

The Czech Republic is alive with design. Designblok, Prague's international festival of design and fashion, presents its third location at Prague Castle and international guests of the 25th anniversary edition

The biggest design festival in Central and Eastern Europe will take place from 4 to 8 October in Prague and will once again take visitors to extraordinary places where it will serve the best of contemporary European design. Alongside the Trade Fair Palace of the National Gallery Prague and the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague, the third exhibition venue will be Prague Castle – the Royal Garden and the Prague Castle Ball Games Hall. The main foreign star of this year's edition will be the unorthodox Dutch designer Ineke Hans. She will present a special exhibition showcasing the Circuform brand and the first Dutch deposit chair. She will also sit as the president of the international jury of the Designblok Awards, which annually selects the best projects of the entire festival.

Two extraordinary projects will be showcased at Prague Castle. The **Prague Castle Ball Games Hall** will house the **Made by Fire** exhibition, which received considerable attention from both Czech and foreign professionals and media during its premiere at the world's largest design week in Milan in April this year. In the Czech Republic, the joint project of the Moravian Gallery in Brno and Designblok will be presented for the first time in such a prominent setting. The space in front of the Ball Games Hall in the **Royal Garden** will host **Designblok Cosmos** – the largest travelling exhibition in the twenty-five-year history of the festival and a showcase of the best of contemporary Czech design. The main exhibition of the anniversary edition was created with the support of the PPF Foundation. The patronage of the festival, for the first time in its twenty-five-year history, was assumed by **Petr Pavel**, the **President of the Czech Republic**, alongside the **Mayor of Prague Bohuslav Svoboda** and the **Minister of Culture Martin Baxa**. Both exhibitions at the Prague Castle site will remain open an extra week after the official end of Designblok 2023 and will be accessible from 3 October to 15 October 2023.

The overarching theme of this year's edition is **THE JOURNEY**. In addition to Prague Castle, the design journey will also take visitors to the **Trade Fair Palace of the National Gallery Prague** as well as to the **Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague**. It is there that they will find the **Superstudio**, a space for showcasing companies, manufacturers and brands, and the **Openstudio**, presenting independent creators, product design, fashion and jewellery. The special exhibition **High Craft**, created in cooperation with the prestigious **Vogue CS** magazine, will make its premiere, and the exhibition project **Family Silver**, prepared in cooperation with **Forbes Czech Republic**, will present its third edition.

"The first Designblok took place in 1999. Our journey began in the wilderness, with fourteen brave traveller-exhibitors and a hare motif in the logo. As the narrow path became wider and

*firmer, the pilgrims grew into established companies and renowned designers. The event for enthusiasts transformed into one of the main cultural events of the season, visited annually by 40,000 design lovers eager for inspiration and business opportunities. Exhibitors now number close to three hundred, and each year new brands and creatives full of courage and ideas join in. In the quarter century of Designblok's existence, a number of places around Prague have been transformed into showcases of cutting-edge design – some of which were not normally open to the public at the time – from the industrial spaces of the Žižkov Freight Depot, the Grandhotel Evropa building on Wenceslas Square, the seat of an elementary school, which was later transformed into the UMPRUM Mikulandská Technology Centre, the Industrial Palace at the Prague Holešovice Exhibition Grounds, to historic palaces in the centre of Prague such as Kafka's House, Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace, Swéerts-Sporck Palace or the House at the Minute," says **Jana Zielinski**, Director of Designblok.*

The main foreign guest of the 25th edition of Designblok will be the star of contemporary Dutch design **Ineke Hans**. She will sit as president of the Designblok Awards jury and will present her own brand Circuform and the REX project – the first ever Dutch deposit chair. "My first encounter with Designblok dates back to 2007, when I attended one of the presentations, and I've been a fan ever since. Jana Zielinski, Jiří Macek and the whole team have managed to create a strong and attractive festival for young, emerging designers as well as established authors and brands. I am very proud to have been invited to chair the international jury of the Designblok Awards and look forward to contributing to making the 25th anniversary edition extra festive," says designer Ineke Hans. Other equally renowned members of the Designblok Awards jury will be **Joseph Grima**, architect, editor, curator and founder of Alcova and Space Caviar, as well as creative director of the Design Academy Eindhoven; **Birgitta Homburger**, creative director, designer and strategist from Germany; **Benedict Hobson**, journalist and co-director of Dezeen; and Dutch multidisciplinary designer **Simone Post**.

Promising foreign participation is also confirmed by installations of prestigious brands such as **Magis, Laufen, hülsta, brik and Vitra**, which this year took charge of the design of the Vitra VIP Lounge, designed by scenographer Marek Cpin.

The packed ninth edition of the **Diploma Selection** competition will feature the work of contemporary progressive artists from across Europe. In addition to this year's contestants, the catwalk will showcase Norwegian fashion designer and 2018 winner **Ramona Salo**. Four years after her triumph, she will come to present her latest fashion collection. In the exhibition, visitors will be able to see the continued work of **Marie Radke**, who came third with her socket design last year, as well as the work of German designer **Matthias Gschwendtner**, who was awarded first place.

World renowned gallerists, art dealers, curators and publicists will be among the jury of the Diploma Selection competition, which brings together the best diploma theses from Europe. This year, Designblok will once again be attended by the very best design experts from Europe, such as gallerist **Rossana Orlandi**; artistic director of the prestigious Cappellini brand **Giulio Cappellini**; director of the Museum of Arts and Crafts in Hamburg **Tulga Beyerle**; gallerist **Lina Kanafani** and many others. The Czech Republic is represented on the jury by columnist, curator and head of the Czech edition of ELLE Decoration quarterly **Eva Slunečková**; editor-in-chief of Vogue CS **Danica Kovářová**; managing editor of Forbes Life **Anna Nosková**; creative director and stylist **Jan Králíček**; columnist **Andrea Běhounková**; editor-in-chief of ELLE **Thea Kučerová** and others. This year, designers and companies have an exceptional opportunity to present their product design and fashion collections in one place to the most competent people in the industry and to establish valuable business contacts in the Czech Republic and abroad, which are essential for the further development and future of their work.

The 25th Designblok will take place from 4 to 8 October 2023 in the Trade Fair Palace of the National Gallery Prague, the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague, the Ball Games Hall and the Royal Garden of Prague Castle as well as other locations around Prague. The Designblok Cosmos and Made by Fire exhibitions at Prague Castle will be open from 3 to 15 October 2023.

PRESS CENTER: https://bit.ly/Designblok2023_PRESS

In the press centre you will find this year's visuals, formats for social networks, promo video, photos of locations, exhibitors and international guests.

MEDIA ACCREDITATIONS are open at the link https://bit.ly/DB23_Press_Akreditace

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If you are interested in an interview with the organizers, international guests and partners, please do not hesitate to contact me.