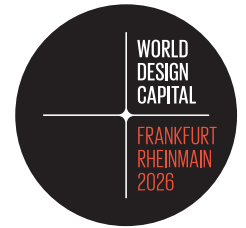


Press Release,
Frankfurt a. M., March 10, 2025

Janet Echelman Transforms Konstablerwache in Central Frankfurt with Poetic Net Sculpture



As part of World Design Capital Frankfurt RheinMain 2026 (WDC), the region, led by the city of Frankfurt, is sending a strong signal about the power of design in public space. With *A Sky Full of Hope – Earthtime 1.78 Frankfurt*, renowned artist Janet Echelman will realise one of her iconic, technologically sophisticated net sculptures above Konstablerwache. Created especially for Frankfurt, the work – reaching up to twelve metres in height – will become a living sculpture animated by the kinetic energy of its surroundings, creating a new atmospheric and social landmark in the city centre. From July 2026, the installation, commissioned by the Department of Culture and Science and the City Marketing Unit, will serve as a visual symbol of a region that embodies and radiates solidarity, diversity, internationality and openness. In doing so, it will establish a new place in the city centre where art, urban society and the WDC 2026 theme *Design for Democracy. Atmospheres for a Better Life* come together beneath the open sky.

The installation *A Sky Full of Hope* will also provide fresh impetus for the transformation of urban spaces. The project aims to turn Konstablerwache from a purely functional transit hub into a central meeting place that fosters identity and community. ‘Konstablerwache is currently a hectic and inhospitable place. From July onwards, Janet Echelman will transform it into a vibrant meeting point with her floating installation: wind, light, colour and movement will enhance the quality of the space and invite people to experience public space in a new way,’ says Carolina Romahn, Managing Director of World Design Capital RheinMain 2026.

The installation is being realised by the Department of Culture and Science together with the City Marketing Unit, part of the Department of Economic Affairs, Law and City Marketing, which has also secured the project’s funding. In collaboration with WDC 2026, the aim is to position Frankfurt internationally through a work of art with global resonance while using public space as a stage for technological and aesthetic innovation. The project also represents an act of democratising design, offering easy, barrier-free access to the work of a renowned contemporary artist for all citizens. Here, design is understood not as mere decoration but as a powerful tool

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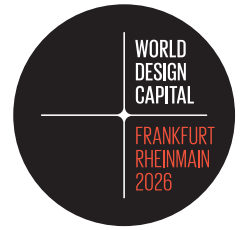
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for fostering social interaction and enhancing the long-term quality of urban life. Stephanie Wüst, Head of the Department of Economics, Law and City Marketing, explains: 'As part of World Design Capital Frankfurt RheinMain 2026, we are demonstrating how design and art can generate sustainable momentum for urban development – not temporarily, but with a long-term perspective. This strengthens Frankfurt's appeal as a location, revitalises the city centre and underlines the city's ambition to position itself as an international metropolis willing to break new ground.'



Connection creates stability

The thematic dimension of A Sky Full of Hope – Earthtime 1.78 Frankfurt is deeply rooted in the city's DNA. Frankfurt is home to people from many nations – a diversity that directly inspired Janet Echelman's title and conceptual approach. The net symbolises a fundamental principle of urban society: connection creates stability. 'We are all part of the net,' says Dr Ina Hartwig, Head of the Department of Culture and Science for the City of Frankfurt. 'It is a visible sign that the WDC's guiding principle of Design for Democracy is actually taking effect. In a poetic and intelligent way, this installation transforms a central location into a shared urban experience.'

High-tech meets craftsmanship: the technical genesis

The technical realisation of the work represents a symbiosis of traditional craftsmanship and cutting-edge engineering. For her Earthtime series, Janet Echelman combines centuries-old knotting techniques with advanced software and aerospace engineering. The structural core of the Frankfurt sculpture is a complex fibre construction made of high-strength polymers such as PTFE and UHMWPE. These high-tech materials have significantly greater tensile strength than steel, yet remain extremely light and weather-resistant – making the realisation of such monumental, free-floating volumes possible in the first place.

Designed as a 'living sculpture,' the installation harnesses the kinetic energy of its surroundings: the net responds even to the slightest air currents and continuously changes its shape and visual density. This organic movement is supported by a colour palette developed specifically for Frankfurt and an integrated lighting design. The carefully balanced interplay of warm and cool tones symbolises both the interaction of different cultural perspectives and the relationship between humans and nature. After dark, LED systems use the specific reflective properties of the fibres to transform the work into a luminous volume, casting atmospheric light across Konstablerwache.

Architecture and ecological integration

Architecturally, the project is carefully integrated into its existing context. Measuring approximately 25.9 m x 12.7 m, the net sculpture spans Konstablerwache square at a height of between 7.5 m and 12 m. The structure is supported by four pylons

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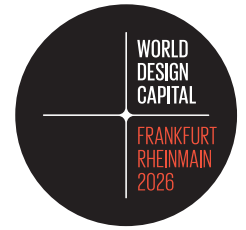
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around 12 meters high, which are firmly anchored in the ground without affecting the existing trees.

Ecological compatibility is further ensured by an ornithologically tested material concept. Konstablerwache – a place of transit and encounter – thus becomes the stage for an installation that, according to Echelman, addresses global interconnectedness: when one part of the net moves, every other part is affected – a poetic reference to the importance of social and ecological responsibility in shaping a sustainable future.



What is WDC 2026?

The World Design Capital® (WDC) is an initiative of the globally recognised, non-governmental World Design Organization (WDO)® that honours cities using design as a driver for economic, social, cultural and environmental progress. Frankfurt RheinMain (Germany) has been awarded the title for the year 2026 under the theme *Design for Democracy. Atmospheres for a Better Life*. In previous years, the title has been awarded every two years to the following cities: Turin (Italy), Seoul (South Korea), Helsinki (Finland), Cape Town (South Africa), Taipei (Chinese Taipei), Mexico City (Mexico), Lille Métropole (France) and Valencia (Spain), as well as most recently San Diego (USA) and Tijuana (Mexico) as the first binational designation, and Busan (South Korea), selected as World Design Capital® 2028.

More information at WDO.org.

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