's to come.



Right place, right time: that's how you could describe the origin story of [Future > Factory > Furniture >](#), a special event at [Dutch Design Week 2023](#), which returns to the iconic Klokgebouw – along with over one hundred other sites in the city of Eindhoven – from 21 to 29 October. It was in the former Philips factory building that, earlier this year, another industry gathering took place. [Destination Design](#) hosted over 40 international and Dutch brands for the second year running in an effort to shed light on new products and innovative ideas.

This was also where Destination Design co-organiser Hans Filippini, CCO of [Leolux Furniture Group](#), first came together with Marsha Simon, [Dutch Design Foundation](#)'s Programme & Community Manager, to talk about carving out a space for manufacturers at the city's biggest fair. Typically reserved for installations that sidestep a product focus in favour of more conceptual showcases, they both knew DDW was the right platform to highlight the common issues that brands face when it comes to [sustainability](#) and circularity.



Leolux CCO Hans Filippini (top) is one of the co-founders of Destination Design (bottom), a fair that puts innovative manufacturers and brands at its centre. Photos: Hugo Thomassen (top), Simone de Geus (bottom)

'Products aren't usually a part of DDW's programme, which is more focused on global themes', explains Filippini. 'But those themes are also in our focus! We are also very worried about sustainability and how our products can stay long-lasting. So we brainstormed together to figure out how we can ask the design community and DDW visitors to think with us in the challenges that we are facing.'

'We started with Destination Design and then all felt the urge to open up and share our thoughts and beliefs and questions'

Participants at [Future > Factory > Furniture](#) > include [Arco](#), [CS Rugs](#), [Gelderland](#), [Label van den Berg](#), [Lande Family](#) and [Leolux](#), joining forces in an unprecedented move toward transparency and collaboration. 'It surprised me how quickly we came together as a collective', admits Filippini. 'But under pressure, everything gets fluid. We started with Destination Design and then all felt the urge to open up and share our thoughts and beliefs and questions.'





Marsha Simon, Programme & Community Manager at DDF (bottom), is one of the people responsible for the fair's sustainability focus and advocated for the new manufacturer collaboration. Photos: Max Kneefel (top), Boudewijn Bollmann (bottom)

For Simon and Dutch Design Week Creative Head Miriam van der Lubbe, the collaboration made sense. 'We talked about what a pity it was that these brands were not presenting their work – and way of working – during Dutch Design Week. Because they do belong in that community', says Simon. 'Under this year's theme [Picture This](#), they are opening up their kitchens and actively asking for participation. They're being vulnerable by presenting the audience with their issues and showing what role every person in the product life cycle – whether it is designers, colleague manufacturers or clients – can play.'

In light of the global environmental crisis, the event presents a unique opportunity to highlight the benefits of sharing openly, especially among competitors

In light of the global environmental crisis and as a natural continuation of last year's Dutch Design Week theme [Get Set](#), the event presents a unique opportunity to highlight the benefits of sharing openly, especially among competitors. Simon echoes the sentiment: 'I think it's special that in times this challenging, these furniture brands are putting in the effort to open up and work together instead of just continuing to show the great furniture they are making. We've come to a point of no escape – raw materials are running out and we have to take matters into our own hands, not wait for legislation to tell us to.'



