



AHEC Europe  
Unit 20.1,  
20-22 Vestry St  
London, N1 7RE

[americanhardwood.org](http://americanhardwood.org)

PRESS RELEASE  
MARCH 2014

## FIVE

### In an exciting new show, 'FIVE', the American Hardwood Export Council teams up with OKAY Studio to celebrate Clerkenwell Design Week's 5th Anniversary

A 5th wedding anniversary is celebrated with a wooden gift. In keeping with this tradition, and in celebration of its 5th Anniversary, Clerkenwell Design Week is curating a special exhibition with OKAY Studio and the American Hardwood Export Council. Inspired by five American hardwood species and Clerkenwell's 5th Anniversary, five design teams from OKAY Studio will work independently to produce an eclectic mix of innovative designs showcasing how versatile American hardwood can be. The five species are tulipwood, ash, hard maple, red oak and cherry, chosen to promote the diversity of colours and grains in these lesser-known American hardwood species. The designs for FIVE will be manufactured by Kent-based sculptor and fabricator, Adam Kershaw who is renowned for his craftsmanship and skill with wood.

OKAY Studio is a design collective that consists of several individual design studios. It originated in 2006 when at first it consisted of six colleagues, all of whom graduated from the Royal College of Art that year. It has since grown organically into a much larger group and now has members in Holland, Spain and Japan to add to its North London base. The designers participating in FIVE are: Mathias Hahn, Liliana Ovalle, Ed Swan, Andrew Haythornthwaite and Peter Marigold (collaborating for this project), and partnership Hunting & Narud. When approached with the project, Amy Hunting from Hunting & Narud said, "We were thrilled to be challenged with such an interesting and open brief giving us the freedom to produce new and exciting work, exploring the use of American hardwoods."

Demonstrating creative flair, the early concepts from each design team are unique and inspired, studying the beauty, texture, colour and performance of American hardwoods through sculptures, furniture and tableware. Liliana Ovalle comments on the project: "Everyone in the group has a particular approach to design from objects oriented towards production, to bespoke prototypes, to projects that show different aesthetic explorations. It will be interesting to see how this diversity emerges through the different proposals."

At the end of February, the designers visited Adam Kershaw's workshop to discuss their initial concepts and to learn about working with American hardwoods. Kershaw's role as fabricator is to preserve the visual intention whilst guiding the designers through the working qualities of American hardwood and how the material can enhance OKAY Studio's designs. Ed Swan comments, "I've not personally worked with American hardwood before so it's a really nice chance to do so." Liliana Ovalle adds, "Wood is incredibly versatile. As designers, we can revisit this material many times and always find techniques, processes, or species that we haven't used before. This project is an exciting opportunity to evolve that knowledge and find new applications for it." Adam Kershaw likes working with young designers because often their perception of materials is intuitive and untainted by tradition and practicality. He comments, "Fresh eyes on familiar problems can generate surprising results."

Alongside the design potential, American hardwoods are specified extensively by designers and architects around the world for their strong environmental credentials. American hardwoods derive from managed natural forests; selection harvesting and favourable growing conditions mean the forest is maintained and biodiversity is protected. Whilst contributing 20% of total global hardwood supply, the net volume of standing timber after harvest is increasing year on year. The session at Kershaw's workshop offered AHEC's European Director, David Venables, an opportunity to brief the designers on the environmental credentials of U.S. hardwoods. Hunting & Narud's Amy Hunting said, "Having only worked with European woods, I was uncertain about the sustainability of U.S. hardwoods, both being based in Europe but also in regards to what I assumed about their forestry and processes. Learning from AHEC about the expansive resource luckily proved me wrong."



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Clerkenwell Design Week has become one of the best-loved events in the design industry calendar. The event has increasingly become a must go-to showcase for the UK and international design community. Ed Swan comments, "The opportunity to create show-specific work for a public space at Clerkenwell Design Week, in celebration of its 5th Anniversary, is really exciting. The show is growing in strength and recognition year by year and I hope we can add to that."

FIVE will be open to the public during Clerkenwell Design Week from 20 - 22 May 2014 at The Scin Gallery, 27 Old St, London EC1V 9HL.

**-ENDS-**

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#### **Notes to Editor:**

Image credit: Joseph Fox  
High resolution images are available by emailing [pr@americanhardwood.org](mailto:pr@americanhardwood.org)

#### **American Hardwood Export Council**

For over 20 years the American Hardwood Export Council (AHEC) has been at the forefront of wood promotion in Europe, successfully building a distinctive and creative brand for U.S. hardwoods. AHEC's support for creative design projects such as FIVE for Clerkenwell Design Week, demonstrate the performance potential of these sustainable materials and provide valuable inspiration.

[www.americanhardwood.org](http://www.americanhardwood.org) @ahec\_europe

#### **Clerkenwell Design Week**

One of the best-loved events in the design industry calendar, Clerkenwell Design Week is a three-day annual festival gathering Clerkenwell's long-established design community together. Now in its fifth year, the event has increasingly become a must go-to showcase for the UK and international design community. Last year's show attracted over 50,000 registered attendees and 250 brands from the UK and across the globe.

The name Clerkenwell comes from the Clerks' Well in Farringdon Lane, where London parish clerks performed the famous Medieval Mystery Plays throughout the Middle Ages. Since the Industrial Revolution, the area has housed craft workshops, printers, clockmakers and jewellers. Traditional crafts, such as printing and bookbinding still flourish, as do graphic designers. In the last two decades, Clerkenwell's unique variety buildings have been transformed into central studio and workshop spaces, attracting an unprecedented concentration of architectural, design and creative practices.

