

# space

BY STANSONS



Rick Mower opens up about recovery, purpose and proving people wrong.

## 2026 design forecast

the designers guide

# hh global

texture and depth

[stansons.co.uk](https://stansons.co.uk)



ISSUE 7



a note from

guy stanley

creative director



**Happy New Year folks,** what's happening for you this year?

We wanted to let our readers into the story behind some changes in the months ahead.

Space started (3 years ago) as a joke. Yes, a joke! Of course, we're deeply passionate about inspiring and helping people, but a podcast? A printed magazine? That felt crazy for a soft furnishing brand.

Still, we thought... happy to give anything a shot.

So we started talking, recording and publishing.

Scrappy. Raw. Basic. But honest, now it's the fastest growing voice in workplace design.

It's entirely down to you all who show up, listen in, share ideas, and keep the conversation moving forward. That's why *Space evolves again this year.*

There are **3 key changes** to help you get even more:

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As ever, it's great hearing from you. Your feedback (big or small) is what's built this thing.

Even if you've got nothing to add and are simply enjoying the ride, let us know. It genuinely matters.

So, enough about us.

How are you? What's your challenge?

Chat soon,  
Guy



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# hh global



impactful tech-enabled creative  
production and procurement

Behind some of the world's most recognisable brands sits HH Global. Quietly clever, globally connected, and seriously good at what they do.

DESIGNER: MARIS  
CLIENT: HH GLOBAL  
LOCATION: LONDON







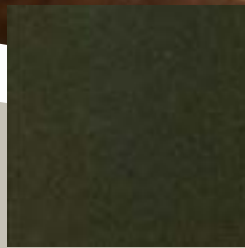
Working alongside Maris Interiors, we helped shape a workspace for HH Global that feels as confident and considered as the brand itself. HH Global operates on a global stage, partnering with some of the world's biggest names to deliver smart, tech enabled creative production and procurement. Their London office needed to reflect that scale and ambition, while still feeling calm, comfortable and great to spend time in.

Across the space, natural cork acoustic tiles were introduced to soften sound and reduce noise in busy areas. The difference is immediate. Conversations feel clearer, meetings feel calmer and the space as a whole feels warmer and more inviting. Beyond the acoustic benefits, the cork adds texture and character, bringing a subtle sense of nature into the workplace and reinforcing HH Global's commitment to more sustainable choices.

In meeting rooms and private offices, motorised blackout blinds give teams instant control over light and privacy. Whether it's a presentation, a video call or a moment of quiet focus, the space adapts effortlessly to what's needed in that moment.

This project was never about products for the sake of it. It was about creating a space that works hard for the people using it every day. The result is an office that feels balanced, purposeful and ready for whatever the day brings. A workplace that supports performance without shouting about it.

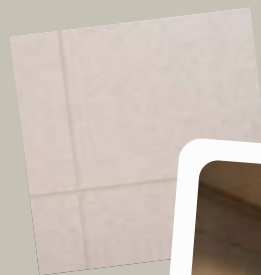




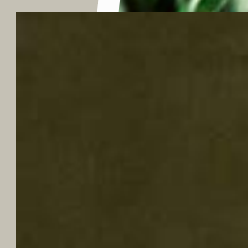
5698 sq ft



mororised  
blackout  
rollerblinds



maris interiors





*seasonal samples*

# sample SESH

OUR TAKE ON 'CLOUD DANCER'

order samples online – [stansons.co.uk](https://stansons.co.uk)





# 30 under 30s - WHAT WE LEARNT FROM GEN Z

## CONNECTION BEATS CONVENIENCE.

HANNAH: "PEOPLE OUR AGE... WE'RE LOOKING TO MEET PEOPLE. EVERYONE'S LOOKING FOR CONNECTION."

OFFICES NEED TO HELP PEOPLE MAKE FRIENDS, BUILD CULTURE, AND FEEL PART OF SOMETHING - NOT JUST REFILL A WATER GLASS.

