

PRESS RELEASE



Form Follows Friendship: German-Dutch Design Collaborations Explore New Ways of Design Exchange

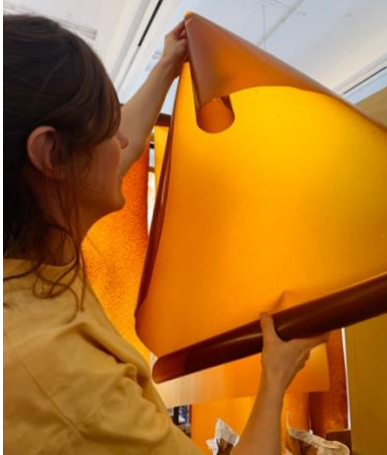
Frankfurt am Main, 2 June 2026

How do design ideas emerge when authorship is shared? What happens when ideas travel, materials evolve, and perspectives come together? From **14 to 28 June 2026**, the exhibition **Form Follows Friendship – Co-Design as a Democratic Practice** at the Museum Angewandte Kunst Frankfurt presents three collaborative projects developed by emerging designers from Germany and the Netherlands.

Created on the occasion of **World Design Capital 2026 Frankfurt RheinMain**, the project brings together young designers from both countries to develop shared design proposals over several months. Working across disciplines and locations, the teams explore questions around material research, circular design, digital tools and collective ways of working.

At its core, the exhibition understands co-design as a democratic practice. Rather than focusing on a finished object, it highlights the process itself. Ideas evolve through exchange, negotiation and collective authorship. Design becomes a shared practice shaped by experimentation, dialogue and collaboration.

The exhibition features three projects that offer different perspectives on contemporary design challenges:



A Matter of Light by **Verena Brom (GER)** and **Sjoerd Geerts (NL)**, explores a modular lighting system made from bio-based materials derived from industrial fruit waste. Combining material innovation with principles of circular design, the collaboration investigates how lighting objects can be designed for disassembly, repair and material recovery.



Form Follows Fold by **Friedrich Gerlach (GER)** and **Studio Luis Marie (NL)** explores folding, cutting and draping as a shared design practice. Through the exchange of prototypes, the designers develop spatial structures from recycled materials, refining and reinterpreting them step by step. The project demonstrates how simple means, experimental collaboration, and continuous dialogue can give rise to adaptable spatial installations.



AI Tell You Everything by **Tina Lenz (NL)** and **Enes Pavluković (GER)**, explores authorship, voice and editorial agency in the age of automated media production. Visitors are invited to generate, edit and transform AI-produced texts into physical publications, reflecting on media literacy and the role of human decision-making in contemporary communication.

Form Follows Friendship – Co-Design as a Democratic Practice is a joint project by the German Design Graduates initiative of the German Design Council, the diplomatic network of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Germany, and the Creative Industries Fund NL, developed within the framework of the World Design Capital 2026 Frankfurt RheinMain. The project builds on the German-Dutch initiative "Form Follows Friendship", established in 2023, which connects designers, companies and creative practitioners from both countries and fosters long-term collaborations.

The aim is to bring together young designers from Germany and the Netherlands and to make new forms of cross-border collaboration visible. Participants were selected through the Design Networking Hub of the German Design Museum Foundation.

Images and press materials can be downloaded here: germandesigngraduates.com/press-release

Representatives of the project available for interviews and further information:

Lutz Dietzold, CEO, German Design Council

Kai Rosenstein, Chief Experience Officer, World Design Capital Frankfurt RheinMain 2026

Astrid Joost-van der Spek, Honorary Consul of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Frankfurt am Main

Anselm van Sintfiet, Programme Manager, Creative Industries Fund NL

Exhibition Information

Form Follows Friendship – Co-Design as a Democratic Practice: 14–28 June 2026

Opening reception: 13 June 2026, 4–6 pm

RSVP: germandesigngraduates.com/rsvp-fff-2026

Venue: Museum Angewandte Kunst, Schaumainkai 17, 60594 Frankfurt am Main

Project Partners

German Design Council

Since 1953, the German Design Council has been one of Germany's leading institutions for design. Connecting design, business and society, it promotes innovation, sustainable transformation and the international visibility of design. Through initiatives such as German Design Graduates, it supports emerging talent across all design disciplines and creates platforms for exchange, networking and international collaboration.

Diplomatic Network of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Germany

The Dutch diplomatic network in Germany, consisting of the Dutch Embassy in Berlin and two Consulates in Düsseldorf and Munich, aims to strengthen cooperation between Germany and the Netherlands. Through supporting initiatives such as "Form Follows Friendship", it actively fosters cross-border dialogue and collaboration between emerging designers from both countries.

Design Networking Hub

Hosted by the German Design Museum Foundation, the Design Networking Hub is an online platform connecting designers, studios and creative professionals worldwide. The open call for "Form Follows Friendship" was launched through this platform, which continues to facilitate international exchange and collaboration.

Creative Industries Fund NL

Creative Industries Fund NL is the Dutch national cultural fund for design, architecture and digital culture. The fund supports innovative projects, research initiatives and international collaborations, strengthening the role of the creative industries as drivers of social and economic development.

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