

● LUMINALE 2020
↳ PRESSEMELDUNG

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"Digital Romantic" at Luminale 2020

From 12-15th March, the tenth Luminale will be welcoming international artists to Frankfurt and Offenbach. "Digital Romantic" is the central theme for artistic projects and the talk program of the Biennial for Light Art and Urban Design.

"An impressive program of around 110 installations will be on show in Frankfurt and Offenbach from 12th to 15th March, 2020 - for the first time over an entire weekend - and many of them in the public space," says Peter Feldmann, Lord Mayor of the City of Frankfurt and Luminale patron. "There will also be a stage program with a total of 16 events and 42 TALK guests. As in 2018, the festival center will be at the Instituto Cervantes in the former Amerika-Haus," explains Feldmann.

"With 'Digital Romantic', for the first time, Luminale, the Biennial for Light Art and Urban Design, is presenting a thematic focus for artistic works. Thus, In the year 2020, the festival will be at the forefront of the times, an age characterized by technological and social upheaval," the Lord Mayor continues. As well as the artistic and historical, aspects of urban planning and social dimensions will likewise be explored."

The Luminale 2020 is thus internationally positioned. Participants are coming from Japan, New Zealand, Denmark, France, Great Britain, Portugal, Hungary, Croatia, the Czech Republic and the Netherlands. The venues include the city's major sights, such as the Römer and the Alte Oper (Old Opera House), as well as such lesser-known, hidden places as the Fishermen's Vault on the River Main. Places that have long been inaccessible, such as St. Leonhardskirche or a vaulted cellar in Ostparkstrasse, can be rediscovered. The variety of the presentations is immense: video mappings on building facades, installations in churches, the historic ramparts, upon and even in the water, a mobile light artwork, the staging of an entire street, an artificial sky, augmented reality, concerts, performances and a series of initiative projects by the Frankfurt and Offenbach City Society, form a multi-faceted program. One work even thematizes light without it actually being implemented.

"We have been able to attract many new partners," says Isa Rekkab, head of Luminale. "The Biennial is a project involving the whole of city society: cultural institutions, scientific institutes, studios, galleries, museums, nightlife, associations, initiatives and religious communities from all over Frankfurt and Offenbach are taking part. Many participants developed their creative ideas on their own initiative and put them into practise with unparalleled commitment."

The CURATED program brings together 23 outstanding artistic projects at the interface of light and city. The focus is on projects created for a specific location in Frankfurt or Offenbach and explore its architecture, history or future perspectives.

The Luminale COMMUNITY comprises around 80 projects - outside the curated program, here, too, there is plenty of scope for creative ideas and implementation.

Ten colleges and universities from the region and beyond are participating in the STUDY program. Two projects will be presented in the BETTER CITY section - initiatives that will continue to contribute to urban design even after the Luminale.

On the four evenings, from Thursday to Sunday, the Luminale invites visitors to rediscover the city and explore the public space, on the Light Walk, for instance, which links numerous venues into a city tour.

Luminale Highlights in Overview

Frankfurt landmarks such as the Römer, Alte Oper, the German Romantic Museum under construction and St. Katharinenkirche (St. Catherine's Church), are among the venues for this year's Biennial.

A big celebration will be held at the Römer to mark the 30th anniversary of the city partnership between Budapest, Leipzig, Prague and Frankfurt. The partnerships were each concluded in 1990, a year after the fall of the Iron Curtain. Three artist collectives from these partner cities are designing the Römerberg, the town hall and the Old St. Nicholas Church in an audiovisual 180-degree production: Maxin10sity from Budapest, Radiolux from Leipzig and 3dsense from Prague.

"BE\LONGING" is the title of a work created for the Alte Oper by Xenorama, a five-member, internationally-acclaimed artist collective. It is a reflection on issues of the times: Is there room for sensuality, longing, or doubt in our sobering data landscapes and smart cities? The production, precisely adapted to the façade, leads from sparse digital structures to sensual light plays and dreamlike discoveries.

The projection "Obsidian" by video artist Robert Seidel also builds a bridge between the intellectual world of analog romanticism and digital modernism. Manuscripts, delicate calligraphy and impetuous figurines from the collection of the Freies Deutsches Hochstift alternate on the façade of the new German Romantic Museum.

With his installation "Ariadne's Night", Philipp Geist brings the Bethmannweiher and the adjacent pavilion, formerly the city's first public museum, into the public gaze. A walk-in video/light installation welcomes visitors into a poetic oasis of light and color in the middle of the city.

