

Companion13



The Fair Director

Art Cologne is one of the world’s most important art fairs. its director, Daniel Hug, gives us insights into Cologne’s art scene — and a peek into his home.

➤ [Portrait, p.14](#)



Perfect Pairing

Jörg Meyer and Rainer Wendt are both gastronomes and friends. For our recipe page, the business partners have prepared a drink and snack that go together just as well as they do.

➤ [Food & Drink, p.16](#)



Tomorrow is Another Day

Between the Wupper and the Rhine, Eva Gödel seeks out men for her modeling agency, Tomorrow is Another Day. One thing they all have in common? They don’t match today’s standard beauty ideal.

➤ [Art & Entertainment, p.26](#)



Little Tokyo

COMPANION took a closer look at the hustle and bustle of Germany’s largest Japanese community around Immermannstraße in Düsseldorf.

➤ [Report, p.17](#)



Cologne has a reputation for being a pretty cool, cosmopolitan city. And rightfully so, according to Charlotte Mieß. For this issue, the caterer, who’s as cool as Cologne itself, showed us her favorite places around her hometown: from a sneaker store and hip restaurant to the brand new Gerling Quarter, not to mention the legendary cathedral.

➤ [District Tour, p.9](#)



Düsseldorf’s Creative Legacy

Erik Nissen Johansen, founder of the creative agency Stylt, is well aware of the city’s creative pulse — so we asked him to curate an innovation story for this issue.

➤ [In depth, p.20](#)

“Rivalry makes many things easier.”

Düsseldorf and Cologne have been rivals for centuries. Gareth Joswig reveals why that doesn’t matter at all to COMPANION.

➤ [Column, p.30](#)

Art in North Rhine-Westphalia

Museums: just for wintertime? Think again. COMPANION presents the most beautiful art spots in the region — all of them ideal destinations for summer excursions.

➤ [Activity Map, p.24](#)

Coworking Cosmos

Werner Aisslinger believes that we will work more and more in coworking spaces in the future. And he would know. After all, the designer has just conceived of a new one.

➤ [Talking Business, p.12](#)

Rhineland’s Real Queens

With wigs, powder, and sequins, Cologne’s dazzling drag queen quartet works to fight racism and support tolerance, and has a lot of fun with it along the way.

➤ [Interview, p.21](#)

The Grandbrothers

Lukas Vogel and Erol Sarp make music together as the Grandbrothers, whose sound swings somewhere between piano and electronic melodies.

➤ [Music Page, p.8](#)

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Editor's Note

COMPANION does North Rhine-Westphalia! For our 13th edition, we traveled to the Rhineland, where two fantastic new hotels will soon open: 25hours Hotel The Circle Cologne and Das Tour Düsseldorf. That's reason enough to take a closer look at these two cities that have been archenemies for centuries. Helau or Alaaf, Kölsch or Alt: in an amusing column, Gareth Joswig explains why it's not the cities' rivalry we're interested in. Instead, we prefer to concentrate on all that unites Cologne and Düsseldorf, like the Rhine river, for instance, which draws people to its banks all summer long.

The making of issue 13 introduced us to several interesting locals again. Like the Real Queens from Cologne, four drag queens who stand up for tolerance and openness in high heels, makeup, and sequined clothes, honouring Germany's LGBTIQ+ heartland. Also in Cologne, restaurateur Charlotte Mieß showed us her favorite district, the hip Friesenviertel, which attracts visitors with its impeccable shops that sell trainers, vinyl, and culinary delights. Little Tokyo on the Rhine: that's what we explored in Düsseldorf. Concentrated around the Immermannstraße area is Germany's largest Japanese community, whose culture everyone can enjoy thanks to the excellent range of Japanese supermarkets, ceramics stores, and restaurants. Anna Maria Luisa de' Medici, Kraftwerk, or Heinrich Heine: Düsseldorf has benefitted from pioneers and innovators in the fields of art, music, and literature for centuries now. Erik Nissen Johansen from the creative agency Stylt has assembled a collection of the city's most exciting innovators.

North Rhine-Westphalia also holds many interesting sites outside of Cologne and Düsseldorf, however. From the former Zollverein Coal Mine Industrial Complex to the Raketensstation Hombroich, we have compiled a list of the most worthwhile artistic excursions across the state — all of which are extremely summer-friendly. Who knows, perhaps this summer edition might inspire some readers to take a trip to NRW?

Freunde von Freunden

The online magazine Freunde von Freunden has been portraying inspiring personalities since 2009, forming a creative and international community along the way. Over the years, we have also built a lively network of talented people in Cologne and Düsseldorf. Some of them have contributed to this 13th issue of COMPANION, a North Rhine-Westphalia special celebrating the brand-new 25hours Hotels Das Tour Düsseldorf and The Circle Cologne. The result? Read on to find out more.

freundevonfreunden.com

Issue

Enjoy the armchair exploration in the meantime!

Yours,
COMPANION



Contributors



Luca Iriti

The first edition of COMPANION that Swiss-native Luca supervised in his role as art director was, as chance will have it, the Swiss issue. Since then his experience in and talent for editorial design has influenced five issues of the magazine. Luca likes the fact that work at COMPANION is never dull — he makes sure of that with all kinds of color! Luca is particularly inspired by the magazine's unusual format, which gives him plenty of room for creativity. It's important to Luca to develop ideas for every new edition and to add an element of surprise to the design of each page. He has certainly succeeded in this goal with the NRW issue.

lucairiti.com



Pia Gärtner

Following her foray into journalism at a daily newspaper in Upper Austria, Pia moved to Vienna. There she encountered art and pop, and, above all, creative people from these fields she could interview — in the attic of the 25hours Hotel at MuseumsQuartier Vienna, for example. At the moment Pia is undertaking an editorial internship with Freunde von Freunden in Berlin. Yet she still found the time to contribute to this edition of COMPANION — a project that has once again roused her curiosity for unknown cities, which is why she's now planning a trip to Zurich. After all, she needs a few more days' break before she begins to write her thesis for her Master's in journalism.

instagram.com/pdshey



Max Brunnert

Max is the in-house court photographer for this edition. In addition to shooting the Real Queens and the District Tour in Cologne, he photographed Düsseldorf's Japanese community, discovering completely new corners of his hometown in the process. He wants to visit again soon, privately and without his camera this time. And a trip to Japan now features on his wish list. But first he needs to go back to his desk to evaluate all the images he's amassed over the last few months in peace. Through his work, Max has been able to get to know and document many exciting places and people. Having gathered such great memories, he's of the opinion that work isn't too bad at all.

maxbrunnert.de



Barbara Russ

While Barbara was working on our NRW Art Map for this edition, she was sitting on a beach in Tel Aviv enjoying the Israeli winter sun. The fact that the freelance journalist still wanted to spend the summer in North Rhine-Westphalia is due to the fact that, as a Berliner in exile, over time she has learned to appreciate the cultural offerings in her new home of Düsseldorf. The high concentration of excellent restaurants, the museums, and life on the Rhine are just a few factors that give the city a high quality of life. And Carnival, of course! Whether dressed as an escaped prisoner or a last-minute unicorn on the go with Yoko Ono and John Lennon, collective excess can be liberating.

barbararuss.de

The River at Your Feet

TEXT PIA GÄRTNER — ILLUSTRATION STEPHANIE F. SCHOLZ

“Why is it so beautiful along the Rhine?” a German folk song asks. We know the answer. Here, you can find the best things that the 40-kilometer riverbank stretching between Cologne and Düsseldorf has to offer.

1. Just the Peace

It's certainly not the quickest way to get from Düsseldorf to Cologne, but a bike tour along the Rhine's cycle path is totally worth the trip. Especially when you're not in a hurry — the region's verdant landscape has a lot to offer. Not to mention the beautiful river, of course. Speaking of rivers, they offer other magnificent ways to slowly make your way from one city to another. On certain summer days, return boat trips between Düsseldorf and Cologne are on offer. There's no doubt about it: standing on the deck in the sunshine is far superior to any high-speed train.

↳ [k-d.com](#)
↳ [nrw-tourismus.de](#)

2. Down It

Where should we have a drink today, then? In summer, the answer to this question is: outdoors. In the Germans' most beloved type of garden — a beer garden. A prime example can be found at Galerie Burghof in Düsseldorf, magnificent in itself with its wonderful trees that protrude into the (hopefully!) blue sky. Find a nice shady spot under the canopy of leaves — here, only the beer is cooler. Another nice location is the Sürther Bootshaus in Cologne, where things can start to get a bit blurry — but that usually happens at a certain point in the evening wherever you are, right?

↳ [suertherbootshaus.de](#)
↳ [galerie-burghof.de](#)

3. Still Waters

Swimming in the Rhine is actually prohibited. But this doesn't stop some water lovers from braving the dangerous currents. Those who prefer not to be fished out of the water by the police can opt for the more comfortable option and go swimming at the Lörick lido in Düsseldorf. In addition to the pools, there is also a fantastic sandy beach nestled into a quiet little stretch of the Rhine. Another legal option is to bathe in the Unterbacher See. This lake has two swimming areas, one in its northern part and the other down south.

↳ [baeder-duesseldorf.de](#)
↳ [unterbachersee.de](#)

4. Strength Training with a View

Great for the upper arms. Even beginners can book river-rafting tours in Cologne thanks to the experienced guides at hand. With the help of their expertise, you can row past some of the city's sights in a dinghy. The panoramic view is far superior to any gym.

↳ [river-rafting.de](#)

5. Like in a Film

Who wants to go “Back to the Future,” just like in the Hollywood film? Actually, the past can be pretty nice, too. It is when you find yourself in Zons, at least, with its wonderfully preserved medieval city centre. This small city with an odd name is located halfway between Düsseldorf and Cologne. And as if the name of the town weren't amusing enough, the city was given the lovely alliterative nickname of “Zollfeste Zons” (Customs Fortress Zons) thanks to its historical fortifications.

↳ [zons-am-rhein.info](#)

6. With Rose-Tinted Glasses

Let's face it — sunsets always have an element of sappiness to them. However, when a romantic mood strikes, take a walk across Cologne's Deutz Suspension Bridge in the evening. As the sky turns a delightful shade of pink and the sun disappears behind the rooftops of the city, even hardcore pragmatists can't help but be won over by the sheer beauty of the sky at sunset. Did that sentence sound a bit sappy, too? Try it for yourself and see how you feel afterwards!

7. Stars Under the Stars

You'll most likely have seen some of the films on show, but that doesn't matter one bit. Under open skies, you can experience the classics in a new light: the Alltours Kino open air cinema on the banks of the Rhine in Düsseldorf screens firm film favorites from July to August. Fans of contemporary cinema won't miss out either: the program also includes new releases. And if things ever get a bit dull, you can always gaze at the stars above you.

↳ [alltours-kino.de](#)

TEXT LEONIE VOLK

ice, ice, baby



Jonas Lurballe
Instagram.com/jonabatti

DÜSSELDORF FOOD & DRINK

At Eisdieler Tati the classic flavors of chocolate, nut, vanilla, and more exotic ones like gooseberry meringue and violet have one thing in common: they contain nothing artificial. The ice cream parlor on a corner in Pempelfort does great business with its delicious home-made flavors. The ice creams are topped off with chocolate sprinkles, hundreds and thousands, or candied walnuts. There are also freshly baked cakes, milkshakes, and coffee. Heartier meals such as African peanut stew and Indian lentils with ginger, tomato, and rice are served for lunch. The ice cream parlor became known due to Jacques Tati, the star of “Monsieur Hulot” — the comedy that placed the beach of Saint-Marc-sur-Mer on the map. Fast track that summer beachside feeling with a scoop or two from here.

↳ [Eisdieler Tati facebook.com/EisdielerTATI](#)

ANYTHING BUT ORDINARY



Maria Kozak
Instagram.com/mariakoz

DÜSSELDORF FOOD & DRINK

Nothing is traditional in Bar Olio: in this restaurant hotspot you can't reserve a table, nor can you choose your favorite dish from a menu. Instead, a loud hustle and bustle, long waiting times, and a difficult-to-read board listing highly promising dishes await guests. This seems to be the trade-off for delicious cuisine and a relaxed atmosphere. There's no one way of doing things here — the cuisine is an international mélange: think Moroccan couscous, scallops on a spinach and ginger salad, veal tongue with celery puree and nut butter. It is also hard to say no to the homemade pasta. The mix of German, Mediterranean, Asian, and African influences means there is something to suit every taste. And the wine list guarantees an enjoyable evening.

BACK TO THE ROOTS

COLOGNE ART & ENTERTAINMENT

German publisher Benedikt Taschen wants to get back to his origins — a desire that led him to open his flagship store in his hometown of Cologne last September, a mere few meters away from his very first store, a comic book shop that he ran in 1980 in Lungengasse. Back then, the entrepreneur had already recognized the demand for affordable art books. Now comics have given way to heavily illustrated books. The range is extensive — from affordable coffee table publications to more expensive limited editions. With mid-century furniture, light tables, and a floor covered with tiles by Gio Ponti, it's no surprise that part of this branch on the Neumarkt was designed by Italian designers Alberto Stamparoni Bassi and Salvatore Licitra. The 200-square-meter sales and display area offers customers an overview of the Taschen portfolio, which spans art and culture, pop and fashion, film and photography, and sex and glam.

↳ [Taschen taschen.com](#)



Maria Kozak
Instagram.com/mariakoz

PLUMP MY BIKE

DÜSSELDORF FASHION & STYLE

The “West Coast Customs” of northern Rhineland repair Düsseldorf residents' bikes and also make bikes themselves. Schicke Mütze on Talstraße is not only a workshop, but also a shop and café. Here bike lovers can buy 1950s-style retro jerseys, or while away time over coffee and cake whilst their bikes are made fully operational again. And if you get really comfortable, you can stay for one of the regular events. The program includes film evenings or readings, for example. Of course, there's always a cycling connection. And during summer, the operators of Schicke Mütze also organize bike rides — such as a relaxed evening route appropriately named “Rookies, Chillah, Tempokillah.”

