

Press Release

1/5

Frankfurt am Main, 13 September 2023

Frankfurt and the RheinMain Region will be World Design Capital 2026.

The World Design Organization™ (WDO), headquartered in Montreal, Canada, announced in a video conference on September 12, 2023, that Frankfurt and the Rhein Main Region will receive the globally prestigious title of World Design Capital for the year 2026.

Alongside Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Frankfurt RheinMain was in the running with the claim Design for Democracy. Atmospheres for a better life among the two finalists selected by the WDO's international committee representing all continents and prevailed over the competing city. The title will be ceremoniously awarded to Frankfurt RheinMain at the WDO's annual World Design Assembly in Tokyo, Japan from October 27-29, 2023. In the first quarter of 2024, the World Design Capital Signing Ceremony will take place, at which the Host City Agreement will be officially signed. This is the starting point for the World Design Capital year 2026.

In the video conference, the WDO Managing Director, Bertrand Derome, thanked the jury for the convincing and comprehensive application and congratulated Frankfurt RheinMain on winning the title of World Design Capital 2026. The jury particularly praised the application's claim, developed by Prof. Matthias Wagner K, which will have a great impact not only regionally, but above all worldwide. The jury was also impressed by the successful and impressive preparatory work that had taken place in the course of the application in the form of numerous events, many contributors and a tour of the entire Rhine-Main region. The jury was also particularly impressed by the cooperation between culture, design, business and society, which conveyed a great sense of community in the Frankfurt RhineMain

Press Release

2/5

Frankfurt am Main, 13 September 2023

region and stood behind the application with energy. Bertrand Derome was already in July 2023 together with Eunjoo Maing from the WDO for a three-day visit to the Frankfurt RhineMain Region and was able to convince himself in numerous discussions.

The title of World Design Capital® is awarded every two years by the WDO and is an internationally recognized program initiated from the design industry as a tribute to cities and regions for their effective use of design to promote cultural, economic, social and environmental development. In a year-long program of events, the designated city or region presents itself as a center for design, creativity and innovation. It becomes part of an international network. In the past, the international award has gone to cities such as Helsinki, Cape Town, Lille Métropole, Seoul and Mexico City. These cities have become prominent design centers that still benefit from their designation as World Design Capital.

For more than two years, the team of the project company headed by Prof. Matthias Wagner K, Director of the Museum Angewandte Kunst, has been working on the application on behalf of the City of Frankfurt am Main and the Kulturfonds Frankfurt RheinMain and has been pushing it forward intensively. The period was used to start a joint movement with various cooperation partners and participatory formats as well as actors, initiatives and supporters: "I am very pleased that Frankfurt and the Rhine-Main Region will bear the title World Design Capital 2026. We did not apply for the title in order to adorn ourselves with it, but what was important throughout the entire period was that the application should a movement that stands for a democratic culture of freedom.

freedom. And we succeeded in doing that. Our tour of the Rhine-Main region, numerous discussions and conferences have already shown how

Press Release

3/5

Frankfurt am Main, 13 September 2023

great the need is in Frankfurt RhineMain to talk about the issues that affect our future. This is already resulting in a widespread regional network, a new community on which the movement can build and which counters a wait-and-see "carry on like this" with a constructive "do things differently together" that goes far beyond the art and design scene. The project catalog that emerged from the application is an impressive fund from which to draw now. With the title, we are building on this foundation that has already been created and thank all the initiators, the designers, all those involved, the cities and communities and the sponsorship," says Prof. Matthias Wagner K, director of the Museum Angewandte Kunst and head of the application.

"I congratulate the citizens of Frankfurt and the RheinMain region for the title World Design Capital 2026, which is a merit of collaborative efforts. The title offers a great opportunity for the field of action culture, which was an extensive part of the application. Together with Design for Democracy, we want to focus on the existing cultural venues in the Frankfurt RhineMain region and those that need to be redesigned, which seize the opportunity to promote the common good via the inherent cultural assets they convey with their own productions and events, and to spread their charisma to the world. We are all looking forward to being the host city and region for a large number of visitors," says Dr. Ina Hartwig, Head of the Department of Culture and Science in Frankfurt am Main.

"Our common goal was to hit the big time: Frankfurt RheinMain. World Design Capital 2026. We have achieved this goal, and in a few days the work will really begin. Until then, I am above all proud of our city and the entire Rhine-Main Region and grateful for the great team that has already achieved so much in such a short time. The city and region have impressed with their economic and urban quality, but also

Press Release

4/5

Frankfurt am Main, 13 September 2023

as a dynamic and resilient location with outstanding future potential. Networking with each other is tremendously important and would have remained as a lasting value even in the event of failure in the finals. Now the title is an additional powerful impulse for the international perception and development of our creative location. It gives Frankfurt and the Rhine-Main region a wide range of opportunities to give projects room for discussion, development and realization, and thus perhaps also add a new facet to the high good of democracy," says Stephanie Wüst, head of the department of economics, law and city marketing in Frankfurt am Main.

"The successful application of Frankfurt and the RhineMain region as World Design Capital 2026 is a shining example of the power of cultural cooperation at all levels. I am proud that we can now host this important event together with our partners and bring the cultural identity of Frankfurt and the entire region closer to the world. At the same time, this award will further enhance the attractiveness of our metropolitan region and promote the idea of networking within the region as well as with other cities and nations. Together, we are shaping the future through culture, and the world will look to Frankfurt RheinMain as a source of creative inspiration," says Karin Wolff, Managing Director of Kulturfonds Frankfurt RheinMain, delighted with the successful application of Frankfurt and the Rhine-Main region as World Design Capital 2026.

Frankfurt RheinMain had applied with the claim Design for Democracy. Atmospheres for a better life. The goal of the conceived 2026 program of Design for Democracy. Atmospheres for a better life is to create a sustainable, participative international center of design, design disciplines and design methods for people from all over the world here in the RheinMain region. A hub for all existing design

Press Release

5/5

Frankfurt am Main, 13 September 2023

initiatives, grassroots initiatives, universities with a design focus, NGOs, representatives from society, business, politics, law, technology, science and culture, as well as citizens on the basis of illustrative historical design upheavals, existing and new projected projects. And last but not least, design should give Frankfurt and the region a common identity. Under the common denominator Design for Democracy, targeted work can now be done on the implementation of projects in cooperation with all cities and municipalities in the region. The title World Design Capital Year 2026 will ensure international attention.

In the spirit of Design for Democracy. Atmospheres for a better life, the application defined twelve fields of action that are most pressing in shaping social interaction. They determine and structure the basic work as a platform provider for the development of the program for the World Design Capital 2026: Working, Building, Education, Energy, Health, Industry, Consumption, Culture, Mobility, Public Space, Sports and Living. More than 100 projects were submitted from across the Frankfurt RhineMain region for the fields of action, and they now represent impressive value for the city and its surrounding region. These include as major projects: Designkioske Frankfurt RheinMain, A Step Ahead - Mathildenhöhe, Darmstadt New Campus University of Design (HfG), Offenbach am Main, House of Democracy, Frankfurt am Main, Life Science Hub - biomindz, Mainz, Ropeway High*Line, Offenbach-Frankfurt, Station Mitte, Offenbach am Main, Cultural Campus, Wiesbaden. In addition, more than 60 projects from the entire region found their way into the application.

The planning for 2026 will be presented at a press conference in the fall 2023.