



The magazine on the
FrankfurtRhineMain metropolitan region

FUTURE HUBS New Ideas for FrankfurtRhineMain — **WDC 2026** Why design can strengthen democracy — **BUSINESS** The home of world-famous products — **CULINARY ARTS** Why food design is more than just a feast for the eyes — **HOTBEDS OF TALENT** How design schools are shaping tomorrow's creative solutions — **CRAFTSMANSHIP** Where traditional skills meet innovative design

Where the future is taking shape

>
English
Edition

Issue 2025/26



Frankfurt
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Design
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Capital
2026

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As World Design Capital 2026 Frankfurt RheinMain will become an international showcase for innovation, creativity and sustainable future design. The award puts a global spotlight on the region with more than 400,000 companies, universities, research institutions and creative professionals. It strengthens its economic impact and opens up new opportunities for exchange and networking for companies and institutions alike.

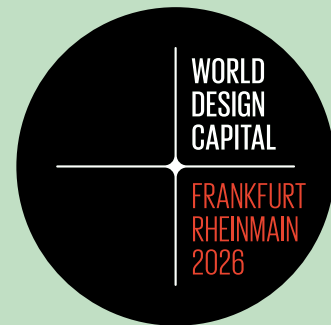
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a driver of
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Design is more than creating nice products. It's about shaping the way we live together, about democracy and the future. Design drives transformation, simplifies access to information, encourages active participation and initiates necessary change.

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// Editorial



THE REGION'S
CREATIVE FORCES

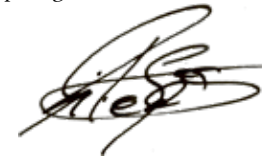
In 2026, Frankfurt am Main will be the first German city to hold the title of World Design Capital – a great honour and an even greater opportunity.

In this region, design has never been just about surface or style, but always about attitude. The spectrum ranges from the social architecture of the “New Frankfurt” movement to excellent craftsmanship and innovative design brands that set global standards. FrankfurtRhineMain is a region where preserving tradition and shaping the future go hand in hand.

Today we are seeing how the demands placed on good design are evolving. It is about more than aesthetics now: sustainability, social cohesion, participation, and digitalisation are now key factors, too. Technologies such as artificial intelligence challenge us to rethink design. What spaces do we make available for human creativity? How do we connect precision and intuition, craftsmanship and high tech? The answers emerge not only in studios and architecture firms but also in research institutes, start-ups, workshops, universities and companies across our region.

This issue of the FRM magazine offers an insight into this creative force, introducing people whose ideas, courage and conviction are shaping the future – whether analogue or digital, functional or artistic. It is this wealth of perspectives that defines FrankfurtRhineMain and makes it the design region of the future.

I wish you an inspiring read!



Mike Josef

Mayor of the City of Frankfurt am Main



INNOVATION
SHAPES
THE FUTURE

FrankfurtRhineMain stands for economic strength, international connectivity and technological innovation – combined with outstanding universities, academic excellence and a rich cultural landscape. What also sets the region apart is its entrepreneurial drive to turn ideas into real solutions – demonstrating that the future doesn't just come about by chance but is the result of an active process. The fact that Frankfurt will be the first German city to hold the title of World Design Capital in 2026 is an expression of this spirit. Here, design is not an end in itself but a driver of both economic and social momentum.

One genuine showcase project for our economic region is the new start-up space created by the innovation platform Futury, currently taking shape at Bertramshof in Frankfurt – on the former site of Hessischer Rundfunk. A hub is growing here to accommodate the next generation of entrepreneurs. It is particularly pleasing to see the close regional and cross-border collaboration between strong partners from business and academia – entirely in the spirit of FRM GmbH. This space represents what defines the region as a whole: forward-looking ideas, practice-oriented education, established networks – and the determination to make innovation visible and effective. On a collaborative basis.

Our region is home to leading companies, highly qualified talent and creative brands. FrankfurtRhineMain is a laboratory for the future, where people and markets come together – at the heart of Europe. This magazine shows how closely economic strength and design quality interact here – and why our region continues to be so attractive for investment, talent and new ideas.

I wish you an enjoyable read!



Eric Menges

CEO of FrankfurtRhineMain GmbH
International Marketing of the Region

PARTNERS FOR THIS EDITION OF FRM

GOLD



BRONZE

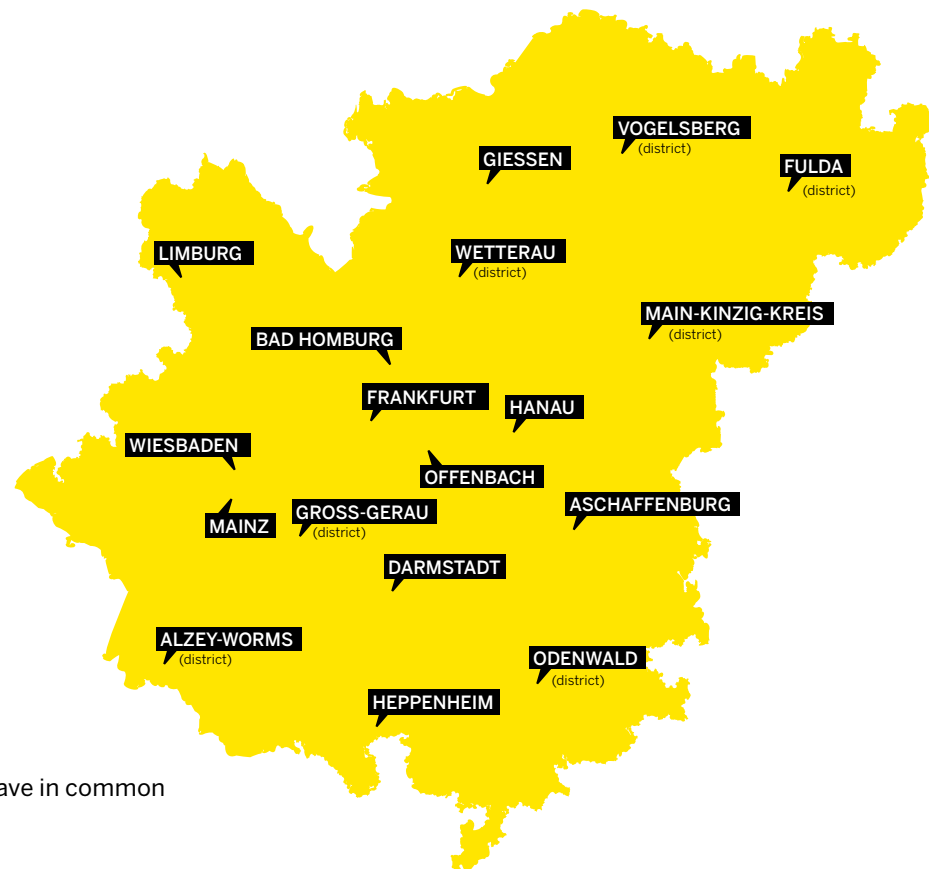


SILVER



SUPPORTERS





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Future Hubs in FrankfurtRhineMain
Our cover image shows Bertramshof in Frankfurt – see also pages 26-33



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A NEW STARTING POINT FOR YOUR GAMES INNOVATION

At the Frankfurt Business Games Hub, young studios and gaming start-ups find the ideal environment to grow their ideas.

Located in the east of the city, in the Frankfurt Start-up Centre ("Gründerzentrum"), the hub combines modern infrastructure, individual support and direct access to the regional start-up ecosystem. The future of game development starts here.

Frankfurt is more than a financial hub – it's a creative centre for games, home to industry leaders like Nintendo of Europe and award-winning studios such as Keen Games. A city where innovation, expertise, and success come together.

FRANKFURT BUSINESS GAMES HUB

frankfurt-business.net/gameshub





Through WDC 2026, the region will explore ideas on how design can improve the way people live together.

STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY THROUGH DESIGN

As World Design Capital 2026, FrankfurtRhineMain is set to bring people, ideas and inspiration from all over the world together under the motto **“Design for Democracy. Atmospheres for a better life”**.