↳ [Schicke Mütze schickemuetze.de](#)



Maria Kozak
Instagram.com/mariakoz

Italian Dining

COLOGNE FOOD & DRINK

Just like in a large Italian family, a bit of tumult and a warm atmosphere create a good environment in which to chat with your companion. Although the head chef Kumar Parween is not Italian, but in fact East Indian, he prepares authentic Italian dishes with just as much passion. Pizza, pasta, and grilled meats are served and there's a tasting menu for 38 euros. The “astice” pasta with lobster tails, calamari, and clams in a fresh tomato sauce is especially delicious. And for guests who want to enjoy the Il Bagutta taste in the office or at home, the Heinsbergstraße restaurant has a range of jars to take away — filled, for example, with carrot and coconut soup or lamb curry.

↳ [Il Bagutta ilbagutta.de](#)

Hats off!

COLOGNE FASHION & STYLE

We still hear phrases such as “hats off” or “keep it under your hat” — but the actual accessory is hardly worn anymore. Pia Diefenthal and Thomas Rüttgers are trying to change that with their hat shop in Kettengasse in Cologne. Pia's great grandfather founded the family business in 1905 and she and her husband are now the fourth generation to run it. Their mission: to make clothes, sun hats, caps, and bowler hats socially celebrated again. The shop fitting is reminiscent of times gone by with its Mauser tables, industrial lamps, and sewing machines — relics from vintage hat manufacturing. Combined with Persian rugs and leather-look wall coverings, they create a cozy, inviting atmosphere laced with nostalgic flair.

↳ [Diefenthal diefenthal1905.de](#)



Foranwey
Instagram.com/foranwey

FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS

DÜSSELDORF ART & ENTERTAINMENT

Who does the city belong to? This question is at the centre of Asphalt Festival, which provides the same answer year after year: the party-going Düsseldorfers. Whilst the large stages take a break in high summer, Düsseldorf's interdisciplinary folk festival allows the general public to experience culture via a varied program and pop-up art in public spaces — with theater, dance, music, and literature in selected locations. This year there will be 40 events with national and international artist groups. Get out onto the streets — they belong to you!

Asphalt Festival – July 13 to 22, 2018
asphalt-festival.de



HOLLYWOOD GLAMOUR

DÜSSELDORF FASHION & STYLE

Düsseldorf is a fashion capital with a tradition. It is not surprising, then, that Talbot Runhof has opened a boutique here in addition to its Munich and Berlin branches. The three cities have little in common — and that's exactly what the established designer duo wants. Between Munich and Paris, Adrian Runhof and Johnny Talbot design occasion wear for very different women. For women from Munich, Berlin, and Düsseldorf. Oh, and also Hollywood: Oscar-winner Helen Mirren and pop star Selena Gomez are regularly seen in Talbot Runhof on the red carpet. In the Düsseldorf boutique at Heinrich-Heine-Allee 38, just a few meters from Königsallee, a magnificent mirrored ceiling marks the entrance and highlights a floor with a 3D design. Here, luxury fashion and excellent service await the distinguished customer — no matter where she's from.

Talbot Runhof talbotrunhof.com



Caffeine Kick

COLOGNE FOOD & DRINK

Early risers take note: at Hommage in Friesenstraße the first visitor of the day receives a coffee on the house. You can choose fruity or rich coffee creations made from hand-roasted coffee beans. As well as a caffeine kick, there are homemade snacks such as crêpes with buffalo mozzarella and sun-dried tomatoes; fresh bread with rhubarb, goat's cheese, and mint; and apple cake with cinnamon crumble. The independent café in the trendy Friesenviertel district also has an impeccably designed interior: old sewing machines and cable drums have been turned into tables and the hallway is decorated with jute coffee sacks and fruit and wine crates.

Hommage facebook.com/hommage.koeln



Where the Flowers Bloom

DÜSSELDORF FASHION & STYLE

Business here has been blooming since 1901, when Blumen F.U.S.S. began delighting its customers on Mother's Day, weddings, birthdays, and Valentine's Day (and beyond, naturally). True botany experts are at work in Düsseldorf's oldest flower shop. The florist in Oststraße makes and ties bouquets of sunflowers, roses, and amaryllis, and arranges them in large jars or filigree vases, paying particular attention to regional freshness — the majority of the flowers come directly from auction and are only obtained from regional growers. The two-storeyed shop is worth a visit, not least because its rooms always smell so heavenly!

Blumen F.U.S.S. blumen-fuss.de

Tiny Bits from our Cities

TEXT PIA GÄRTNER



First Time at the Cinema

MUNICH ART & ENTERTAINMENT

Off to the ticket office: Munich Film Festival is the second-largest of its kind in Germany and is taking place for the 36th time. Fans and film makers will meet here from June 28 to July 7, 2018, in a relaxed atmosphere. Numerous international, European, and German film premieres will be shown.

Munich Film Festival filmfest-muenchen.de

Atmosphere in the Cellar

FRANKFURT FOOD & DRINK

Only adventurous visitors make it to Kinly Bar in Frankfurt's railway station district: steep steps lead down to the cellar pub. There is also no mobile phone reception. However, exceptional drinks and great company should provide enough entertainment.

Kinly Bar kinlybar.com



The Tropics in the Outdoor Pool

BERLIN HOSPITALITY & RETREAT

It's a real bathing culture: Tropez puts on a diverse program at the Sommerbad Humboldthain outdoor pool during the warmer months. From June 2 to September 2, 2018, there will be music, performances, and performing arts in the temporary art space. The perfect and traditional way to round off your summer's day: Capri ice lollies and chips with ketchup and mayonnaise. Tropez is incidentally a traditional kiosk as well. Oh yes, and of course you can swim in the pool, too!

Sommerbad Humboldthain tropeztropez.de



A Woman's Bath

ZÜRICH HOSPITALITY & RETREAT

The name gives it away: the women's pool on the Stadthausquai is reserved exclusively for female swimmers during the day. You can swim in the river at the nostalgic art nouveau swimming pool, with its unique view of the Wasserkirche (Water Church) and the surrounding old town. Cultural events in the evenings are open to everyone.

Stadthausquai badi-info.ch



Front Page

MUNICH ART & ENTERTAINMENT

The tabloid media not only provides entertainment, but also enough scope for criticism. Often an insatiable desire for content blurs the lines between fact and fiction, or ethical concerns are ignored on the hunt for exclusive stories. The central figure in this perfidious game: the unscrupulous reporter. Just such a character is played by Thomas Darchinger from Munich in his solo stage play "Seite Eins" (Front Page). This comedy by Johannes Kram is a critical but amusing analysis of the media. Darchinger plays the tabloid journalist Marc, who is constantly on the hunt for the latest stories. The Munich actor is familiar with shady characters, having played the part of villains in films and on the stage for decades. He's therefore the ideal choice for this solo stage play. But what would the media be without its audience, who expect constant entertainment? "Seite Eins" fulfils that demand while simultaneously provoking debate about the effect of the entertainment media, giving the audience the opportunity to reflect on its own role in the media machine. The play can be seen in the Dreheleier theater over the coming months. There are also plans for performances in Stuttgart and other cities.

Seite Eins – July 13 to 22, 2018 seite-eins.net



The World on the Terrace

VIENNA FOOD & DRINK

When it's hard to decide which restaurant to go to, it has to be the Summerstage. Next to the Danube Canal, locals from all over the city set up small open air restaurants, versions of their own summer kitchens. In the evenings, in the space of just a few hundred meters, there is Caribbean, Italian, and Asian cuisine — all in one place.

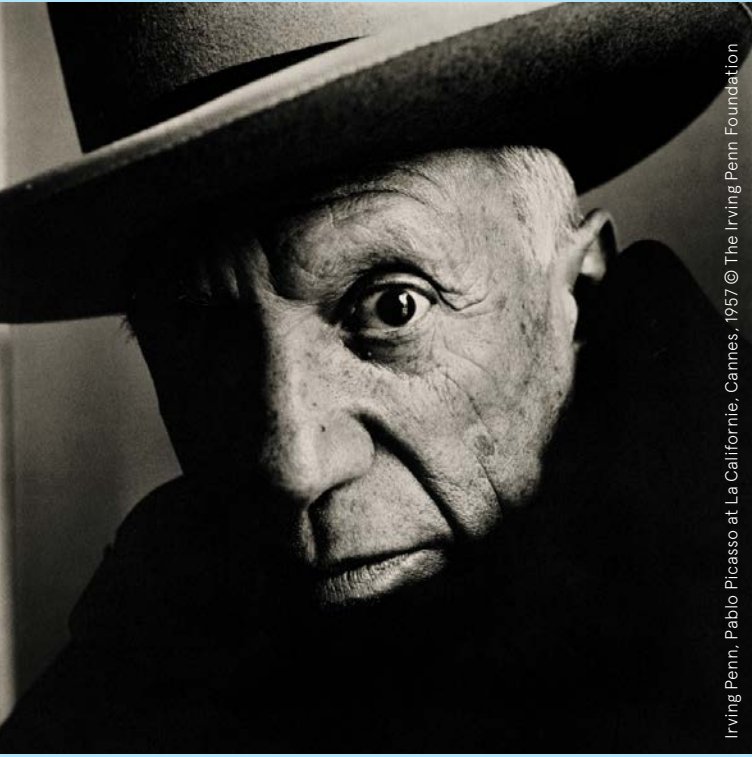
Summerstage summerstage.at

Icons on the Wall

BERLIN ART & ENTERTAINMENT

His portraits of icons such as Pablo Picasso and Marlene Dietrich are world-famous. He has since become an idol himself: to mark the centennial of his birth, C/O Berlin is celebrating Irving Penn with a major retrospective. The exhibition "Irving Penn" can be seen at Amerika Haus until July 1, 2018.

C/O Berlin co-berlin.org



Jungle in the City

HAMBURG FASHION & STYLE

The Winkel Van Sinkel concept store in Hamburg's Neustadt district specializes in the favorite home accessory of millennials: the plant. The product range is not only a green, however. Alongside every kind of plant imaginable and self-designed terrariums, there is also stationary and other pretty home accessories.

Winkel Van Sinkel winkelvansinkel.de



BETWEEN

THE STRINGS

TEXT LAURA AHA

For Lukas Vogel and Erol Sarp, the sound spectrum of the grand piano is not limited to its chords. Under the moniker “Grandbrothers,” the duo compose electronic dance music for the piano, which places them on par with Düsseldorf’s numerous genre-transcending musicians. For COMPANION they curated a playlist that captures the essence of the city where they met in 2011.



It’s hard to think of Düsseldorf without invoking pop music. After all, this is where the German rock band Kraftwerk laid the foundations for techno in the 1970s. Around the same time, the artists’ pub Ratinger Hof was becoming an epicentre for German punk and underground culture. It was here that art students of Joseph Beuys mingled with musicians such as Fehlfarben, DAF, and Campino, who would go on to sing with Die Toten Hosen.

This enriching exchange between art and music still resonates today — as is evidenced by listening to the Grandbrothers. Erol Sarp and Lukas Vogel, both pianists, met in 2011 when studying sound and video technology in Düsseldorf. Erol, who was born in Wuppertal, and Lukas, from Zurich, had to overcome their own prejudices when they first arrived: “You always hear that Düsseldorf is a very clean, rich, slightly cold city,” says Erol. “But there’s a vibrant arts scene — you shouldn’t forget that when you talk about it!”

As students, they both spent a lot of time at the Arts Academy and at the Salon des Amateurs club — hubs of experimental art and music that would soon inspire them to start their own project. “It was at that time that I start-

ed producing electronic music and building my own synthesizers. It was Erol’s idea to combine piano and electronic music,” Lukas recounts. Similar musical paths have been taken by artists such as Nicolas Jaar, Nils Frahm, and Hauschka.

As another adapted Düsseldorfer, Hauschka — who has covered his piano in bottle caps, tinfoil, and egg shakers, and introduced the electronically adapted piano to pop music — has greatly influenced Lukas and Erol. The Grandbrothers want to go a step further, however. The grand piano remains the only source of their sound — both for melodies and beats. “It would, of course, be easier to fall back on samples or to do something with synthesizers. But our idea was to use mechanical means to extract abnormal sounds from the piano,” describes Erol.

Ever the inventor, Lukas developed an apparatus out of small hammers that can be externally attached to the strings or the wood of the grand piano. This allows the Grandbrothers to play the piano with four hands — Erol at the keys and Lukas from his computer. This is where he records the sounds live, distorts them electronically, and mixes them with the natural sounds produced by the piano.

If a reworked piano brings to mind John Cage and challenging conceptual music, you’ll be pleasantly surprised by the Grandbrothers. The works that make up their albums “Dilation” and “Open” are catchy and almost pop-like in places, yet remain too sophisticated to be classed as banal easy listening. For Lukas, it’s all about balance: “We are more accessible than experimental electronic music, yet compared with shallower piano music we are considered relatively experimental.”

The interplay between Lukas’s elec-

tronic effects and Erol’s intelligent harmonies pull the listener in, just like an exciting story. For though the pieces don’t have any vocals, they produce images in your head like a film soundtrack. Their tracks bear poetic titles such as “Long Forgotten Future” and “Circonflexe.” Not that these names confine the works to certain genres. Like everything with the Grandbrothers, the themes of their music arise during the creation process. “There’s no set story beforehand. We start jamming and then think afterwards: ‘Oh, now we should save that somehow.’ Sometimes something associative occurs to us. Other times we open a book, point somewhere at random, and then that becomes the name,” Erol explains, laughing.

On tour, the duo’s stage set up is something of a challenge and is bound to have given countless sound engineers gray hairs. It takes at least two hours until every small hammer is in the right place, each equalizer adjusted. For the Grandbrothers, a grand piano does not only belong in a classical concert hall. Last year they toured as a support act with DJ and downtempo producer Bonobo, played gigs at the Fusion Festival, and regularly appeared in clubs.