The "BlauRaum" light installation bathes Frankfurt's Fahrgasse in blue light. A barcode pattern illuminates the street, where, every half-hour, performers dance a 10-minute choreography among the visitors. The art galleries, shops, bars and restaurants of the Fahrgasse are all part of the production, inviting visitors into their own blue spaces.

In the Metzlerpark, Portuguese artist Telmo Ribeiro creates an almost surreal perceptual experience with his laser performance "Clouds in Garden": a second sky floats above the heads of the visitors. Clouds slowly move to ambient sounds. A place to linger, to forget space and time for a moment.

The longest journey to the Luminale was definitely made by Yasuhiro Chida. In the former O25 in Ostparkstrasse, the Japanese artist visualizes the natural phenomenon of "diamond dust" in his filigree installation "Myrkviðr". Chida is a finalist for the International Light Art Award (ILAA) 2019, presented by the Centre for International Light Art in Unna.

The hyper-romantic live installation "CYGNUS" leads the viewer at the Rechneigrabenweiher into the "uncanny valley", the eerie valley where the boundaries between digital imagination and conventional reality become blurred. Eight glowing swans, lifelike, seeming to float on the water as they sleep, awaken and form into a mysterious nocturnal roundel, before they swim apart again - as if nothing had happened.

In the Eschenheimer Anlage, near Hessendenkmal, Marija Avramovic and Sam Twidale will present the installation "Sunshowers/Sunbeam", inspired by the cult film "Dreams" by Japanese director Akira Kurosawa. The work seizes upon the poetic, magically-visual language of film, transforms it into a contemporary techno-animism, thus transferring the film icon into the digital age. In an extension for Luminale, the Augmented Reality App (Sunbeam) complements the animation, allowing the characters to act in the urban space.

In St. Catherine's Church at the Hauptwache, "REFRAKTO" combines music, sound, light installations and laser mapping into an immersive audiovisual experience. The audiovisual performance and installation was created exclusively for the church by Danish composer duo Den Sorte Skole, the artist collective Vertigo and organist Prof. Martin Lücker.

Numerous other churches in Frankfurt will also be represented at this year's Luminale. St. Leonhard's Church, re-opened just a few months ago, will be joined by the Klosterkirche Liebfrauen (Liebfrauen Monastery Church), the Dreikönigskirche (Church of the Three Kings), the KunstKulturKirche Allerheiligen and St. Anthony's Church. The latter present a project by Michael Riedel's master class from the Academy of Visual Arts Leipzig. Under the title "Turned Off", "Unorte" (non-places) are explicitly brought into the light, while the rest of the church remains in the dark.

With more than 20 projects, Offenbach's creative artists, companies and producers are also taking part in the Luminale, to present the exciting range of artistic creation, technical innovations and topics of the day. For example, artists in Atelierhaus B71 are calling for volunteers to join them on a voyage to a distant planet with "Mission Romantica". While at the School for Fashion. Graphics. Design., "Offenbach touch", a surreal room installation by Daniela Ballweg and NIQUU in the STUDY section offers a view of an unknown world.

Environmental Issues in Focus

Either directly or indirectly, numerous Luminale 2020 projects address the issue of the environment: On the Westend Campus of the Goethe University, the audiovisual production "Facing Extinction" tackles the worldwide extinction of species that is rocking our planet. On the façade of the Poelzig Building, unique motifs present the wonders of nature and, at the same time, confront viewers with the inconvenient truth behind the images. The parallelism of nature and culture, the interaction between technology as cause and, at the same time, as opportunity for change, form the conceptual basis of this art installation.

Director and Academy Award winner Louie Psihoyos (The Cove, Racing Extinction) and photographer Joel Sartore (founder of the National Geographic project Photo Ark), are providing

their material for this visually stunning production. The project is in the tradition of the 'Racing Extinction' series on such iconic buildings as the UN headquarters and St. Peter's Church in the Vatican. The installation for the I.G. Farben Building at Goethe University is the first project of its kind in Germany; the façade projection realized by the Berlin design office mbox. Partners in the project, which is being developed in cooperation with the Senckenberg Society for Natural Research, are the Okeanos Foundation for the Sea and the Johann Wolfgang von Goethe University.

With his installation "Touching Night Skies", Tobias Ziegler creates a space that directs the eye to the night sky. A walk-in, deep black structure open to the heavens masks the silhouette of the surrounding buildings and offers a view of the night sky. What remains of the firmament?

