



# Design Leaders Conference 29.01.26

FUTURE DESIGNERS

FUTURE LEADERS

FUTURE IRELAND

FUTURE SKILLS

FUTURE BUSINESSES

WIFI: LH Events  
Password: DLC2026#

# MEGA

# TRENDS

# TRENDS

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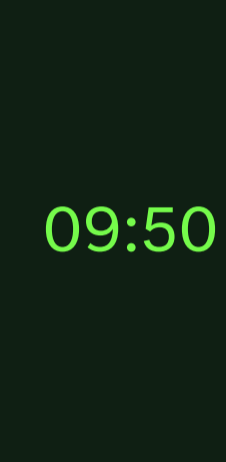
**MEGATRENDS** are shaping the world we're designing for—vast, unstoppable forces redefining how we live, work and create.

From breakthroughs in technology to the realities of climate change and shifting demographics, they are the pulse of progress.

Visionary leaders don't just react to these changes, they anticipate them, turning disruption into direction.

Together, we'll uncover how these defining forces are transforming design and where new opportunities lie for creative leaders and business and look at how shifts in a global context influence design nationally and how Irish design can position itself as a global player.

#DesignLeadersConf  
[DesignLeadersConference.com](http://DesignLeadersConference.com)



## Conference Schedule

09:00 Registration & Breakfast

09:45 Opening Remarks



**Niamh O'Shaughnessy**  
Network Manager,  
Design Skillnet

09:50 Design 2035:  
A Pathway to the Future



**Charlotte Barker**  
CEO, IDI

10:20 Who Will Define the Future of Design? Why designers must take ownership of the future—and build the systems to shape it



**Evan McGuinness**  
Designer & Partner,  
Bielke&Yang

10:45 How to Attract and Retain Younger Creatives



**Jane McDaid**  
Founder & Head of  
Creative Innovation,  
THINKHOUSE

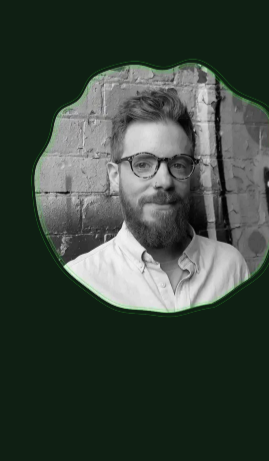
11:05 **PANEL DISCUSSION** Reshaping the Future of Design—with the Next Generation



**Danielle O'Connell**  
Co-founder,  
Good as Gold



**Niamh Cooney**  
4th year student,  
IADT



**Beth Cullen**  
4th year student,  
IADT



**Robin Dennis**  
4th year student,  
IADT



**Jaz Webb**  
4th year student,  
IADT

11:40 Q&A Future Designers Section

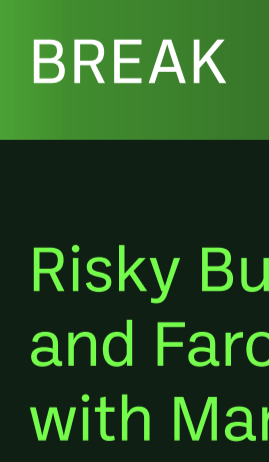
11:40 **BREAK**

12:10 Upskilling 1m Designers to Grow the Green Economy



**Cat Drew**  
Chief Design Officer,  
UK Design Council

12:40 Ireland's Ace: How Skillnet Ireland's model is Enabling World-Class Innovation



**Tracey Donnery**  
Director, Policy and  
Communications,  
Skillnet Ireland

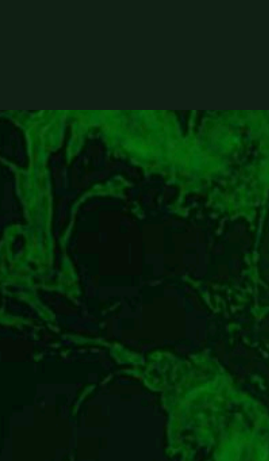
13:05 Q&A Future Skills Section

13:20 **LUNCH**

14:05 Yes, Agencies Are Brands Too



**Emily Penny**  
Brand Voice Consultant  
& Founder, Becolourful



**Joel Stein**  
Founder, Common  
Miracles & Associate,  
Becolourful

14:30 Innovation Design: Transforming industry signals into scalable solutions



**Connor Upton**  
Innovation Director,  
Accenture

15:05 Strategic Opportunism: Designing Creative Businesses for Change



**Gill Wildman**  
Director, Stby

15:30 Q&A Future Business Section

15:45 **BREAK**

16:00 Risky Business: Neville Brody and Farouk Alao in conversation with Mary Doherty



**Neville Brody OBE RDI**  
Founder,  
Brody Associates



**Farouk Alao**  
Artist, Designer, and  
Founder, studio858



**Mary Doherty**  
Founder and Managing  
Director, Red Dog

16:50 Closing Remarks



**David Wall**  
President, IDI

17:15 **DRINKS RECEPTION**



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