



Over 300 Global Creatives Join D&AD Awards 2026 Jury as Agencies, Brands and Independent Studios Unite

More than 300 leading international creatives to judge the world's most prestigious creative awards, alongside the announcement of the D&AD Festival

London, UK, D&AD, the global non-profit championing excellence in design and commercial creativity, today reveals the jury for the 2026 D&AD Awards, bringing together a global jury of leading creatives from more than 40 countries to judge the very best in commercial creativity.

This year's jury reflects the changing shape of the creative industry. For 2026, independent studios now make up around half of the jury, alongside an increased number of brand-side representatives, including creatives from global brands such as Lego, Unilever and adidas, reflecting the breadth of creative leadership today, spanning world-class agencies, brands and independent studios, while maintaining the rigorous standards D&AD is known for.

The D&AD Awards 2026 also reflect the organisation's provocation to the industry. In line with its recent Creativity is Alive manifesto, the D&AD Awards challenge creatives, brands and studios to demonstrate that creativity is alive through action, making and world-class work.

The D&AD Awards return in May 2026, with live judging taking place from 17 - 20 May and winners announced on 20 May. Running alongside this, the D&AD Festival will take place across the Southbank on 19 - 20 May, featuring Insight Sessions exploring the work judges championed and challenged, the debates inside the jury rooms, and the themes and trends that emerged.

The Festival will also include keynote talks curated by D&AD President Lisa Smith, alongside the Yellow Pencil Showcase, where the winning work for 2026 will be revealed and explored with insight from the jury presidents.

This year, D&AD will also offer a number of free festival tickets to support creatives who have recently been made redundant, reinforcing its commitment to the creative community during a challenging period for the industry.

The Black Pencil, D&AD's highest honour, along with the President's Award, individual rankings and Company of the Year, will be announced and celebrated separately in September.



Across 46 categories, juries will assess work against the core principles that have defined D&AD for more than six decades: originality, craft and creative excellence. The judging process remains peer-led and focused on work that pushes the industry forward.

The current list of over 300 international judges can be found [on the D&AD website](#) with more to be added in the coming days.

Donal Keenan, D&AD COO said: *“As a global non-profit, D&AD exists to uphold creative standards for the industry. The Awards are judged by creatives, for creatives and this year’s jury reflects the reality of how great work is made today, while maintaining the rigour and integrity that have defined D&AD for more than six decades.”*

Lisa Smith, D&AD President and Uncommon Global Chief Design Officer, said: *“Creativity thrives when it’s actively supported, challenged and put into practice. This year’s jury brings together people who are deeply involved in making great work happen and who understand the responsibility that comes with recognising and championing creative excellence.”*

D&AD Awards 2026 is now open for entry. Key dates below, and for full details on categories, judging criteria, pricing and deadlines, please visit the D&AD website. Tickets for the Festival go on sale on 12 February via the [D&AD website](#).

NOTES TO EDITORS

For more information please contact Laura.mcturk@dandad.org

Key Dates

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| 11 February 2026: | Early Bird Discount Deadline (save 20% on entries) |
| 19 March 2026: | Final Awards entry deadline |
| 19 - 20 May 2026: | Shortlist Announced |
| 20 May 2026: | D&AD Pencils Announced |
| 19 - 20 May 2026: | D&AD Festival |
| September 2026: | D&AD Awards Ceremony |

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](#)