“We’ve got a strong club following,” Erol points out. “We don’t just make dreamy romantic piano music, but also beats. Our music is supposed to make you dance, and it works well in a club context.” An ideal evening for the duo would see them play at the Philharmonic at 8 pm before getting the party crowd in the groove on the dance floor at 2 am. Art or music, techno or classical, experimental or pop — these genres are not mutually exclusive for the Grandbrothers.

grandbrothersmusic.com

Sound of Düsseldorf

Playlist

- 1 Closing
sine sleeper
- 2 Time
La Düsseldorf
- 3 Aerodynamik
Kraftwerk
- 4 Peace Moves
Bufman
- 5 Mari Ori
Lena Willikens
- 6 Hallogallo
NEU!
- 7 Craco
Hauschka
- 8 Key My Brain
Mouse on Mars
& Atom TM
- 9 Blinky Palermo
Omer Klein

Listen to the Grandbrothers’ playlist on the 25hours Hotels website:
25hours-hotels.com/Sound-of-Düsseldorf



THE COLOGNE



CIRCUIT

TEXT CHERYLL MÜHLEN — PHOTOS MAX BRUNNERT

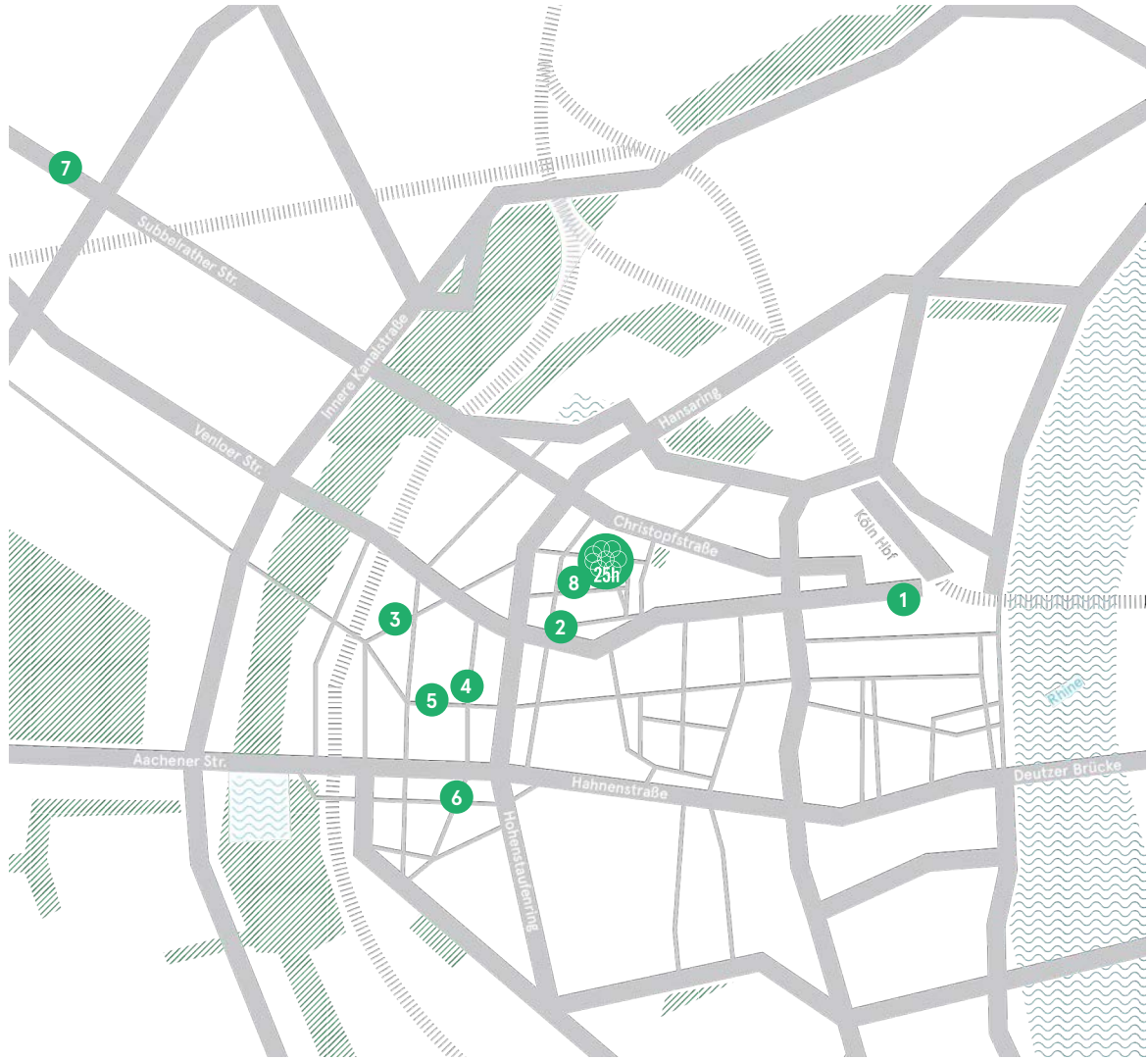
Charlotte Mieß is an incredible multitalent, that much is certain. Just like her hometown of Cologne. Could there be a better guide for the COMPANION District Tour of this Rhineland city? We don’t think so! Not only did Charlotte give us a tour leading through historic landmarks to more modern districts; with her cheerful Rhineland nature and Cologne dialect, she is a symbol for this modern, cosmopolitan city. Charlotte’s route is largely all within walking distance, but best explored by bike, if possible. She herself is an enthusiastic cyclist and walks along pushing her bike throughout our tour — that is, when she’s not cycling ahead of us to reach the next spot before we do.

Standing still is not an option for Charlotte — something that might account for her incredible wealth of knowledge. After an hour, our impressed photographer asks her: “What don’t you know?” Charlotte’s modest answer: “Well, I only tell you about the things I do know.”

What we know about her: Charlotte Mieß is actually a chef and owns her own food truck, from which she most enjoys preparing vegetarian and vegan delicacies. She is about to open a street café, Köski (pronounced Köschki), which she is currently “completely renovating” herself.

The mother of two — her oldest daughter is twenty, the younger one five — is also interested in architecture, and, together with her parents, has already refurbished one or two properties in Cologne. With her lively manner, the self-proclaimed “local patriot” shows us her hometown and gives us a refreshing overview of the sights.

This Roman city is over 2,000 years old and, with more than a million inhabitants, is the most populated city in North Rhine-Westphalia. There is certainly a lot to discover. With this in mind: “Maacht et joot” — go well, as they say in Cologne.



“Maacht et joot!”

1

Cologne Cathedral

There are few cities that are so closely associated with a landmark as Cologne is with its magnificent Gothic cathedral. It is both a place of worship and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and its twin steeples always appear to stand out, no matter where you are coming from or what direction you're facing. It's therefore no surprise that this is where we start our tour. Inside the church, the spring sunshine refracts through the elaborately designed windows and bathes the cold stone structure in the warm colors of the rainbow. "I find it simply magical here," enthuses Charlotte, her gaze directed at the 75-meter-high ceiling. The over 600-year-long construction process and regular structural restorations have paid off: even Cologne denizens remain mesmerized by the superlative cathedral. The wonder in Charlotte's eyes gives that away.

koelner-dom.de

2

Paffgen Brewery

We continue in the direction of Friesenplatz, or, more precisely, 64–66 Friesenstraße. Charlotte cycles ahead, and we follow on the U5 underground line, which stops right at the cathedral square and takes us straight to Charlotte. She is already standing in front of the heavy black doors of the Paffgen brewery, its name proudly displayed above the doorway in golden letters. "Everyone here knows it," proclaims Charlotte. "It's really authentic." As the only remaining microbrewery from the last century, Paffgen purveys real Kölsch beer, which is still home brewed in its brewhouse — where a restaurant has been serving local specialties since Paffgen's inception. Order the Halve Hahn (rye bread roll and cheese) or Flönz (black pudding) to accompany your Kölsch for a real Cologne evening.

paeffgen-koelsch.de

3

Fivve

From the brewery we go straight to the next urban curiosity — and the Fivve shop is both literally and metaphorically unique. There is only the one single outpost, which you have to come to Cologne to visit. And the trip is worthwhile for visitors from further afield. Lovers of natural cosmetics will be in seventh heaven here upon sighting a vast range of products from manufacturers selected for their distinctive design, fine workmanship, and use of sustainable materials. This oasis of well-being was founded by Daniel Sackmann and the sisters Aleksandra and Karolina Werner. "Here you'll only find the best products," Charlotte assures us. "This is where I like to buy presents. But only for really special people." And if you want to treat yourself for a change, towards the rear there is a range of spa treatments for pampering both body and soul.

fivve.com

4

Hack Leather Goods

As tempting as the spa room might be, it's time to move on to our next location. After a six-minute walk towards Maastrichter Straße, we find ourselves at Hack Leather Goods — a manufacturer embodying real craftsmanship. Looking at the goods displayed in the window, Charlotte recounts buying a bag from here 15 years ago that is "simply indestructible." Here, quality goods are still created according to traditional methods. Owner and founder Christoph Hack learned the trade from his grandfather and has been pursuing it professionally for the past 30 years. He's been running the shop for 18 years, and according to him, Charlotte was a customer right from the start. Today he attracts customers both young and old. It doesn't matter whether you're looking for a rucksack, belt, or bag — you'll find what you need here in a heartbeat.

lederware.de

5

Groove Attack

Our next destination awaits just across the street from Hack Leather Goods. In these days of digital sound files, dragged into carelessly compiled smartphone media libraries, we hold shops like Groove Attack in high esteem. Tucked away in the basement below the men's clothing store Monsieur Courbet, this site of pilgrimage for record lovers has been located here for 25 years. It's a place for everyone who loves the warm sound of pressed vinyl. On the well-organized shelves you'll find everything from hip-hop and soul to Brazilian jazz, reggae, and country, to Afrobeats, electro, drum and bass, and Japanese music — the latest trend, apparently. Charlotte browses through the shop — perhaps on the hunt for a new record for her husband. We've heard he's a regular visitor here.

grooveattack.com

6

The Good Will Out

Off to the next Cologne institution. As we arrive at the brand-new two-storey location of The Good Will Out around midday (in mid-February 2018, the store moved just round the corner to Richard-Wagner-Straße), we've just missed the latest stampede for a coveted sneaker release. Which is probably just as well — it seems people are happy to queue out on the street for hours to get their hands on a limited edition pair. This sort of hype doesn't interest Charlotte at all. Even so, she tries on a pair of pink Nike Lunar Force 1 Duckboots. Faced with such a curated range, which is presented in a wonderfully neat, aesthetically pleasing way, it's hard not to be tempted. The fact that shopping at The Good Will Out is a bit like being in a gallery further reinforces the demand for a contemporary sneaker lifestyle. This is shoe shopping on another level.

thegoodwillout.de

7

Wallczka

It might sound like Polish pierogi, which in itself would certainly be tempting, but Wallczka, which has been open for almost a year in Cologne's Ehrenfeld district, in fact serves international mezze in new combinations, a celebration of laid-back yet adventurous cuisine. And Charlotte, herself a chef, certainly knows what she is talking about when she recommends Wallczka. The menu is concise yet varied. Vegetarians and vegans are especially well catered for. There is crispy courgette albiondigas in an oriental tomato curry sauce (Charlotte's favorite), kimchi pancakes with teriyaki aubergine and sesame, and green papaya salad with roasted peanuts and coriander — all served in small portions so you can try a bit of everything. It's lucky we're hungry and can replenish our energy in such an enjoyable way before we set off to our final destination.

wallczka.com

8

Gerling Quartier

... and the route there leads us straight back to Friesenplatz. This is where the Gerling Quartier is — the home of the new 25hours Hotel The Circle Cologne. The former headquarters of the Gerling Group insurance company is one of the largest historical buildings built in the early years of the Federal Republic of Germany, Charlotte tells us. A monument that represents both rise and fall. But as we enter a new era, the entire district is being transformed into an integrated residential and living space. From July 2018, the new 25hours Hotel with 207 rooms will be situated in the striking rotunda "Im Klapperhof 10." Here guests can look forward to a 500-square-meter reception area. In the heritage-listed main hall to which insurance customers once came to pay their contributions, a diverse "fairground" has emerged, comprising a lounge, kiosk, bike workshop, and DJ corner — even Cologne locals are pleased with the new collective space.

gerling-quartier.com

TALKING BUSINESS

Coworking Cosmos



TEXT FLORIAN SIEBECK

Werner Aisslinger is one of Germany’s most sought-after designers. He is currently working on 40 projects, ranging from a shopping mall in Bangkok to a watch for Nomos. He talks to COMPANION about the new 25hours Hotel The Circle Cologne, analogue places in a digital world, and working in the bathtub.

COMPANION: Werner, in your work you often deal with how we will live, and, above all, work in the future. What drives you?
WERNER AISSLINGER: Our whole work and office life will change — more than we can imagine at the moment. Factory production will be completely automated and all non-robots, thus humans, who still work will do so in new, efficient feel-good locations, which still need to be discovered.
In places like the new 25hours Hotel The Circle Cologne that you designed? There is a coworking space in the café there.
Well, if you look at companies such as WeWork, co-working is an exceptional, growing phenomenon worldwide. The question is, of course, why can’t hotels, which already have the infrastructure for food and coffee and well-being, become coworking locations? After all, these days tech companies like Apple send their employees to coworking hotels by the beach so they can work and relax — it’s creating a whole new market.
Given their structure, are hotels suitable coworking locations?
Yes, for that very reason. They are much more suitable


than places that are purely coworking spaces, which try to organize the needs of community, services, and well-being around the working areas — this is already the case at hotels. We estimate that two thirds of the users of the coworking space here are locals, with the other third being hotel guests.
So no lonely hours at a hotel desk in the evening then?
We don’t even include desks in our hotel projects anymore. People prefer to sit on the bed in their room in the evening to answer emails, and during the day they prefer to be part of a community and sit in public spaces, which will increasingly take the form of coworking areas.
You also designed the “Cowork Bath” — a bathroom with an area to work in. Is this an idea that has potential for the future?
It was for the “House of Wonders” exhibition at the Pinakothek der Moderne art gallery in Munich. The show was all about life in the future and played around with new hybrid residential concepts, which had not been previously linked. Often my best ideas come to me in the bath.

