Kohler and Agata Kurzela Bring “Tales of Imagination” to Life at Downtown Design Dubai 2026

Tuesday 17 November, 2026

Drawing on over 150 years of design heritage, the immersive exhibition explored creativity, craftsmanship, material innovation and wellness through historical discoveries and imaginative spatial experiences.

DUBAI, UAE, 9 November 2026 – Kohler Co., a global leader in kitchen and bath design, presented *Tales of Imagination*, an immersive exhibition created in collaboration with award-winning designer Agata Kurzela, at Downtown Design Dubai 2026. Presented from 4 to 8 November at Dubai Design District (d3), the installation explored the relationship between design, art, craftsmanship and technology through a series of imaginative spatial experiences.

The exhibition formed part of Downtown Design, which welcomed over 20,000 visitors and featured more than 300 brands and designers from over 35 countries. Held under the patronage of Her Highness Sheikha Latifa bint Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Chairperson of Dubai Culture and Arts Authority, the fair welcomed visits from Her Highness and His Excellency Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, Minister of Tolerance and Coexistence.

Inspired by Kohler's more than 150-year history of creativity and invention, *Tales of Imagination* brought the brand's design heritage into a contemporary context. Through colour, materiality and architectural expression, the exhibition explored how historical references, artistic experimentation and technological developments can inform new approaches to design.

From Kohler's Archives to New Design Perspectives

The creative process began with an exploration of Kohler's archives, dating back to the 1870s. Working with historical material, Agata Kurzela Studio uncovered a series of stories and references that informed different elements of the installation.

Among them was the company's first defining creative act in 1883, when founder John Michael Kohler transformed a cast-iron horse trough into a bathtub by applying an enamel coating and adding four feet. This simple act of reimagining an existing object became an early expression of the company's approach to invention, demonstrating how an everyday object could acquire an entirely new purpose through design.

Another source of inspiration was Kohler's extensive collection of advertisements from the golden age of advertising, when illustrations and imaginative storytelling presented new possibilities for modern living. Among these historical innovations was the Kohler Electric Sink, introduced in the 1920s as an early attempt to automate dishwashing. Although short-lived commercially, the invention reflected an experimental approach to domestic design that was ahead of its time.

Rather than presenting these references as a chronological history, the installation translated archival discoveries into contemporary spatial expressions, encouraging visitors to explore the connections between past inventions and present-day design thinking.

A separate space-lab kitchen module introduced another unexpected reference from Kohler's history. Inspired by the company's involvement in the space programme, the environment drew on the visual language of spacesuits and space stations. Research into Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*, particularly its storyboards, influenced the design of a table, while lighting elements recalled the visual vocabulary of space exploration.

Together, these different references illustrated how historical research can become a starting point for contemporary design, allowing familiar objects, materials and architectural elements to be considered from unexpected perspectives.

“Tales of Imagination celebrated the freedom to explore new ideas and possibilities through design. Together with Agata Kurzela, we created an experience that reflected Kohler's enduring belief in creativity, experimentation and craftsmanship, while inviting visitors to see familiar materials and forms from a new perspective,” said **Olivier Lefebvre, President of Kohler Kitchen and Bath, EMEA.**

Media:







Related Sectors:

Home & Garden ::

Related Keywords:

Sink :: Bathroom :: Luxury Interior :: Home Design ::

Scan Me:

“This collaboration was an exploration of how material, color and form can shape unexpected experiences. By approaching design through curiosity and experimentation, we created an environment that invited visitors to discover their own interpretations and stories,” said **Agata Kurzela, Founder and Creative Director of Agata Kurzela Studio.**

Exploring Craftsmanship, Materiality and Innovation

Material experimentation was central to the exhibition, with a selection of Kohler products illustrating different approaches to manufacturing, surface treatments, craftsmanship and technological development.

The **Pearlized Derring™ Sink** was among the exhibition's focal points. Its distinctive surface treatment explored the relationship between colour, texture and functional design, translating an artistic experiment into a finished object.

The exhibition also featured **Kohler WasteLAB™**, an initiative that transforms manufacturing by-products into purposeful designs, giving discarded materials a second life. Making its UAE debut at the show, WasteLAB introduced a practical exploration of material reuse, demonstrating how manufacturing remnants can be reconsidered as resources for new applications.

Innovation in fabrication was further explored through the **Sculptura™ Faucet Collection**, whose sculptural ceramic handles are produced using 3D-printing technology. The collection demonstrated how advances in digital manufacturing can expand the possibilities of form, precision and material expression in functional objects.

Presented within the architectural environments developed for *Tales of Imagination*, these products formed part of a wider exploration of how ideas move between artistic experimentation, material research and functional design.

Shape of Sound: Exploring Wellness Through Design

The exhibition's exploration of sensory experience extended into *Shape of Sound*, a wellness-focused environment examining the relationship between sound, space and physical perception.

Framed by dramatically oversized speakers, the installation used scale and sculptural volume to give sound a visual and architectural presence. The composition explored how an intangible element could influence the experience of a space, bringing a theatrical dimension to the bathing environment.

The **Memoirs™ Drop-in Whirlpool Bathtub**, inspired by classical architecture, brought together traditional design references and contemporary wellness features, including customisable whirlpool massage and a built-in heater.

Through the juxtaposition of sound, volume and architectural form, *Shape of Sound* extended the exhibition's investigation of materiality beyond the physical qualities of objects to consider the sensory dimensions of design.

Beyond the Installation: Conversations on Materials and Making

Kohler extended *Tales of Imagination* beyond the exhibition through a programme of discussions and hands-on experiences examining the evolving role of materials in architecture and interior design.

On 5 November, **“Raw and Refined: The Materials Shaping Premium Living”** brought together Ralf Steinhauer of RSP Architects, Pooja Shah-Mulani of LW Design Group, Mohammad Adib of Dewan Architects & Engineers and Ellen Søhoel of XBD Collective, with Agata Kurzela as moderator.

The discussion explored how designers balance craftsmanship and mass production, aesthetics and durability, and the growing importance of sustainability and sourcing in material selection. It also considered how these decisions influence both the experience and long-term performance of premium spaces.

The programme further included a hands-on workshop centred on **Kohler WasteLAB™**, inviting participants to examine material transformation and creative reuse. Building on WasteLAB's introduction to the UAE, the workshop offered a practical perspective on how manufacturing by-products can become starting points for further experimentation and design.

Through *Tales of Imagination*, Kohler brought together its historical design archive, contemporary

collections and ongoing explorations in material innovation and wellness. The collaboration illustrated

how established craft techniques, new technologies and creative research continue to shape the possibilities of kitchen and bathroom design.

For more information, visit Studio Kohler.

Company Contact:

Kohler Middle East

E. press@commfive.com
W. https://www.kohler.com

View Online

Additional Assets:

Newsroom: Visit our Newsroom for all the latest stories:
https://www.kohler.pressat.co.uk