## NEURODIVERSITY ISN'T NICHE - IT'S EVERYONE.

ELEANOR: "WE'RE DESIGNING FOR A NORM THAT ISN'T ACTUALLY THE NORM... PROBABLY 80% OF PEOPLE FIT INTO NEURODIVERGENT CATEGORIES."  
DESIGNING FOR SENSORY NEEDS, OVERSTIMULATION, UNDERSTIMULATION AND STIMULUS-CHOICE ISN'T A SPECIAL ADD-ON - IT'S NOW THE BASELINE FOR DESIGNING WELL.

## SUSTAINABILITY ISN'T AN AESTHETIC - IT'S A MINDSET.

SARAH: "IT SHOULDN'T HAVE TO LOOK SUSTAINABLE."  
IT'S ABOUT MINDFUL MATERIAL SELECTION, FEWER FINISHES, AND EMBEDDING ENVIRONMENTAL CHOICES FROM DAY ONE - NOT GREENWASHING A PALETTE.

## SENSORY DESIGN IS THE NEW FRONTIER.

SARAH: "COLOR, FRAGRANCE, SOUND... IT'S HOW YOU FEEL IN A SPACE THAT CONTROLS HOW YOU ACT."

ELEANOR: "PEOPLE WANT WARMTH, TEXTURE, COZINESS... TECHNOLOGY HAS PUSHED US FAR AWAY, AND DESIGN NEEDS TO BRING US BACK."

WARM MATERIALS, SCENT, LAYERED PAlettes, TACTILITY - THESE AREN'T TRENDS; THEY'RE HOW GEN Z BUILDS EMOTIONAL CONNECTION.



## "THE OFFICE HAS TO LOOK AFTER YOU."



## OPEN PLAN FATIGUE IS REAL.

HANNAH REPORTED COLLEAGUES SAYING: "WE DON'T WANT TO SEE OPEN-PLAN DESKS ANYMORE... BEEN THERE, DONE THAT."

GEN Z WANT "LANDSCAPES", COZINESS, SOFTNESS, PLACES WHERE YOU AREN'T "BEING WATCHED", AND SETTINGS THAT LET YOU HIDE AWAY OR PLUG IN SOCIALLY DEPENDING ON THE DAY.

## JUNIORS AREN'T JUST LEARNING - THEY'RE TEACHING.

TIA: "THEY COME IN AND GO, WHY ARE YOU DOING IT LIKE THAT? AND YOU REALISE THEY'RE RIGHT."

GEN Z CHALLENGE THE OLD WAYS, BRING FRESH PERSPECTIVE, AND PUSH SENIORS TO RETHINK HABITS AND ASSUMPTIONS.

## PRETTY DOESN'T SAVE A PROJECT



ELLIE: "IT IS GREAT TO KIND OF BUILD A PROJECT AND IT LOOKS AMAZING. BUT IF YOU HAVEN'T GOT THAT SPACE PLAN THAT FUNCTIONS CORRECTLY AND WORKS WITH THE BRIEF ON WHAT THE CLIENT HAS REQUESTED, IT'S JUST NEVER GONNA WORK DOWN THE LINE."