How do you create places where people feel relaxed but can also work productively?
Just as with many other places, space, acoustics, and light are very important. For coworking, Wi-Fi speed plays a role, too. For us designers it’s all about being extremely advanced. We have to generate euphoria and enthusiasm among coworkers. They need to feel they are part of a community in an extremely cool and unusual atmosphere. If the service is right and people can network on a professional business level, then it works.
Doesn’t the Kölsch beer on the counter distract them from their work?
Well, the media industry is pretty successful in Cologne, so the link between Kölsch and work seems to be functioning alright.
A coworking space ties in with the overarching theme of the 25hours Hotel The Circle Cologne: to a certain extent, the “New Worlds” theme celebrates retro-futurism.
It’s about a utopian time and the technology euphoria of the 1950s and 60s when people dreamed of a better future and life on Mars. Our hotel concept picks up this topic of euphoria without being a “2001: A Space Odyssey” space hotel. Today we see hotels as vibrant, unconventional venues that like to inspire and surprise their guests, and given them up more than they might expect from a hotel. Analogue places have to work hard to keep up with the digital world nowadays.
Is this design approach reflected in the coworking café?
We created a coworking world through extremely interesting, futuristic workstations — all of which are unique designs. For example, there are “working units” — small individual work spaces into which you can retreat, like with the mini textile shelter. Connectivity and design: those are the issues. I believe design accounts for 90% of a coworking space. Putting office swivel chairs in glass boxes isn’t really that exciting in the long term.


➤ aisslinger.de




“Why can’t hotels, which already have the infrastructure for food and coffee and well-being, become coworking locations?”




Two in One
Sculpture? Shoes? Why not both? Based between Wuppertal and Düsseldorf, Katharina Beilstein produces eccentric objects that look as great in a display case as they do on your feet.
Shoe Sculpture by Katharina Beilstein, prices upon request
➤ [instagram.com/k.t.beilstein](https://www.instagram.com/k.t.beilstein)




Dreaming of a Fresh Summer
Do you leave the house in a T-shirt during summer? Add a pink bomber jacket by the Düsseldorf fashion label G-Lab to your repertoire. Waterproof, windproof, breathable, and stain-resistant with a thermal lining, it is perfect for the unpredictable northern European climate.
Estelle by G-Lab, 399 EUR
➤ g-lab.com




Many Shades of Color
You can never have too many pairs of sunglasses! Not only are they a trendy accessory, they also provide vital protection. The Ace & Tate store in Cologne has your eyes covered with a range of cool, colorful models.
Sunglasses by Ace & Tate, from 98 EUR
➤ aceandtate.de




Play the Piano
Did you take piano lessons as a child and have wanted to get back into it for years? The exceptional Cologne-based musician Chilly Gonzales has just the thing for you: easy sheet music for getting back into playing!
Re-Introduction Etudes (Book+CD+Poster) by Chilly Gonzales, 22 EUR
➤ chillygonzales.spinshop.com




Made for Mermaids
Clear, pure water needs nothing else added to it. Except maybe a bottle to hold it in. At Stilla, they come decorated with a finished ceramic screen print, making an eye-catching statement.
Aqua by Stilla, crate of 20 x 0.25-litre glass bottles 9.98 EUR
➤ stilla-aqua.net




For Fashion Addicts
At Essentiel Antwerp you'll find this cool macramé bag as well as a great range of fashion for men, women, and children. The label chose to open its first German store in Cologne.
Light-blue macramé shoulder bag by Essentiel Antwerp, 135 EUR
➤ essentiel-antwerp.com




After-Sun Refresher
Soothe and refresh dry, sunburned skin with this moisturising mask by Dr. Schrammek — a traditional label from Essen. P.S. it's vegan-friendly.
AloCalm Gel Mask by Dr. Schrammek, 32 EUR
➤ shop.schrammek.de




Fine Publishing Design
The magazine designers at Cologne creative agency Meiré und Meiré ensure that your summer reading looks as interesting as it is to read. Like the new edition of Arch+, for instance.
Arch+, designed by Meiré und Meiré, 22 EUR
➤ archplus.net



Sicilian Summer Popsicles
At Cologne ice cream shop Stecco Natura, you won't find traditional scoops. Instead, you can enjoy ice cream of the finest Sicilian quality on a stick. Highly recommended: adding toppings like "banana split" or "cheesecake."
Popsicles by Stecco Natura, 2.50 EUR
➤ stecconatura.it



Happy-Go-Swimming
Re-embrace the childlike joy of swimming. Thanks to the Düsseldorf label 22/4, men can proudly wear the level one German swimming badge on their chests: the sea horse, of course!
Shirts by 22/4, 237.60 EUR
➤ 224hommesfemmes.com





TEXT SASCHA ABEL — PHOTOS MICHAEL ENGLERT

Art Cologne counts as one of the preeminent art fairs on the international circuit. That’s thanks to its director, Daniel Hug, who has been steering its path to success for years now. He gives COMPANION an insight into Cologne’s art scene — and a glimpse at his own four walls.

Daniel Hug is restless. Homeless. He’d be the first to suggest that of himself. The American with Swiss roots has moved at least 17 times in his life, though exactly how many times he couldn’t say for sure. He grew up in Zurich. After his parents divorced, he moved to the United States with his mother. More moving around and studies in fine arts at the Art Institute of Chicago followed. He then entered the art trade and lived in Los Angeles. For eight years now, he’s lived in Cologne and worked as the managing director of Art Cologne.

Postwar architecture instead of palm trees and Rodeo Drive. Cologne coterie rather than cosmopolitan art flair. “Cologne wasn’t cool when I got here — everyone wanted to go to Berlin,” Hug recalls. Yet this “uncool” city on the Rhine does enjoy a good location. It’s close to the Benelux countries and Paris. Not too far from London. And art in Cologne is rich in history: “Starting in the 60s, Cologne was the art capital of Germany. The Cologne-based art collectors Peter and Irene Ludwig were collecting pop art before the Americans themselves had even thought about it. Even today, the city has a very strong art scene. There are important and established galleries here. Cologne is a large city and at the same time intimate. You can build and maintain personal relationships and friendships within the industry and have more opportunities for exchange than anywhere else.”

Daniel lives right in the center of Cologne. He takes the train to the other side of the Rhine to get to his job at the Kölmesse, Cologne’s trade show center. Over the last three months before the event, he’s spent most of his time in his office on the tenth floor. You can tell that there’s plenty of

work going on here by the number of exhibition catalogs and art books piled up on one another. He makes it sound almost banal when he describes how he’s kept Art Cologne tipped for success for several years now, as if he were teaching his son to ride a bike — a piece of cake: “You have to bring in the international heavyweights to mingle with the exhibitors at the show. It’s like in high school. If the cool kids are doing something, the others will want in on it as well.”

Under his predecessor, Gérard Goodrow, the fair was geared more towards quantity than quality, featuring almost 300 participants, but gradually faded in importance. Renowned international exhibitors and collectors stayed away. As the new managing director, Daniel reduced the number of exhibitors to around 190 galleries. He introduced new, logical structures: small stalls at cheaper rents for emerging galleries and more space for established exhibitors. A bold new approach, for sure, albeit one without the guarantee of crowded convention halls. But his enthusiastic eyes reveal the truth: he is an excellent networker. He manages to inspire people and bring them together. Today, Art Cologne has become indispensable as an art fair of international standing.

“Critical thinking. You find creative ways to solve a problem. And don’t go by the book,” claims Daniel, as he describes his own approach with a sly grin. He’s best at talking about art in English. When he speaks of what he has planned for the show, his eyes begin to light up. In the future, Daniel wants to use Art Cologne to better promote young galleries in particular. Called the “Neumarkt” (New Market), he’s adding a private area in which young exhibitors can present individually or as part of a group. He’s acutely aware of his

responsibilities in the capricious business of art: “It’s like in the fashion world. As a supermodel, you have about five years. Then it’s over. Few young gallery owners manage to reach the next level. The expiration date of a gallery is about five years nowadays, a trade show has about ten to twelve years before they start having difficulties. But of course there are exceptions.” Yet as the oldest art show in the world, Art Cologne has long left this limit far behind.

Since Daniel has been living in Germany, he has learned a lot about the way the German art market works: “In Germany, the middle class, in particular, collects art. In the States, it’s mainly the super rich. There are perhaps three Germans who can afford a Jeff Koons at 20 million. Here it’s not so much about speculating. Germans mainly buy what they like.”

When not in the office or on the road, the family man prefers to spend his time at home with his wife, Natalia, and his two-and-a-half-year-old son, Nikolai. Natalia is a gallery owner who grew up in Riga and subsequently lived in Vancouver for many years. The fact that she speaks very little German is not a problem — the Cologne art scene is international enough to forgive her for it. In 2013, Natalia came to Cologne and opened her contemporary art gallery. Her self-titled gallery is a minimalist gem located in Cologne’s trendiest district, the Belgian Quarter.

Just a few minutes’ walk from the gallery is the Hug family home. The simple modernist building is not far from the historic Rudolfplatz and overlooks the Kölnischer Kunstverein. Daniel only brings art into his own home when he has a special connection to it. There we find the two-and-

a-half-meter tall “Standardpose” by Christopher Williams, which portrays a larger-than-life chicken against a light blue background. It was only possible to frame the enormous print directly in his home — the work of art would have otherwise hardly fit through the door.

Daniel also owns a poster by Claudia Kugler that typographically explores the antonyms of “stinginess” and “greed” in great serif letters. Hug runs his fingers over the cleanly applied edges of the artwork as he recalls that the artist herself came by to hang it on the living-room wall. In his opinion, good art doesn’t have to be expensive. His gut feeling decides what makes it onto his walls: “You don’t necessarily have to understand a work of art, but it has to raise questions. I think that’s important. I like art that irritates me.”

Aside from art, interior design is a special hobby for Daniel. He collects design classics by Marcel Breuer and Egon Eiermann. He prefers a functional style — modern. “As a child, I wanted to become a furniture designer. My father was an architect and told me: ‘We already have a perfect chair. It has four legs, a seat, and a backrest. What is it about that that you want to reinvent?’ That had an effect on me.” For Christmas, Natalia gave him a storage space. He’s a collector. She’s a minimalist. This means both have to compromise: if it isn’t needed or hanging on the walls, it gets moved to storage. Consequently, Daniel is even more

pleased by the bargains that do make it into the apartment. Next to the kitchen, in front of the oversized posters by Christopher Williams, you’ll find the classic tubular-steel B27, a Marcel Breuer table from 1929. Daniel is visibly happy as he reveals: “Someone posted it on the internet with a very bad photo. I bought it for 101.95 euros. What a crazy bargain!”

Daniel’s Marcel Breuer collection is his pride and joy. However, his eyes glow even brighter when he speaks of his son. Little Nikolai is growing up multilingual. He attends an English-language kindergarten and the nanny speaks German with him. Despite the long tradition of art within the Hug family, when the time comes, Nikolai will decide for himself what he wants to be. “Perhaps he’ll be a lawyer, perhaps an architect. Or a doctor. Doctor wouldn’t be bad. Then he could take care of me when I’m old,” Daniel says with a laugh. And who knows? Perhaps Daniel will even grow old in Cologne. The eternal traveler. The homeless one. He could certainly imagine it in any case.



artcologne.de

To Friendship

TEXT CELINA PLAG – PHOTOS MICHAEL KOHLS



Bartender Jörg Meyer and restaurateur Rainer Wendt enjoy high-quality drinks and food not only as business partners but also as friends. For this issue of COMPANION, the duo share their favorite food pairing: a drink and sandwich that go as well together as they do.

Alcohol brings people closer. Of this, Jörg Meyer and Rainer Wendt are firmly convinced: “People who drink together learn a lot about other people. For example, whether the other person is worth trusting. Alcohol consumption reveals our true character,” says Jörg. “In this respect, bars are ideal places for friendship and encounters,” adds Rainer — at least, that is, bars run in the way of this dream team with their cultivated European drinking culture — a feature present in no small degree.

A good ten years ago, they opened Le Lion – Bar de Paris near Hamburg City Hall, just across from the popular brasserie Café Paris, which Rainer, a seasoned veteran of Hanseatic gastronomy, has been running since the early 2000s. Jörg and Rainer had already known each other for a while at that point, and would often embark on pub tours together. “We were really into port wine back then. Port wine and cigars,” says Rainer, laughing. “It was never about being drunk for us,” Jörg adds, “but rather the path leading up to it. In a bar, you talk about everything. Our best ideas come to us there. We make important decisions at the bar.”

Le Lion itself is perhaps the best evidence that this strategy works well for the duo. Since its opening, the bar has received several awards, notably having been voted one of the “50 best bars in the world.” This is owed in part to one of Jörg’s liquid creations, the Gin Basil Smash, which has quickly become a cocktail icon since its invention in 2008. It’s not like the friends to rest on their laurels, however. They prefer to keep coming up with new inventions. In 2012, Jörg rediscovered the so-called highball, a beverage genre long forgotten. The highball is a short drink served in ice-cold glasses with massive ice cubes — a kind of espresso among alcoholic beverages, quickly mixed and ready to drink, but also effective thanks to its high alcohol proof content.

With the Boilerman Bar in Eppendorf, Hamburg, Jörg and Rainer have dedicated an entire location to the highball; a concept that has proved so successful that they’re also adapting it for the 25hours Hotels. And that makes for an excellent fit. After all, a sophisticated drinking culture has always been a top priority in hotel bars. The first Boilerman Bar opened at the 25hours Hotel Altes Hafenamit Hamburg, and in 2017 a further branch was added to Munich’s The Royal Bavarian, which quickly became a meeting place for

guests and locals alike — just like at the Cinchona Bar, found in the 25hours Hotel Langstrasse Zurich, which is also based around the highball concept. Jörg and Rainer have long since become 25hours Hotels bar experts.

It’s no wonder, then, that the duo was also involved in the planning of the new 25hours Hotel Das Tour Düsseldorf, for which they developed The Paris Club: a French-inspired pairing of a bar and, for the first time, a restaurant, with good drinks, classic fare, and new interpretations of Parisian bistro culture on the menu. When COMPANION asked Rainer and Jörg to contribute a recipe for this issue, they soon settled on a food pairing: a drink that’s complemented and completed by a dish — or is it the other way around? No matter. Either way, it’s akin to the well-balanced harmony of a close friendship.

For their COMPANION pairing, Jörg and Rainer have chosen a Dubonnet Highball based on the French aperitif Dubonnet. The drink is an aromatized wine on ice mixed with soda, “a light drink that we always drink even when we don’t really want to drink,” says Jörg with a laugh. After all, the two can’t afford to have a more persistent buzz in their everyday lives than their guests. The Merguez Frites sandwich is an exquisite match: a fast-food snack popular in France that is itself a culinary collaboration between French food culture, with its baguettes and fries, and the culinary influence of Moroccan immigrants through the spicy merguez sausage. The best thing about this food pairing? It can be prepared quickly, so there’s more time to spend with the friends you invite to share it with. Bon appétit!



