Since 2015, the SCHLOSSLICHTSPIELE Light Festival Karlsruhe has inspired artists to break new ground in captivating audiences. For four weeks, every evening between mid-August and mid-September, the more than 170-meter-wide facade of Karlsruhe's Baroque palace becomes a grand stage for artistic projection mapping works.

Since 2023, the dm-Award connecting worlds has honored outstanding projects that connect digital and analog space and carry projections beyond the palace facade, out to the audience and into the city center.

dm-Award *connecting worlds*

As a member of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, Karlsruhe is committed to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. In dm-drogerie markt, a sustainable and forward-looking company from Karlsruhe, we have the perfect partner for this. The call for entries for the dm-Award connecting worlds is open internationally to artists, who may apply individually or as a collective. The submitted projects are to be realized in 2027 as part of **the SCHLOSSLICHTSPIELE Light Festival** and the exhibition ***Media art is here***. Both events will take place for four weeks between mid-August and mid-September 2027. During the SCHLOSSLICHTSPIELE, several projection mappings with different content and lengths are shown every evening. The winning project can be integrated into this program but may also function as a standalone program item.

We are seeking innovative projects that, under the motto "**PLAYGROUND**," connect the digital space of the SCHLOSSLICHTSPIELE projection mappings on the facade with the analog space of the Market Square, reaching into the city, and thus **playfully activate public space**.

The projects submitted must therefore consist of two elements:
One element on the palace facade (projection mapping, 2–5 minutes) and at least one satellite that also functions independently of the projection. Submitted projects must be experienceable on Karlsruhe's Market Square and be publicly and freely accessible. The presentation may take place throughout the entire duration of the SCHLOSSLICHTSPIELE Light Festival 2027 or be limited to specific periods.

Possible formats and content include, for example:

- Interactive projections in which the audience interacts with the facade, as well as interactive game elements or projects with audience participation
- Installations or media artworks that relate to the projection on the palace
- Stagings of the Market Square as a playground for creative ideas
- Combinations of other art forms with projection mapping (e.g., concerts, actions, and performances over several days) in connection with the installation on the Market Square
- Creation of new spatial experiences and public interaction involving the buildings around the Market Square
- Sculptural elements, 3D experiences, or immersive formats
- Integration of new technological possibilities
- Collaborations between local and international players

The Karlsruhe Market Square
The Market Square is the central square of Karlsruhe's city center. With the Pyramid as its landmark, City Hall, and the Stadtkirche (City Church), it forms a historic ensemble. It is the site of recurring events and markets, and it is adjacent to, among others, restaurants and hotels.

