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#artcolognefair

"People here buy out of a love of art"

ART COLOGNE 2026: Art Director Daniel Hug on highlights, returnees, and the art market

The 59th ART COLOGNE (November 5th to 8th) opens in a few weeks. Daniel Hug, Art Director of the art fair, provides a first overview of the offering in the interview. Here you will find the [complete program](#) of this year's ART COLOGNE exhibitors.

Mr. Hug, the current edition of ART COLOGNE is once again structured into four segments, namely GALLERIES, NEUMARKT, COLLABORATIONS, and ART + OBJECT. What highlights can be expected? Let's start with the GALLERIES section, with art of the 20th and 21st centuries.

I am quite pleased that several important galleries have returned. These include Mennour from Paris, which represents the artist Lee Ufan, who receives the Wolfgang Hahn Prize this year. That is quite a major highlight.

Nino Mier, who runs galleries in New York City and Brussels, is taking part again. The last time he participated was prior to the pandemic. He will show Stefan Rinck, a German stone sculptor whose sculptures are very idiosyncratic and humorous,

The new participants are very international. Pelaires is coming from Palma, Wentrup from Berlin, and Bärbel Grässlin will also be with us again. The acb Gallery is coming from Budapest and the Eduardo Secci Gallery from Milan.

Absolutely worth mentioning is the 203 Fine Art gallery from New Mexico, which is bringing art from the American Southwest with it. One of its artists is Lee Mullican, the father of Matt Mullican. His painting is inspired by light and folk art. Also in the program are Larry Bell, a key figure of the Light and Space movement, and the 84-year-old sculptor Lynda Benglis, a key representative of feminist art. She is known for the use of unconventional materials like wax, latex, polyurethane, and metal. Gestural abstraction combines with sensual corporeal forms in her sculptures. They are joined by young, contemporary artists.

And one particularly noteworthy highlight of modern art: Galerie Bastian from Berlin is bringing the painting "Nutzgarten am Wannsee" (The Kitchen Garden in Wannsee) by Max Liebermann.

Are there interesting new participants in the NEUMARKT section for current art?

We have around 35 galleries participating in the NEUMARKT section. Several of these are with us for the first time, including Bonamatic from Copenhagen, COMMUNE from Vienna, Diez from Amsterdam, eiklid / rusten from Oslo, Anna Helwing from Zurich, Kogo from Estonia, Jo van de Loo and Paulina Caspari from Munich, LUNETTA 11 from Milan, and Niso from London. Alex Serra from Cologne is new, as is Petra



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Seiser from Attersee, who was with us last year in the COLLABORATIONS section. Extremely interesting is OSMOS from New York City. It was originally a magazine shop that was then transformed into a gallery. It is operated by Cay Sophie Rabinowitz, who has Aaron Young and Anton Stankowski in her program, among others.

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The gallery eiklid / rusten is very young. Its first fair was ART COLOGNE PALMA MALLORCA in April 2026. There it had a lovely presentation by Yves Scherer.

KIN, the gallery of Nicolaus Schafhausen, comes from Brussels and was also with us last year. Very important is newcomer CASTIGLIONI from Milan, and Robert Grunenberg is also among the returnees.

The COLLABORATIONS section has grown continually over the years. What concepts are there this year, what interactions?

This time, we have 30 participants in this segment. Thomas Brambilla from Bergamo is sharing a stand with the Dep Art Gallery from Milan. They are showing the artist Salvo (Salvatore Mangione, 1947-2015). He is very interesting, and his works are fascinatingly similar to those of the young Swiss artist Nicolas Party, who is extremely successful. Salvo is something like the vanguard of Party; the works are quite rare. That Salvo is now being shown at the trade fair is something truly special.

Sommer Contemporary Art is returning to COLLABORATIONS, a format that has been quite successful for them. They are undertaking a joint project with Peter Kilchmann.

ZAHORIAN & VAN ESPEN from Bratislava are cooperating with the GALLERIA CONTINUA from Havanna. They will show the Ukrainian artist Zhanna Kadyrova, whose oeuvre encompasses sculpture, video, photography, and performance. She was represented at the Biennale in Venice.

Jan Kaps was in the NEUMARKT section last year, and is now with two artists in COLLABORATIONS: the young artist Selome Muletta from Ethiopia and Michael Williams from Los Angeles, who is already quite established. It is an attractive mix.

Molitor from Berlin and Khoshbakht from Cologne are also joining forces. Molitor represents Anna Jermolaewa, Nika Kutateladze from Georgia, and Margaret Honda; Khoshbakht represents Yoor Park from Korea and the British artist Beth Collar.

What is the source of the particular attractiveness of the cooperative projects?

The costs are lower when several galleries share a stand. They can thus take greater risks and not only show conventional art. I think that's great.

How do things look in the ART + OBJECT section, which shrank slightly last year?

10 A.M. from Milan is coming back; Dierking - Galerie am Paradeplatz, Kaune, and Galerie Vivid will be with us again, as will the goldsmith Georg Hornemann, with locations in Düsseldorf and Berlin. New are Sina Stockebrand Kunsthandel and Gusch, a design dealer from Cologne that offers extremely rare things. Its artists include, for example, Julian Jakob Kneer, a young Swiss who works more with

installations. He once designed the floor covering of the gallery completely of leather. Gusch is also bringing works from Chryssa, a very interesting Greek-American concept artist. Galerie Derda from Berlin will show works by Oskar Schlemmer, Adolf Fleischmann, and Sophie Taeuber-Arp at the art fair.

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With 165 participating galleries and art dealers, the number of exhibitors corresponds with that of the previous year. Has this scope been maintained?