The global businesses that have made Clerkenwell their home have shaped the borough into the UK's most important generator of creativity and innovation. Serving an infinite variety of other industries easily accessible from across London, Clerkenwell has become home to a plethora of new media agencies, graphic and interactive design studios and more than 200 architectural practices - more per square mile than anywhere else on the planet. In addition, Clerkenwell houses over 60 design showrooms including world leaders Vitra, Poltrona Frau, Knoll and Steelcase. [www.clerkenwelldesignweek.com](http://www.clerkenwelldesignweek.com)

#### **Adam Kershaw**

Kent-based sculptor/maker, Adam Kershaw works on bespoke craft projects including sculpture, furniture, repurposed railway carriages and small spaces. Kershaw's clients include



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Alison Wilding, Martino Gamper, Phyllida Barlow, Wallpaper\* Magazine, Retrouvius, Event Communications and Skanska.

Adam graduated with a BA in Sculpture from Chelsea College of Art and later attended the Royal College of Art where he graduated with an MA in Sculpture.  
[www.adamkershaw.com](http://www.adamkershaw.com)

#### **The designers from OKAY Studio:**

##### **Mathias Hahn**

London based Product Designer Mathias Hahn (born 1977 in Germany) started up his studio in 2006 and is one of the founding members of OKAY Studio. After graduating as Industrial Designer in Germany, he moved on to the Royal College of Art where he received a MA degree in Design Products under Ron Arad in 2006.

From his studio and workshop he is working on diverse projects in the field of industrial and furniture design. His client list includes companies like Ligne Roset, Marset, Asplund, Kvadrat, Magazin, Zeitraum, Another Country, Vertigo Bird, Kohler, Ikea and others. His work has been exhibited in numerous international exhibitions and galleries and featured in many major design publications worldwide. Recently Mathias Hahn was selected Newcomer of the year 2014 by German ELLE DECORATION, in 2010, he received the German Design Price as Newcomer/Finalist. In 2012, his light JINN was awarded the RED DOT: Best of the Best, while in 2011 he received an IF Award and an Interior Innovation Award for his light LANTERN by Ligne Roset.

Mathias Hahn - Industrial Design Studio works in a wide field ranging from industrial design, product development, art direction and consulting through to experimental design, one-off production and interiors.

##### **Andrew Haythornthwaite (in partnership with Peter Marigold for FIVE)**

Andrew Haythornthwaite is a London based designer, who graduated from the Royal College of Art in 2006. He has worked in various international locations, and now has a studio based in London with the Okay Collective group of designers. He works on designs of objects, furniture and spaces, and has won several awards including Silver from the IDSA (America), Red Dot (Germany), Stringer Award (BeST, New Zealand) and Most Successful Design (China). Andrew also has work in the permanent collections of MoMA New York.

##### **Hunting & Narud**

Norwegian-born, London-based designers Amy Hunting and Oscar Narud have recently joined forces and founded Hunting & Narud. They work for a wide selection of clients including the Norwegian Embassy, the Norwegian Design Council, the Design Museum London, the Victoria & Albert Museum and The British Council. They are represented by Gallery Libby Sellers where recently had a solo show with The Copper Mirror Series. Amy is a graduate of the Department of Furniture and Spatial Design at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts (the Danish Design School), where she graduated in 2008, while Oscar attended the Royal College of Art, London, and graduated in 2006 with an MA in Design Products.

##### **Peter Marigold (in partnership with Andrew Haythornthwaite for FIVE)**

Peter Marigold followed a path from sculpture at Central Saint Martins into theatrical and event scenography. In 2005 he joined the Design Products course at the Royal College of the Art under Ron Arad and since then has concentrated almost solely on furniture. In 2009 he was awarded one of the four Designer of the Future awards by Design Miami, followed by a significant installation at Art Basel. Working with both galleries, institutions and manufacturers his work continues to be exhibited in the UK and abroad such as MoMA New York, Design Museum London, 21-21 Design Site Tokyo and Design Museum Holon and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

##### **Liliana Ovalle**

Liliana Ovalle is a London-based designer from Mexico who graduated from the Royal College of Art in 2006. Her work includes commissions and production pieces for Plusdesgin Gallery, Nodus, and Anfora amongst others. In 2006 she received the Talent Award by the British Council. Her designs have been selected for multiple exhibitions including Design Miami, MoMA



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Store, and Gallery Libby Sellers. Since 2011 Liliana is part-time researcher at the Interaction Research Studio, Goldsmiths University of London. In April 2011 she joined the collective Okay Studio based in North London.

#### **Ed Swan**

The son to an architect, Ed Swan was born in Worcestershire, England in 1979. He graduated from Leeds Metropolitan University with a degree in 3D Design in 2002. On graduating with MA in Design Products from the Royal College of Art in 2005, Swan's achievements covered several awards, including the 10 Around Town competition for Sun Microsystems. As a finalist for Garrard jewellers' design competition, he created innovative jewellery integrating precious stones and micro-electronics.

In 2005 his "Obscura View" work gained interest from E&Y, Japan and consequently was installed in Tom Dixon's first architectural adventure, the Tokyo Hipster's Club. He has since had work exhibited at the Design Museum, London.

Based in London, Swan's work has been presented by Ron Arad and more recently with Okay Studio as part of exhibitions in London, Milan, and Cologne. Swan currently works in the Creative and Interiors team at fashion retailer Ben Sherman headquarters, and is an independent product, furniture and lighting designer operating from OKAY Studio in Stoke Newington, a space shared with fellow Royal College of Art alumni.