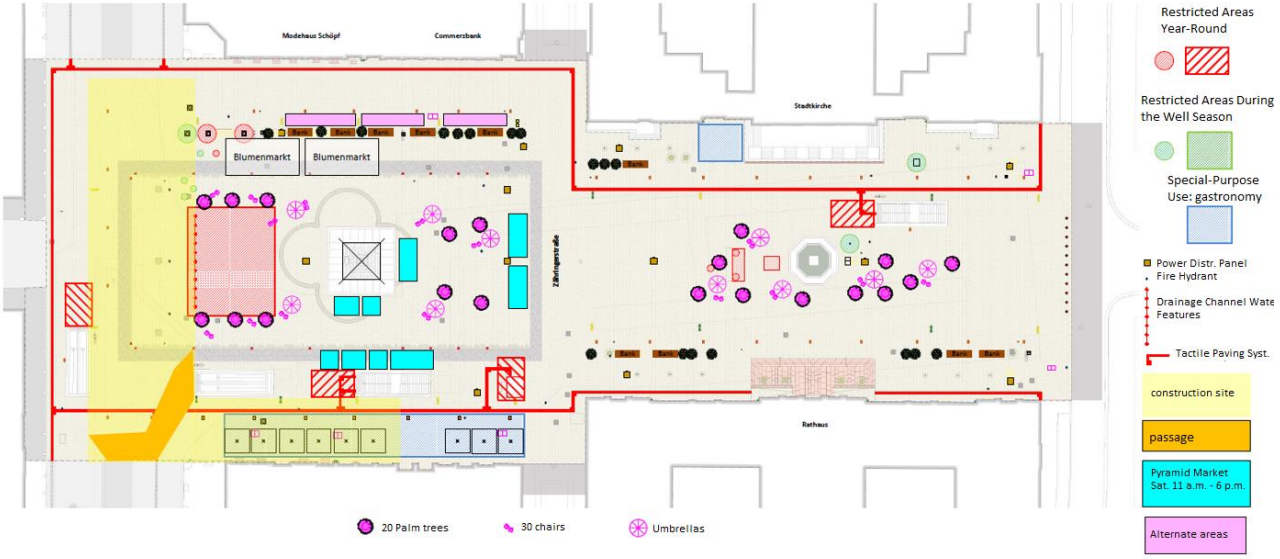

Fig 1: Map Market Square

The UNESCO City of Media Arts Office of the Karlsruhe Department of Cultural Affairs awards **the dm-Award *connecting worlds*, endowed with €10,000**, in partnership with dm-drogerie markt GmbH + Co. KG as the awarding partner, ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe as curatorial partner, and KME Karlsruhe Marketing und Event GmbH as organizer of the SCHLOSSLICHTSPIELE Light Festival Karlsruhe. In addition to the prize, the **production costs** of the winning project are funded with **up to €20,000 net** to make the realization of the concept possible. Curatorial support and technical assistance from the project partners (Cultural Office, KME, and ZKM) are included in the prize. The production grant must cover all costs incurred during production, such as fees, technical equipment, and the winners' travel expenses. The technical requirements and the existing infrastructure of the SCHLOSSLICHTSPIELE are listed in the Production Guidelines. Any changes or additional equipment must be planned for by the participants themselves.

TERMS OF PARTICIPATION

The application period ends **on November 25, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. CET**. Before submitting your application, please read the following information carefully. Please do not hesitate to contact our team with any questions: cityofmediaarts@kultur.karlsruhe.de.
Production Guidelines: https://cloud.zkm.de/s/ENNmB2PdwG8t3pE
Model Data and Photos: https://cloud.zkm.de/s/7H96FwfzzFi5C3j

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GENERAL CONDITIONS

The application must be submitted as a single document in German or English and must include the following:

- **Information about the individual or artist group** (name/company name, email address, mailing address, phone number, nationality/place of residence, short biography);
- a brief but meaningful and easily understandable **project outline**, including a **storyboard** and ideas for presenting the project (maximum 1,500 characters including spaces), as well as a list of required materials, technical equipment, and personnel needed (security, supervision, setup and teardown, etc.), and the granting of usage rights;
- **visual material** in the form of renderings, photos, illustrations, or **video material**: a maximum of 5 images, 3 video clips or audio samples, each with a maximum length of 5 minutes, or up to 5 links.
- Text information must **not** be submitted in the form of images, as this complicates the further processing of applications.

Important notes:

- Projects that have already been realized are permitted with adaptations.
- Employees of the host institutions, sponsors, and the awarding partner, as well as jury members, are excluded from participation.
- Applications must be submitted by November 25, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. CET to: cityofmediaarts@kultur.karlsruhe.de.
- Due to file size, the application must be sent **via download link**.
- **Submissions that do not meet the above requirements will not be admitted to the competition and will not be presented to the jury.**

We welcome applications from all people, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, or cultural, ethnic, or social background.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Participants must be reachable at the address they provide.
- By participating in this call, participants agree to the publication of the information they have provided about the submitted artwork.
- The winning works will be published through various media and communication channels. We therefore ask participants to compile the audio, image, and text components with the utmost precision and care.
- All submitted works will be kept in our archive. By submitting, participants consent to the archiving of their submissions.
- The data transmitted in connection with submissions will be processed for the purpose of conducting the competition. Project implementation may begin following registration and in consultation with the UNESCO City of Media Arts Office of the Karlsruhe Cultural Office.
- The project must be **completed by July 31, 2027**, so that it can be presented in time for the SCHLOSSLICHTSPIELE Light Festival. Even if the project is not shown at the start of the SCHLOSSLICHTSPIELE in mid-August, timely completion is requested to allow sufficient time for the installation of the artwork and for planning.

IMPORTANT DATES

- **October 9, 2025**: Start of application period
- **November 25, 2026, 1:00 p.m. (CET)**: Application deadline
- **Mid-December 2026**: Notification of applicants
- **January 2027**: Public announcement of the winners
- **August 12 – September 13, 2027**: SCHLOSSLICHTSPIELE Light Festival and *Media art is here* 2027

SELECTION PROCESS

A panel of expert jurors selects the winners of the award from the submitted projects. The jury is chaired by Dr. Dominika Szope, Director of the Cultural Office of the City of Karlsruhe, and consists of representatives of the SCHLOSSLICHTSPIELE curatorial circle. The jury decides on the basis of curatorial and technical criteria which submission receives the award and can be realized.

Decisions are made in closed session. Legal recourse is excluded.

Impressions of past projects on the Market Square and at the palace:
(clockwise: Nils R. Schultze, Felix Müller, "Die Kugel," 2023; Alex Besta, "Sleeping Trees," 2024; Andreas Hölldorfer, Norina Quite (ato) with VOLNA, "Pyramide von morgen," 2026; Rainer Kehres, "Globenbogen," 2022)