

PRESS RELEASE\_\_\_\_\_

**GERMAN DESIGN GRADUATES : *DARE TO DESIGN***

The annual exhibition of the most relevant graduate projects of German art and design academies opens at the Museum Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg

Frankfurt am Main, 1 September 2023

**The *Dare to Design* exhibition of the German Design Graduates 2023 initiative of the German Design Council brings together the most visionary projects of German art and design academies at the Museum Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg (MK&G). A jury selected four award-winning projects from the 47 positions presented in the exhibition, which were announced at the show opening on 31 August 2023.**

*Dare to Design* presents the most relevant work by graduates of product and industrial design from German art and design academies. From over 250 submissions, 47 positions were selected for the exhibition – four of which were announced at the formal exhibition opening.

The works presented in the exhibition thematically address society and community, sustainability and circularity, research and science as well as inclusion. As different as the projects, concepts and products are, they are all united by the understanding that design goes far beyond mere surface design. Rather, design processes are used to question existing systems, to renew them and to realise projects that enable socially sustainable living.

Lutz Dietzold, CEO of the German Design Council, comments: “It is remarkable with what great circumspection and foresight the young generation is responding to the circumstances of our age. The role of design as a catalyst for innovation and transformation is particularly evident in the works shown. I am therefore very pleased that the German Design Council is able to make the innovative strength that emerges from German universities visible through the German Design Graduates initiative. Since our foundation 70 years ago, one of our core tasks has been to pave the way for young designers to enter the industry – we help to form alliances between designers and between design and industry, business and science, so that these visionary ideas for a future worth living can be put into practice. With the German Design Graduates, we can advance this initiative in an ideal manner.”

Tulga Beyerle, Director of the Museum Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg, adds: “We are very pleased to be able to exhibit the most interesting projects of young designers from German art and design academies. *Dare to Design* offers an overview of the current positions of young design from Germany and the best graduates from the art and design academies. As a leading house for design, we are happy to be able to support young designers and to give their innovative ideas more visibility in this way.”

The award categories Society and Community, Sustainability and Circularity, Research and Science as well as the focus topic Inclusion represent the wide range of current design discourses and focal points. The awards, which include 2,500 euros of prize money, are presented by a top-class jury.

[Press information and photos for download](#)

### **The awards and prize-winners at a glance:**

#### **Sustainability & Circularity**

##### **Prize-Winner:**

##### **Toxic Legacies by Leila Wallisser, Weißensee Kunsthochschule Berlin**

Statement of the jury:

“The award-winning project Toxic Legacies by Leila Wallisser is particularly impressive for the way in which designers deal with complex problems – developing and acquiring topics in a step-by-step, and sometimes roundabout, way. Starting with the problem of how used cigarette filters could be put to good use, various experiments with materials led to the question of the value of the initial product itself – and the price at which recycling is worthwhile. What convinced the jury was the transparency with which these detours are described in the project, and how the path to the result of the work is demonstrated and visualised. In her project, Leila Wallisser takes on the magnitude of the problem and not only deals critically with the topic, but also with her own way of working. In the resulting ‘re:cig’ campaign, ‘recycling as a solution for everything’ is criticised and the good conscience and (self-)deception propagated by this is exposed in a charming way.”

Members of the jury:

Leif Huff, Design and Innovation Strategy at the Agency FLUID

Dr. Florian Sametinger, Head of Research at the agency KISKA

Ronja Scholz, Expert for Eco-Design & Circular Service Design at the Fraunhofer Institute for Reliability and Microintegration IZM

## **Research and Transfer**

### **Prize-winner:**

**(non-) local lab by Beatriz Oria Lombardía, Bauhaus Universität Weimar**

Statement of the jury:

“Based on the question of how design can add value to a scientific, ecological and social issue, this project not only pursued an interdisciplinary research approach, but also actively involves civil society. The designer has a clear mission: to question what contribution she as a designer, and the design discipline as such, can make to the environment, society and research. Beatrice Oria Lombardía uses the example of dealing with invasive plants such as knotgrass to show the complex connections between environmental problems and our everyday actions. However, she does not simply thematise the problem, but creates solutions by questioning how invasive species can be used as a resource. She combines interdisciplinary knowledge with design-based material research and creates space for social participation with her installation. In this way, the project shows how design can build bridges between research and society, thus creating new ways of knowledge transfer beyond familiar paths.”