BY KIM BERG

Design has long played a defining role in FrankfurtRhineMain, as the region’s cultural and architectural history shows. With their “New Frankfurt” initiative in the 1920s, Ernst May and his team created a model project of international standing for modern, socially minded design and programmatic urban planning. New Frankfurt celebrated its centenary in 2025 and is the subject of several major exhibitions. Darmstadt made design history even earlier: in 2026 it will be 125 years since the first exhibition was organised featuring the

work of the artists’ colony on Mathildenhöhe, which remains a milestone for modern design and applied art. This living legacy continues to shape the region through numerous companies and leading design schools that are constantly rethinking and applying the principles of good design.

In 2026, the global spotlight will be on design from FrankfurtRhineMain. As World Design Capital (WDC), the region will provide a stage



The WDC partners are organizing around 2,000 events in FrankfurtRhineMain – including exhibitions, open studios, and interactive formats.




for exploring how design can transform our society, our cities and the ways in which we live together. “The title of World Design Capital will enable our region to rediscover an identity that has been anchored in its DNA for centuries – creative, innovative, diverse and open to change,” says WDC managing director Carolina Romahn. “FrankfurtRhineMain has been an international hub of innovation and transformation for hundreds of years. The artistic and social movements of New Frankfurt and the Mathildenhöhe in Darmstadt are exemplary, providing a blueprint for potential future large-scale design projects for urban spaces and regional infrastructure.”

The guiding principle “Design for Democracy. Atmospheres for a better life” invites us to see design as a social force – a means of strengthening democratic processes and improving quality of life for all. Democracy is constantly evolving and requires ongoing creative engagement across all areas of life,” says Romahn. What may sound abstract will take on concrete form in FrankfurtRhineMain through a wide-ranging and ambitious programme that extends throughout the year and beyond. Some 2,000 events are to be staged by around 400 partners of the WDC 2026 in the region. “We’re turning the entire region into one big workshop for experimentation and trying things out – and it’s fine if not everything goes to plan. What matters is that we start taking action,” explains the WDC managing director.

In June 2026 the region will become an international meeting place for designers, creatives and anyone interested in future-oriented ways of living together. At the “World Design Experience”, the WDC will bring together the region’s creative industries and businesses in a variety of formats. For ten days, FrankfurtRhineMain will be transformed into a laboratory of the future: in exhibitions, open studios and interactive settings, regional ideas will meet global input. The focus here will be less on design in the classic sense than on spaces for dialogue – places where new perspectives can emerge.




Carolina Romahn is Managing Director of World Design Capital 2026.

WDC 2026 will seek to generate fresh impetus for long-term change. 

August will see another highlight of the annual programme – the “Month of Design”. Visitors can look forward to numerous outdoor events and an interdisciplinary “World Design Street Festival” held in different parts of the region, offering engaging formats for participation and experimentation. For a whole month, design in all its diversity will take centre stage – from large-scale installations and unusual discovery tours to exhibitions. Over three consecutive weekends, the “World Design Street Festival” will turn various neighbourhoods in Frankfurt and the region into temporary creative spaces, where street art blends with music and performance.

Throughout the year, countless smaller-scale events will also shape the programme. “There will be highlights across the region in 2026,” says Romahn. “We’ll be presenting hanging gardens, a solar-lit cycle path between Offenbach and Frankfurt, circular initiatives for product reuse. We’ll be revitalising the cultural campus in Frankfurt Bockenheim with a wide range of players and activities, and installing the first Superblock in Wiesbaden.” Developed in Barcelona, the Superblock concept enhances residents’ quality of life by calming traffic and creating green spaces. The WDC Campus will also involve the region’s universities in the process.

Alongside this, special projects will demonstrate how design can be both low-threshold and highly relevant – from TikTok formats that reframe public debates to democracy workshops in kiosks or empty shop windows. In Darmstadt, the exhibition A Step Ahead will mark 125 years of visionary design on Mathildenhöhe, linking past and future in design history. All these projects seek to foster democratic participation, social justice, ecological sustainability and cultural diversity through creative approaches in public spaces.

Alongside public design experiences, three major international conferences will bring together experts from design, science and politics. In Wiesbaden, Offenbach and Frankfurt, the “World Design Policy Conference” will focus on how design can become a driver of social transformation. “At the Paulskirche we will present a manifesto to decision-makers and policymakers in the region with the aim of embedding design and design processes sustainably within democratic structures. The aim of WDC 2026 is to have an impact far beyond that one year – the idea is to spark impulses for lasting transformation,” explains Romahn. The year will conclude with the “Convocation Ceremony”, at which the organisers of WDC 2026 will formally hand over the baton to the next World Design Capital. 



Let us design how we want to live.

Design for Democracy. Atmospheres for a better life

WORLD DESIGN CAPITAL
FRANKFURT RHEINMAIN 2026



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1

People at the centre: “New Frankfurt”

A hundred years ago, Frankfurt reinvented itself from the ground up. Between 1925 and 1930 more than 12,000 apartments were built, along with entire housing estates and public and industrial buildings such as the Großmarkthalle. Led by Ernst May, the urban planning project “New Frankfurt” also set aesthetic benchmarks and placed the common good at its core – a groundbreaking approach. Clear-cut lines and functionality defined its architecture. Buildings dating back to the “New Frankfurt” era can still be seen today, for example in Römerstadt, on the Bornheimer Hang (photo) and in Riederwald.

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KRONBERG
IM TAUNUS

4

FRANKFURT
AM MAIN

1

HANAU

3

2

OFFENBACH
AM MAIN

WIESBADEN

5

6 DARMSTADT



5

Modern art and architecture: Museum Reinhard Ernst

There it stands, radiant and white – the “sugar cube” of Wiesbaden. Designed by the Japanese star architect Fumihiko Maki, the Museum Reinhard Ernst owes its nickname to the clear lines of its façade. Behind it, spacious, light-filled galleries present abstract art from the past 75 years.



1

Masterpieces of aviation: Lufthansa Visitor and Conference Center

Legendary aviation up close: from April 2026, visitors to the new Lufthansa Visitor Center at Frankfurt Airport will be able to marvel at two icons of German aviation history – a 1950s Lockheed Super Star and the Junkers Ju 52, affectionately known as “Tante Ju”.

© Jee-Hae Youn/
Lufthansa Group

Everything about typography and books: Klingspor Museum

From A for Arial to Z for Zapf: the Klingspor Museum in Offenbach puts the design of books and type at centre stage. Typography and calligraphy take pride of place in its exhibitions, while visitors can learn the craft for themselves at the print workshop.



2

THE GRAND TOUR OF GOOD DESIGN

BY CHRISTINA HENNING

Where can design be experienced in Frankfurt-RhineMain? A tour from Wiesbaden via Offenbach to the Taunus leads to places of creative design, demonstrating that whether architecture, jewellery-making or typography, the region's hallmark is its sheer variety of good design.



4

Clear forms: the BraunSammlung in Kronberg im Taunus

Can a hairdryer or a toaster become an icon? If they were designed by Dieter Rams, the answer is yes. The long-time head designer at Braun, Rams created products according to his own principles of good design – such as the need for honesty and unobtrusiveness. His designs can be explored on a visit to the Braun-Sammlung in Kronberg im Taunus.

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Jewellery and craftsmanship: Goldsmiths' House Hanau

Filigree gold jewellery, items in solid silver, dozens of gleaming showpieces: the German Goldsmiths' House in Hanau presents alternating exhibitions of the many forms of precious metalwork – forged and designed by artists from all over the world.



3

6

The leap into the modern era: Mathildenhöhe in Darmstadt

“Respect the old, but have the courage to try the new afresh.” It was with this maxim that Grand Duke Ernst Ludwig inspired an artists' colony that he himself created on Mathildenhöhe. From 1901 onwards, what began in the Art Nouveau style grew into an architectural synthesis of the arts that was continuously developed over the years. Meticulously designed residential buildings and landscaped surroundings testify to the drive towards modernity. Towering above it all is the Hochzeitsturm, with its distinctive roof comprising five rounded battlements. Today the Mathildenhöhe in Darmstadt is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

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WITH HAND AND HEART

In the craft sector, the fusion of tradition and innovation continuously gives rise to new **success stories** that tell of creative strength, technical expertise – and sheer enthusiasm.

