

## Pressemitteilung · Press Information

### **Cologne is coming!**

*A fresh breeze is blowing through the city! Cologne is evolving into a metropolis that is luring creative minds from every point on the globe.*

Whether Berlin or Paris: Cologne is head and shoulders above the rest when it comes to creative thinkers. No other city can boast a more dense agglomeration of creative people than the Cathedral City. More creative people live here than in all of the rest of North Rhine-Westphalia.

Noon on Aachener Strasse. As bistros and pubs nuzzle against each other vying for customers, the "Metzgerei Schmitz" holds court among them. Formerly a butcher shop, today a salon and hot spot for artists and creative minds. You may run into fashion designer Eva Gronbach here. She runs her boutique in the tony "Belgian Quarter", and garners international recognition for her "German Jeans" collection, even with the management of Thalys Train. Without further ado, the French awarded this youthful Cologne-based fashion star a design project: new uniforms for their railroad staff. Today, the Thalys is a catwalk on tracks and Colognes inspiring climate draws other fashion creators. Designer Chang, who draws a coalescence of Asian influences with Parisian flair, comes to mind - or Fenja Ludwig, another example of an avant garde creator marketing under the label "Ludvik". Three shooting stars together recently set the scene on fire with the first ever "Cologne Catwalk" at the Spichernhöfe, during the imm cologne (the famous international furniture trade fair) in January. "It is an absolute joy for me to spark new trends and ideas", explains designer Eva Gronbach. "Cologne is packed with amazing people who are the source of the unique atmosphere in this city."

The sun vanishes behind the Deutzer bridge, but still glimmers in the shear panels of modern office buildings. To live, to work, and to be at home on the river: Cologne's new boardwalk, the Rheinauhafen, exudes cosmopolitan élan. Sunday's enchanting mile-long stroll. Weekday's nexus of the creative and the prominent. Front and centre lay the "Crane Houses" designed by architect Hadi Tehrani, which catapulted the spectacular skyline of the cathedral city into the 21st century. Then the next, newest homage to the Rhine: The Oval Offices - designed by Berlin-based architect duo Sauerbruch and Hutton, attaining international attention for its colour concepts. Cologne embraces its role as today's most vital architectural scene in Germany. Indeed, when it comes to European urban development today, the Cathedral City is all the buzz, which one denizen considers above all a success: Bernd Streitberger, Cologne's director of development and planning: "Cologne has always had great architects, but the outside world is finally acknowledging it!"

Even as design location, the Cathedral City is at the peak. In the last decade, Cologne was able to cultivate a distinctive design community. Driven by imm cologne, the design programme Passagen or the Cologne International School of Design, which is considered a hotbed of fine design. One of the

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epicentres of recent design is the Ehrenfeld district. In old factory halls and middle-class homes, you can find young designers who benefit from the affordable rents and the multicultural flair of the former Workers Quarter. A plethora of design events are also innovative, a recurrent theme throughout the year. Whether new talent, Rheindesign or design fairs: new design platforms that are a springboard for the next generation and earn Cologne its reputation as Creative City. This also impresses the stars of the industry: Regular visitors to the Cathedral city include Philippe Starck, Matali Crasset, Piero Lissoni, Alfredo Häberli, or the Ronan Brothers and Erwan Bouroulec, for stimulation and to gain inspiration. One view also belongs to the Museum for Applied Art: Classics from the 20th Century are on display in the newly reopened design department. Lamps, furniture and articles of daily use from legendary designers like Charles and Ray Eams, Dieter Rams or Philippe Starck.

Saturday in Cologne is the day for making the rounds to the galleries. Entire streams of pilgrims flood to the city to check out the latest creations in painting and photography. The art scene on the highroad to Berlin? The first ones have already returned long ago. The Rhineland is still the residence of choice for the most important collectors and the artistic potential of the region is vast. Fresh wind abounds, be it from the newest galleries or the stalwarts like the Museum Ludwig, Wallraf-Richartz-Museum or from the Kölnischer Kunstverein, spearheaded by its duet of resident curators, Anja Nathan-Dorn and Kathrin Jentjens.

Even the meaningful contemporary artists have evolved in this city, and settled down here - take Rosemarie Trockel and Gerhard Richter as prime examples. The air is thick with creativity? This notion also animated the mind of young artists like Merlin Bauer, who launched the "Love Your City" project. Since May 2005, he has bestowed post-war modern buildings with an oversized award ribbon, to an almost comedic effect. "I wanted to demonstrate that the City possesses a series of outstanding structures from the 50s and 60s, that are essential to its identity and that reflect Cologne's values - like liberal thinking and openness," explains the Graz-born artist. For his award designations, he even achieved international praise, like the architect Peter Zumthor, who built the architecturally compelling "Kolumba" diocesan museum in Cologne using the elements light and air.