



internationale tanzmesse nrw

internationale tanzmesse nrw, Im Mediapark 7, 50670 Cologne, Germany

Press information

CLAUDIA HOLTHAUSEN

Press

T +49 151 / 191 5555 0

T +49 2162 / 96 15 40

presse@tanzmesse.com

www.tanzmesse.com

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This year's edition of the internationale tanzmesse fair will be taking place in Düsseldorf, Krefeld and Leverkusen from 31 August until 3 September 2016. This is the 11th time the dance state of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) will play host to around 1,800 guests from all over the world.

Dance performers, companies, institutes and service providers will be presenting their activities at over 120 trade fair stands from more than 50 countries.

The event connects the most important international network gathering for dance makers with a big dance festival, which offers its professional visitors to see more than 90 companies within four days.

As a flagship project for the Tanzjahr Deutschland 2016 programme, this year's edition of the fair will see a greater focus on meetings, exchanges and networking. In eleven *T-Talks* – Tanzmesse's new dialogue format – production-related issues will be discussed and the various activities of individual institutions presented. In doing so, Tanzmesse is staying true to its guiding principle of providing a platform for meetings and exchanges so that participants can ultimately work together.

The profile of the *Open Studios* has been further developed for this year's edition. They will form an even stronger focus of the programme as an important marketing, presentation and networking format. One new feature will be the *Focus Forums* taking place as part of the Open Studio programme. It is during these forums that four countries will have the opportunity to provide an insight into their national dance scene and to place the work of artists more in the overall context of the scene.

Programme: <https://www.tanzmesse.com/de/programme/2016/performances/>

OPENING RECEPTION with Prof. Monika Grüters, Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media, 31 August, 18:00, tanzhaus nrw

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Relevance from a cultural industries perspective

By adopting a unique concept, the internationale tanzmesse nrw is unparalleled in the way it unites both the performance-related and economic aspects of the industry it serves. It brings together major international players from the creative-production sphere and representatives from the world of presentation on an international platform, enabling intensive interaction between choreographers and dance companies, as well as between event organisers and funding bodies. It therefore lays the foundation for cooperation and partnership. Thanks to its flexible event formats designed to serve as open-ended gatherings as opposed to a tool focused exclusively on the commercialisation of existing productions, the internationale tanzmesse nrw clearly distinguishes itself from other events aimed at dance professionals. This also gives it a USP in the cultural-industries market mechanism. The success it has enjoyed is testament to the concept it follows. Every edition of the event has attracted more visitors than the previous one, with visitor figures up over three-fold in the last ten years. Around 500 visitors attended the 2006 edition, while 1,800 are expected this year. These figures provide proof of the organisers' ability to bring together the right players and strike the right balance. In the 22 years since it was founded, the internationale tanzmesse nrw has become a key platform for the contemporary dance scene. It gives dance professionals from around the globe the opportunity to successfully go about their work – including from a financial perspective. It therefore serves as a good example of a project that effectively fosters the cultural industries.

Relevance from a cultural-policy perspective

The internationale tanzmesse nrw is a pioneer from a cultural-policy perspective. It does not have a national focus, and is instead designed as an international project from top to bottom. This represents a remarkable approach in view of the world of contemporary dance and the way it is funded, given the fact that there are no other projects like it in the world where the host country is not in the spotlight. This structure marks an innovative approach as it doesn't react to globalisation. Rather, globalisation is a requirement. The Tanzmesse therefore becomes a test bed for new forms and formats of networking in general. It serves as an example for productive and sustainable global action, giving its stakeholders the freedom to highlight what makes them different and present themselves as interesting cooperation partners.

In addition, the Tanzmesse does not function on a hierarchical platform, an aspect that sets it apart from other networking and commercialisation projects. The guiding principle is to treat all participants the same, guaranteeing them the same rights and subjecting them to the same requirements. None of the various groups of visitors – performers, organisers or agents – enjoy preferential treatment. Nobody receives special benefits. This fulfils one of the fundamental requirements for effective networking and cooperation: All parties are on an equal footing when they interact.

The internationale tanzmesse nrw also serves as a seismograph that gauges global developments in the cultural-policy sphere. This is highlighted by how the exhibitor structure has changed over the years. While the Tanzmesse primarily consisted of individual dance companies renting small exhibition booths in the early days, the majority of the booths are now rented by major organisations that are directly or indirectly funded by their national culture ministries. Their goal is to represent the entire dance landscape in a certain region or country at a large stand. This illustrates how culture is becoming an increasingly important export – and also a means of national self-assertion. An increasing number of small regions pushing for independence are presenting themselves as independent players in the cultural sector. They actively use the Tanzmesse as a way to form their cultural identity. Examples of this include Catalonia, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Wallonia.