

## Press release

18 May 2018

### OVO furniture range launches at Clerkenwell Design Week

The new OVO range of solid wood furniture, designed by Foster + Partners, is being launched at Clerkenwell Design Week (22-24 May 2018) as part of the festival's British Collection. The range celebrates the age-old tradition of craftsmanship in everyday objects, combining durability and careful detailing with a strong materiality to create a range of furniture that is exceptionally tactile and generous.

Building on the practice's earlier partnership with Benchmark to produce bespoke furniture for the Maggie's cancer centre in Manchester, OVO carries forward the sense of home it brought to the project. Appropriate for both domestic and commercial spaces, the collection comprises of two variants of dining table, accompanying benches, sideboard, shelving unit, high table, stool and occasional tables.

Mike Holland, Head of Industrial Design, Foster + Partners, said: "The soft geometry of the OVO range not only imbues the pieces with a quiet solidity, but also serves as a compelling invitation to touch, while the boldness and simplicity of its form demands perfection of execution of the craft. Working closely with the craftspeople at Benchmark, we have created a unique range of solid wood furniture that embodies a sense of warmth and generosity, and has an inherent sense of longevity that will allow each piece to gather memories and meaning through successive generations."

Using the wonderful tactility of solid wood, the pillowed top surface of the tables and benches

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invites the arms and thighs to rest softly on the gentle bevel along its edge, an ergonomic detail that eliminates uncomfortable pressure points. The underside has a sloped profile that accentuates its crafted aesthetic, and four turned-wood legs pierce through to the table-top with a traditional expressed circular wedged tenon joint. The entire ensemble has an oiled natural finish that brings the materiality of the solid wood to the fore.

The collection is offered in solid oak or walnut. Rectilinear dining tables are available in both standard height and high option with two sizes of benches and high stool to complement them. Also sharing the common aesthetic are a round dining table, two sizes of side table and coffee table.

The specially designed sideboards have a straight finger-jointed wooden carcass and circular recessed handle detail carved between each drawer or door. Available with six drawers or four doors they can be used as a credenza with provision for power and data management.

The modular shelving unit has 1.9m-long wooden shelves that are pierced by four thin cylindrical wooden supports. A unique system of connection between the supports allows for multiple shelves to be stacked one on top of the other – from a simple low pair to a maximum of five shelves.

Notes to editors:

- The collection is on view at the Clerkenwell Design Week - The British Collection Hall: 3.2 Stand: B1, Crypt on the Green, Clerkenwell Close, EC1R 0EA, 22-24 May, 10am – 9pm.
- The press preview will be held on Wednesday, 23 May, 9am – 11am. Mike Holland, Head of Industrial Design at Foster + Partners, will be present.

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- The British Collection at Clerkenwell Design Week:

2018 marks the third year of 'British Collection', which showcases some of the UK's most exciting home-grown talent and their latest furniture, lighting and product design. At this exhibition, the collaborative launch of the OVO collection will showcase pieces from Benchmark with Fosters + Partners which are designed to sit as comfortably in a modern and creative workplace as a design hotel or home. Each piece is designed with depth of meaning, and passion to create beautiful, responsible furniture.

<https://clerkenwelldesignweek.com/british-collection/>

- About Benchmark:

Founded by Terence Conran and Sean Sutcliffe over thirty years ago, Benchmark are widely regarded as a powerhouse of craft. With a sustainable approach at the heart of everything they do, Benchmark design and make furniture using traditional craft techniques alongside innovative technology. Using the best quality natural materials, they aim to create environments that connect with ones' senses and touch on an emotional level. Nestled in the countryside of Kintbury, just an hour out of London, their studio, showroom and workshop house a team of in-house designers and skilled craftsmen who collaborate with external designers for the growing Benchmark furniture collection as well as designing and making bespoke furniture for workspaces, hotels, restaurants, retail, public buildings and private homes.

<https://benchmarkfurniture.com/>

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