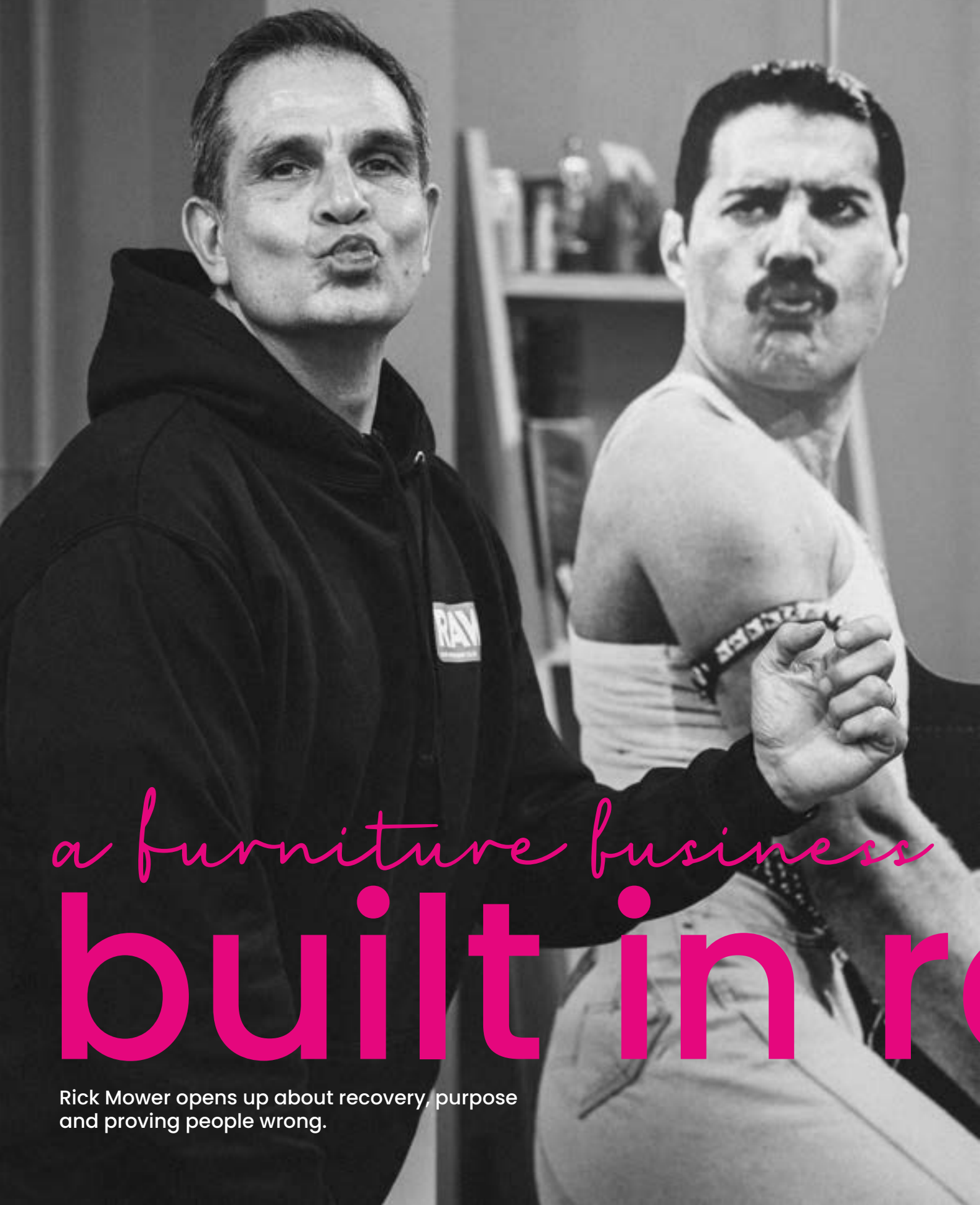
GEN Z WANT SPACES THAT GENUINELY WORK. THE LOOK MATTERS, BUT FUNCTIONALITY AND A CLEAR BRIEF COME FIRST IF YOU WANT THE WORKPLACE TO LAST.

TIA SAID IT STRAIGHT: "IT'S FOUR WALLS AND A DESK, BUT ACTUALLY THERE'S SO MUCH MORE TO IT EMOTIONALLY... IT NEEDS TO CARE ABOUT WHO'S IN IT."

GEN Z AREN'T BUYING FUNCTIONAL SHELLS, THEY WANT WORKPLACES THAT FEEL GOOD, FEEL HUMAN, AND ACTUALLY SUPPORT THE PEOPLE INSIDE THEM.







# a furniture business built in rehab

Rick Mower opens up about recovery, purpose and proving people wrong.

**“Rick, you’re 15 years into your recovery journey — before we get into RAW, who were you 15 years ago and who are you now?”**

Fifteen years, five months, 19 days and 2 hours ago, I was emerging from a life-changing rehab...blinking. For the best part of ten years before then, I had no true idea of who I really was. I’ll spare you the details but, trust me, it wasn’t pretty and not a place I ever want to go back to. Today? I’m less of a mess, truly grateful, and doing something that’s positive, disruptive and one hell of a ride.