For the Dubonnet Highball

- 50 ml Dubonnet Rouge
- 100 ml cold soda
- 1 large ice cube
- 1 fresh organic lemon
- lemon zest

Ready in no time. Place one or two large ice cubes into an iced glass. Add 50 ml Dubonnet Rouge, 100 ml ice-cold soda, and a few splashes of lemon juice for freshness. Garnish with a sliver of lemon zest — a final flourish that lends the drink a nice two-tone appearance.

Tip: for professionals, the quality of the ice cubes is crucial. The clearer they are, the slower they melt — and the less watery the highball tastes. Boil the water twice before freezing, or increase the sub-zero temperatures in the freezer.

For the Merguez Frites

- 1 medium baguette
- 2 merguez sausages
- 3 large potatoes
- 4 tbsp harissa
- Ketchup
- Oil for frying and deep frying

Quickly fry the merguez sausages so they are almost black when removed from the pan. In the meantime, cut open the baguette lengthwise and hollow it out slightly — the merguez will later be placed in the resulting groove. Brush the inside of the baguette with the slightly spicy harissa paste. If you like, add a little ketchup for extra flavor. Finally, top the sandwich with french fries. Anyone short on time can opt for frozen ones. If, on the other hand, you own a deep fryer, cut the potatoes into long sticks. They’ll also get crispy in the oven at 250 degrees Celsius. The spicy Merguez Frites is best enjoyed hot with the ice-cold Dubonnet Highball.



TEXT CELINA PLAG – PHOTOS MAX BRUNNERT

About one-fifth of all Japanese people in Germany live in and around Düsseldorf. No wonder, then, that this metropolitan region is also being shaped by Japanese culture. Over the years, the district around the centrally located Immermannstraße in particular has become a sort of “Little Tokyo” that attracts locals and tourists with culinary delicacies, ceramics, art, tea, and literature from Japan — reason enough for COMPANION to have look around and meet up with the community.



The table looks like a chaotic setting from an anime: countless small plates and cups, hardly larger than a doll's, cover almost every millimeter. Squeezing on equally small stools around the table, there are a handful of full-grown adults — and they don't play with puppets. Here at ANMO Art/Cha, in a quiet cross street of the bustling Immermannstraße in Düsseldorf's center, a Japanese tea tasting is taking place. The interested guests sip happily through the assortment of mild and bitter green teas, as well as through specialties of sweet and tart tea, matcha and earthy tasting pu-er.

The atmosphere is casual and cheerful, which is not always the case in the context of tea tasting. "Tea originally came to Japan through China and now has a tradition going back over a thousand years," says Motoko Dobashi. In classical Japanese tea ceremonies, there are strict rules and hierarchies. "We take a more relaxed view and want our customers to be able to enjoy their tea at home," says Motoko. "Here they get to know the variety and special features of tea. And customers are very interested in tea culture. For many, this is a completely new field. We notice that the appreciation of tea is increasing."

In addition to the tea selection from Japan and China, ANMO, founded by Motoko and Anna Friedel in 2017, also offers a large selection of old and new handmade ceramics, a small assortment of modern kimonos and fashion accessories, and "art," says Anna with a smile. "When we opened the shop, we knew we also wanted to be a gallery with changing exhibitions. But being Japanese is not a must for the artists," says Anna, laughing.

She and Motoko are both artists, so the idea of integrating a gallery was an obvious one. The friends got to know each other during their studies in Munich. Soon they traveled together to Japan and Hong Kong. Anna was fascinated by Japanese culture from an early age. She has been doing Asian martial arts as a competitive sport for years. "The philosophy and culture behind it cannot be excluded," she says.

Anna had moved to Düsseldorf a few years earlier "for love's sake." Her friend Motoko, who was living in Berlin, first had to be convinced to come to the Rhineland with her family. "For the children, it's also nice to get to know Japanese culture," Anna says. And nowhere else in Germany can they do this better than in Düsseldorf — Nippon on the Rhine. Intensive trade relations between Germany and Japan existed as early as the 19th century. After World War II, Japan's connections to the Rhine and Ruhr regions became particularly strong, as it was there that the war-ravaged nation found urgently needed steel and chemical products for reconstruction. Centrally located, Düsseldorf was suited as a commercial center, and starting in the 1950s, Japanese companies settled in the area. There are about 200 of these companies in Düsseldorf — and nearly 500 in the greater metropolitan area — making them a significant economic factor for the region.

No wonder the Japanese community here is so big. Approximately 6,500 people from Japan live in Düsseldorf. Compared to other minorities in the city, they're nowhere



near as numerous. Nevertheless, Japanese culture has a strong influence on city life. The quarter between the main station and the old town around Immermannstraße is known as "Little Tokyo" even beyond the city limits — and even on Google Maps the quarter is promoted as such. Between karaoke bars, ceramic shops, galleries, Japanese sport clubs, and medical centers, the right culinary offerings for locals and tourists has established itself here. Apart from the many Asian supermarkets, which are quite popular with all Düsseldorfers, the density of excellent restaurants has often received praise.

While in the rest of Germany Japanese cuisine is still equated with sushi, in Düsseldorf they know that the country consisting of over 7,000 islands has much more to offer. In addition to Japanese bakeries and shops, where snacks such as the stuffed onigiri rice balls are served, the quarter also offers elegant omakase restaurants such as Nagaya. Similar to a tea ceremony, an omakase menu consists of a set of several courses. The guest does not choose, but rather leaves the decision in the hands of the sushi master — and by doing so also expresses respect for the cook. This is eating according to the principle of politeness, so to speak.

Ramen, a hearty and comparatively cheap noodle soup, is particularly popular on Immermannstraße. Long queues often form in front of the countless soup kitchens of "Little Tokyo." A small eatery, with cozy wooden furniture,

menus with Japanese characters on the walls, and an open kitchen, seems to steam at any time of day. The smells of strong broths infuse the air as guests in the chock-full space eat enthusiastically from their bowls, which are varyingly topped with chicken, beef, pork belly, seaweed, Chinese cabbage, mushrooms, and half an egg. For dessert, there's ice cream with sesame or matcha.

However, Japanese life in the city is not limited to the drag down Immermannstraße. EKO House is an important cultural hotspot in Niederkassel, a residential area where many Japanese people live and where the Japanese school is also located. The community house offers Buddhist-based events and introduces the traditional Japanese way of life. In addition to language classes, courses in calligraphy, Japanese dance, and ikebana — the art of flower arranging — are also available. A visit is worthwhile even just to browse the library, or to have a look at the golden interior of the adjacent temple. It's the only temple of Jōdo Shinshū, one of the largest Japanese schools of Buddhism, in Europe. The tiny Japanese-style temple garden attached to it attracts countless visitors, especially during the spring and summer months.

But as a Japanese person in Düsseldorf, you don't necessarily have too much to do with traditional teachings or temple life. "Our Japan can mostly be found at home," says Yuta Maruyama as he whisks past Anna and Motoko's tea

salon. Yuta came to Düsseldorf as an infant and grew up here. "At home, we eat and speak Japanese. As a child, I read Japanese children's books and watched series," he says. But Yuta only came into contact with the community as a teenager. "That's not necessarily because the community is particularly closed. However, many Japanese only stay in Düsseldorf for three to four years, mostly because of their father's work," says Yuta. "They know the exact date of departure when they arrive. The children attend the Japanese school so that they don't miss the connection when they return. That makes it hard to make contacts there."

Yuta first met a few Japanese friends through his older sister and began to get interested in Japanese pop culture with them. "It's nice to be able to share cultural roots with friends," he says today. Yuta also pursues a particularly exciting profession. He's a magician! He always has a deck of cards with him and is able to demonstrate his skills on the spot. It's a real pleasure to watch him swirl his cards through the air, skillfully making them disappear and reappear. "It's not a typical Japanese job," says Yuta, laughing. "But in fact, people play a lot of cards in Japan. While friends had the TV on, we played cards for family evenings."

Michiko Shida hasn't had much contact with the Japanese community for a long time, too. "A lot has changed in the meantime, but it's much easier with social media today," she says. Michiko came to Düsseldorf over 20 years ago at the age of 18 — quite by chance, after an acquaintance had recommended the city to her — and ended up staying. She started out working in gastronomy and formed an international and art-loving circle of friends. Then she completed an apprenticeship as a ceramist. "I've always been interested in that," says Michiko. "Pottery is quite common in Japan and you practically grow up with it." Nevertheless, she learned pottery from a German master potter. "And he was also inspired by the Greek style," says Michiko, laughing, as she spins a cup on the potter's wheel in her brightly lit studio.

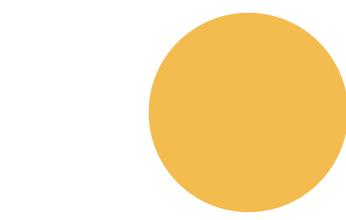
But her bowls, cups, and plates, which she has been selling under her own name since 2009, and which are stacked up to the ceiling in a light-colored wooden shelf, are "in heart and soul Japanese." This is perhaps because the forms are reduced to the essentials and the designs show no wild patterns, but are rather fired in modest colors. Michiko's ceramics can also be bought in Anna and Motoko's shop. Because somehow, everyone in Düsseldorf's Japanese world ends up knowing one another.



The philosophy and culture behind it



cannot be excluded."



Asian Edibles

Supermarkets such as Dae-Yang offer a wide range of Asian groceries and takeaway dishes from the fresh-food counter, as well as a large selection of Japanese rice wine, rice cookers, steamers, and whatever the culinary heart desires.

➤ [dae-yang.de](#)

Avant-Garde

Yohji Yamamoto and Comme des Garçons are Japanese pioneers of contemporary fashion. With the Düsseldorf bag label ESDE, the avant-garde style is making an appearance in the Rhineland, too.

➤ [esde-bags.com](#)

Buddhism

Those interested can learn more about traditional Japanese life and Buddhist roots at the EKO House in Niederkassel.

➤ [eko-haus.de](#)

Celebrate Japan

Hundreds of thousands of visitors are attracted by the annual Japan Day in Düsseldorf, which traditionally ends with brilliant fireworks. In 2018, the cultural event will take place on May 26.

➤ [japantag-duesseldorf-nrw.de](#)

Karaoke

Karaoke is actually very popular not only in Japan, but in many Asian countries. You don't have to be a good singer either. The Modern Times karaoke bar at Immermannstraße 41 is quite authentic.

Magic

Admittedly, magic is not necessarily a Japanese affair — but Yuta Maruyama is a fabulous Japanese magician with the name Kaitokid!

➤ [kaitokid.de](#)

Manga

A real art form in Japan. Takagi offers a large selection of manga comics — and books on Zen and Japanese literature.

➤ [takagi-books.com](#)

Omakase

The polite meal ceremony can be experienced in the fancy restaurant Nagaya. If you're after exquisite sushi, you'll find it at Yabase.

➤ [nagaya.de](#)

➤ [yabase-ddf.com](#)

Pottery

One of Japan's finest crafts is ceramics. No wonder, since for tea or the many small dishes of Japanese cuisine, you simply need nice tableware — made by Michiko Shida, for example.

➤ [michiko-shida.com](#)

Ramen

The steaming Japanese noodle soup is becoming more and more popular in European regions — Düsseldorf has loved this hearty dish for years. At Takumi, you'll find some particularly delicious versions.

➤ [facebook.com/TakumiDusseldorf](#)

Tea Ceremony

Tea and the related rituals have a long tradition in Japan. At ANMO Art/Cha, you can experience tea in a modern way and admire art at the same time.

➤ [anmo-art-cha.com](#)



Düsseldorf’s Creative Legacy

CONCEPT **ERIK NISSEN JOHANSEN** — TEXT **ALEXANDER SCHOLZ** — ILLUSTRATION **STEPHANIE F. SCHOLZ**

As a long-established innovation hotspot, Düsseldorf may surprise you yet. Just ask Erik Nissen Johansen. The founder of award-winning Swedish creative agency Stylt, which recently designed the new 25hours Hotel Das Tour Düsseldorf, was amazed to discover the Rhine metropolis’s rich history in art and culture. For COMPANION, he selected five influential Düsseldorfers that shaped — and continue to shape — the city, if not the world.