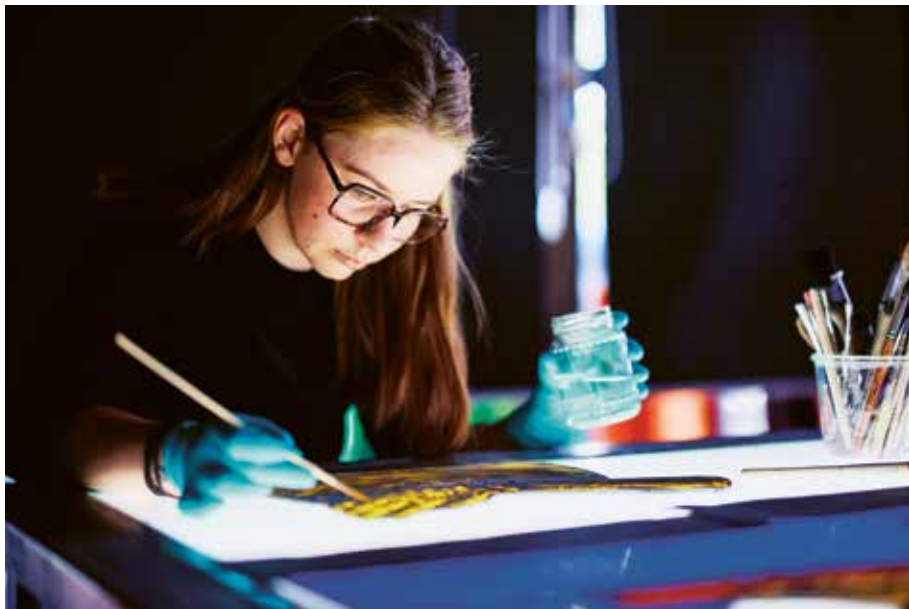
BY CONSTANZE KLEIS (TEXT) AND JONAS RATERMANN (PHOTOS)

Thomas Pildner was a latecomer to his profession. Or you might say that the former manager simply took a little longer to discover his true calling. But once he did, things moved quickly. Having worked intensively with wood, form and structure since 1998, he soon realised: “It’s a match.” He attended courses with renowned turners, opened his own workshop in Bad Homburg in 2010 and went on to win major awards, such as the Hessian Design Prize in 2018. “I love the material,” says the 67-year-old. At first the woodturner and sculptor created elegant solid-wood bowls that were practical for serving salad or muesli. Over time, though, his work has shifted away from functional vessels towards thick-walled, weighty yet elegant sculptural objects. These pieces no longer need to serve a household purpose – they stand on their own. And they do so in prominent places, such as at the Museum Angewandte Kunst in Frankfurt and at Goethe University. Many of his works now belong to public collections.

Pildner devotes himself to the nature of each type of wood, which comes exclusively from felled native trees – often where the trees have been removed out of necessity. In his wood store there are pieces from a 200-year-old yew in Bad Homburg palace

park, and from the sequoia standing in the churchyard of the Evangelical Methodist congregation in Friedrichsdorf. He engages deeply with the character of each material, sketching his designs along growth rings, forks in the wood, scars – sometimes damage caused by deer – or other irregularities. Some works take him years to complete. “First, the wood has to be given time to dry. Depending on the type, you allow for about one year per centimetre of wall thickness,” he explains. Once ready, Pildner rough-cuts the block with a chainsaw and sets it aside again. “A year later I turn the blank, which can weigh up to 100 kilograms, into a rough form on the lathe,” he says. Before he even touches the surface design, five or six years may pass as he returns year after year to refine the shape at the lathe. “I shape by means of removal. That means I have to know in advance what the finished piece will look like.” Manual shaping is done using sculptor’s tools. Before handing over his works to new owners, Pildner textures, brushes, sands and oils them. Many are now owned by private collectors in South Korea, North America, Canada and across Europe. And there, too, they are meant – as Pildner puts it – “to show just how much beauty this world still has in store for us, despite everything.”

Some of Thomas Pildner’s works are held in public collections, such as at the Museum Angewandte Kunst in Frankfurt.



Derix Glasstudios also realises designs by artists.

Glass is like painting with light. //

Just as well-travelled as the wooden objects from Bad Homburg is the glass art produced by Derix Glasstudios in Taunusstein. Their colourful glass windows and walls are to be found in countries including Austria, Egypt, Italy, Dubai, the USA, Spain and Switzerland. There they adorn churches, hospitals, kindergartens, government buildings, museums, nursing homes, universities, schools, offices, conference centres – even a prison. The company’s roots go back to 1866, when Wilhelm Derix I laid the foundations for its success in Goch on the Lower Rhine. The business remained family-owned until 2015, when master glazier, glass painter and long-time employee Rainer Schmitt – also a certified glass construction technician – took over to secure the studios’ future.

“Glass is like painting with light. Glass art creates a completely different atmosphere in a room, depending on how the sunlight falls,” says Marko Šimecki, a member of the management team and head of production. The Taunusstein-based Glasstudios manufactory creates unique works of art. Alongside work for sacred buildings and the restoration of historic glazing, the team also brings to life the designs of national and international art-

ists. To this end, they combine techniques such as screen printing, leading, airbrushing, etching and glass painting. Sheets of glass measuring up to 3.20 by 6.20 metres can be fired in eight kilns. In 2024, for example, Glasstudios produced the impressive glass façade for a new hospital chapel in Elizabethtown, Kentucky, based on a design by American artist Guy Kemper. Four metres wide and 2.8 metres high, the piece was made of mouth-blown Lamberts® glass from the Upper Palatinate. The Derix portfolio ranges from the village church in Altjessnitz, Saxony-Anhalt, to the Museum of History in Texas. In order to realise an artists’ vision, the company consistently explores and develops new techniques, Šimecki explains.

Constantly reorienting and developing is also part of the professional outlook of Frankfurt ceramic artist Viola Beuscher. In creating her pottery, the 33-year-old draws inspiration from the people who will eventually use her ceramics. “We have around seven restaurants that are long-standing clients. I experiment a lot with the chefs. They have very clear ideas about the ceramics – less about form than about function and presentation. Some works have emerged from this process that mean a lot to me



In order to create glass design that is as innovative possible, the team is constantly testing new techniques.

I want to create products that are elegant, high-quality and timeless. //

because they're always also part of the story involving that particular individual." Her products seek to tell stories, convey certain values, and also keep pace with the times. Beuscher's ceramics are timeless classics, yet they still bear her distinctive signature. Memorable yet understated, they harmonise well with other objects. She mainly works with natural tones "because I simply want to create a product that is elegant, high-quality and timeless – something you invest in once and that is permanent."

Beuscher first came into contact with pottery while doing occupational therapy. What began as a pastime became a passion. She was given a potter's wheel and produced her first individual items for sale. Encouraged by her success, she began to create entire collections, going on to set up her own ceramics studio in her mid-twenties. Since then she has seen steady growth – in terms of responsibility, her team and the orders she receives. She now has ten employees. In her Frankfurt studio, they process around a tonne of clay from the Westerwald each month. The pandemic gave such a boost to her online shop that it has since become one of the main pillars of her business, she says. The pottery courses she offers are also in high demand. Beuscher loves her work – and it shows in her ceramics. //



Viola Beuscher mainly works with natural tones.



WHERE GOOD DESIGN FEELS AT HOME

With its high-tech laboratories, medieval town centres and international trade fair halls, FrankfurtRhineMain has forged an identity as a creative hub where outstanding design shapes the economy. **World-famous products** come into being here – from razors and cameras to furniture and architectural masterpieces.

BY WOLF ZINN

Rather than being noisy, design in the FrankfurtRhineMain region is thoughtful and sustainable. It rests on an approach that reconciles function with aesthetics – an attitude that has influenced generations of designers. And this is no passing trend, as shown by the brands and creative minds at work between the Taunus, the Odenwald and the western Spessart.





Close to the Alte Oper in Frankfurt stretches the sculpture ensemble Welle, designed by the Frankfurt architectural firm schneider+schumacher and realised by Arnold AG.