**“What’s one thing about your story that most people don’t see, but you wish they understood?”**

I think it’s that I met people during addiction and in recovery who, despite the most awful – and I mean truly awful – life challenges, showed a super-human, against the odds power to turn their lives around. If more people understood some of the factors that often drag people into addiction and what it takes to overcome it, we’d be richer for it.

**“Was there a single moment when you realised your life had to change?”**

I’d been hospitalised after another alcohol withdrawal seizure and, in that hospital bed, I knew something had to change or it was game over. I was broken. Physically, psychologically and emotionally – everything was \*ucked. I had a choice to make.

**“When did the idea for RAW first come into your mind? Was it clarity, accident, desperation, or inspiration?”**

50% clarity, 50% inspiration. The idea for RAW probably crystallised late in rehab. In my previous life, I’d been working in the brand development and advertising industry....USPs were hard to authentically come by but, if you could nail one, you could move fast and outcompete established players. That, combined by being inspired by the sheer ‘non-traditional’ talent of people I’d met in addiction and recovery became the starting points. If we could harness a unique brand proposition and create great products powered by a truly exceptional workforce, we were on to something special.

**“When you founded RAW, what did you need it to represent for you personally?”**

I needed to prove people wrong. I needed to prove I’d changed and I needed a vehicle for others like me able to do that too.

**“Was anyone pivotal to the founding of this, other than you?”**

Yes, my wife, Rachel. Without her unrelenting, life-affirming belief, it simply wouldn’t have happened. She was the difference that made RAW happen.

**“You say ‘business as it should be’ — what does that really mean to you?”**

It means you can run a successful business and change lives. It doesn’t need to be a compromise. The IP we’ve developed at RAW proves that it can be done. Why wouldn’t you do that if you could? There’s a different way of building success that goes way beyond just a strong P&L.

**“What emotion do you want people to feel the moment they walk into RAW?”**

Excitement.

**In the 1,000’s of hours of social impact you’ve created, is there a story or person that stays with you?”**

Yes. The sixty seconds it took for one of our Crew to relapse and overdose at home. He’d been with us for

three years, clean and had become an utterly outstanding colleague. His life was transformed, he was successful. It was a reminder of how fragile life can be and that, in a moment, addiction and bad decisions will get you if you don’t stay ahead of them.

When I remember that, the beautiful stories everyday of people being happier, being trusted again by their loved ones, finding new friendships and all that wonderful stuff seems all the sweeter.

**“What achievement means the most to you personally?”**

Being able to prove that not everybody should be judged by their past. And doing it through the quality of what we do, not by preaching about it.





**“What was the toughest season of building RAW?”**

Interesting question. I think that depends on what your version of ‘toughest’ is. Many people have come through things that, in comparison, makes building a business seem like a breeze. That said, our early days and getting the chances to prove our mettle took a fair amount of grit and teak-tough belief in what we’d set out to do.

**“How do you personally manage your recovery while leading a growing social enterprise?”**

I just stay well, fit and keep good company close. I get my highs from my family, friends and RAW. Supporting others is a great way of staying clean. Give love.

**“When someone hears the word RAW in 20 years, what do you hope it stands for?”**

I hope they look at more mainstream businesses around them by then – those with a purpose hardwired into them – and think ‘RAW’ played a tiny part in changing how businesses do more than just make money.

**“What part of your story do you hope people remember most when they think about you as a founder?”**

“Crikey, if someone as crazy as him can do a half-reasonable job of it, I’m going to give it a go and start my own social business”!

**“What does RAW look like in 5 years? What’s grown, changed, or evolved?”**

We’ll have diversified from only commercial furniture manufacture and circular economy services. Our best-selling product is our story – that opens the door to a broad range of different product types and sectors we can move in to. There are plenty of markets where no firms have a credible social value USP. More spend will be going through businesses that add real social value.

We’ll be employing more remarkable people who just needed a place to realise and show how unique they are. That’s our purpose but, if you look at the declining workforce availability in the coming decade, ‘normal’ firms will have to be more positive in who they recruit too.

RAW Potential, our youth charity, will be working with double the number of young people it works with.