ART	LITERATURE	FASHION	MUSIC	CULTURE
Anna Maria Luisa de’ Medici	Heinrich Heine	Albert Eickhoff	Kraftwerk	Philipp Maiburg
In the late 17th century, Düsseldorf’s creative soul was awakened by a prominent patron. Upon joining her husband, Elector Johann Wilhelm II, in the Rhineland city, Anna Maria Luisa de’ Medici of Tuscany, the last descendant of the powerful House of Medici, began transforming her new hometown into a cultural beacon. During her 26-year reign, she sponsored countless artists and musicians, opened new theaters, and helped fill the city castle’s art gallery with a huge selection of paintings and sculptures. Pieces from the collection as well as prized work by Rubens, ZERO, and Picasso are now housed in Düsseldorf’s Museum Kunstpalast and NRW Forum, making them two of the most prestigious art museums in the world.	Born at Bolkerstraße 53 (now the Heine Haus) during the French Revolution, the 19th-century poet Heinrich Heine would eventually become one of Germany’s preeminent Enlightenment thinkers and arguably Düsseldorf’s most celebrated citizen. During his lifetime, however, he was a maverick: a liberal voice in reactionary Germany who, after initial successes with lyric poems and prose, eventually saw his writings censored and then banned. In 1830, Heine emigrated to his spiritual home of Paris. There, he wrote his famed “Germany. A Winter’s Tale,” a satirical travelogue published in 1844 that is equal parts love letter to his home country and pointed critique of its rampant militarism. Steeped in wit and irony, the epic in verse form marks a highpoint in German political poetry and remains relevant to this day.	Of all the nicknames Albert Eickhoff earned over his lifelong career, “the nose” is probably the most fitting one. The Westphalian fashion czar was the first to introduce Germans to Italian designers such as Giorgio Armani, Prada, and Gucci, which he did in the 1960s. He was also an early patron of Gianni Versace, organizing his very first fashion show in 1978 and encouraging the now legendary creator to launch his own brand. A move to the then fashion capital of Düsseldorf in the early 1980s saw Eickhoff ascend from trendsetter to haute couture magnate for good. Before its closure in 2013, his prominent boutique on Königsallee earned up to a whopping 25 million euros a year. Today, the so-called “King of Kö” is remembered as one of luxury fashion’s last grand seigneurs — a charming socialite who was an entrepreneur, entertainer, and tastemaker all in one.	From the iconic lines repeated in their 1974 hit “Autobahn” to the robot doppelgängers that so often took their place on stage — Kraftwerk remains one of Germany’s biggest contributions to contemporary music and pop culture. Founded by two visionary Düsseldorfers, Ralf Hütter and Florian Schneider in 1970, the formation’s singular sound of dreamy synthetic melodies and precision-engineered grooves primed the world for electronic music (“Autobahn” was the first German song to crack the American Top 40) and has influenced virtually every musician since. So say the critics: for some, Kraftwerk is “the most important group since the Beatles” (New York Times), and for others, “the reason music sounds like it does today” (BBC).	After touring festivals across Europe as one half of the drum and bass duo Phoneheads in the early aughties, former DJ Philipp Maiburg decided to enrich the “sound of Düsseldorf” with a music festival of his own. In 2006, Open Source Festival premiered its signature mix of avant-garde and pop for a few dozen music lovers in the pouring rain. In 2017, there were thousands. Over the past twelve years, Maiburg has succeeded in cultivating a beloved music gathering that’s both intimate and world-class. It’s not only the sound of greats like The Roots, Beirut, Hot Chip, or Metronomy, however, that transforms the city’s racing tracks every July: a cultural program also showcases a wealth of regional talent while Düsseldorf’s art students “hijack” the festival setting to explore timely questions each year.
Stylt is a creative agency based in Gothenburg, Sweden. Founded in 1991 by Norwegian visionary Erik Nissen Johansen, its team of artists, designers, architects, interior designers, engineers, developers, and even copywriters tackles projects throughout Scandinavia and beyond. With their designs, such as the new 25hours Hotel Das Tour Düsseldorf, Erik always tells a story — one of the reasons he was immediately on board when COMPANION asked him to collaborate on a story for this issue.				
» stylt.se				



TEXT **MANUEL ALMEIDA VERGARA** — PHOTOS **MAX BRUNNERT**

Under the respective monikers Pam Pengco, Kimberly Kiss, Marcella Rockefeller, and Laila Licious, Olli, Kim, Marcel, and David have been performing as the group “Real Queens” in Cologne since 2016. And it’s not only locals along the Rhine who’ve heard of them — a video of he drag queens went viral on an international scale. The video shows the four of them engaged in what they do best: linking fun with political awareness. It’s particularly fitting in the colorful city of Cologne. But the Real Queens’ voices are not restricted to the parameters of the queer scene. Their shows, parties, and their own web series have one thing in common — undertones of social criticism.



“It is precisely in dark times like at the moment where good humor and colorful personalities are needed.”

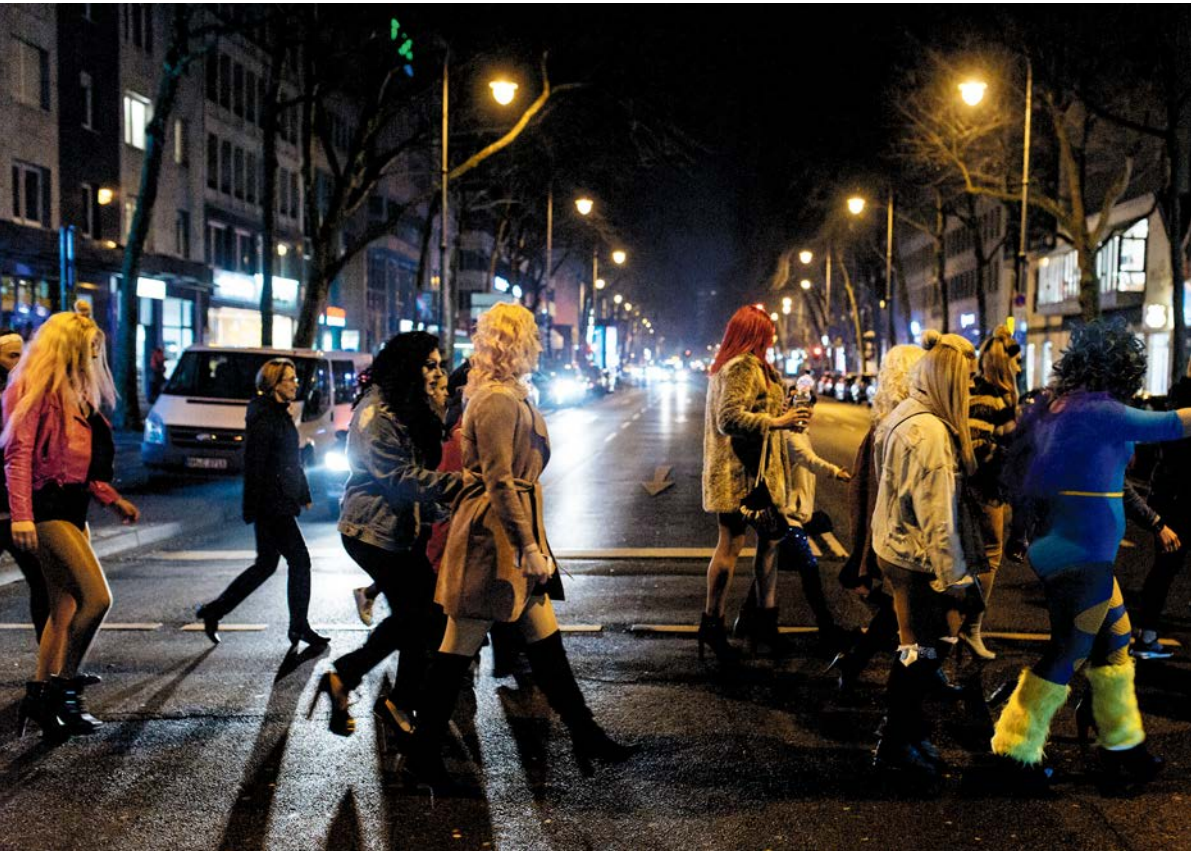
COMPANION: You advertise your shows as a “mix of party and performance — but with a clear message.” What is the message you want to get across?
Marcel: At our events we want to celebrate diversity. Everyone should be able to be themselves exactly as they are, without fear.
David: We simply can’t understand why anyone would be against us living our lives as we wish. It’s still an issue!
Do your concerns extend beyond the queer scene? At the moment there are lots of issues you could campaign about.
Marcel: Of course this message is transferable to other areas of life. The issue of acceptance is very topical at the moment, particularly in the face of the refugee situation.
David: At the end of the day, the questions we devote ourselves to are not only connected with the queer scene. They deal with racism, body shaming, and the marginalization of older people in public life. By welcoming absolutely everyone to our shows and parties we are setting an example that goes way beyond the scene, and it is widely understood in this light.
Olli: For example, last year we produced a video based on the maxim “Human Rights First.” It was a clear quotation from a point of tension that had developed at the time in the USA. We played on Donald Trump’s “America First” election slogan. The video went viral and was also shared in America. It would be hard to believe that only the LGBTQ+ scene saw it. This remains our primary target group, but we are always seeking to broaden ourselves thematically.
What role can your art play in a polarized society like the one we’re experiencing at the moment?
Marcel: First, we can bring joy to many people. It is precisely in dark times like at the moment where good humor and colorful personalities are needed. We constantly find that our fans — for whom things aren’t going

so well — contact us on Facebook. These are people to whom we give courage and a reason to laugh.
David: The mood in America is shifting, as it is in Europe. Right-wing movements are gaining traction everywhere. We want to oppose them, so that’s what we’re doing.
Does this very mood not make it hard for you to be in sufficiently good humor yourselves for your shows?
David: It’s what drives us. Of course we’re sometimes afraid or worried when we see the growth of the Right, which is in complete contrast to our goals. But that’s precisely what reminds us that we need to continue. It’s important to us to demonstrate that we, too, are still part of this world. That there’s still a fun, colorful part. And that togetherness is so much more important than getting worked up about the fact that a couple more refugees have arrived in Cologne.
Marcel: Both things can be easily combined. A friend of ours goes out and about as an impersonator of performance artist Conchita Wurst, collecting donations for refugee accommodation. He brings food, blankets, and clothing into homes dressed in his drag queen outfit. The people there are so grateful and our friend has hardly experienced any resistance. And that shouldn’t be taken for granted, considering that the majority of Syrians have hardly had any contact with our art form before. Bringing joy and promoting tolerance — if politics can’t manage it, then it’s our job.
So is it also about transferring the values of the queer scene, such as tolerance and exuberance, to other levels of community? Setting an example through the LGBTQ+ scene?
Marcel: It can at least be one good example. But we certainly don’t want to hide the fact that it is this very scene that often lacks tolerance. You only have to click through gay dating profiles to see how many boys say they don’t want to meet Asian or black people.

David: There’s often a misunderstanding that as a gay stronghold, things in Cologne are easy and without conflict. But I still wouldn’t dare to travel two stops on the underground alone whilst dressed in drag. Of course, it’s fine most of the time. But the risk of getting angry responses is always there. That’s something I’m afraid of, unlikely as it is. But that’s one of our jobs: not everyone has to find what we do great, wonderful, and exciting. But everyone has to accept it. I just want to be able to travel to work in my own clothes.
Marcel: At the end of the day, someone who goes to work in a suit wears just as much of a costume as we do, if he normally hangs out at home in his vest with his tattooed arms on display. A suit is also a costume, an impersonation — no different to us.
How important is the city of Cologne for your program?
Olli: Cologne is my home, even though I don’t come from here. I’d like to link this sense of home with my art. All four of us integrate the Cologne mentality into our appearances. Here you can happily ask anyone for directions and you’ll get an answer straight away. You might not end up where you wanted to go, but at least you’ll have had a friendly conversation.
David: Cologne is publicly perceived as a tolerant place to live, which is why our show fits in well here. That’s also because Cologne has long been known as a fun Carnival city. It would certainly be harder to get our message across in a village with only a thousand inhabitants.
Through the Cologne Carnival and its accompanying speeches, the city also has a very old tradition of combining fun with political awareness.
David: For me, Carnival was the deciding factor in starting to engage in this art form. The first time all four of us went out dressed in drag for Carnival we realized how much fun it was. At some point we realized we could

earn money from it, and over time we added the idea of using it as a way of political campaigning.
But you can play a part in politics without a costume. Political cabaret, for example, does not only involve cross-dressing.
Marcel: For me, my stage persona is the appropriate mouthpiece. I believe I am heard better in this way. After all, calling for more acceptance and tolerance whilst wearing such a costume is very authentic.
Kim: You can also detach yourself more easily when in costume. If you make a stupid comment dressed in drag, people celebrate it. It makes it easier to get your concerns across concisely and with vigour.
David: For some people, a costume also serves as protection. Many drag queens are shy as men but very eccentric in costume. Nobody comes to our shows to recite the Lord’s Prayer with us. They know that at drag shows we get to the point, and that sometimes we can be ironic and cynical. We don’t stop for anyone, no minority is spared, everyone can be a target. And that’s exactly what people expect from our characters.
How did these characters develop?
David: I discovered the type of drag queen who makes everything seem bigger and more extreme than a normal woman. You grow into it, and the character grows with you. We’d rather never have to see photos from the times when we indiscriminately dressed up as women for Carnival again.
Kim: I’d say that we have since grown into a saying from the film “To Wong Foo”: “We have way too much fashion sense for just one gender.”
The film clarifies the key question of the difference between a man in women’s clothes and a drag queen. How would you explain it?
Marcel: Drag is an art form that develops quite differently in each individual and can become independent.

“At our events we want to celebrate diversity.”



To me Marcella is not a real person — I can easily separate her from my real life. But there are many cross-dressing artists who lose themselves in these characters. When we first started doing this at Carnival, we could never have imagined professionalizing it to the extent we do now. After all, we were dressing up as Amy Winehouse and Lady Gaga — it didn’t have anything to do with our own characters at that point.
Yet everything began with Amy Winehouse and Lady Gaga. Is the inspiration for a character always a female role model, or can a drag character be created in and of itself?
Olli: Great divas like Beyoncé, Cher, or Lady Gaga, whose music we also use, are certainly an inspiration for every drag, especially as far as the look is concerned. It’s just that it’s presumably a bit easier for Beyoncé, Cher, and Lady Gaga, with their budgets and stylists, than for us with our sequins and glue guns.
That sounds quite time consuming and expensive.
David: Shoes in our sizes are bloody expensive! We get through an incredible number of tights. We need underwear, artificial breasts, outfits, makeup, wigs. You have to bear in mind that nothing about our characters, from head to toe, is real. Many people who want to book us for appearances and pay us in sparkling wine and guest lists don’t seem to realize this. That won’t pay my bills and living expenses.
Couldn’t you get by with fewer outfits?
David: No, it’s precisely the perfect illusion that fascinates people so much. Drag is about more than simply squeezing yourself into a pig costume for Carnival. A huge amount of work and effort goes into it, which most people can’t even begin to imagine.

TOMORROW



IS ANOTHER

Her chase occurs between the Rhine and Wupper rivers: Eva Gödel is constantly on a manhunt. She doesn't care about current beauty ideals, it's all about having an expressive character. Which is precisely why the faces of her boys on many catwalks are causing a sensation — on an international level. It is fitting, then, that the Düsseldorf resident chose a common English saying for the name of her model agency in Cologne: Tomorrow Is Another Day.

TEXT CELINA PLAG

DAY

You can learn a thing or two from young people's rooms. As individually curated presentation surfaces, the walls reflect the reality of life and dream worlds of a whole generation. Here there's a poster from a teen magazine, there a photo of a best friend, or a souvenir from last year's summer camp. Just like the salon-style hang, maturing characters make collages of space and spatiality to reflect their adolescent self-positioning. The pale boy band member or sweet pop singer becomes a role model for attitude, style, and beauty ideals. Usually, that is.

Those who think outside the box early on have the ability to put people who are somehow different into perspective. Eva Gödel, for example, flicked past the glossy posters. The Cologne native tore pages showing completely different faces out her magazines. Bravo teen magazine didn't feature in her world. As a child of the late 1970s, Eva instead preferred to devour the London subculture bibles *i-D* and *Dazed* from their very first issues. Strong stuff for a young girl. But it was precisely the radical photography that impressed Eva from an early age: fashion images intended to represent evidence of a counter culture instead of the mainstream. She still had some ads on her walls — such as Steven Meisel's images for CK One and the Austrian designer Helmut Lang's campaigns. In her eyes, the skinny look was preferable to Davidoff's Cool Water body-building physique.

