

UNDER STRICT EMBARGO UNTIL 14:00 GMT, WEDNESDAY 19 NOVEMBER 2025

CREATIVITY IS DEAD: D&AD LAUNCHES BRAND MANIFESTO AND CHALLENGES THE INDUSTRY TO PROVE OTHERWISE

- Issues a deliberate provocation for the industry – to prove whether creativity is dead or very much alive
- Launches a new brand manifesto and movement reigniting the act of making across the creative industries
- Reveals 2026 D&AD Awards Jury Presidents and announces new categories

London, Wednesday 19 November 2025: D&AD, the global non-profit championing excellence in design and commercial creativity, today announces a bold new brand manifesto and movement to reignite the act of making as it kicks off its 2026 Awards programme.

The new brand campaign and manifesto is a deliberate provocation to an industry at risk of overthinking itself: creativity isn't being stolen by technology, it's being left undone. We're scrolling instead of doing. The threat isn't a lack of ideas, but a lack of action. The brand manifesto marks the start of a new era for D&AD, one that places action and experimentation back at the heart of commercial creativity.

To bring this new era to life, D&AD has partnered with Uncommon to launch a global brand campaign, inspired by the manifesto, spanning its Awards, Learn and Talent programmes. Visually bold and unapologetically direct, the campaign poses one question: Is creativity dead or alive? and invites creatives everywhere to respond.

The campaign kicks off with a reimagined look for the D&AD 2026 Awards programme and the announcement of the 2026 Jury Presidents, a line-up of visionary creative leaders who embody the manifesto's spirit.

The 2026 Jury Presidents include a global mix of creative experts from leading international brands and agencies, including Dentsu Tokyo, Airbnb, FCB Global, 72andSunny, Havas Health & You, Dutch Uncle and more.

Donal Keenan, D&AD Chief Operating Officer states, *"Our new brand manifesto captures a belief that runs through everything we do, across our Awards, Learn, and Talent programmes, because the future of commercial creativity depends on keeping the spirit of making alive."*

Creativity today is more decentralised than ever, coming from makers, creators, in-house teams and a new wave of independent studios. Our role is to ensure all these voices are equipped and inspired to keep pushing creative excellence forward. Yet in this abundance, creativity risks becoming diluted. Brands are finding it harder than ever to cut through and truly engage audiences, which is exactly why this provocation is needed."

Lisa Smith, D&AD President and Uncommon Global Chief Design Officer states, *"Creativity doesn't die, it drifts. It gets buried under deadlines, data and fear of taking risks. This manifesto is a reminder to the industry that ideas are only as powerful as the people brave enough to make them real. As creative leaders, we have a responsibility to protect that spirit – to keep making, experimenting and proving that bold, human ideas still matter. D&AD exists to champion that pulse. To show that creativity isn't just alive – it's vital."*

Nils Leonard, D&AD Trustee and Uncommon Co-Founder adds, *“We talk like proud reporters on a slow motion car crash. Thousand word essays on LinkedIn mournfully posted late at night about how our castles made of bean bags and free Haribo are falling down around us, about how fragile creativity is, except it isn’t. Yes, we are the passengers on the bus falling at a thousand frames from the bridge, the problem is we are also the drivers. Technology, In-housing and influencers didn’t kill creativity, we did. It dies every time we spend more time wanging on social and every time we start believing our jobs are content solutions. Shut up and make. The biggest threat to our jobs isn’t AI, it is apathy. If we believe creativity is dead, if we believe it is alive, we are right.”*

New for the D&AD Awards 2026 are categories that reflect how creativity is evolving:

Brand Transformation: celebrates the power of strategic insight and measurable business or cultural influence, alongside executional craft, creating space for entries that excel in both thinking and making.

Cultural Influence: recognises commercial creativity that makes a cultural impression. Work that sparks conversations, shapes identity, sets trends, or embeds itself into culture.

Sports Entertainment: celebrates creativity within the world of sport; from campaigns and sponsorships to branded content and fan experiences – where storytelling connects teams, brands and audiences.

For over 60 years, D&AD has celebrated and championed excellence in design and commercial creativity. Now, as the industry faces a culture of hesitation and passive observation, D&AD is reigniting its founding spirit, creativity that acts and moves culture forward.

As part of the launch, D&AD has created an editorial hub exploring the question *Is Creativity Dead or Alive?* a series of articles, interviews and insights examining the state of creativity today. The platform brings together voices from across design and advertising to explore how creativity is evolving. Visit the editorial hub at dandad.org/alive.