ARCHITECTURE IN DETAIL: GLASBAU HAHN AND ARNOLD AG

Design in FrankfurtRhineMain is about far more than just products – it is expressed in buildings and materials, too. The tradition-steeped Frankfurt company Glasbau Hahn is a specialist in glass-based exhibition and architectural solutions. It produces museum showcases ranging from free-standing display cabinets to glass walls, and operates a modern glazing workshop for glass doors, staircases and light-filled interiors. In addition, Glasbau Hahn advises museums worldwide on climate, lighting and security solutions for their galleries. “We see glass not just as a material but as a medium that shapes spaces,” says managing director Ottmar Ernst.

Arnold AG in Friedrichsdorf, meanwhile, stands both for highly automated industrial production and artistic metalworking. The company supplies major machinery manufacturers with complex components, but it also builds railings and yacht fittings, and implements sculptures and art projects across the globe – always with a focus on precision and aesthetic impact. In bringing distinctive creations to life, its technicians work hand in hand with internationally renowned artists, architects, sculptors and designers such as Jeff Koons, Anish Kapoor, Pae White, Olafur Eliasson and Sol LeWitt.

Glasbau Hahn designs and builds items such as museum display cabinets – here at the Oman Across Ages Museum.



Good design means as little design as possible. //



Braun hi-fi appliances were among the designs created by Dieter Rams.

BRAUN: THE PRINCIPLE OF “LESS IS MORE”

Frankfurt in the 1950s: as the city slowly recovered from the devastation of the Second World War, the economy was reviving. At the same time, a medium-sized company was revolutionising everyday life. Founded in 1921 by Max Braun in Frankfurt-Bockenheim, today based in Kronberg, Braun was the first to fuse modern design with industrial production.

Largely defined by the work of Dieter Rams, born in 1932 and later a design legend, Braun produced items from the 1950s onwards that combined functionality, technical innovation and a clear aesthetic. Razors, radios, record players – Braun products became symbols of a confident new consumer culture in Germany. Rams once summed up his philosophy in this phrase: “Good design means as little design as possible.” This credo influenced generations of designers worldwide, including Apple’s former chief designer Jonathan Ive – and resonates to this day. Anyone wanting to see for themselves can visit Braun’s permanent exhibition on technology and design at the company headquarters in Kronberg, Taunus.



Andreas Kaufmann, chairman of the supervisory board of the long-established Wetzlar-based company Leica.

LEICA: FOCUSING ON THE ESSENTIALS

Some 70 kilometres north, in Wetzlar, stands another icon of German design: Leica. Few brands have shaped the way we see and capture moments as profoundly as the cameras made in central Hesse. The first 35mm camera was created here as early as 1914, ushering in a whole new era of photography with its compact design. Leica became the tool of choice for many of the great photographers, forging a visual style that was to define the 20th century.

“The Leica became part of me, like my hand”: this was how French photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson once described his favourite camera. To this day, the Leitz-Park in Wetzlar continues to develop and assemble cameras that win over photographers worldwide: precision without unnecessary show effects. The Ernst Leitz Museum also stages temporary exhibitions of outstanding photography and the history of Leica.

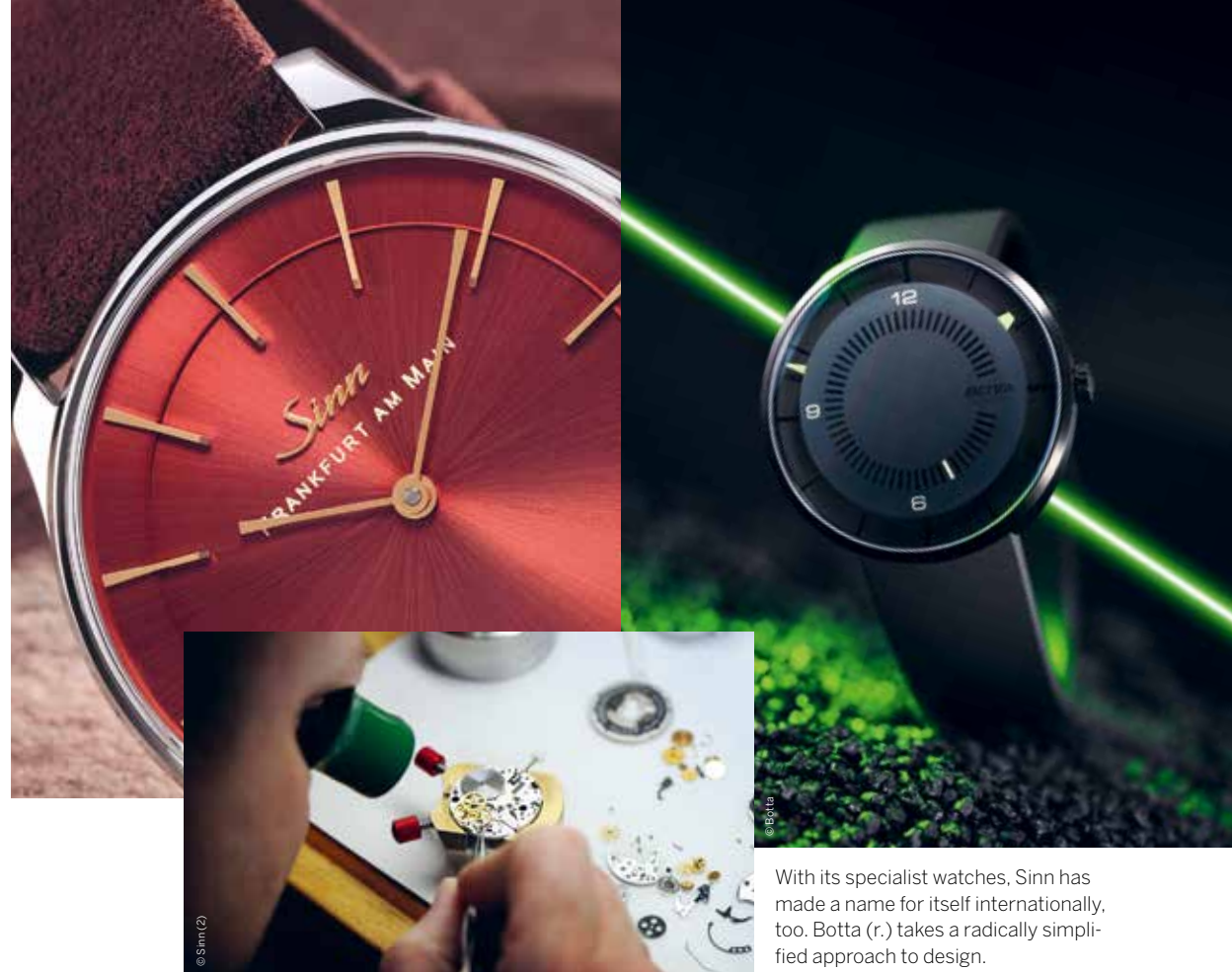
We want to create furniture that is allowed to make its presence felt in a room without being loud. //

E15: WOOD IN ITS MOST HONEST FORM

In Frankfurt, e15 shows how furniture can be a statement. Since the 1990s, the brand has stood for radical material honesty, with designs such as the solid wood table “Bigfoot”, whose massive legs rise like an archaic monument. The range also includes purist chairs, beds and shelves, all marked by uncompromising clarity and craftsmanship. Designer Philipp Mainzer, co-founder of e15, explains: “We want to create furniture that is allowed to make its presence felt in a room without being loud.” This philosophy reflects a trend towards conscious reduction and durability.



The table “Bigfoot”, designed by Philipp Mainzer more than 30 years ago.



With its specialist watches, Sinn has made a name for itself internationally, too. Botta (r.) takes a radically simplified approach to design.

TIMEPIECES WITH CHARACTER: SINN AND BOTTA

FrankfurtRhineMain has a strong sense of time, not bound by passing trends. Founded in 1961, Sinn Spezialuhren in Frankfurt develops robust instrument watches that are prized by pilots and divers to this day. Rather than chasing fashions, Sinn focuses on legibility, reliability and understatement – and has built an international reputation on that basis.

Working from his studio in Königstein, Klaus Botta pursues his own guiding principle: “Simplicity is the true luxury of our time.” Botta reinterpreted the single-hand watch, inspired by historical tower clocks. Time is radically simplified in its display, encouraging the wearer to engage with it more consciously. Conceived in the spirit of the Bauhaus, Botta’s clearly designed models are intended as islands of calm in a world overloaded with digital stimuli.