And that's where it all started — with Eva's own poster-slayered walls. Just like so many careers, hers was influenced by her teenage bedroom. But at that time she was thinking about everything but the future. Eva lived for the present. In the early years of hip-hop and techno, she learned to skateboard at 15 and went out all night. At 16 she got a part-time job at Made In — which she describes as the "coolest clothes shop in town" at the time. It was the port of call for traveling DJs and everyone who wanted to keep up with fashion in the Rhineland. "Luckily I was good at school, so I was able to work a lot from an early age. I also traveled a lot," Eva says today. "My boss at the time liked my style and sent me to New York to bring back samples of brands for him that he wanted to buy, then later I was sent to London." Back then she'd never have guessed that one day she would run her own modeling agency.

Until it happened almost by chance, in 2001. Eva founded her first agency, Nine Daughters and a Stereo, together with photographer Kira Bunse. Eva actually studied communication design in Wuppertal under well-known lecturers, such as the art theoretician Bazon Brock. During her studies Eva had often approached quasi models for artists and photographers she was friends with and arranged projects. Nine Daughters and a Stereo was the manifestation of her university thesis: "I thought that if I simply combined everything I had done for my degree, then that would create the ideal modeling agency in my view." Actually, it could just as easily have been about corporate design and the style of photography, about the staging of interesting people on a website. "I put it online and thought to myself: It's worth a go." And so Eva sent off a few emails to different brands, including the designer Stephan Schneider. "He booked straight away," says Eva, who also runs the creative agency Cheewing the Sun in Wuppertal with two former university friends. "I simply put the models on a bus and drove to Paris with them. It all went well." And suddenly there was one customer after another. Since then the whole thing has been run on a completely different level. "I've just been to the Paris Men's Fashion Week with over 80 of my lads. It's a bit like a school trip." You can picture it exactly.

Eva has carried out castings for hundreds of fashion shows in the 17 years that she has worked as a modeling agent — including for the best international fashion houses. She regularly works with photographers such as Willy Vanderperre and stylists like Alistair Mackie, and she supplies models for campaigns and editorials. The books for *Tomorrow Is Another Day* are in keeping with this: around 250 men and only a few women, all of them individual, thin, hollow-backed, sometimes a bit lopsided and crooked — faces with character. In this way Eva is helping to broaden the definition of the male beauty ideal. Take Artur for example. He has long thin arms that hang down from sloping shoulders and his ears are big. He's a hit: Artur can be seen in the autumn campaigns by Prada, Dior Homme, and MSGM. Then there's Milos, whose look evokes smoky clubs, scratchy guitars, and indie bands. The tattooed Milos always looks as if he's just spent the last three nights partying. Perhaps he has been. Leon, however, has the face of a choir boy. His pale almond skin and blond curls are equally sought-after at the moment. Eva looks beyond social backgrounds and cultures when casting her models. And you can tell. So much variety is hard to find in one place. That's why Eva scouts everywhere — at rock concerts, in the supermarket, on the streets. The 41 year old is permanently on the lookout for new faces but doesn't stick to a particular mold. What does she like? "It can be anything. Special ears, a certain nose, interesting hair." There's just one thing all her boys seem to have in common: none of them are completely perfect. It wasn't just flicking through the pages of magazines like *i-D* or *Dazed* that honed Eva's feel for it: "I was originally inspired by the Larry Clark exhibition at the Museum Ludwig in Cologne in 1992. I was totally blown away by his black-and-white photographs from the 60s and 70s," she explains. Clark's images are spontaneous snapshots of flawed bodies having sex and shots of drug houses. Taking heroin as a fashionable hobby with the comedown an aesthetic premise — that's how things used to be. Now, of course, they stick to its pure fashion translation.

When Eva started in 2001, her type of individual model didn't really exist. That played into her hands. She still finds most of her models in Cologne and Düsseldorf, where she now lives in the Oberkassel district. Eva, who likes wearing Céline, Prada, and Jil Sander, has never thought about moving. "I travel a lot, but I'm always glad to be back here where I don't have to spend every evening meeting my clients in restaurants," she says. And the infrastructure in Düsseldorf is outstanding: "Thanks to the airport there are excellent connections, whether to Paris, London, or New York."

It would appear there's a disproportionate number of genetically gifted young men in the Rhineland. Well, lots of boys with small flaws, in any case. "Perhaps it's just that the cities here are the right size. There's a good art uni, lots of people the right age," Eva says. Actually, it was the same during her time at school: "There was a certain type in every class who would have been a wonderful fit with my agency." It's a pity that Eva wasn't on the look out for models back then. In fact many of her models today are still at school. "But things don't really start in earnest for us until they are 16," she says. The bean poles with wonky noses and pouting lips still need a bit of maturity. They need to get up early, be reliable at turning up for castings, and cope on their own in unfamiliar places. There's a lot of things that younger boys don't usually enjoy. Eva is therefore often more than just a booker and a scout; she has to act as a minder for her boys. You don't know in advance who is already capable of taking responsibility for themselves and others.

When she looks back at all the faces she has discovered over the years, one factor has always been decisive: "Their look is exactly right for a particular moment — that's what beauty is to me." And mostly this moment occurs during adolescence. And yet, even some of Eva's old — or rather, older — models are currently doing well in business again — thanks to Miuccia Prada, apparently. A few seasons ago the designer started booking adults again, and actors. And whatever Miuccia does, others do too. "At the moment the most diverse characters are doing well," says Eva.

But at some point it has to come to an end, even for boys with beautiful flaws: "When they are younger, the great thing is that they don't need to worry about their body," Eva says. "They can eat at McDonald's every day and drink a six pack of beer every evening without affecting their appearance. But when they lose their hair or their waistline expands, then it's all over for most male models," she laughs. That's why she advises her models not to do the job full-time in the long term. Most of them listen to her and do something else as well. Ivo, for example, works as an engineer for a car dealership. The family man has modeled for Prada. "For most of them modeling is just a hobby or a very well-paid second job," Eva says.

How well paid, exactly? Eva doesn't want to say. But if a model is constantly booked for important shows and large campaigns, he can certainly afford to buy something nice, a first car or even his first house, perhaps. And Eva? "I want to be successful for me and my lads. And if I weren't, I'd look for another job," she says. "I enjoy what I do, but I'm not 20 anymore." Still young enough to enjoy the school trips with her models, however.

Making the City of Tomorrow

IN COLLABORATION WITH MINI

More connected, more enjoyable, more livable — startups can play a vital role when it comes to reimagining city life. URBAN-X, a startup accelerator founded by MINI and run in partnership with the venture fund Urban Us, helps the best city innovators succeed. Every six months, the program invites up to ten young companies into its offices and fabrication lab at A/D/O, a bustling creative space in Brooklyn also run by MINI. Here, the entrepreneurs join a twenty-week

“boot camp” that focuses on product design, development, network-building, and mentorship. The perks: a \$100,000 investment, access to pilot customers, and cutting-edge prototyping facilities, and the expertise of world-class engineers, designers, and marketing specialists. So far, URBAN-X has helped more than two dozen innovations to reach the market. COMPANION selected four that have the potential to make life better in your own neighborhood.

Nello

Sometimes it's the little fixes that make (urban) life a lot better. For example: do you keep missing parcels because you weren't there to grant access to your building when the courier rang? Enter nello, the Munich-based startup that offers remote and keyless access with a smart retrofit: a small hardware add-on, nello one, upgrades your intercom with Wi-Fi and tells your phone whenever somebody rings the bell. Swipe to unlock your building's front door from wherever you are, or have it auto-open for friends and family via assigned virtual keys. Assign one to yourself and enter with your keys in your pocket.

nello.io



Farmshelf

Urban farming for the smartphone generation: Farmshelf's vertical indoor farms enable everyone to grow food right where they live, work, or eat — with little to no skill required. They come with your choice of seed pods and, once plugged in, do most of the growing automatically. Better yet, the Farmshelves' highly optimized conditions, owing to custom LEDs and advanced nutrient systems, ensure year-round growth at double to triple the rate of traditional agriculture while using 90% less water. They're smart, too: the shelves “stream” farming updates to your phone and alert you when it's time to harvest.

farmshelf.com



WearWorks

Working towards the future of haptic interfaces, WearWorks invented an affordable navigation device for the blind and visually impaired. WAYBAND™ is a smartwatch look-alike that guides users via vibration — and their phone. A mobile app tracks route and position using high-precision GPS, while the WAYBAND™ provides directions with gentle Morse-like cues (four quick buzzes signal a left turn, two long buzzes signal a right turn). In between turns, a pulse-defined “haptic corridor” ensures the owner stays on track. Last November, early adopter Simon Wheatcroft demonstrated the technology's capacity to empower: wearing the latest WearWorks prototypes, the blind runner mastered large parts of the New York Marathon unaided and unassisted.

wearworks.com/Urban-X



Industrial/Organic

Nearly half of all the food we produce ends up in the garbage — a resource the founders of Industrial/Organic no longer want to let go to waste. Their proposed urban network of modular micro-refineries breaks down organic matter six times faster than conventional methods at a fraction of the cost, reclaiming water (food waste is 75% moisture), energy, and nutrients in the process. The first major city to adopt the system was New York, where Industrial/Organic will open their first commercial-scale facility this spring.

industrialorganic.com



URBAN-X

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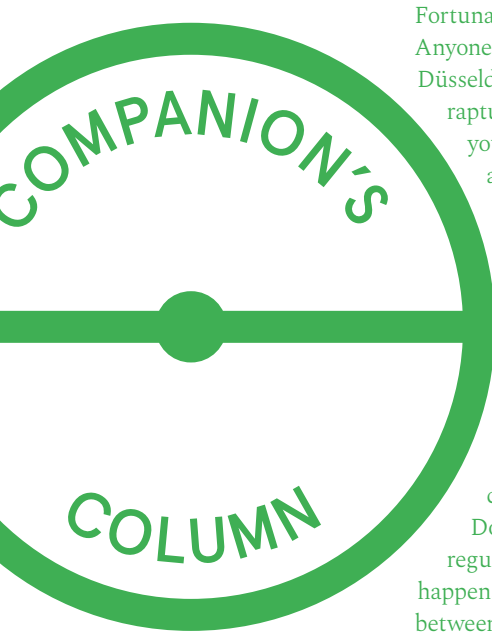
TEXT GARETH JOSWIG

A long-standing rivalry unites Cologne and Düsseldorf — one that’s tangible throughout both cities; in their history, sport, and even their punk culture.

Rivalry makes many things easier. Having a clear enemy gives structure to your day and fills your life with purpose. How else can you explain the fact that primary school children in Düsseldorf are taught about the alleged wickedness of the inhabitants of Cologne as their first historical reference? Let's be honest: nobody is really interested in the Battle of Worringen from the year twelve hundred and so-and-so.

The battle, however, is said to be the ridiculous origin of a feud between the cities of Düsseldorf and Cologne. Of course, from the perspective of a bunch of old knights who would be stabbed to death with pitchforks, the battle for whatever succession or key rights along the

Take Campino, the self-proclaimed "professional teenager" and lead singer of Die Toten Hosen. Even the name of the punk band, whose members are all avid fans of the football team Fortuna Düsseldorf, takes a jab at their unbeloved neighbors. The Cologne cabaret artist Jürgen Becker once said that "in the village on the Düssel" the prevailing music is all "Tote Hose" (dead boring). And there you have it: the band's name. It comes as no surprise, then, that at a concert performed in Cologne, Die Toten Hosen once borrowed the words of Marius Müller-Westernhagen to sing: "I'm pleased I'm not a Cologner."



Rhine probably didn't appear quite as silly as it does over 700 years later. But perceived from afar, the hostility between Cologne and Düsseldorf might seem to be the equivalent of a neighborly dispute between two cantankerous pensioners about the height of a hibiscus hedge.

The friction between the two cities has lasted centuries, and for many Cologne and Düsseldorf natives, it is of some importance — even if it is not always seen as a deadly serious matter. When it comes to beer, however, things get heated. The question of which tastes better, Alt or Kölsch beer, is a majorly contentious issue. The same goes for whether, after refuelling with numerous Kölsch or Alt beers, you should slur the greeting "Alaa!" or "Helau" at Carnival. Evidence of the friendly rivalry between the two cities, located 40 kilometers from each other, can be found in every important part of life: pop songs, punk, Carnival, ice hockey, and football.

When a Düsseldorf journalist wrote in the newspaper Die Welt that "If you ever end up at the hustle and bustle of Carnival in Cologne, you'll quickly notice that the Geneva Convention falls short," he didn't have to wait long for an answer from one of his colleagues in Cologne: "We Cologners appear almost harmless when we say that Düsseldorfers are rich, snobby, dumb know-it-alls, who drink their disgusting brews in their MedienHafen docklands on their sludgy Rhine water."

The thing is, of course, that this same sludgy Rhine water has already flowed through Cologne 40 kilometers upriver. With anecdotes like these, the rivalry takes on the character of two 13 year olds teasing each other, bickering on bumper cars at a funfair, hopelessly smitten. It's just that these cities' puberty stage hasn't yet come to an end. As an outsider, it's tempting to shout in

Düsseldorf, found neither dialect particularly attractive. He called the Cologne "Kölsch" dialect one "which sounds, and almost smells, like rotten eggs." And of the language of his home town, the Francophile author alleged that you can notice "the croaking of the frogs in the Dutch swamps." Well, well.