"The Lonely Tree" by Kathi Kaepfel in Frankfurt's Weißfrauen Diakoniekirche, tackles man's romantic relationship to nature and the death of spruce trees.

"If Words Were Water" is an art installation beneath the surface of the River Main by New Zealand light artist Marcus McShane, which questions our responsible use of the precious resource of water.

Sustainability in the Urban Space

The Luminale BETTER CITY category presents projects that will be preserved for the city and its residents even after the duration of the Luminale. For example, the Green Showhouse Ferdi by PIER F - Future Port Frankfurt. In cooperation with its owner, a vacant building in Fechenheim will gradually become a dynamic showroom, laboratory and field for experimentation. From sustainable building solutions to structural climate adaptations such as roof and façade greening, unsealing, etc. up to and including the interior with "curtains and carpets of 'green' materials" - the company is open to everything.

Material for All - MFA is committed to making surplus materials from the trade fair, art and theater scene accessible to a wide, creative public. Through networking with companies and institutions in the Rhine-Main area, MFA and its partners provide residual materials for local, cultural and social use. Their warehouse is also located in Fechenheim.

Dialogue and Discourse in Luminale TALK

In the daytime, Luminale TALK is holding interdisciplinary dialogue and discourse on the themes of light, city and the future. In the festival center, the Instituto Cervantes in the former America House, a stage program with renowned personalities from the worlds of art, culture, science, urban planning and politics awaits all those who may be interested. The program includes exciting panel discussions, as well as lectures, talks and a film screening.

Luminale TALK kicks off on 13th March, 2020, on the topic "High-Rise City Frankfurt", in cooperation with the Association of German Architects (Bund Deutscher Architekten, BDA) Hessen. Guests include Dutch architect Ben van Berkel and Simon Ruppert from Bollinger + Grohmann Ingenieure.

The TALK on 14th March, 2020, expands upon this year's thematic focus of "Digital Romantic". In cooperation with the Freies Deutsches Hochstift, Frankfurt, the emphasis will be on romanticism

as a cultural-historical epoch, new romanticism in urban centers, digital romance in online dating platforms and, finally, on the question as to whether the digital and the romantic can be reconciled in the course of the major social upheavals we are currently facing.

On 15th March, 2020. Luminale TALK focuses on the topic "(urban) nature" in cooperation with the Senckenberg Society for Nature Research. Why is biodiversity so important? What are the interactions between biodiversity and climate? What needs to be done to preserve the diversity of species? What role does the city play, with its colorful mix of habitats? And what is the influence of light? The day's highlight will be the presentation by Prof. Antje Boetius, Director of the Alfred Wegener Institute for Polar and Marine Research. Taking part in the Luminale for the second time, she will report on the ongoing MOSAiC expedition.

The First Luminale Light Object in Limited Edition

Initiated by Luminale, designer Kai Linke and the frankfurter werkgemeinschaft e.V. (fwg) have collaborated on the creation of an atmospheric light object in a limited edition. KUU was born from the dream of bringing the moon to Luminale. It is Luminale's first light object and a contribution towards inclusion and participation of the disabled. In Finnish, the name "KUU" stands for the fascination of the moon. Anyone wishing to take one of the few coveted pieces home, should stop by the festival center on the opening day of Luminale.

Further information: ↳ luminale.de

About Luminale

Since 2002, Luminale has been held in Frankfurt every two years. Originally initiated by Messe Frankfurt in close cooperation with the exhibiting Industry of Light + Building, the festival of lights has become one of the biggest cultural events in Frankfurt and the Rhine-Main region. Since 2018, as a biennial for light art and urban design, Luminale has pursued the aim of creating a popular, artistic and high-quality program, as well as making a sustainable contribution to urban design. The city thus becomes not only a stage, but also the object of the festival. Projects that address urban visions at the interface of light, architecture, technology, ecology and social interaction in the city, or with its history and culture, make this tangible - accompanied by interdisciplinary dialogue on related issues. Luminale 2018 presented 150 light productions in Frankfurt and Offenbach and attracted almost 250,000 visitors. The heart of Luminale in the urban space is the Light Walk, linking places accessible by foot into a city tour and a public gallery of light art. The Luminale e. V. was founded in June 2017 as a non-profit organization to promote and organize Luminale as a biennial for light art and urban design.

Press Contact

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