**“What scares you about the next chapter, and what excites you?”**

The excitement probably masks any fear.....the opportunities to expand what we do to new sectors and products and, in turn, bring more unique people into our tribe makes me tingle.

Structurally the biggest change in all markets will be that, 100% guaranteed, the businesses that create real social value

will commercially outperform those that don’t. That’s properly exciting for brands like ours and our client partners.

**“What type of space have you often felt most comfortable and safe in?”**

I used to feel safest in the corner of a downbeat pub, on my own, anaesthetised with ethanol. Now, it’s at home with my boy and my wife.

**“What does ‘success’ look like to you now, compared to 15 years ago?”**

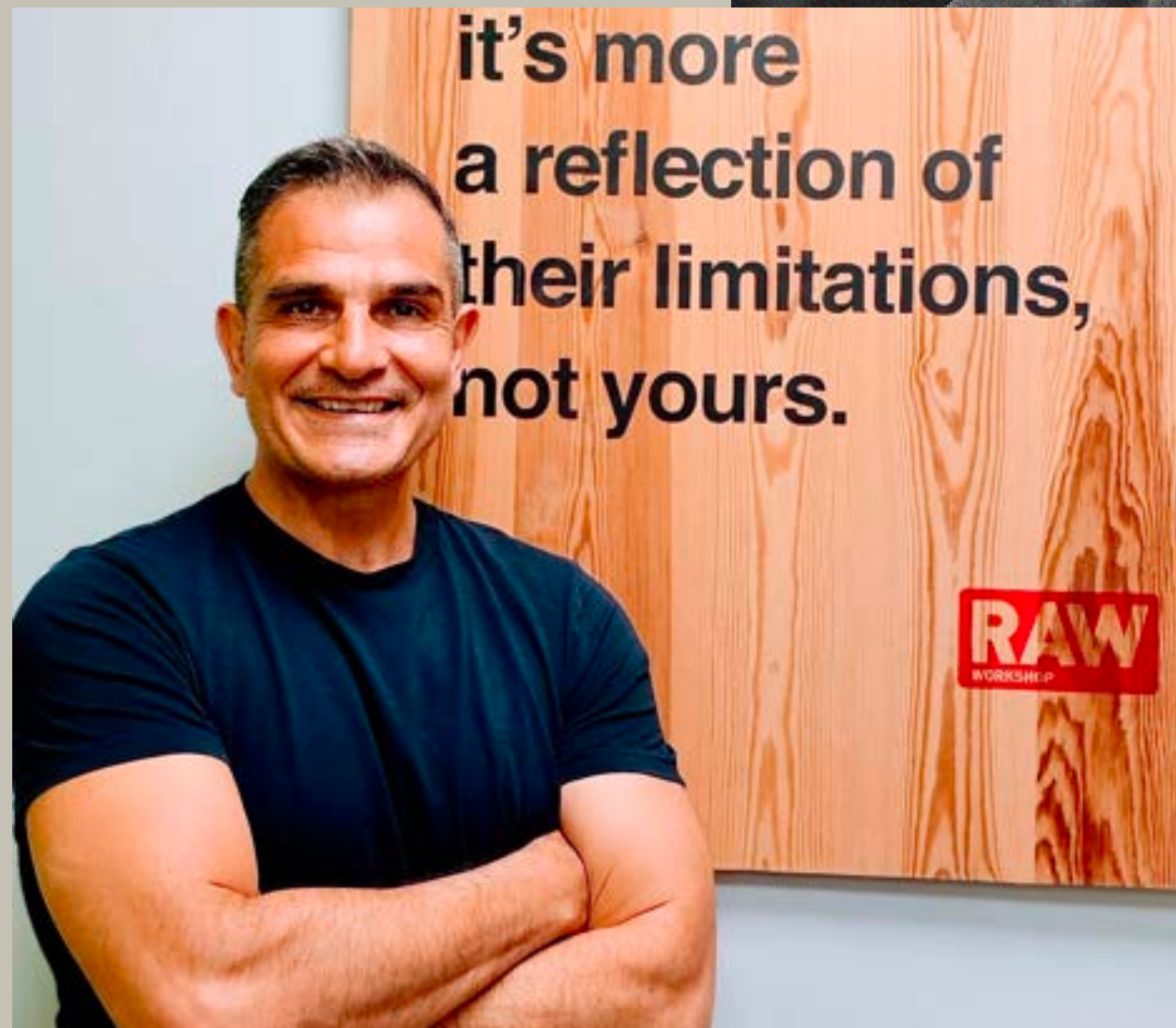
Man, every day is a success when I don’t have to use a chemical to change how I feel.