Members of the jury:

Dr. Andrea Augsten, Strategist and Design Researcher in the Innovation Lab of the Deutschen Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH / Member of the Executive Board Deutsche Gesellschaft für Designtheorie und -forschung

Lynn Harles, Creative Engagement Manager, Museum für Naturkunde Berlin

Stephan Ott, Director Institute for Appliance and Research (IfDRA) by the German Design Council

## **Society & Community**

### **Prize-winner:**

#### **Bücheria by Anna Unterstab, Hochschule für bildende Künste Hamburg**

##### Statement of the jury:

“Anna Unterstab achieves many things at once with her final project: she not only creates visibility for queer-feminist issues and current challenges in Hamburg Wilhelmsburg, but she also realises an ‚analogue‘ space or a meeting place for exchange, for self-empowerment and for learning together and collective reading. What impressed us about the project was the unconventional approach in the sense of an expanded concept of design, which does not “only” result in the design of a product or system – but instead, with Bücheria, creates something even more comprehensive, profound and multifaceted. With this particular approach, Anna has managed to ensure that her work does not remain anchored in the future as a mere vision, but is actually already located in the here and now, where it can have an important, immediate effect. The result is a “real utopia”, so to speak, expertly embedded into existing structures. In this way, she boldly and concretely demonstrates the direction in which the design discipline can develop – with great self-confidence, she explodes the boundaries of what design is and what ideas a graduate design project should theoretically correspond to. Last but not least, Anna condenses all this into a fantastic publication that will even be published by a local publishing house very soon. Anna’s work impressed us very much, and we are curious to see how she will develop Bücheria further.”

##### Members of the jury:

Barbara Lersch, Hans-Sauer-Stiftung

Prof. Kris Krois, Professor at the Freie Universität Bozen

Tobias Trübenbacher, Product Designer

**Focus: Inclusion**

**The selection of both the focus and the prize-winner were made by all juries.**

**Prize-winner:**

**Vruit by Juliane Kühr, Hochschule der Bildenden Künste Saar**

Statement by the jury:

“The designer – who, in this case, was selected by the entire jury – has dealt with a topic in her final project for which there is a great need and yet no good solution, but mainly provisional solutions; this may also be due to the fact that it is a taboo subject. With Vruit, Juliane Kühr developed a product, a sex toy, which empowers a large group of people, primarily same-sex couples and singles with the desire to have children, to help fulfil this desire in an aesthetic and pleasurable way. Yet Vruit not only wants to support, symbolise and simplify ‘the choreography’, as the designer calls the process around insemination (sperm transfer), through the toy, but she also seeks to educate people about health issues and legal challenges with an accompanying booklet that also refers them to crucial support services. In this way, her project has a multidimensional approach as it brings in and clarifies various aspects that are also relevant to society. The designer evaluates the product, or rather the topic at hand, far beyond the scope of her final graduation project and thus manages to present a vision that answers the needs of her target group.”

Alongside the awards, support services are also provided: all submitted final projects of a GDG year are placed in the network of stakeholders from both industry and culture. Selected ambassadors choose specific projects according to their own criteria in order to individually support the young designers behind the respective projects. Among this year’s supporters sharing their expertise, knowledge or networks are the following institutions, platforms and individuals:

Ambiente Messe Frankfurt, BASF Designfabrik, Covestro, Designcampus Dresden, Haute Innovation, ID Berlin, Internationale Handwerksmesse München, Jasmin Jouhar, Mono, Afili

The works of the prize-winners as well as 43 other projects by German art and design academies will be on display at the Museum Kunst und Gewerbe (MK&G) until 8 October 2023.

All exhibited works at a glance:

<https://germandesigngraduates.com/gdg-exhibition-2023/>

Further information on opening hours and admission prices:

<https://www.mkg-hamburg.de/>

### **About the German Design Graduates Initiative**

German Design Graduates is an initiative with the purpose of supporting young product design graduates and presenting state-certified universities, art colleges, and universities of applied sciences. The initiative was started in 2019 by Prof. Ineke Hans, Prof. Hermann Weizenegger, Prof. Mark Braun and Katrin Krupka. GDG is supported by the German Design Council Foundation, which has been the project sponsor of the initiative since 2022.

<https://germandesigngraduates.com/>

### **About the German Design Council**

The German Design Council has served as the leading international centre of excellence for communication and knowledge exchange in the fields of design, brand, and innovation since 1953. It is a part of the global design community with its international services, support for young talents, and memberships, and has always contributed to establishing communication and networks worldwide. The German Design Council provides networking opportunities to its members and numerous other international design and brand experts in the form of events, conferences, awards, jury meetings, and expert panels; promotes discourse; and delivers important stimuli to the global economy. Its members currently include more than 320 companies.

<https://www.german-design-council.de/ueber-uns>

[www.gdc.de](http://www.gdc.de)

The German Design Graduates Exhibition 2023 is a cooperation with:

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