



PRESS RELEASE

More than a bright surface!

Luminale 2018 will inspire its participants with lighting art and debates about the future

BETTER CITY: Two projects kept for Frankfurt's citizens

(Frankfurt am Main, 26 March 2018) Luminale, the biennale for lighting art and urban design, can look back on a successful festival week: 149 projects, light installations, performances and discussion panels attracted around 240,000 visitors, despite icy temperatures, to the venues in Frankfurt and Offenbach. In particular, the Light Walk in Frankfurt city centre enjoyed great popularity. On this circular inner-city route, the coordinators presented a multiplicity of artistic formats. People enjoyed not only the large-scale installations at the Alte Oper, at the Römer and in St. Catherine's Church, but also the smaller works along the way.

The organisers of Light and Art had added to the ninth Luminale a debate on the challenges faced by the city in the twenty-first century. In parallel with Light + Building, leading international trade fair for light and building technology, experts and artists from Germany and abroad discussed social, ecological, technological and artistic aspects of modern urban developments in a comprehensive complementary programme.

"We intend Luminale to set long-term incentives for sustainable urban design", says festival director Isa Rekkab. "We are glad that our new concept has been so popular and has already manifested itself in some projects. In all, the topics were very well received by the visitors."

Peter Feldmann, Mayor of the City of Frankfurt and sponsor of Luminale, expressed his great satisfaction: "This year, Luminale was transformed into a biennale for lighting art and urban design."

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For six days it brought light to our streets, squares and houses and enticed people to take evening walks, despite the cold weather. It transformed Frankfurt landmarks such as the Römer, the European Central Bank and the Alte Oper into light artworks, but also bathed locations such as the Ben Gurion Ring in a new light. The focus was not solely on art; Luminale illuminated contemporary questions of urban development in the truest sense of the word. We can look back on a splendid event, which will leave a lasting impression among the citizens of Frankfurt and the city's guests. I am looking forward already to Luminale 2020."

For Wolfgang Marzin, President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Messe Frankfurt, the new concept of Luminale was fully realised. "The opening to questions of urban design, the support from Mayor Feldmann as sponsor, the newly founded Luminale Association, and – last but not least – the new Project Office have given the festival fresh input. The overlap of topics with Light + Building is close – digitalisation, networking, security and energy efficiency in the urban environment formed the focus of both artists and of exhibitors and experts from the whole world. As the founder of Luminale we are of course closely linked to the festival and will continue to play our part in developing it successfully further.

A total of 149 projects were on the programme from 18 to 23 March 2018, in five festival categories: ART, COMMUNITY, STUDY, SOLUTIONS and BETTER CITY. The neighbouring town of Offenbach, since 2008 a regular location of Luminale, took part this year with 26 lighting artworks, exhibitions readings and film performances.

A great attraction to the public in Frankfurt was the Light Walk, designed for the first time, featuring 35 artistic works. Walking this route, visitors could experience the city centre as a great open-air gallery of lighting art. Landmarks and monuments, as well as lesser known locations, were there to be discovered.



Five of the most important Frankfurt landmarks – the Römer, the Alte Oper, the European Central Bank, St. Catherine's Church and the Eisener Steg – were venues for an artistic approach to light and the city in a wide range of forms. Philipp Geist staged the Römer as a light installation to walk around, and in a video-mapping show the Italian artists' collective Karmachina illuminated the history of the Alte Oper, which was a venue at Luminale for the first time. The artists' collective from Bremen, Urbanscreen, with its illustrator Andreas Preis, transformed the facade of the European Central Bank into an animated street gallery.

Incentives for urban design

For the first time Luminale has a festival centre in the Instituto Cervantes. The stage in the former America House became a platform for dialogue and discourse in the new programme section of SOLUTIONS.

Focal points during the five topic evenings were the environment, architecture, people and light. Academics, artists, town planners and ordinary citizens considered current questions of urban development. At the "City Lights" symposium, attended by eminent participants, international experts discussed the potential, the importance, the impact and the bonding power of urban light against the background of the rapid expansion world-wide of urban development.

BETTER CITY: sustainable for Frankfurt

The BETTER CITY section is devoted to those projects which remain permanently to the city and make a contribution to the sustainability of the whole festival. The illumination of the Friedberger Warte means that Luminale will be present permanently in the city even after Luminale is over. Following the redesign of the square, now the Friedberger Warte itself has been given a new illumination. The project is a work of the interior designer and light planner Christian Uitz.



In the project “Lights on” Jens Schader is illuminating nine so-called “dark locations”, seen as unsafe places, in the high-rise development on the Ben Gurion Ring, through a wide range of lighting elements. The design around the church of St. Lioba is the result of the different viewpoints and creative processes of the people of all ages living in the “Bügel.” It illustrates the pending changes in the renewal process of this housing development – which, with support from the Social City federal and state programme among other agencies, includes the permanent improvement of lighting in the district.

The festival’s energy balance has surely come out well, too. “We turned a lot of light out before we switched on the lights and projectors”, says festival director Isa Rekkab, summarising. “Both city institutions and many residents have supported us by reducing the lighting of squares and facades during Luminale, to that the art could make itself better felt.”

For Luminale 2020 Isa Rekkab hopes for further supporters and sponsors to realise the programme. “Luminale needs further strong partners and an assured financial basis for a successful future.”

What people have said about Luminale 2018:

“I am very happy to have been present at this year’s Luminale at this particular location – the Römer – with my own installation for pedestrians, ‘Frankfurt FADES.’ It was something quite special for me to see how the thousands of visitors fell under its spell and took time to bathe themselves in my immersive lighting space. I went again and again to the Römerberg and looked into beaming, happy, fascinated faces. A true transformation of this historical location took place, and citizens of Frankfurt who have known their Römer for years had certainly never seen and perceived this place in such a way.”

Philipp Geist; Frankfurt Fades



“Luminale 2018 was for me a wholly triumphant and successful project.”

Fabian Thiele; Hibb de Bach

“This year’s Luminale offered us a fantastic platform to link the themes of lighting art, innovative lighting construction and urban microclimate. Our prototype, developed in collaboration with the Technical University of Munich, has received a good deal of positive feedback, and we shall be developing it further. Luminale has helped to launch innovative topics and collaborations.”

Moritz Dörstelmann; Urban Climate Canopy

Through this festival in the City of Frankfurt, we, all of us – artists, supporters and especially reporters – are jointly making a strong demonstration, to reach a broad public: Luminale is a valuable, many-sided and, above all, socially relevant event. It has been a great pleasure for me to take an active part in it. My work was part of the Art section, art in public space. Thank you for giving this art form so much space; it is constantly called the queen of the arts.”

Victoria Coeln; KATHARINEN+PASSION

About Luminale

With around 200,000 visitors, Luminale ranks among the biggest events in Frankfurt and the Rhine-Main region. The festival of light is held concurrently with the international Light + Building trade fair every two years. Messe Frankfurt founded Luminale in 2002 and has promoted and supported the festival extensively since then. In 2018 Luminale was positioned for the first time as a BIENNALE FOR LIGHTING ART AND URBAN DESIGN, with the aim, at the interface of art, technology and urban living, to provide an incentive for positioning the city as a attractive location for the future and a “creative hub.” In the five festival categories of ART, COMMUNITY, STUDY, SOLUTIONS and BETTER CITY there were 149 projects on the programme.