**“What’s the bravest thing you’ve ever done?”**

Stared a demon in the eyes and betted everything on a last roll-of-the dice.

**“If someone listening is in the darkest moment of their own story, what would you want to tell them?”**

Talk to someone. If you haven’t got anyone to talk to, ask Guy for my number. It can get better, it really \*ucking can, and better beyond anything you could ever imagine.



To find out more about RAW, Europe’s largest manufacturer of furniture with social impact built, in visit:  
[www.raw-workshop.co.uk](http://www.raw-workshop.co.uk)



# the 2026 DESIGN FORECAST



listen on space by stansons



# WE PREDICT 2026 colours



sarah — jolic studio



**honeycomb**

"I think yellow is having a moment — honeycombs, umbers, rich yellows. They bring joy to a space."

paula — lloyds bank

**dark plum**



"I am loving I'm loving black cherry. It's like a dark, plummy, like, purpley sort of color."

cleanor — layrd



**old street**

**"I'm sick of corporate blues."**

I love old street by Coat Paints — a muted red wine, a warm, calm burgundy."

tia — peldon rose

**terracotta**



"A burnt orange... warm, autumnal, along the lines of terracotta but not bright."

antonia — unispace

**mustard**



"We've had sage, burgundy, terracotta... I'm putting it out there — mustard."

dicky — white red

**red oxide**



**"We're seeing a lot of red oxide,**

burgundy, ochres, and these orange-red hues mixing together. Very late-70s, early-80s. I think it's here to stay for a couple more years."

**"A really, really dark red...."**

like Smith & The Devil. Not Christmas red or postbox red — a strong, striking devil red."

ellie — modus

**devil red**





# WE PREDICT 2026 spaces



antonia — unispace



**quiet space**

"Quiet spaces. Cocoon environments. They're coming back."

sarah — jolie studio



**kitchen island**

"Semi-electric lounge settings are on the rise they make people want to be there."

"Also the kitchen island. It's where everyone gathers, collaborates, spreads stuff out."

tia — peldon rose



**amenities**

"More focus on amenities, yoga studios, podcast rooms, multi-use spaces."

paula — lloyds bank



**collaboration**

"Collaboration spaces — but intentional, well-designed, purposeful ones."

dicky — white red



**zoom rooms**

## "Event spaces.

Virgin's is always in use, panels, fairs, lounges, hotel mode." "Also pitch pods, Zoom rooms... people hate generic Teams backgrounds."

They want brand-consistent rooms to present from."

eleanor — layrd



**boardrooms**

## "Soft meeting spaces

Why are boardrooms still cold? We need sofas, relaxed spaces, warmth."

## "The kitchen, the tea point

the breakout space. It's the heart of the space."

ellic — modus



**the kitchen**



# *mother*



*an office for creative people*

Mother is an independent company, home to the most creative people around. It was started in 1996 by a group of friends wanting to break free from traditional, network-owned ad agencies, free to do the best work they could.

DESIGNER: CLIVE WILKINSON  
ARCHITECTS  
CLIENT: MOTHER  
LOCATION: LONDON







Stepping into their offices is like a museum of curious finds. A trove of antiques and creative clutter, an inspirational space where some of the best ads have been thought up and created. From Uber Eats, KFC, Ikea, Trainline and more, Mother has shaped campaigns that have become iconic, worldwide.

An office so packed with creativity is only destined for 'coolness'. The huge open space warehouse work areas are lined with breakout spaces decked in multiple colours, each based around themes, comfort levels and the next antique chair. These spaces feel casually curated, each pumped with a personality of their own, brought together by atmosphere rather than uniformity. Curtains line each area, offering a subtle privacy barrier and a burst of personality.







