

NordArt 2026 at Kunstwerk Carlshütte

The NordArt International Art Exhibition holds a distinctive place in the contemporary art world. Its conceptual depth and relevance, diversity and curatorial cohesion make it an unforgettable experience for any art lover.

Established 27 years ago at the historic Carlshütte iron foundry in Schleswig-Holstein, Northern Germany, NordArt showcases vibrant contemporary art to over 100,000 visitors every summer, with its 2026 edition taking place from **6 June to 4 October**.

The atmospheric setting of the Carlshütte halls sets the tone for NordArt's curatorial approach. As a coherent work of art in its own right, the show redefines its exhibition space as a participatory experience. By creating visual and intellectual bridges, it encourages a dialogue between the viewer, the surroundings and the art itself.

The participating artists present their unique and diverse perspectives on current global challenges, weaving an emotional narrative of shared humanity and a sense of connection, despite all our differences.

NordArt is curated by **Wolfgang Gramm, Inga Aru** and **Taso Gramm**. "Art seeks answers to everything that moves and touches us, and within art people can find those answers," says Principal Curator Wolfgang Gramm.

Renowned for its particular aptitude for introducing outstanding Eastern art to international audiences, NordArt promotes the idea of the world as one family.

Alongside its main exhibition and an impressive sculpture park, NordArt features many specially curated projects and a range of collateral events in collaboration with cultural institutions and embassies from various countries.

Focus of NordArt 2026 – Baltic States

Vilnius – Riga – Tallinn: Notes from the Fringe

Curator: **Meda Norbutaitė**

The Baltic States Pavilion continues NordArt's tradition of regional focus exhibitions. Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia – three small nations on Europe's North-Eastern border – share a history marked by periods of foreign rule and by sustained efforts to safeguard their peace, independence and cultural identity.

Living and creating on Europe's sensitive geopolitical threshold has shaped a distinct artistic sensibility. The exhibition reveals how contemporary Baltic artists confront vulnerability, belonging and tension in a rapidly changing and increasingly unstable world.

Their works do not observe reality from a distance but operate within it, navigating a careful path between powerful neighbours in East and West with remarkable resilience, imagination and insight.

The exhibition comprises three parts: **Present Tension** confronts fear and instability, **Inner Territories** moves into a realm of myths and the subconscious, and **A Laboratory of World-Making** searches for meaning through substance.

Special Project – Landscape of Thought**Contemporary Chinese Art**Curator: **Taso Gramm**, Curatorial Assistant: **Juan Zaft**

Chinese culture is characterised by a distinctive capacity to embrace ambivalence. Opposites are not perceived as contradictions, but as complementary forces within a larger balance. This way of thinking also shapes contemporary Chinese art, which moves between individual identity and collective experience, between social reflection and poetic contemplation. In the staging of Landscape of Thought within the Carlshütte colossal industrial halls, this approach creates a space that unfolds like an immersive realm. Traditional techniques, with echoes of ink painting and classical craftsmanship, encounter the industrial structures and contemporary media, revealing shifting fields of tension, transition and resonance.

The project showcases artworks by fifteen prominent Chinese artists, including **DUAN Jianwei**, **FANG Lijun**, **LIU Shangying**, **ZHAN Wang** and **WANG Yuyang**. The six-metre-high Walking Man by leading artist **SU Xinping** remains on display in the sculpture park, in addition to his new work in the exhibition halls.

“Silsila”**Female artists from Central Asia**Curator: **Manuchehr Kudratov**

“Silsila” (Arabic for lineage) brings together the works of seven female artists from Central Asia. In the Sufi tradition, the term describes a chain of knowledge passed from one generation to the next.

Across many cultures, women are the custodians of this continuity, preserving cultural memory, skills and values.

Presented in the ACO Wagenremise, the exhibition traces connections between past and present, ritual and daily life, individual expression and collective memory.

Between Wind and Spirit – Traces in Space**Contemporary Mongolian Art**Curator: **OYUNTUYA Oyunjargal**

The Mongolian project draws together key elements of contemporary Mongolian art while honouring the spiritual and material roots of its nomadic traditions. Windswept mountains and vast open landscapes are reinterpreted through a modern visual language expressed in a variety of media.

Balancing ancient symbolism with universal contemporary perspectives, the works create layered impressions of cultural memory, personal experience and artistic transformation.

The exhibition showcases artworks by thirteen outstanding Mongolian artists.

Irony of Fate

The large-scale multimedia installation by **Bernd Reiter** reflects on the tragic reverberations of global power struggles. Symbols of American financial supremacy, embodied in vintage limousines, lie crushed beneath the looming presence of Russian military prowess, while debris from the collision continuously broadcasts looping war footage.

Both memorial and warning, the work remains unsettlingly topical, raising questions about responsibility, perception and the media’s relentless circulation of violence.

Presseinformation

NordArt 2025 Honorees

The NordArt Prize 2025 Awardee is **Ekaterina Zacharova**. With her extensive series 'Human Being Mosaic', the artist once again demonstrates her virtuoso painting technique and sensitive sense of colour.

All Audience Award recipients are presenting their most recent works. **Wiesław Smętek** surprises the viewers with a different side to his art, **Ronen Sharabani** offers a philosophically profound video work and **Paul Critchley** is sure to bring much joy with his humour.

The award ceremony will take place at the opening of NordArt 2026.

However, as art remains open to interpretation, visitors to NordArt 2026 are sure to discover their personal favourites and highlights from the rich tapestry of outstanding work by all participating artists.

The list of participating artists is available at www.nordart.de/en/artists

From the beginning of May, the names will be linked to the individual catalogue pages.

The comprehensive **exhibition catalogue**, available in both German and English, will be released at the opening of NordArt 2026.

In addition to the main exhibition, NordArt offers a **diverse cultural programme** with concerts, performances, guided tours and special events.

Kunstwerk Carlshütte is a non-profit cultural initiative, established by the internationally active ACO Group in collaboration with the towns of Büdelsdorf and Rendsburg. It is a distinctive venue for art and culture. Since 1999, the centrepiece of Kunstwerk Carlshütte has been the annual NordArt exhibition, held during the summer months. The venue encompasses the historic foundry halls, offering 22,000 square metres of exhibition space, an 80,000-square-metre sculpture park and the ACO Wagenremise. The exhibition programme is accompanied by cultural events such as concerts, poetry slams and theatre performances. Schleswig-Holstein Festival Orchestra's public rehearsals and concerts take place in June and July. The concert hall at ACO Thormannhalle accommodates up to 1,200 listeners.

The hosts and principal sponsors of Kunstwerk Carlshütte are the entrepreneurial couple **Hans-Julius and Johanna Ahlmann**.

NordArt 2026 will take place from 6 June to 4 October.

Visiting hours are Tuesday to Sunday, 11 am – 7 pm;
the exhibition is closed on Mondays

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www.nordart.de/en/

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