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THE FRANKFURT CHAIR

A chair is a chair is a chair – and that's the best way to sum up the Frankfurt Chair. Designed in the 1930s by Max Stoelcker, it was less about the motto “form follows function” than about making production as simple as possible for a chair of maximum stability. By the 1950s it was to be found everywhere in German government offices – and to this day it still to be seen in kitchens, dining corners and restaurants. Plain, simple, restrained, unobtrusive: it is simply the very essence of a chair.



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TIMELESS ICONS



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BEMBEL AND GERIPPPTES

Apfelwein – a kind of regional cider – is a very particular drink that calls for special vessels. It is poured from a Bembel, a cross between a jug and a pitcher that is painted blue – combining the rounded form of a jug with slender neck and spout of a pitcher. The tart Apfelwein is drunk from a Gerippptes, a ribbed glass which gets its name from its textured (“ribbed”) surface. Both the Bembel and Gerippptes started to appear in Apfelwein taverns from the end of the 19th century onwards, though the origins of their design remain obscure. Legend has it that the ribbed surface makes the contents sparkle – or perhaps it simply ensures a secure grip for the merry drinker.

FRANKFURT LAMP NO. 1

The Frankfurt Lamp No. 1 doesn't just give light: it is also a reminder of the great age of clear design, a tribute to its creator, and a salute to fine craftsmanship. Bauhaus designer and craftsman Christian Dell created it in the 1920s in connection with the “New Frankfurt” programme launched by Mayor Ludwig Landmann together with architect and city planner Ernst May. It embodied the design principles of the day – stability, elegance and practicality – and, importantly, it did not dazzle. To mark the centenary of “New Frankfurt”, 100 examples of this homage lamp have been newly produced.



© Frankfurt Leuchte No. 1



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OHROPAX

Function dictates form – and that applies perfectly to Ohropax earplugs. After all, what doesn't fit simply doesn't work. These “inventors of quiet” from Wehrheim in the Taunus have been protecting people from noise since 1908, now in their third generation, with small earplugs made of wax, foam and silicone. Today they come in a whole range of colours and with different filters, but they all have one thing in common: they fit.

STRAUSS

Work trousers, jackets, shoes – what do all these have to do with design? The answer is to be found in the catalogue of workwear manufacturer Strauss, based in Biebergemünd. The brand's global success is built on a synthesis of quality, safety and design – sometimes plain, sometimes eye-catching, but always functional. It's a success story that began modestly: the great-grandfather travelled the country selling brooms and brushes, the grandfather switched to mail order, the father expanded the product range, and the sons injected lifestyle into the world of work – along with ecological and social responsibility.



© Strauss Deutschland

THE FUTURE NEEDS PLACES WHERE IT CAN GROW

Creativity requires space. In FrankfurtRhineMain, **future hubs** are emerging that are more than just architecture: they are laboratories for ideas, catalysts for innovation and a home for those who want to rethink our future.

BY CHRISTINA DIER (TEXT) AND JONAS RATERMANN (PHOTOS)

Red brickwork, tall windows, an old water tower in the courtyard:

Bertramshof in Frankfurt's Nordend district radiates industrial charm right in the heart of the city. Where the Hessischer Rundfunk had its offices up until recently, a place for future ideas is now taking shape. "This whole section of the building here is Futury's new 'Startup Space'," says managing director Melissa Ott, pointing to the east wing of the complex. Ott has driven the development of Futury in recent years and is proud of what is now emerging: "At Bertramshof we're creating a kind of home base on a surface area of 2,000 square metres. Young founders are to get together with investors and partners from industry here to devel-

op their ideas further – from market readiness through to scaling." Futury is an innovation platform that is supported by an alliance of corporate and foundation partners together with four universities: the Frankfurt School of Finance & Management, Goethe University Frankfurt, Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz and TU Darmstadt. Their shared vision: 1,000 new start-ups by 2030, with a particular focus on spin-offs from academia.

Political tailwind for this ambitious goal has come from Berlin. In mid-2025, Futury was one of ten initiatives nationwide to be selected for funding in connection with the EXIST flagship



Start-up flair in a brick building: a new space for young entrepreneurs is taking shape at the historic Bertramshof in Frankfurt.

competition “Startup Factories”. This means that over the next five years, up to 10 million euros from the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy will flow into FrankfurtRhineMain – along with a further 10 million euros raised privately by Futury itself.

This support will enable Futury to expand its programmes from early-stage encouragement at universities through to access to industry partners and financial support. Venture capital with a target volume of 40 million euros is also available through Futury Capital’s Fund III. “We want to make founding a company a natural career option for researchers and students,” says Melissa Ott. “With excellent conditions at the new Bertramshof site, and also partners and experts who support start-ups from the initial idea through to scaling.”

The vision: 1,000 new start-ups by 2030.

But for Ott, it’s not just about numbers: “I’d like to see more flagship start-ups that reflect a local connection with FrankfurtRhineMain. Just as Flixbus is associated with Munich, we need a start-up for our region. Something like a second BioNTech, if you like.”

The fact that there is no shortage of ideas in FrankfurtRhineMain is demonstrated by the roughly 120 start-ups that Futury has accompanied in recent years. One of them is SportsRouting, founded in 2024 by Lennard Carlstaedt, Julian Jungnitz, Damian Heil and Vincent Beinhauer. The four share a long friendship, having known each other since kindergarten in some cases. The idea for SportsRouting was born during an IT internship at the football club SV Darmstadt 98, which they did while they were studying at TU Darmstadt’s Department of Economics. The result: software that makes player scouting in football more efficient. “Our tool is based on mathematical optimisation algorithms and takes into account the fact that scouts can only observe players at fixed times

in certain places. Using the tool enables them to save time, cut costs, reduce CO₂ emissions and spot more talent live at an earlier stage,” explains Carlstaedt. The young company is continually developing the software: integration of live injury data and cost-optimised flight options has already been achieved, and further features are planned. SportsRouting recently celebrated its first major success: the start-up has entered into a development partnership with Bundesliga club SV Werder Bremen. SportsRouting itself will not initially be moving into the Startup Space at Bertramshof, but the founders are well aware of the benefits offered by the innovation platform. “What really helped us was access to know-how and an expert network, especially from industry, which came through Futury’s six-week Product School. We certainly intend to stay closely connected with the team in future,” says Carlstaedt. For him and his co-founders, the decision to launch their company was the right one. “It’s fantastic to run your own business, meet so many new people and be part of a growing start-up-community.”

While start-ups from a range of sectors are taking their first steps at Bertramshof, AI Factory FrankfurtRheinMain is focusing on the next technological leap: the development and application of artificial intelligence. A number of project partners have come together for this purpose, including the Wirtschaftsinitiative FrankfurtRheinMain, the project company AI Factory Management and chip manufacturer NVIDIA. AI infrastructure developer Polarise is set to invest in the construction and operation of the new AI Factory.

Anyone imagining a factory in the classic sense, however, would be mistaken. No new building is being erected – instead, the necessary hardware and software components are being installed in existing buildings in central Frankfurt. From the outside the cityscape will remain unchanged – yet for the region’s companies and start-ups, the project is still a milestone.

For many small and medium-sized enterprises in particular, access to high-performance computing capacity has so far involved high costs and concerns over security. The new AI Factory is pursuing a European approach, offering companies a secure, high-performance infrastructure, especially in regulated sectors such as finance, mobility and healthcare. “The AI Factory ensures



A clear mission: for Futury managing director Melissa Ott, founding a company is to become a genuine career alternative.



Entrepreneurs with a passion: Lennard Carlstaedt (left) and Vincent Beinhauer (right) have established a start-up to apply data-driven scouting in football.

AT A GLANCE: Futury’s new “Startup Space”

Focus

Start-ups from every sector can use the new Startup Space; Futury itself focuses on the clusters Life Science & Healthcare, Aviation & Space, Banking & Finance, Data & AI, and Deep Tech & Green Tech.



Location

Bertramshof, Frankfurt Nordend (Am Steinernen Stock 1)

Milestones

The grand opening was in August 2025

New programmes for students, researchers and start-ups from autumn 2025

Expansion of the network and targeted cluster development through to 2030

2,000 m²

Office, co-working and event space with up to 150 workplaces, closely connected to the Futury start-up community

digital sovereignty, bringing high-performance AI technology into line with regulatory and ethical standards. It’s a strategic shift in how we in Europe deal responsibly with AI and with our own data,” says Michel Boutouil, CEO of Polarise.