The fluctuation of plus/minus ten participants is due to COLLABORATIONS. One half has double occupancy, the other single.

In Hall 11, the stands are pretty much fixed. We have only a finite number of stands at the art fair that we can work with. Around a third of the galleries has booked fewer square meters. That the stands are smaller is a trend that already began a few years ago. The size reflects the market, too many participants leads to a great deal of Art not being seen and the galleries having fewer sales.

What significance does the NEW POSITIONS sponsorship program, initiated by the federal association of German galleries and art dealers (BVDG), have?

Since 1980 the NEW POSITIONS sponsorship program has been providing young artists with the possibility to present their works in a 25 square meter special area next to the stands of their galleries. Financial support is provided by the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media, the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia, the Bundesverband Deutscher Galerien und Kunsthändler (German association of galleries and art dealers), and Koelnmesse.

For this year's ART COLOGNE, 18 young artists were selected to receive visibility through the sponsorship program. For many artists, the path to the art market opens up this way.

What special events will there be?

The Landesbank Baden-Württemberg (LBBW) is showing an exhibition on the theme of "What moves us - art as a mirror of the times". Presented will be, among others, works by Jody Korbach, Julius von Bismarck, and Sophia Süßmilch, juxtaposed with historical positions like Adolf Hölzel and Ida Kerkovius.

The Central Archive for German and International Art Market Studies (ZADIK) dedicates itself in this special event to the art trade between the GDR and FRG in the period from 1945 to 1990 and subsequent developments following the political transformation.

There are also three focus projects initiated and curated by the exhibiting galleries. What will they show?

The Galerie Baro presents feminist installations, sculptures, and photographs of the Austrian/Spanish photographer Eva Lootz (born 1940). Dierking from Zurich shows Christian Megert, who will be 90 this year. He presented a mirrored room at documenta 1968, which Dierking is now reconstructing in an area of 25 square meters inside his stand. The mirrors are mounted on the ceiling and on the floor, so that one has this infinity feeling upwards and downwards. A mirror wall from 1962 will also be shown. Eva Lootz and Christian Megert are both also coming to the art fair.

The third focus project is dedicated to Hermann Nitsch, one of the most well-known Viennese Actionists. It is being realized by Lisa Kandlhofer. Works by Nitsch can also be seen at the stand of Zimmermann-Kratochwill. The Nitsch-Foundation will also fill a stand across from the LBBW special event with museum-quality historical works with the support of these two galleries. The Kandlhofer stand is located adjacent and the Zimmermann-Kratochwill opposite. All of them are thus very close to one another in the center of the upper hall.

What is offered in the event program?

One highlight is certainly this year's talks program, organized by TEXTE ZUR KUNST. This time the focus is on Cologne in the 1990s, still an interesting theme, because the art market was especially interesting at this time.

Apropos the Cologne art market: this year we are cooperating with the Kölner Museumsnacht. The focus is on a shared idea: art connects. With their Museumsnacht ticket, visitors can discover ART COLOGNE on Saturday afternoon from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. Conversely, ticketholders of ART COLOGNE have access to the entire Kölner Museumsnacht on Saturday evening - with 13 museums and numerous pop-up culture locations.

There are also two satellite trade fairs, namely "Neu Cöln" and "Prospect Cologne." "Neu Cöln" is organized by the Galerie JUBG, together with Arjan Stockhausen and Alexander Warhus. The former Dominican monastery in the Lindenstraße serves as an exhibition space.

"Prospect Cologne" is an initiative of the galleries Manoucher Koshbakht from Cologne and Max Mayer from Berlin and a group of engaged young collectors. 18 exhibitors from around the world are showing works, including six galleries that are also exhibiting at ART COLOGNE.

The economic prospects remain consistently poor. In the past year, you have said that the European art market is affected less than the global market. Does that still apply?

The market is still difficult, but it is still going, if at a lower level. At ART COLOGNE too, there were primarily sales in the five and six-digit range. Because many exhibitors are participating again this year, I presume that sales at ART COLOGNE last year were for the most part good. An example is Clementin Seedorf, a young Cologne gallery that took part last year for the first time and is now returning. I take that as a very good sign.

I would say that the market is stabilizing. It can't get any worse, but only better. Few galleries have closed in the Rhineland, actually a few more new ones have actually opened in the last year.

Do you still trust in the loyal, eager-to-buy, Rhenish collectors?

In the Rhenish collectors and in those from the Benelux countries. People here buy out of a love of art, not to speculate.

Are there synergies between ART COLOGNE and ART COLOGNE PALMA MALLORCA?

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Absolutely. Three galleries from Palma are at ART COLOGNE with Baró, Peleires, and Reus. They are joined by galleries we discovered in Palma, such as eiklid / rusten from Oslo. In the COLLABORATIONS section, we have the A + B Gallery from Brescia and Suburbia from Barcelona. They got to know one another at ART COLOGNE PALMA MALLORCA and are now organizing a booth in Collaborations. There are thus synergy effects from both sides.

ART COLOGNE not only wants to provide a comprehensive overview of current art, but also create space for dialogue, inspiration, and societal discourse. Is this function of particular significance in times of crisis?

The personal encounter is extremely important. Selling art is only one element of this coming together of Art, dialogue and human interaction complete the picture. Art fairs and museums are the last places where people meet and don't just look at their cell phones.

ART COLOGNE is celebrating its 60th anniversary in 2027. Can you already reveal what is planned for this occasion?

We are moving into the new Confex and Hall 1. There is a bit of daylight and state of the art technology there, no columns, and a view of the cathedral. It's going to be quite lovely.

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