On the other hand, the ferocity felt in the Revier or other Ruhrpott derbies doesn't extend to the football rivalry between Cologne and Düsseldorf. Perhaps it's a sign that they secretly don't find each other so bad after all. The derby between Cologne and Düsseldorf is certainly

not one of the most volatile throughout football history — simply because it has occurred too rarely in the past decades. Cologne mainly plays at a higher level whilst Düsseldorf kicks about the lower leagues. The end of the 70s marked an exception. Two DFB cup final matches between 1. FC Cologne and Fortuna Düsseldorf are equally memorable. The first one, held in 1978, was won by FC Cologne, but Fortuna got their revenge in 1980. Anyone who recounts the matches in Düsseldorf is bound to go into rapture at the thought of the young Klaus Allofs's moustache and the record-holding player Gerd Zewe. It's the same for Cologners with then-young

Pierre Littbarski's mullet and Dieter Müller's goals. This all seems benign compared to the fans of Dortmund and Schalke, who regularly demonstrate what happens when a bit of teasing between opponents turns into blunt chauvinism by beating each other up despite a large police contingent. Which isn't to say, of course, that supporters of Fortuna and FC Cologne always behave themselves: FC Cologne fans, for example, saved themselves the hassle of a trip to the toilet during a match against Schalke 04 and filled the empty beer tankards instead. Yes, with number ones and twos. And, as one might fear, for the purpose of throwing at fans of the opposition. We'd prefer they stuck to their metaphorical teasing on the bumper cars.

A small olive branch was offered in the name of mutual understanding by a group of students from Cologne, who, in 2009, attempted to reduce

the feud's severity by collecting commonly held misbeliefs on their website under the heading: "Cologne Loves Düsseldorf and Düsseldorf Loves Cologne." In short, they claimed that there was no truth to the enmity: "The error possibly lies in insufficient insight into historical events, false interpretations of Carnival speeches, propaganda by separatists on the left bank of the Rhine, or a complete lack of understanding of Rhinish humor."

The project wasn't completely successful, however. When international pop star Adele appeared in concert in Cologne in 2016, she invited a ten-year-old girl up onto the stage during her show. The pop diva asked the girl where she came from.

Unfortunately the girl gave the wrong answer: "Düsseldorf." The Cologne audience reacted with booing and whistling. Directed at a ten year old. Adele, shocked by the intensity of this Rhinish vivacity, would probably have liked to grab a pitchfork herself as she said the only thing there really is to say in this entire debate: "Get over it."

Gareth Joswig is an editor at Taz and drinks neither Alt nor Kölsch. As a Werder-Bremen fan, our columnist enjoys a pint of bitter and the rivalry with HSV. He's been a local journalist in Bremen since the completion of his degree in history and sociology in Potsdam. Other than that, Gareth is really good at foosball and the lawn game Kubb, at which he remains undefeated.

➤ @garethmetik

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BEDBURG-HAU, GERMANY

Moyland Castle
Am Schloss 4
Monday 11:00–17:00 (just the historic garden)
Tuesday–Friday 11:00–18:00
Saturday–Sunday 10:00–18:00
➤ [moyland.de](#)

BERLIN, GERMANY

25hours Hotel Bikini Berlin
Budapester Straße 40

C/O Berlin
Hardenbergstraße 22–24
Monday–Sunday 11:00–20:00
➤ [co-berlin.org](#)

Tropez Kiosk
Wiesenstraße 1
June 2–September 2, 2018
Monday–Sunday: 10:00–18:00
➤ [tropeztropez.de](#)

BONN, GERMANY

Federal Art and Exhibition Hall Bonn
Friedrich-Ebert-Allee 4
Tuesday–Wednesday 10:00–21:00
Thursday–Sunday 10:00–19:00
➤ [bundeskunsthalle.de](#)

COLOGNE, GERMANY

25hours Hotel The Circle Cologne
Im Klapperhof 10

as-if Records
Brüsseler Straße 92
Tuesday–Saturday 11:00–20:00
Sunday 11:00–18:00
➤ [as-if-records.com](#)

Päffgen Brewery
Friesenstraße 64–66
Sunday–Thursday 10:00–00:00
Friday–Saturday 10:00–00:30
➤ [paeffgen-koelsch.de](#)

Café Hommage
Friesenstraße 73
Monday–Saturday 08:00–18:00
Sunday 10:00–18:00
➤ [facebook.com/hommage.koeln](#)

Five Store & Spa
Bismarckstraße 70
Tuesday–Friday 11:00–19:00
Saturday 11:00–18:00
➤ [five.com](#)

Groove Attack
Maastrichter Straße 49
Monday–Friday 12:00–19:30
Saturday 12:00–18:00
➤ [grooveattack.com](#)

Hack Lederware
Maastrichter Straße 22
Monday–Friday 11:00–13.30 and 14:00–19:00
Saturday 11:00–16:00
➤ [lederware.de](#)

Hutladen Diefenthal 1905
Kettengasse 3
Monday–Friday 11:00–19:00
Saturday 10:00–18:00
➤ [diefenthal1905.de](#)

Il Bagutta
Heinsbergstraße 20a
Monday–Friday 12:00–15:00 and 17:00–01:00
Saturday–Sunday 17:00–01:00
➤ [rostickceria-massimo.de/il-bagutta](#)

Köln–Düsseldorfer Deutsche Rheinschiffahrt AG
Frankenwerft 35
➤ [k-d.com](#)

Kölner Dom
Domkloster 4
Monday–Sunday 06:00–21:00
➤ [koelner-dom.de](#)

Museum Ludwig
Heinrich-Böll-Platz
Tuesday–Sunday 10:00–18:00
Every first Thursday of the month 10:00–22:00
➤ [museum-ludwig.de](#)

Sürther Bootshaus
Sürther Leinpfad
Monday–Thursday 12:00–21:30
Friday–Saturday 12:00–23:00
Sunday 10:00–21:30
➤ [suertherbootshaus.de](#)

Taschen Store
Neumarkt 3
Monday–Saturday 10:00–20:00 and 19:00–22:00
➤ [taschen.com](#)

The Good Will Out
Richard-Wagner-Straße
Monday–Friday 12:00–20:00
Saturday 12:00–19:00
➤ [thegoodwillout.com](#)

Wallczka
Subbelrather Straße 295
Monday–Tuesday 09:30–00:00
Friday–Saturday 09:30–01:00
Sunday 09:30–00:00
➤ [wallczka.com](#)

DUISBURG, GERMANY

MKM Museum Küppersmühle
Philosophenweg 55
Wednesday 14:00–18:00
Thursday–Sunday 11:00–18:00
➤ [museum-kueppersmuehle.de](#)

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25hours Hotel Das Tour Düsseldorf
Louis-Pasteur-Platz 1

Alltours Kino
Rheinpark Düsseldorf
July 19–August 19, 2018
➤ [alltours-kino.de](#)

ANMO Art/Cha
Bendemannstr. 18
Wednesday–Friday 12:00–18:00
Saturday 12:00–16:00
➤ [anmo-art-cha.com](#)

Asphalt Festival
Bachstelzenweg 6
July 12–22, 2018
➤ [asphalt-festival.de](#)

Bäder für Düsseldorf
Various venues
➤ [baeder-duesseldorf.de](#)

Blumen F.U.S.S.
Oststraße 61
Monday–Friday 08:30–18:30
Saturday 08:30–14:00
➤ [blumen-fuss.de](#)

Bar Olio
Schirmerstraße 54
Monday–Saturday 11:00–01:00

Dae-Yang
Immermannstraße 15
Monday–Saturday 09:00–20:00
➤ [dae-yang.de](#)

EKÖ–Haus
Brueggener Weg 6
Tuesday–Sunday 13:00–17:00
➤ [eko-haus.de](#)

Galerie Burghof
Burgallee 1
Monday–Sunday 11:00–00:00
➤ [galerie-burghof.de](#)

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Immermannstraße 4
Monday–Thursday 19:00–01:00
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Nagaya
Klosterstraße 42
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➤ [nagaya.de](#)

Schicke Mütze
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Tuesday–Friday 11:00–19:00
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➤ [schickemuetze.de](#)

Takagi Books
Immermannstrasse 31
Monday–Saturday 10:00–18:30
➤ [takagi-books.de](#)

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➤ [bricknvy.com/takumi](#)

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Heinrich-Heine-Allee 38
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➤ [talbotrunhof.com](#)

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➤ [unterbachersee.de](#)

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Sunday 18:00–22:00
➤ [yabase-ddf.com](#)

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Saturday–Sunday 10:00–18:00
➤ [museum-folkwang.de](#)

Querfeldeins
River Rafting
Various venues
➤ [querfeldeins.org](#)

FRANKFURT, GERMANY

25hours Hotel The Goldman Frankfurt
Hanauer Landstraße 127

25hours Hotel by Levi's Frankfurt
Niddastraße 58

Kinly Bar
Elbestraße 34
Monday–Saturday 19:00–03:00
➤ [kinlybar.com](#)

HAMBURG, GERMANY

25hours Hotel HafenCity Hamburg
Überseallee 5

25hours Hotel Altes Hafenanmt Hamburg
Osakaallee 12

25hours Hotel Number One Hamburg
Pauli-Dessau-Straße 2

Winkel van Sinkel
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Tuesday–Friday 11:00–19:00
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➤ [winkelvansinkel.de](#)

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Haus Mödrath
An Burg Mödrath 1
Saturday–Sunday 12:00–18:00
➤ [haus-moedrath.de](#)

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Museum Abteiberg
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➤ [museum-abteiberg.de](#)

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25hours Hotel The Royal Bavarian
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Filmfest München
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June 28–July 7, 2018
➤ [filmfest-muenchen.de](#)

Seite Eins
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Rosenheimer Straße 123
July 13–22, 2018
➤ [theater-dreheier.de](#)

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Raketenstation Hombroich 1
Monday–Sunday 10:00–18:00
➤ [langenfoundation.de](#)

Museum Insel Hombroich
Minkel 2
Monday–Sunday 10:00–19:00
➤ [inselhombroich.de](#)

VIENNA, AUSTRIA

25hours Hotel at MuseumQuartier Vienna
Lerchenfelder Straße 1–3

Summerstage
Robauer Lände 17
May 2–mid-September, 2018
Monday–Saturday 17:00–01:00
Sunday 15:00–01:00

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Skulpturenpark Waldfrieden
Hirschstraße 12
Tuesday–Sunday 10:00–19:00
➤ [skulpturenpark-waldfrieden.de](#)

ZONS, GERMANY

Zons Am Rhein
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➤ [zons-am-rhein.info](#)

ZURICH, SWITZERLAND

25hours Hotel Zurich West
Pfingstweidstrasse 102

25hours Hotel Langstrasse Zurich
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Frauenbad
Stadthausquai 13
May 10–September 16, 2018
Monday–Sunday 11:00–19:30
➤ [barfussbar.ch](#)

Masthead

COMPANION is a magazine about the people who shape and enrich our cities.

➤ [25hours-hotels.com](#)
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➤ [fvonf.com/tag/25hours](#)

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Director · Frederik Frede
Partnerships and Sales · Tim Seifert
Project Management · Lina Götttsch, Silvia Silko
Chief Brand Officer 25hours Hotels · Bruno Marti
Culture Manager · Volker Walzer

Editor in Chief · Celina Plag
Editors · Manuel Almeida Vergara, Anna Dorothea Ker, Florian Siebeck, Leonie Volk

Art Direction · Luca Iiriti for moresleep.net
Design · Adrian Wing Lun Ho, Daniel Faró, Luca Iiriti for moresleep.net

Illustration · Stephanie F. Scholz
Photo Director · Robert Rieger, Aimee Shirley
Photographers · Max Brunnert, Michael Englert, Michael Kohls

Writers · Sascha Abel, Laura Aha, Manuel Almeida Vergara, Pia Gärtner, Gareth Joswig, Cheryll Mühlen, Celina Plag, Barbara Russ, Alexander Scholz, Florian Siebeck, Leonie Volk

Translators · Toptranslation via 25hours, Brenton Withers
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timmi@fvonf.com

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MY 25HOURS

Feeling at Home in Hamburg

Kim Stieber is a business consultant in Baden-Württemberg. Does that sound serious and a little snooty? Think again! Kim is pretty laid-back, which is why he has been coming back to the 25hours Hotel HafenCity Hamburg for more than two years now.

I actually come from a completely different professional field. For a few years, I did events in Berlin. So it was all a bit more rock'n'roll. I've been working as a business consultant for ten years now, mainly for banks and insurance companies. For the past eight years, I've visited Hamburg every week to see the same clients. Over the years, I've tried out a lot of different places to stay, and eventually I came to stick with 25hours Hotel HafenCity Hamburg. That was the first hotel where I really felt at home.

I am very open and often approach people. As such, I feel a little caged-in in many of the more uptight hotels. Although the employees smile at you, you can tell that they actually want to be left in peace. It's different at the 25hours Hotels. For example, I really like that the staff there address people with the informal German "du." And although the staff's interaction with the guests may be easygoing, the processes behind the operations are perfect. Despite being very laid-back, I am a stickler for service.

That's why I like to take many of my business partners to the NENI restaurant at the 25hours Hotel Altes Hafenanit Hamburg. There, I like to challenge them, even provoke them a little. I throw them in the deep end, where they sit in their business suits and are addressed with "du." Then I order a mezze platter, and we all eat from a plate set in the middle

of the table. For many of them, that's a little shocking. However, most acclimatize to the situation, and after a few minutes, they think it's great that a business meeting can be so personal. And of course, I think it's fantastic when I'm able to win them over with this.

For regular guests of the 25hours Hotel HafenCity Hamburg, there is a menu that says: "You are part of the family." And that's exactly the way I feel when I arrive at the hotel. Everybody says "hello," we take the time to have a little chat. I've also ended up at a Mario Kart tournament in a pub at the end of an evening together with a few of the employees. We played Nintendo and downed some Astras. That's not something you can experience at any other hotel! I like that you can simply wander through the lobby in track-suit bottoms and a T-shirt on any given evening and nobody bats an eyelid.

I've completely fallen in love with Hamburg now, and a lot of that can be attributed to my favorite 25hours Hotel. I probably have my wife to thank for that. A few years ago, she booked a trip to Vienna for my birthday and reserved a room for us at the 25hours Hotel at MuseumsQuartier Vienna. I thought it was amazing and immediately looked into whether there was one in Hamburg as well.



EVERY-BODY NEEDS A COMPANION

Share your moments.

#mycompanion
@25hourshotels

A person sitting on a red chair, reading a newspaper with the headline "HAMBURG".

A newspaper titled "companion" with a photo of a woman, resting on a wooden table next to a small potted plant.

A hand holding a newspaper titled "companion" with the headline "ROARING BERLIN".

A person's hands holding a camera, with a pair of glasses and a magazine featuring a woman's face nearby.

A newspaper titled "BITS" with a yellow cover and illustrations of people running.