Key D&AD Awards Dates 2026

- Open for Entry: 26 November 2025
- Super Early Bird Deadlines (30% off) Payment: 14 January 2026
- Early Bird Deadlines (20% off) Payment: 11 February 2026
- Final Deadline Payment: 26 March 2026
- D&AD Winners Announced: 19-20 May 2026
- D&AD Festival: May 2026
- D&AD Awards Ceremony: September 2026

Ends

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Notes to editors

About D&AD

D&AD is a global creativity non-profit that celebrates, stimulates and enables excellence in design and commercial creativity. Through its world-renowned Awards and education programmes, D&AD aims to generate funding to champion the next generation of creative talent to drive positive change in the

industry and beyond. The global steward of creative excellence in commercial creativity. For more, visit: dandad.org.

D&AD Awards 2026 – Jury Presidents, with more to be announced in the coming weeks:

Category	Name	Title	Company	Nation
Animation	Marilena Vatseri	Managing Director / Executive Producer	NOMINT	UK
Art Direction	Yoshihiro Yagi	Executive Creative Director	Dentsu Tokyo	Japan
Book Design	David Pearson	Graphic Designer / Founder	Type as Image / The Book Cover Review	UK
Brand Identity Refresh	Teemu Suviala	Global Chief Creative Officer	Landor	USA
Casting	Claire Catterson	Casting Director	Claire Catterson Casting	UK
Commerce	Till Diestel	Chief Creative Officer	Serviceplan Germany	Germany
Creator Content	Akanksha Goel	Chief Executive Officer & Founder / Regional Lead Middle East & India	Socialize Agency / We Are Social	UAE
Cultural Influence	Geoff Edwards	Managing Director, Creative	GALE	USA
Digital Marketing	Tara McKenty	Chief Creative Officer, Australia NZ	AKQA	Australia
Digital Experience Design	Teo Connor	Vice President of Design	Airbnb	UK / USA
Direct	Danilo Boer	Global Creative Partner	FCB Global	USA
Direction	Gabriel Moses	Director	DIVISION	UK
Editing	Yorgos Lamprinos	Film Editor	Cosmic	France
Entertainment & Sports Entertainment	Matt Murphy	Global Chief Creative Officer	72andSunny	USA
Experiential: Activation & Participation	Youri Guerassimov	Co-Chief Creative Officer & Chief Executive Officer	Marcel	France
Film	Brent Anderson	Global Chief Creative Officer	TBWA\Media Arts Lab	USA
Gaming & Virtual Worlds	Claudio Lima	Chief Executive Officer	WOW Gaming Ventures	Brazil
Graphic Design	Naomi Hirabayashi	Art Director & Graphic Designer	PLUG-IN GRAPHIC	Japan
Health	Eric Weisberg	Global Chief Creative Officer	Havas Health and You	USA
Illustration	Noma Bar	Graphic Artist & Illustrator	DUTCH UNCLE	UK
Impact	Ali Rez	Chief Creative Officer	Impact BBDO	UAE

Luxury	Priya Matadeen	Brand Director	Mulberry	UK
Magazine & Newspaper Design	Birthe Steinbeck	Founder & Director / Art Director	STUDIO STEINBECK & SÜDDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG MAGAZIN	Germany
Media	Resh Sidhu	Senior Global Director, Innovation & Marketing	Snap Inc.	USA
New Brand Identity	Cat How	Chief Executive Officer, Founder & Executive Creative Director	How&How	USA/UK
Packaging Design	Gush Mundae	Founder & Chief Executive Officer	Bulletproof	UAE
Photography	Prashant Godbole	Founder & Photographer	ideas@work Advertising	India
Press & Outdoor	Reed Collins	Chief Creative Officer APAC	Ogilvy	China
Product Design	Tom Lloyd	Co-Founder	Pearson Lloyd	UK
Production Design	Dulcidio Gutierrez Caldeira	Partner & Director	Boiler Films	Brazil
Radio & Audio	Mandie van der Merwe	Chief Creative Officer	Saatchi & Saatchi	Australia
Sound Design & Use of Music	Gilvana Viana	CEO & Executive Producer	MugShot	Brazil
Type Design & Lettering	Veronika Burian	Co-Founder & Type Director	TypeTogether	Germany / Spain
Typography	Liu Zhao	Founder & Creative Director	another design	China
Visual Effects	Louise Unwin	Executive Producer	JAMM Visual	UK
Writing for Design	Holly Kielty	Writer & Creative Strategist	Holly Kielty Limited	UK