

Press release

## GLITTER

Press conference: 26 February 2025, 11am

Opening: 27 February 2025, 7pm

28 February to 12 October 2025



The Huxleys, video still, "Style Over Substance", 2021

Hamburg, 3 September 2024 – Glitter sparkles and shimmers, fascinates and outrages. It can be found on the stage as well as on protest posters and in children's rooms. Glitter is omnipresent – and yet the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg (MK&G) is the first museum in the world to dedicate an exhibition to this material. The show will focus on glitter in current political contexts and collective movements, both as a material and a metaphor for visibility, affiliation and self-determination. Around 40 international examples from the worlds of art and design are brought together here – works that make use of glitter as a means of protest or as an element of performance or pop culture, as a symbol of drawing attention to marginalised groups and of resistance against body shaming. The exhibits include a glittering teen bedroom designed by Hamburg artist Jenny Schäfer, photographs by Sara Shakeel and Quil Lemons, skateboards by Mickalene Thomas, GIFs by Molly Soda, show wigs designed by Hamburg wig wizards Karl Gadzali and Mohamad Barakat for Olivia Jones, and a stage outfit worn by Bill Kaulitz. Starting in June 2025, the exhibition will add 300 square metres of fuchsia glitter with the spatial installation "Puff Out" by the Turkish-Belgian duo :mentalKLINIK.

Visitor participation is encouraged – people can for example send in their favourite private objects in advance of the opening, add important

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OPENING HOURS  
Tue – Sun 10am–6pm  
Thu 10am–9pm

ADMISSION  
14 € / reduced 8 €  
first Thursday of the month free 5–9pm  
under 18 free

TICKETS  
[tickets.mkg-hamburg.de](http://tickets.mkg-hamburg.de)

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PRESS IMAGES  
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USE OF PRESS IMAGES  
The press photos may be used only for current reporting in connection with the exhibitions mentioned and the MK&G. The images must not be cropped or altered.

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glitter events to a sparkling timeline or design their own glittering items in the DIY room.

## EXHIBITION CHAPTERS

The six chapters of the exhibition illustrate the diverse, complex and sometimes contradictory contexts in which glitter appears.

In the central exhibition gallery – the *Hall of Glitter* – a polyphonic glitter cosmos unfurls, with unicorns and sticker albums, cell phone cases, nail polish, Christmas decorations and dancing shoes that put visitors in the mood for engaging with this fascinating material. 100 or so favourite objects collected in an open call will be accompanied by personal stories.

The *Glitter up!* gallery examines how glitter figures in protests and the confrontation with body ideals, role expectations and the visibility of marginalised groups. Documentary photographs by Mirjana Mitrovic, Gisela Volá and Mercedes Grassi King show green and pink glitter as activist material for feminist protests and as a symbol of solidarity in Mexico and Argentina. British-Pakistani artist and Instagram star Sara Shakeel lets care workers shine in her collages using digital crystals. In glitter-enhanced portraits, US photographer Hannah Altman draws attention to taboo bodily fluids and imperfections. Gender boundaries are blurred in the photo series by Lorenzo Triburgo and Sarah Van Dyck from New York City, which showcase historical locations and poses. Burlesque performer Pansy St. Battie confidently stages herself, her body and her wheelchair with plenty of glitter and glamour.

The chapter *Sparkle and Shine* features costumes, wigs, nail art and video works. Rather than showy effects, here it is all about fragile moments of styling an individual and collective identity. A stage outfit worn by Bill Kaulitz on Tokio Hotel's 2010 "Humanoid" tour meets up with extravagant wigs by Hamburg wig artists Karl Gadzali and Mohamad Barakat. The large-format video work "Style Over Substance" by the Australian duo The Huxleys shimmers in neon hues, flirting with both glamour and absurdity. A total of 100 unusual and expansive nail designs provide a glimpse of the international nail art scene and its exuberant creativity. Brazilian artist Rafa Bqueer has designed a costume that combines glittering pop aesthetics with indigenous symbols and narratives. The video work "Epilogue" by Cao Guimarães and Rivana Neuenschwander shows the moment following a performance, zeroing in on a group of ants busily clearing away glittering confetti.

