

art karlsruhe 2026 clearly positions itself in the art market

Karlsruhe, February 9, 2026 – art karlsruhe is a proven marketplace for high-quality art and informed exchange. "art karlsruhe reliably attracts around 50,000 art enthusiasts every year to the exhibition halls, but also increasingly to the city's art spaces," says Britta Wirtz, Managing Director of Messe Karlsruhe. "It sends a strong signal when directors, collectors, and private patrons from a total of 30 countries come specifically to Karlsruhe, open to conversation, discovery, and exchange. In the current market environment, this is not a matter of course, but rather an expression of the fair's growing relevance."

Everyone could feel how the formats developed in recent years under the leadership team of Olga Blaß and Kristian Jarmuschek have proven effective and sharpened the character of the fair.

"Collecting as a matter of course"

"Collecting as a matter of course" – this was the title used by Berlin's Tagesspiegel newspaper to aptly describe the special atmosphere at art karlsruhe 2026. The location in the border triangle of Germany, France, and Switzerland plays a key role in this. The combination of cultural density, good accessibility, and economic stability creates the ideal conditions and attracts a dedicated community of collectors.

On the preview day alone, many of the 180 galleries reported good sales to long-standing collectors, but also to many new buyers. "SchlichtInterest is high, visitors are open-minded and well prepared. Conversations flow easily and, happily, many buyers are new contacts for our gallery," said gallery owner Mario Mauroner from Salzburg.

The re:discover positions received a great deal of attention. Works by artists such as Vera Mercer, Knopp Ferro, and Eri Hahn were in high demand. The high-quality classical modern and post-war art that characterizes art karlsruhe is finding the right audience. The galleries Samuelis Baumgarte, Schlichtenmaier, Thole Rotermund, Schrade/Schloss Mochental, Eric Mouchet, Fuchs, Sina Stockebrand, Ludorff, Benden&Ackermann, Hagemeyer, and many others reported positive sales results. Particularly encouraging: numerous institutional purchases and initiatives for exhibitions indicate an impact that extends far beyond the moment of the fair.

Collectors Dinner – space for quality in conversation

The unique Collectors Dinner brought together around 700 invited guests from galleries, collections, institutions, and the media in the dm-arena, which was impressively staged for the evening. The relaxed atmosphere with fine cuisine was widely praised as a place for genuine encounters. "It was the right setting to talk about content together and deepen valuable contacts," said Kristian Jarmuschek. "This evening represents what distinguishes art karlsruhe: dialogue, appreciation, and commitment."

Hall 3: Forum Karlsruhe – LBBW academy:square award presented for the first time

Hall 3 – the Forum Karlsruhe – showcased the close connection between the fair, urban society, and institutional players in a special way. Presentations by key Karlsruhe institutions such as the ZKM, the UNESCO City of Media Arts, and this year's special exhibitions at the fair provided the framework and reached a new level of quality this year, according to the unanimous response from visitors and galleries. The presentations by the city's partners impressed with their depth of content, curatorial care, and artistic strength. The contributions, ranging from the LBBW collection presentation (Digital Traces) to the exhibition Color, Form, Mythical Creatures on Rolf Behm, to the Pop Art selection from the Kohlrusch Collection and the young talent format academy:square, impressively demonstrated how well curatorial sensitivity and successful communication can intertwine. Project manager Olga Blaß: "We can see that our signature style has become established in a short period of time. The formats are continuously evolving, impulses are being set and leading to new collaborations. The best example of this is the LBBW academy:square award, presented for the first time, which is a strong building block for promoting young art, as is the ARTIMA sponsorship award, which went to Marlon Lanziner this year. art karlsruhe shows the charisma that art can unfold for society and the economy."

Art as a resonance chamber – relevance beyond the market

Whether in the halls or in the city: the open dialogue, curiosity, and togetherness that unfold during art karlsruhe create spaces in which art unfolds its social power and connects people. The fair also plays a special role for the state of Baden-Württemberg. Arne Braun, State Secretary for Science, Research, and the Arts, emphasized its supraregional significance at the presentation of the art karlsruhe Prize by the city and state of Baden-Württemberg: For him personally, art karlsruhe is an international leader – not only because it is rooted in the state, but also because it specifically promotes young talent and opens up space for new approaches. According to Braun, it is "one big, inspiring space for thought." Karlsruhe's mayor, Dr. Frank Mentrup, said: "Art is not 'nice to have'. We must inspire society with art and culture. Because the fact that we are here at art karlsruhe, standing peacefully together and exchanging ideas with people we don't know personally, demonstrates our idea of coexistence and sends a strong signal."

Art also enlivened the city outside the exhibition grounds. The Long Night of Galleries, Kunstrauschen, performances in public spaces, and formats such as the After art Party offered opportunities for encounters.

Further information: art-karlsruhe.de, facebook.com/artkarlsruhe, instagram.com/art_karlsruhe, art-karlsruhe.de/linkedin