45,000 sq ft



former  
biscuit  
factory



clive wilkinson  
architects







the most expensive mistake

in construction isn't a wrong

measurement, it's assumption

# warren bragg

Contracts Manager at Ambit

We sat down with Warren Bragg, Contracts Manager at Ambit, to discuss how he has built his career on two simple words, "never assume". In an industry defined by tight deadlines, Warren's considerate approach and focus on early, transparent communication are what truly keep projects on track. Inside, he shares why the 'unspoken' details are often the most important ones in construction.

## **What's one thing you know today that you wish you'd known when you first started out?**

I think it's just, and everyone would probably say this, but I think it's just never assume.

Because I think prior to being in construction, I kind of had hands-on work where you're relying on yourself. You know you've done the task that you've been set right or to the best of your ability. Then you start managing other people and the assumption is, well, I'm looking at the correct drawing, they must be looking at the correct drawing. And that may not be the case.

It's the same with things getting delivered.

Everything comes in a brown box. Are these parts/elements for this room? Probably. Just assume they are. Up they go. Oh, they're not the parts/elements for this room.

So it's that learning curve of where we now have these rigorous paperwork processes. Everyone would say there's too much paperwork in construction now, but I think it is necessary. It's just checkpoints and hold points to make sure what we're doing is correct. Technology helps a lot. We use online portals now so site teams can only get hold of the latest drawing.

So I'd say never assume someone is doing what you think they're doing, because chances are something somewhere is going awry.

## **What's the biggest lesson you've learned on your journey to Contracts Manager?**

Communicating clearly. Sometimes there are tough conversations to be had, but communicating clearly and most importantly respectfully, very early in the process, allows teams to work together to resolve any challenges.



### What does your role look like day to day as a Contracts Manager?

I oversee our smaller special projects. I have site-based teams on several different projects, usually four or five, of varying size and degree. I try to spend a day or half a day on each one where I can.

It's about checking whether contractors are doing what they said they would, if there are any health and safety issues, have there been instructions or client changes that need picking up, anything that needs re-costing or re-reviewing, and whether there have been variations to the contract.

A lot of things end up in grey areas and we have to navigate those. Ultimately it's about supporting whoever needs support to push the project to the finish line on time, on



budget, and with a happy end user.

### What keeps you up at night?

Health and safety. As I've moved slightly further away from being number one on site, that's the big one. There's always something. It could be really minor, like a trailing lead. Everyone knows it's there, everyone's stepped over it all afternoon, but someone could trip on it.

Some projects involve crane lifts, street closures, shelling buildings, taking floors out, structural supports everywhere. You have to check everything. We've put the props in, but are they in the right place?

Sites change constantly and you need to make the site team aware. You can come in on a Morning and by the end of the day walls are up, bins are moved, exit routes have

changed. People need to know, because if the worst happens, you don't want anyone exiting the wrong way.

### What are the smartest value engineering approaches you've seen on a project?

Lighting always gets value engineered. Lighting can be incredibly expensive, but there are so many suppliers and new technologies that can achieve the same effect for less.

We had a project where a long recessed light didn't work. Instead of ripping the ceiling out, we removed the internals of the fitting... had them remade, and clipped them back in overnight. It was much more cost effective and didn't disrupt the space.

Furniture and finishes are another big one. You can find alternatives that look very similar



for significantly less cost.

The other value engineering we do internally as a business is reuse. On one project we took down all the existing glazed partitions and doors, stored them, reconfigured the layout, and reused them. We just sprayed the doors black.

### Looking ahead, what excites you most about the future of commercial fit-out?

Technology and sustainability. As more sustainable products become accessible at sensible costs and lead times, they'll become normal. Construction has phased out harmful products before and found alternatives.

If we keep doing that, it opens up opportunities for better, healthier, more sustainable spaces.

listen to the full conversation



*“never assume someone is doing what you think they’re doing, because chances are something somewhere is going awry.”*





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samples