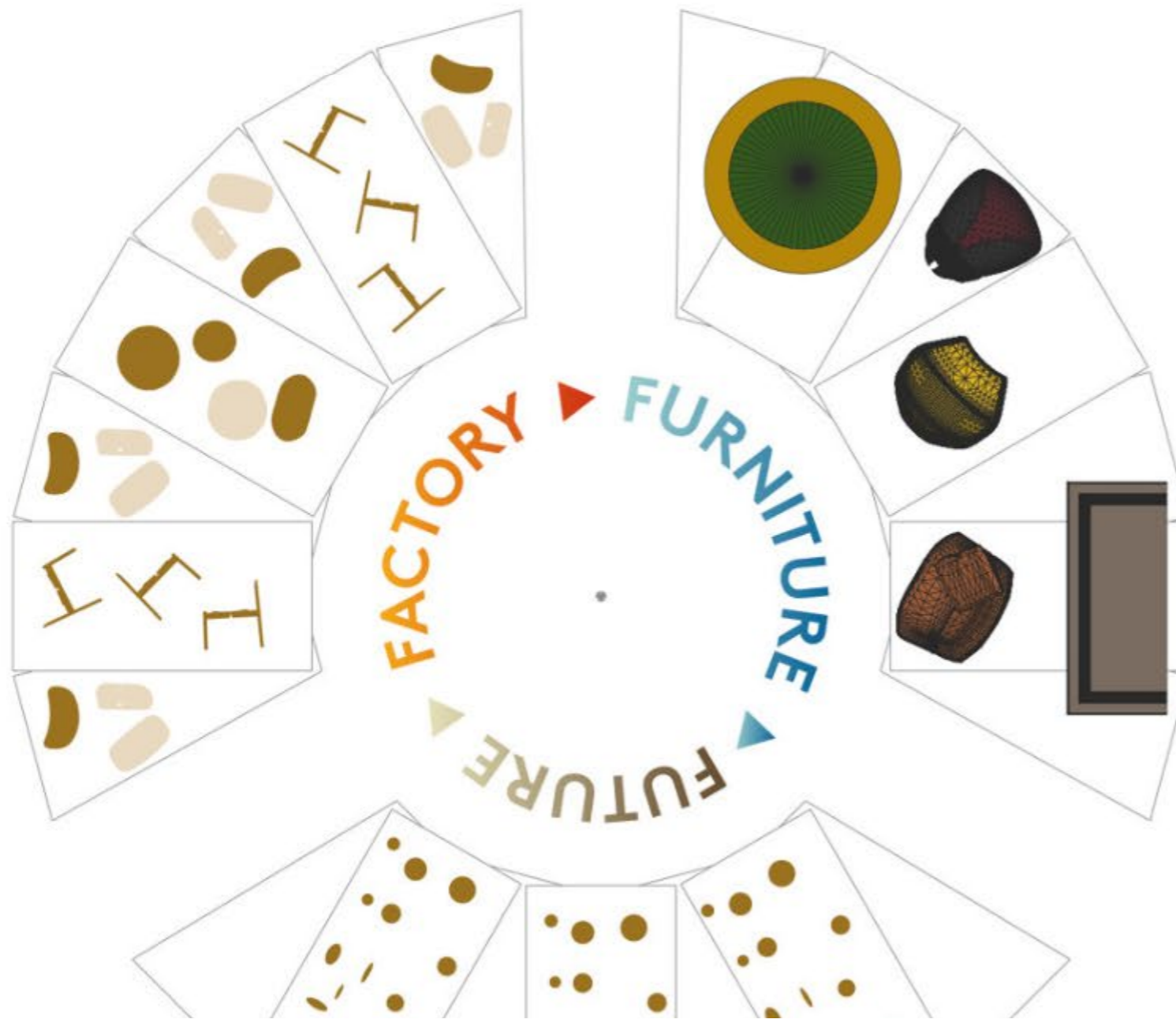
Up close and personal: Future > Factory > Furniture > will let visitors ask uncomfortable questions and present an exhibition design that openly reveals the challenges surrounding circular economy efforts. Photos: Britt Roelse (top), Gelderland (bottom)

When it came to translating the rather abstract issues into a real-life visitor experience, the team enlisted Dutch design duo [Overtreders W.](#) Specialising in demountable, reusable and recycled architecture, the self-proclaimed 'mavericks of the Dutch architecture scene' jumped on board with a circular, three-part spatial concept that involves deconstructed furniture pieces, behind the scenes of production and consumption, to instil a sense of the life cycle of

When it came to translating the rather abstract issues into a real-life visitor experience, the team enlisted Dutch design duo [Overtreders W.](#) Specialising in demountable, reusable and recycled architecture, the self-proclaimed 'mavericks of the Dutch architecture scene' jumped on board with a circular, three-part spatial concept that involves deconstructed furniture pieces, behind-the-scenes looks at production and conversation prompts printed on larger-than-life ceiling banners.

'This is just step one; it's not about the growth of a brand, it's about the betterment of the industry'

Filippini explains the brief: 'When they reach the final stage, visitors should feel like they are allowed to challenge us, set goals and question our processes. It's essentially an open forum for discussion and improvements.' Unlike a more traditional exhibition design, the circular pathway takes its audience on a journey with no predetermined endpoint. Instead, it presents the dilemma of sustainable production in a way that makes palpable its inherent need for partnership and true systemic change.





Dutch architecture firm Overtreders W was enlisted with the exhibition design – visitors can expect a circular pathway and discussion prompts that are suspended from the ceiling. Photo: Overtreders W

And this is just the beginning: both the manufacturer participants and Dutch Design Foundation hope to kickstart a movement that returns at future [Dutch Design Week](#) editions. 'Ideally, it's an awakening to responsibility on everybody's part and realising that you, too, have a role to play in transitioning from fast to slow furniture', says Simon. 'This is just step one; it's not about the growth of a brand, it's about the betterment of the industry.'

© Architonic

Head to the [Architonic Magazine](#) for more insights on the latest products, trends and practices in architecture and design.

RELATED PROFILES

MANUFACTURERS

LĀBEL
VANDENBERG

LABEL VAN DEN BERG

Raamsdonksveer, Netherlands

MORE

MANUFACTURERS

arco



ARCO

Winterswijk, Netherlands

MANUFACTURERS

leolux LX



LEOLUX LX

Venlo, Netherlands

FESTIVALS, EVENTS, TRADE SHOWS

ddw
dutch design week

DUTCH DESIGN WEEK

80 Eindhoven, Netherlands