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Festival of Lights in Leipzig Commemorates Peaceful Revolution of 1989



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The Festival of Lights Leipzig will take place on 9 October 2022 presenting itself with a decentralized concept. Under the motto "Light spreads throughout the city" three international artist teams will show light installations at several locations within the city centre from 7 pm to 11 pm.

The History of the Festival of Lights Leipzig

On 9 October 1989, more than 70,000 people demonstrated in Leipzig without violence for freedom and democracy. This day was decisive for the course of the Peaceful Revolution in autumn 1989. The dictatorship capitulated to the overwhelming power of the citizens. The people of Leipzig and 9 October went down in the history of democracy. To commemorate this milestone of the Peaceful Revolution and to bring the radiance of the events closer to younger generations, Leipzig celebrates the annual Day of Remembrance with very special events. Under the heading "Price of Freedom", the program draws attention to the historical upheaval and the continuing responsibility to live and shape freedom and democracy. In order to make the memory and its significance for contemporary democracy continuously clear, there are also authentic places, apps and museums that can be experienced throughout the year.

This Year's Program of the Festival of Lights

On 9 October 2022, the parish of St Nicolas Leipzig will again refer to the events of 1989 with a special prayer for peace, when many people found courage and hope in the midst of uncertain conditions in the Nikolai Church. "Thirst for peace" - this is the heading of the 2022 Peace Prayer. Musical background will be provided by the Bach choir, the Saxon Symphony Orchestra Chemnitz and the soprano Taryn Knerr, who will perform the 42nd Psalm by Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy as part of the prayer for peace. In addition to personal words from affected Ukrainian women, the Russian historian and human rights activist Dr Irina Scherbakowa will give the speech on democracy in the St Nicolas Church. She is a co-founder and collaborator of the International Society for Historical Enlightenment, Human Rights and Social Welfare "MEMORIAL", which has been banned in Russia since February 2022.

International artist teams with commemorative light projects

The Festival of Lights Leipzig will take place on the central squares Augustusplatz, Burgplatz and Richard-Wagner-Platz. Light installations can be experienced at all locations from 7 pm to 11 pm and can be visited in any order. All three light festival projects have local cooperation partners. Videos on the creation of the projects are available at www.lichtfest.leipziger-freiheit.de/home.html.

"We see ourselves free" by Robert Sochacki from Wroclaw, Poland

The installation on Augustusplatz consists of several parts: the video projections on the entrance doors of the car park play with

memory and everyday images, interpreting them and placing them in new contexts. Both private image material and that of public archives are used. A large projection on the façade of the opera house shows huge pairs of eyes - not just any eyes, but those of Leipzig citizens. Thanks to the "Eyes open!" app developed for the project, they can help shape it. The eyes are an invitation to look carefully, to recognise grievances and to make them public.

"The ME and the WE" by Betty Mü from Anzing, Germany

The video installation on Burgplatz by the artist Betty Mü raises fundamental questions. What does it mean to act as an individual in a group? What unites our society today? What issues for the future do we need to get involved in? With her installation, she delivers a passionate plea for lived sustainability and social commitment. At the centre of the installation is the "we" of "We are the people", the most famous slogan from autumn 1989. We can change. We are the hope. We are the future. Each and every one of us. From the outside, the installation resembles an oversized walk-in kaleidoscope: eleven metres long in total, built in the shape of a hexagon and equipped with mirrors and LED screens through which visitors can walk.

"Democracy needs colour - Join in the spray" by Cart'1 and Matthieu Tercieux from Lyon, France

Digital graffiti, also known as "light spray", is an interactive art form resulting from the collaboration between digital artist Matthieu Tercieux and street artist Cart'1, both from Lyon. Using elements from the world of video games, Cart'1 creates graffiti projections via Wii controllers that allow effects similar to spraying with a spray can. The artists worked in advance with young people from Leipzig to be able to implement the project on a large scale on Richard-Wagner-Platz. Visitors to the Light Festival can become protagonists themselves and change the facades on the Brühl department store with their message using light spray. In between, there will be graffiti performances by Cart'1.

Further Information

- Official website of Festival of Lights: www.lichtfest.leipziger-freiheit.de/home.html
- St Nicolas Church: www.nikolaikirche.de
- "Runde Ecke" Memorial Museum: www.runde-ecke-leipzig.de/
- Forum on Contemporary History Leipzig: www.hdg.de/en/zeitgeschichtliches-forum-leipzig

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Leipzig Museum Round Corner Peaceful Revolution © Philipp Kirschner

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