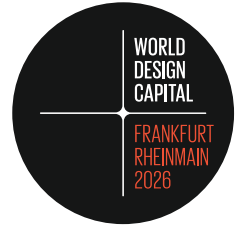


Press Release
02 June 2026

Focus Darmstadt: *Open – Design Week 2026* program in the City of Science



During *Open – Design Week Frankfurt RheinMain 2026*, Darmstadt exemplifies the region's unique combination of technological innovation and design-driven future thinking. For decades, the City of Science has fostered new ideas at the intersection of academia, industry and design – from internationally renowned institutions and innovative companies to a vibrant creative community. Historically, Darmstadt is closely associated with the pioneering spirit of the Mathildenhöhe Artists' Colony, which played a defining role in shaping architecture, art and design around 1900. Today, the UNESCO World Heritage Site is recognised as one of Europe's most significant centres of Art Nouveau and early Modernism. On 11 June, Darmstadt will take centre stage during *Open – Design Week* with its dedicated Focus Day.

As part of World Design Capital Frankfurt RheinMain 2026, Darmstadt is showcased in particular as a hub for forward-looking industrial and innovation processes. With the "Innovative Industries Space" at Designhaus Darmstadt, the city hosts one of the central thematic hubs of *Open – Design Week*, highlighting the role of design as a driver of transformation, technological progress and sustainable development.

Highlights in Darmstadt

During the first weekend of *Open – Design Week*, the Mathildenhöhe will celebrate its World Heritage Festival, alongside the opening of the exhibition *A Step Ahead / Einen Schritt voraus*, marking the 125th anniversary of the first exhibition of the Artists' Colony in 1901. On Saturday, 6 June, the World Heritage Site will be illuminated after dark, while the artists' houses will open their doors to visitors. The program includes live music, a crafts market and a range of food and drink offerings.

On Sunday, 7 June, Darmstadt will join the nationwide celebrations for *German World Heritage Day*. Visitors can take part in an extensive program of guided tours and special activities for families.

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On 11 June, Darmstadt's Focus Day within Open - Design Week, premium e-bike manufacturer Riese & Müller will host a factory tour at 2 pm. Alongside insights into production processes, the program will explore broader themes including mobility, the transport transition and sustainable design.

Also on 11 June, design agency SCHUMACHER Brand + Interaction Design will open its doors from 2 pm, offering a program of talks focused on brand development, interaction design and digital design.

On 12 June, the internationally active science and technology company Merck, headquartered in Darmstadt, will invite visitors to take part in guided site tours. The program will focus on research, architecture and contemporary working environments at Merck.

On the evening of 11 June, Hessen Design e. V. will host an open reception at Designhaus Darmstadt from 6 pm. Attended by Mayor Hanno Benz and WDC 2026 Managing Director Carolina Romahn, the event will provide opportunities for networking and exchange. Hessen Design is dedicated to promoting outstanding design achievements made in Hesse and fostering knowledge transfer between universities, industry and emerging talent.

Quote by Hanno Benz, Mayor of the City of Darmstadt:

"Open - Design Week Frankfurt RheinMain demonstrates the creative and cultural capacity for innovation that unites our region. Within this context, the exhibition 'A Step Ahead - 125 Years of Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt' plays a special role, bringing the historic positions of the Darmstadt Artists' Colony into dialogue with contemporary questions of design, sustainability and inclusion. This is also the benchmark by which World Design Capital 2026 must be measured. Design must have an impact across the entire city, because genuine connection emerges only when culture moves beyond familiar boundaries and creates new spaces for encounter between industrial and residential environments. This is 'Design for Democracy' in practice."

Open Doors on Focus Day Darmstadt, 11 June 2026:

Atelier Löwentor, CREATUR, fp. formgebung, Hessisches Landesmuseum Darmstadt, HUB31, KränkVisuell, Literaturhaus Darmstadt / Kunst Archiv Darmstadt, Luise-Büchner-Bibliothek, Open Dialogue - Reception at Hessen Design e. V., prosa Architektur + Stadtplanung BDA, Riese & Müller, SCHUMACHER Brand + Interaction Design, social.form, whythefriday / Kramm&Strigl / studio cg



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