Not least, the aim of this flagship project is also to strengthen FrankfurtRhineMain as a location for AI start-ups – an ambition welcomed by initiatives such as the Frankfurt AI Hub, which has long worked to build a strong AI community in the region.

Talks on the AI Factory began two years ago, and now it is becoming reality. With a project of this kind, speed is crucial, explains Jörg Schaub, managing director of Wirtschaftsinitiative FrankfurtRheinMain: “Companies now need solutions for a secure and sovereign AI infrastructure. That’s why AI Factory Frankfurt-RheinMain is initially focusing on rapid availability, later scaling up quickly in line with demand.” The fact that Frankfurt is now moving ahead with such determination on AI is likely to provide fresh impetus for the region as a whole.

Only around ten kilometres from the AI Factory in central Frankfurt, another future field is in focus in the Riedberg district: biotech. Since 2004, the Frankfurt Innovation Centre for Biotechnology (FiZ) has been offering young companies the tools they

need to make the leap from research into industrial application: modern infrastructure, 23,000 square metres of laboratory and office space, and room for some 800 specialised jobs.

The city of Mainz has big plans for biotech, too. In the immediate vicinity of Johannes Gutenberg University, the Life Science Campus is currently taking shape. The fact that Rhineland-Palatinate’s state capital is keen to promote the growth of the biotech sector comes as no surprise: the globally acclaimed breakthrough of Mainz-based BioNTech in the field of mRNA vaccines has shone a spotlight on the city as a whole. “Major challenges in healthcare, pandemic preparedness, personalised medicine and industrial biotechnology will continue to occupy us for decades to come. BioNTech’s contribution to tackling the COVID-19 pandemic has shown just how vital forward-looking site development really is,” says Felix Wälder, managing director of biomindz Standortentwicklungsgesellschaft Mainz mbH.

For now, it still takes a little imagination to picture the 12-hectare site as a fully developed life science campus, but at least the first step has been taken: with 3,000 square metres of laboratory and office space, “Lab 1” has been completed and the first tenants have moved in. Inside, there are new laboratories for cell and yeast cultivation, cloning and microscopy. From the outside too,



“Lab 1” offers 3,000 square metres of space for innovative research. It is the first building of the planned Life Science Campus in Mainz.

AT A GLANCE:
AI Factory FrankfurtRheinMain

Focus
Outstanding state-of-the-art infrastructure for AI applications of every kind

Milestones
Launch of the AI Factory in autumn/winter 2025, supplemented with workshops and consultancy

Involvement of companies from the clusters banking/finance, logistics/mobility, pharma/healthcare; other businesses welcome

Location
Frankfurt city centre, in existing buildings, no new construction

Start at an initial core site with full hardware and software modules, followed by gradual expansion of capacity at additional, larger sites in Frankfurt-RheinMain

“Lab 1” signals a future hub: its timber and recycled-concrete façade follows the cradle-to-cradle principle, meaning the materials can be reused once they have served their initial purpose. There is also a rainwater retention system on the roof that provides passive cooling, while photovoltaic panels on the façade generate electricity.

But as Felix Wälder points out, successful research requires far more than the right buildings: “We’re seeing clearly just how important certain factors have become like proximity to research partners, scientific expertise and access to skilled workers. Companies moving here today are not thinking in square metres, but in functioning networks.”

One company eager to tap into just such a network is the biotech start-up LigniLabs, which on 1 July 2025 moved into around 480 square metres in Lab 1. A spin-off from the Max Planck Institute for Polymer Research in Mainz, LigniLabs plans to establish close ties with its future neighbours at its new base on the Life Science Campus. “We’re hoping not just for good

contacts but also customer projects and joint research applications,” explains Dr Justin Grabow, co-founder and managing director of LigniLabs.

For Grabow and his team, opting for the Life Science Campus was an easy decision: “The proximity to the Max Planck Institute for Polymer Research is invaluable – not only because we can carry out certain measurements just a short walk away, but also because it gives us access to the institute’s talent pool and also to other research institutions. The building’s sustainable construction and resulting low energy costs were also a key factor in our decision.” As Grabow puts it: “We want our technology to help change the world for the better – and that should be reflected in everything we do, including the choice of our building.”

The move into Lab 1 was perfectly timed: LigniLabs has just received a welcome financial boost. The start-up has been awarded a founding grant of around one million euros by the Federal Agency for Disruptive Innovation (SPRIN-D). For the

Two parks are planned to surround the Life Science Campus in Mainz.



Research with connections: for Felix Wälder of biomindz, the Life Science Campus is a place where knowledge, talent and application come together.

young company focused on developing a platform technology for bio-based micro- and nano-encapsulation using lignin, the funding is crucial for its future direction: “We want to replace fossil-based encapsulation technologies, pave the way for targeted plant medicine by producing ‘plant vaccines’, and transform other sectors such as the construction industry with bio-based flame-retardant formulations,” says Grabow.

The next steps for LigniLabs are clear – but what is the broader vision for the Life Science Campus as a future hub? Wälder sums it up: “We don’t see the campus as a completed building project but as a space for innovation and a growing landscape of knowledge. If we can succeed in creating a lasting environment here that attracts talent, enables start-ups and eases transfer to practical application, then the Life Science Campus will have fulfilled its mission.” //

Companies moving here today are not thinking in square metres, but in functioning networks. //



AT A GLANCE: Life Science Campus Mainz

Focus

Biotechnology and life sciences, together with university-related businesses

First construction project: “Lab 1” is complete, offering some 3,000 m² of laboratory and office space

First users:

- Lifecare
- LigniLabs
- TRON Translational Oncology Mainz

Milestones

“Lab 2” – laboratory and office building with a surface area of approx. 9,000 m², due for completion by the end of 2026

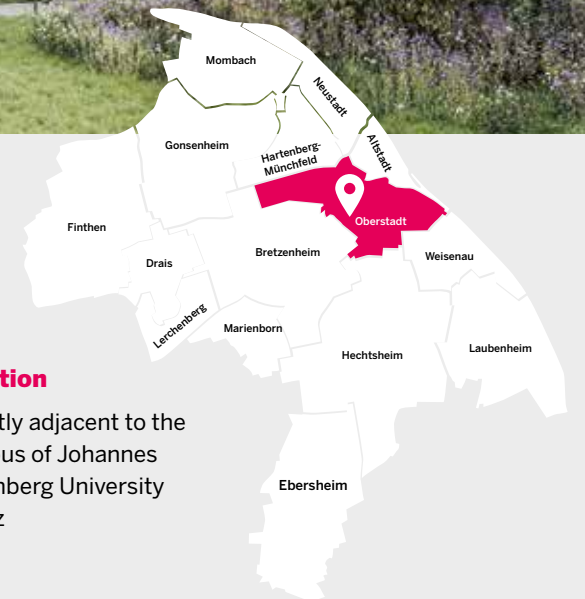
“Plus Ultra Mainz” – laboratory and office building with around 19,000 m², due for completion by the end of 2027; future home of Life Science Zentrum Mainz

Location

Directly adjacent to the campus of Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz

Size:

Approx.
12 hectares



BETWEEN SKETCH AND START-UP

Fashion involving architectural elements, sustainable pizza packaging, inline skates – at the design schools in FrankfurtRhineMain, ideas are emerging that connect creativity with entrepreneurship. A visit to **three of these hotbeds of talent** shows that the next generation is working enthusiastically on creative solutions for the future.

BY CHRISTINA PFÄNDER (TEXT) AND JONAS RATERMANN (PHOTOS)

A black cape drapes over a uniform, heavy buttons glint dully in the studio light. Hidden pockets, clean lines and elegant tailoring. created by Luca Keil, now in his third semester of fashion design at the Academy of Fashion & Design (AMD) in Wiesbaden, this outfit is more than just an item of clothing: it tells the story of Nathalie “Lily” Sergueiew, the double agent who influenced the Allied landings in the Second World War. “The look reflects the duality of camouflage and official appearance,” Keil explains.