For the *Teenage Glitter* gallery, Hamburg-based artist and photographer Jenny Schäfer has staged a sparkling teen bedroom. A film installation by Hamburg filmmaker Sarah Drath and video works by US performance and media artist Molly Soda assemble shimmering moments from film and television history as well as contemporary internet culture. Analogue collages by Chila Kumari Singh Burman and Andrés Pérez as well as skateboards designed by the painter Mickalene Thomas take their place in a spatial installation that

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deliberately breaks with mainstream images of coming of age, shedding light instead on what it means to grow up as part of a marginalised group. In his early photo series “Glitterboy”, Quil Lemons, who has since risen to worldwide fame as a fashion photographer and artist, addresses stereotypical images of men and the lack of visibility of Black boys.

The chapter *Glitter Craft* is dedicated to DIY. As an inexpensive and high-impact material, glitter lends itself to embellishment and enhancement. International DIY artists take a playful and self-assured approach to a material that is often denigrated as kitschy, toying with the related clichés and conventions. In five video tutorials, Damali Abrams, María Domínguez Moreno, Sam Reece, Fleur Stiels and Fiona Tretau invite viewers to get creative: A variety of materials are available at a central table, which can be used in and outside of regular workshops.

*Glittermania – The History of Glitter* focuses on glitter as a material and a phenomenon, tracing its history, production and use. A timeline comprising texts, photos, videos and objects draws a trajectory from Cleopatra to the invention of glitter in New Jersey in 1934 and onward to Taylor Swift’s Eras Tour in 2024. This chapter furthermore examines the debates about the environmentally and potentially also morally harmful nature of glitter. Visitors are invited to add further glitter highlights to the timeline.

As of 5 June 2025, two adjacent galleries will display the poetic and immersive installation “Puff Out” by the Turkish-Belgian duo :mentalKLINIK. It consists of 20 or so robotic vacuum cleaners that have been modified to not only suck up glitter but also spit it out again. The result is an abstract, constantly changing “painting” that takes shape across the glittering pink floor.

## SUPPORTING PROGRAMME

A varied supporting programme will take place in the exhibition galleries, the MK&G Freiraum and various locations in Hamburg. In cooperation with local initiatives and residents, a number of different formats have been organised in which participants can experience the fascination and joy of glitter, take part in forums and exchanges, and join others in a discussion of glitter’s potential as a symbol of resistance. These activities will include talks, film series and tours addressing various aspects of design, identity, politics, urban society and community with a focus on the role of glitter. In addition, a diverse series of workshops will be held in the DIY space in the exhibition.

## PARTICIPATING ARTISTS

:mentalKLINIK (Belgium / Turkey), Damali Abrams (USA), Hannah Altmann (USA), Pansy St. Battie (USA), Sophia Bizer (Germany), Chila Kumari Singh Burman (UK), Rafa Bqueer (Brazil), T.L. Cowan (Canada), María Domínguez Moreno / Doodlelingyou (Spain), Sarah Drath (Germany), Karl Gadzali and Mohamad Barakat (Germany), Cao Guimarães and Rivana Neuenschwander (Brazil), Regine Eurydike

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Hader (Germany), The Huxleys (Australia), Bill Kaulitz (Germany / USA), Mercedes Grassi King (Argentina), Quil Lemons (USA), Mirjana Mitrovic (Germany), Andrés Pérez (Venezuela), Sam Reece / Shitty Craft Club (USA), Jenny Schäfer (Germany), Sara Shakeel (UK), Molly Soda (USA), Fleur Stiels / Holy Glitter Zine (Netherlands), Fiona Tretau / The Propcorner (Germany), Lorenzo Triburgo and Sarah Van Dyck (USA), Gisela Volá (Argentina) and others.

Nail Artists: 3rzuobabypink (China), Franziska Unger / Franzischeck (Germany), Natasha Blake / Fuego Nails (UK), Dracula Nails (Hungary), Keely Ma'llo / Honeybabysset (Canada), Maria Vanails (Greece), Louise Corbert / Nettle Nails (USA), Minki Warhol, Sex Nails (Germany), Soppi / beautybysoppi (Germany), Thams Does Claws (Germany), Reina Takano / hitomebore (Japan), Anna Sancho Barbera / Pannkss (Spain), Citlali Guetierrez / unitas\_f3ass (USA), Britney Tokyo (USA)

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