

Media Information
9 September 2026

Preis der Nationalgalerie 2026:**Opening of the exhibition "MAURIZIO CATTELAN. NIGHT".**

+++ The Italian artist's first major solo exhibition in Germany +++
Key historical works and a new site-specific installation in the iconic
Mies van der Rohe building +++ Exhibition dates: 10 September
2026 – 7 March 2027 +++ BMW has been a long-standing partner
of the Preis der Nationalgalerie since 2006 +++

Munich/Berlin. The Neue Nationalgalerie presents "NIGHT", the first major solo exhibition in Germany by Italian artist Maurizio Cattelan, recipient of the Preis der Nationalgalerie 2026. Conceived for Mies van der Rohe's glass hall, the exhibition brings together seminal historical works and new commissions in an installation that lends the museum the character of a contemporary church. Since its inception in 2000, the Preis der Nationalgalerie 2026, Germany's most prestigious museum award for contemporary art, has honored artistic practices that have significantly influenced contemporary art and has presented them to a broad audience in Berlin. BMW has supported the prize as a long-standing partner since 2006.

The exhibition, curated by Lisa Botti (curator at the Neue Nationalgalerie), with Klaus Biesenbach (director of the Neue Nationalgalerie), in close collaboration with Maurizio Cattelan, takes shape around themes of history, power, memory, identity and belief. Familiar images and figures are altered just enough to unsettle their meaning, opening them up to readings that move between irony and ambiguity. In dialogue with Mies van der Rohe's architecture, Cattelan's works activate the building not as a container, but as part of the exhibition itself.

BMW and Maurizio Cattelan.

BMW and Maurizio Cattelan first crossed paths in 2016 at "Rencontres d'Arles: working together with photographer Pierpaolo Ferrari, Cattelan created a special project based around the all-electric BMW i3. The so-called ["Spaghetti Car"](#) featured the vehicle completely covered in spaghetti-themed foil – a humorous and conceptual work that playfully addressed issues of art, consumption, and sustainability. BMW was also the inaugural partner supporting the 4th Berlin Biennale, co-curated by Cattelan, in 2006.

„MAURIZIO CATTELAN. NIGHT".

The title "**NIGHT**" evokes a condition in which things are seen not less clearly, but differently. As **Maurizio Cattelan** puts it: "Night is not simply the absence of light. It is a condition. The exhibition is not about darkness. It is about the loss of

certainty. Night is also temporary — it always contains the possibility of morning, even if you cannot see it yet."

Visitors enter through "Purgatory" (2026), a new commission that places a scaled-down Brandenburg Gate inside the museum. One of Germany's most recognisable monuments becomes a threshold to walk around and through — repositioned as a space of passage, reflection and historical ambiguity. At the centre of the hall, a strong vertical axis is established between "Him" (2001), a kneeling male figure in contemplative pose, and "Dawn" (2007), a female figure suspended in cruciform posture within a transport crate. Overhead, thousands of taxidermied pigeons titled "People" (2026, first shown in Venice in 1997) settle across the ceiling structure, reshaping the space into a place of collective gathering and quiet observation.

The exhibition reaches beyond the glass hall. High on the roof, "Never" (2003) appears as an animatronic child drummer drawn from the protagonist of Günter Grass's "The Tin Drum" — a figure of resistance and warning whose irregular beat rings out across the city, between parade and alarm. On the museum terrace, "Scar" (2026), a cast-iron manhole cover inscribed with the titles of every work in the show, condenses the exhibition into language at street level.

Two further new commissions measure time and mortality: "After" (2026), a six-metre iron pipe struck like a bell, with a sleeping dog at its centre; and "Dust" (2026), a fire extinguisher that holds the cremated remains of a friend of the artist, realised in accordance with the wishes of the deceased.

Further information about the works in the exhibition can be found [here](#).

Maurizio Cattelan.

For more than three decades, **Maurizio Cattelan** (born 1960 in Padua, Italy) has been one of the defining voices in international contemporary art, developing a body of sculptures, installations and conceptual interventions that engage with authority, collective memory and social power. His work has been shown worldwide, including several Venice Biennales and major solo exhibitions at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York ("All", 2011) and the Monnaie de Paris ("Not Afraid of Love", 2016). "NIGHT" marks his return to Berlin 20 years after he co-curated the 4th Berlin Biennale in 2006.

Preis der Nationalgalerie.

The Preis der Nationalgalerie, founded by the FREUNDE der Nationalgalerie in 2000, has established itself over the past 25 years as one of the most significant awards for contemporary art. BMW has been a longstanding partner of the award since 2006. In 2026, the prize enters a new phase through its move into the iconic glass hall at the Neue Nationalgalerie, becoming a singular opportunity for an artist to realise a focused and ambitious presentation.

Jury for the Preis der Nationalgalerie 2026.

The jury for the 2026 award included **Emma Lavigne** (Director of the Pinault Collection, Paris), **Sam Keller** (Director of the Fondation Beyeler, Basel) as well as **Klaus Biesenbach** (Director of the Neue Nationalgalerie). In addition to the jurors, the curators of the Nationalgalerie and the members of the FREUNDE der Nationalgalerie were also eligible to submit nominations.

General Information.

Exhibition Duration: 10 September 2026 – 7 March 2027
(Neue Nationalgalerie, Potsdamer Straße 50, 10785 Berlin)

Exhibition Opening: Wednesday, 9 September 2026, 9 PM
During Berlin Art Week, the exhibition's opening hours will be extended from 10 AM to 10 PM, from Thursday 10 September to Sunday 13 September 2026.

The exhibition is presented as part of the Preis der Nationalgalerie, which is made possible by FREUNDE der Nationalgalerie and supported by BMW.

A pop-up book by Papersmyths Ltd, accompanies the exhibition. Available from the museum shop and online from the [SMB Webshop](#) and the [FREUNDE der Nationalgalerie Webshop](#).

Alongside the Preis der Nationalgalerie, the **BMW Group's long-term commitments in the German capital** include Gallery Weekend Berlin. In addition to its extensive involvement in the visual arts, BMW also collaborates with the Staatsoper Unter den Linden and, this year, hosted the 20th edition of the open-air event "Staatsoper für alle" on Bebelplatz.

The BMW Group's Cultural Engagement, with exclusive updates and deeper insights into its global initiatives can be followed on Instagram at [@BMWGroupCulture](#).

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If you have any questions, please contact:

Press and Communications

Thomas Girst
BMW Group Corporate and Governmental Affairs
Global Head of BMW Group Cultural Engagement
E-Mail: Thomas.Girst@bmwgroup.com

Website: www.press.bmwgroup.com
E-Mail: presse@bmw.de

Markus Farr
Neue Nationalgalerie
Head of Press
Phone: +49 151 527 53 886
E-Mail: presse.nng@smb.spk-berlin.de

BMW Group Cultural Engagement

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Further information: www.bmwgroup.com/culture and www.bmwgroup.com/overview
Instagram: [@BMWGroupCulture](https://www.instagram.com/BMWGroupCulture)
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The BMW Group

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In 2025, the BMW Group sold 2.46 million passenger vehicles and more than 202,500 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax in the financial year 2025 was € 10.2 billion on revenues amounting to € 133,5 billion. As of 31 December 2025, the BMW Group had a workforce of 154,540 employees.

The economic success of the BMW Group has always been based on long-term thinking and responsible action. Sustainability is a key element of the BMW Group's corporate strategy and covers all products – from the supply chain through production to the end of their useful life.

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