This interplay of fabric, form and meaning is part of everyday studies at AMD Wiesbaden. Sketches lie scattered alongside samples, sewing machines hum beside open laptops. Digital tools are already part of the curriculum – but most students are drawn to

the materials themselves. They drape, cut, try out. “Virtual tools such as avatars or digital shows still play a minor role, but they will come,” says Professor Ilona Kötter, Dean of Studies. What she observes most among students is a delight in colour, sheen and detail – a counterbalance to the crises of the present. “They want to create alternative worlds that inspire hope.”

This aspiration is reflected not only in fashion but in interdisciplinary projects, too. Interior design students have worked with the Wiesbaden-based company HEICO Investment Management to develop concepts for transforming retail centres into vibrant meeting places, for example, incorporating nurseries, gyms, street food and designed façades.

Luca Keil is studying fashion design at Akademie Mode & Design (AMD) in Wiesbaden.





Dean of Studies Ilona Kötter (right) observes in her students a joy in colour and sheen – a counterpoint to the crises of the present.

How space and body influence one another through design is exemplified in a bachelor's thesis being written jointly by Nola Jänisch and Nikolas Kraft. Hanging from a clothes rail is one of the key pieces of their final collection at AMD: a light silk fabric, soft and flowing, fixed to the metal frame of a chair. Their designs approach clothing from an architectural point of view: "We were inspired by an essay written by US designer George Nelson," says Kraft. "He describes the invisible spaces under furniture, intermediate spaces that exist but are often overlooked." Some of their garments resemble small walk-in sculptures, others only hint at what is hidden: linings, straps, interiors turned outwards. For Jänisch, one thing is certain: fashion has to be wearable, durable and meaningful. "And as a designer you should also be aware of the psychological effect clothing has on people."

Former AMD student Giuliana Schmidt has already made the leap from university to her own label. Her fabrics are often col-

ourful, her silhouettes playful, with appliqué flowers adding highlights. For her, diversity is not a trend, it's a principle: Schmidt designs outfits for different body types, age groups and genders. Model casting is equally varied – petite, curvy, tall, short. "I want everyone to be able to see themselves in my clothes." She now shows her collections on catwalks and in Vogue, and she supplies pieces for TV productions, too.

Future-facing designs are also being developed at Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences. On a workshop table in the Faculty of Design lies an inline skate – though not of the familiar kind. Instead of being moulded in one piece, it is made up of components that are visibly screwed and slotted together. Even the materials – biobased plastics and recycled aluminium – are part of the concept. Industrial design student Suvi Lener developed it for a course on the circular economy. Her goal: a skate that does not end up in the bin after a few years but can be repaired, recycled and reassembled.

As a designer one should always be aware of the psychological effect clothing has on people. //

"Most skates are made of bonded materials that are almost impossible to separate, and they generate around 9,000 tonnes of waste per year in Germany," she explains. Next to her, Zoe Seyfert holds a shuttlecock: with a single movement she separates the paper feathers from the cork head. "A conventional badminton shuttle as used in tournaments has an enormous ecological footprint," she says. After only a few rallies, a feather often breaks – and the entire shuttle is discarded. Seyfert's solution: a modular shuttlecock with recyclable paper feathers made of hemp and grass fibres, which can be replaced individually and reused – without any animal components.

The two students see workshop practice and prototype building as an essential part of their studies. "The hands-on work helps me develop a better feel for proportions and details and improve my designs," says Seyfert. Out of this practical engagement with material and technique, Kilian Frank developed a special lounge for his diploma project. "Elementum" works without the classic method of bending wood with heat. Instead, Frank harnesses the power of tension: by means of straps and a special textile, the wood bends itself into a stable, ergonomic form. The lounge saves resources, requires no expensive moulds and is easy to transport. Frank sees broader potential here: "Chairs and other items of furniture could also be produced more sustainably using this method."

The Faculty of Design is located on Mathildenhöhe, an ensemble of Art Nouveau architecture and artists' houses that was declared a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2021. Here, ideas for the product world of tomorrow are taking shape. Industrial design professor Tom Philipps teaches with a focus on durability, reparability and resource efficiency. In technical design in particular, he explains, key choices can be made early on: "Materials, construction, lifespan – all these factors shape a product's environmental footprint right from the start."



The designs by AMD graduate Giuliana Schmidt have been featured in well-known magazines such as Vogue and Elle.



At Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences, student Kilian Frank experiments with bending wood.



Zoe Seyfert (left) and Suvi Lener (below) want to make sports equipment more sustainable.



Some 40 kilometres north, colourful pizza boxes are stacked in an office in Offenbach. While studying design at Offenbach University of Art and Design (HfG), Marlene Bruch and a fellow student developed a sustainable reusable concept for transporting pizza, and in 2022 she launched the resulting start-up: PIZZycle. “Conventional boxes are almost impossible to recycle because of grease and food residue,” Bruch explains. “Our container can be reused up to 500 times and then returned to the recycling loop.” The round, single-material container is dishwasher-safe – and it has small air holes that keep the pizza crisp. Production is based in Germany, and shipments now reach more than 27 countries. In 2024, PIZZycle was recognised by the German government as one of its “Cultural and Creative Pilot Projects” – an award that goes to products which combine design with sustainability.

The region offers a wide range of study opportunities in design. HfG Offenbach ranks among the most renowned art and design schools in Germany, while Mainz University of Applied Sciences, Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences and Rhein-Main University of Applied Sciences in Wiesbaden likewise offer practice-oriented programmes such as communication design, interior architecture and industrial design. Private alternatives include AMD Academy of Fashion & Design in Wiesbaden, Macro-media University, and UE University of Europe for Applied Sciences in Frankfurt. //



Tom Philipps has been teaching industrial design at Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences since 2000.

Materials, construction and lifespan – all these factors shape a product’s environmental footprint. //

A FEAST FOR THE EYES

Creative cuisine, award-winning wines, surprising brewing craft and unconventional packaging – in FrankfurtRhineMain, traditional know-how meets contemporary **taste and design**.

BY KIM BERG

The atmosphere at OX is like being in someone's living room – cosy yet modern, with a personal touch. Dishes are served on colour-coordinated ceramics designed especially for the restaurant by the potter Ingrid Zinkgraf from the Palatinate. “We deliberately do without tablecloths. For us, it’s the food, the ceramics and the presentation that matter,” explains head chef and owner David Rink.

He opened the casual fine-dining restaurant in Darmstadt in 2019, together with his brother Norman. In 2022 the brothers won a Michelin star for their concept – the first ever in the city’s history. “Our cuisine is French-inspired with Asian influences,” says Rink.

The OX follows a seasonal approach, working closely with a farming cooperative in the Heidelberg region. “We supplement regional produce with outstanding products from across Europe – fish from Brittany and pork from Extremadura, for example,” the chef explains. The menu is highly dynamic and changes constantly, though a few classics always re-appear, such as confit turbot with velouté (a white sauce), caviar and browned butter.

Alongside the OX, Norman and David Rink have also run L'Oxalis since 2025. With its relaxed atmosphere, the restaurant is styled after a French brasserie. Unlike at OX, guests here can order à la carte. But at both you’ll find “sound, fresh, well-thought-out



Francophile with Asian influences: that’s how brothers Norman (left) and David Rink describe their culinary style.



What fascinates me is processing plant-based ingredients just as creatively and with as much variety as animal products. //

dishes,” says David Rink. The restaurant names come from Oxalis, the botanical name for wood sorrel, a flower that appears in both restaurants’ logos – and is a popular garnish in Rink’s dishes, too.

Plants are Andreas Krolik’s passion, too. He is head chef at the two-Michelin-starred restaurant Lafleur in Frankfurt, and although it serves fish and meat, Krolik’s real passion is vegan cuisine. “The challenge is to bring out the variety of seasonal plant-based ingredients with the same creativity, excitement and complexity as dishes with animal products – always focusing on maximum flavour,” he says. According to Forbes magazine, Krolik’s six-course vegan menu is among the best worldwide – reason enough in itself for a visit to Frankfurt, as the magazine wrote in 2023. For Krolik, visual appeal is important, but taste and texture come first. “Nothing is more disappointing than when huge effort goes into presentation, but the flavour doesn’t deliver.” Nonetheless, the dishes served at Lafleur are still works of art: gleaming jellies, silky purées, fine foams and fresh leaves provide both taste and visual variety. Symmetrically arranged dishes complete the visual experience, underscoring Krolik’s aesthetic standards.

His food designs let the products speak for themselves, always based on seasonal choices: “In spring and summer the plates are more colourful, green, fresh and light in flavour. In autumn and winter, darker tones and stronger aromas dominate.” The menus are accompanied mainly by French wines, reflected in the restaurant’s name, which is itself reminiscent of the famous Château Lafleur in Pomerol – also to be found on the wine list, of course.



Two-star chef Andreas Krolik has a passion for vegan cuisine.



Marius and Marcel Dillmann gave the bottles a new look when they took over the winery.

Though not on Lafleur’s list, the wines of the Dillmann estate in Geisenheim in the Rheingau likewise stand for innovation and top quality. Brothers Marcel and Marius Dillmann manage the winery in the second generation, continuing what their parents began in 1980 when they acquired their first vineyard. When the brothers took over, the bottles were given a fresh new look, too. “We wanted to create something cool and unique,” says Marius Dillmann. At the heart of the design is the Läufer (“runner”) – a little figure drawn by Frankfurt artist Ines Gorges that first appeared on the bottles in the 1990s. On the new labels the figure is highlighted in lacquer. “The lacquer gives the labels an elegant effect,” Dillmann explains. The colour scheme matches the wine categories: white for estate wines, grey for cellar wines, and black for the reserves, the top tier.

White, grey and black also feature in the design of Bembel-with-Care. Based in Birkenau in the Odenwald, this company has been producing Apfelwein in cans since 2007. The idea behind the unconventional packaging is simple: “Traditional fruit pressing and characteristic Odenwald apple varieties meet appealing contemporary design and practical cans,” as it says on the company’s website. When the brand was founded, there wasn’t even any Apfelwein to put in the cans: Bembel-with-Care first only produced merchandise relating to Hesse’s national drink. It was collaboration with the Odenwald producer Krämer that resulted in the first Apfelwein going into stylish containers in 2008 – first in five-litre kegs, then from 2009 onwards in 0.5-litre designer cans.

Modern design in practical cans:
that's the idea behind Bembel-with-Care.



Good
product
design tells
you at a
glance what
a brand
stands
for. //



In 2018, Glaabsbräu was awarded the German Brand Award for its design.

Bottles rather than cans are at the heart of Glaabsbräu, a brewery in Seligenstadt that is now in its ninth generation under the direction of Robert Glaab. “Good product design creates a connection. It conveys values, stirs emotions and instantly shows what a brand stands for,” says Glaab. The brewery’s philosophy makes no compromises. The result is natural beers and creations such as Grie Soß beer, brewed with the seven herbs of Frankfurt’s famous green sauce. The brand identity is designed to match: muted colours adorn labels of classic varieties such as Helles and Pils, while the craft beers feature more vibrant labels in lilac and light green, with the typeface changing depending on the beer. “Our modern brand image combines regional roots with the courage to try new paths,” Glaab explains. In 2018 the brewery won the German Brand Award for its design. //

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PEOPLE OF TODAY

Five out of 5.8 million: those familiar with these faces and stories will know what makes the FrankfurtRhineMain metropolitan region so fascinating.

BY KIM BERG

Isabelle Pering

Top chef and restaurateur

“Cucumber – buttermilk – rose” or “aubergine – beef – miso”: the dishes at BellasLOKAL in the Altenhain district of Bad Soden sound simple – and that is very much the intention. “I’ve made it my mission to draw out and highlight the flavour of each ingredient,” says owner and head chef Isabelle Pering. In her kitchen, quality and local sourcing are key – and it’s a recipe for success. In 2025, the renowned restaurant guide Gault & Millau named the 32-year-old “Newcomer of the Year”. The design of her dishes mirrors her cooking style: clear lines, never overdone. “For me, good food design is always memorable and something you can identify with,” she says. Her aim is to take guests out of their comfort zone: “I want them to let go of the idea that they know everything and instead join us on a little journey – one on which they might discover that things they don’t normally like can actually be very tasty when prepared differently.”





Marc Flick

Architect

“Each of our buildings is rooted in its location, and from that we develop form, materials and spatial organisation,” says Wiesbaden architect Marc Flick. He founded his own firm in 2015. His buildings are marked by clean lines, a pared-back formal style and an acute sensitivity to detail. Many of them have resonating names: Black House, Hunsrück House, Workshop, Deep House. His portfolio also includes a countryside home designed together with the firm Fröhlich Gassner Architekten which was shortlisted for the Häuser Award in 2025. For the jury of this prestigious prize, it therefore ranks among the 20 best single-family homes in Europe. “The house combines clear, understated design with a consistently sustainable choice of materials,” Flick explains, who studied architecture in Darmstadt and Vienna. He is equally focused on how the building sits in its setting. The sloping site is offset with a solid concrete base, while inside, a concrete core helps regulate the indoor climate. All the internal walls are made of cross-laminated timber which are left exposed. With his clear and reduced architectural style, Flick aims to offer an antidote to the overloaded complexity of day-to-day life.



Birgit Kunz

Florist

“Floristry is like painting a picture,” says Birgit Kunz. She has been selling flowers from her market stall for 21 years – first in Seligenstadt, and for the past 15 years in Offenbach. Her neighbours jokingly dubbed her “the market influencer” when she began presenting her flowers on social media. Success soon proved them right: more than 150,000 people now follow her on Instagram, and her online shop “Tausendschön” is flourishing – quite literally. Kunz describes her style as deliberately chaotic, pastel-toned and never minimalist. “I want to give people a little colour and lightness – and show that it can be beautiful even when things aren’t always perfectly arranged,” she says. She especially enjoys working with exotic and rare blooms: “There are so many amazing growers around the world producing incredibly beautiful flowers,” she enthuses. Yet she can still delight in a simple harebell – because to her, every blossom has a special quality of its own.

Antje Dienstbir

Designer of jewellery and metalwork

What kind of aesthetic does a spoon have? Does a bowl need to be filled with fruit in order to fulfil its purpose? These are the kinds of questions Antje Dienstbir asks herself in her work. “I design objects that have accompanied us since the earliest times – both in terms of human history and in the lives of individuals,” explains the Wiesbaden-based artist. Her familiarity with cutlery and vessels inspired her to showcase them as art objects that go beyond mere utility. “After graduating, I specialised in silversmithing spoons,” Dienstbir says. For example, she used wooden ice-cream sticks alongside the silver “bowl” of a spoon, i.e. its concave part. “That was the first time I combined disposable material with a precious metal,” she recalls. Transformed into art, her everyday objects have received numerous distinctions, including the Europe Award for Contemporary Crafts and the Hessian State Prize. Alongside temporary exhibitions, visitors can also admire her works in public collections such as the Museum Angewandte Kunst in Frankfurt and the Goldsmiths’ House in Hanau.



Dennis Hinze

Founder and creative director

Anyone working in the field of international sports fashion design will be familiar with the name Dennis Hinze. The Rhineland-born designer is founder and creative director of the internationally renowned agency N3TWORK, which helps shape global trends from its bases in Frankfurt and Hamburg. Hinze’s company has worked for some of the biggest brands and top athletes around the world. For Red Bull he designed a collection for more than 1,000 athletes across over 100 sports. He developed the global product DNA for The North Face and created the USA Free Ski Teamwear for the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi. “Designing for Red Bull athletes was a highlight – as was working with the American team at the Olympic Winter Games in Sochi, where we had total creative freedom,” says Hinze. For him, design is never an end in itself. It must always solve a problem or create added value. “Design can do far more than just look good – it can change people’s behaviour and be source of inspiration to them,” he explains.



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Whether quality of life, culture, economic performance or sustainability: In many international rankings, the Frankfurt RheinMain region is right at the top – and rightfully so. Opportunities across the cities and towns in our region are endless. Discover these top locations with us. If your company is planning to expand into our region we will assist you through every phase of the set-up process. With outstanding commitment from our team of experts.

FrankfurtRheinMain GmbH International Marketing of the Region is the official point of contact for companies looking to set up an operation in the Frankfurt RheinMain region.

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