

Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe

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Founded in 1989, the **ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe** is a cultural institution which, since 1997, has been located in a historical industrial building in Karlsruhe, Germany that formerly housed a munitions factory. The ZKM organizes special exhibitions and thematic events, carries out research projects, produces works in the field of new media and offers public as well as individualized communications and educational programs.

ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe

Established	1997
Location	Karlsruhe, Germany
Director	Peter Weibel
Website	www.zkm.de (http://www.zkm.de)

The ZKM houses under one roof two museums, three research institutes as well as a media center; in this way it groups research and production, exhibitions and events, archives and collections. It works on the interface of art and science, and takes up cutting-edge insights in media technologies with the objective of developing them further. Since the death of founding director Heinrich Klotz (1935-1999), the ZKM has been directed by Prof. Peter Weibel.^[1] In addition to the ZKM, the associated Karlsruhe University of Arts and Design, as well as the Städtische Galerie Karlsruhe [Municipal Gallery Karlsruhe] are likewise housed in the former munitions factory.

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History

The founding of the Center for Art and Media goes back to the early 1980s. In the context of an ever expanding media landscape, and in conjunction with a transformation of the art world, representatives from local government, the University of Karlsruhe, the University of Music Karlsruhe, the Kernforschungszentrum Karlsruhe [Center for Nuclear Research Karlsruhe] and other institutes, as well as organizations and representatives of the Karlsruhe art scene formed the “Projektgruppe ZKM” [ZKM Project Group] in 1986. In February 1988 the Projektgruppe ZKM presented the content of their work as “Konzept 88” [Concept ‘88], in which the initiative for the fusion of the arts and the new media was outlined in both theory and practice.^[2]



during exhibition *Car Culture* in 2011, *Car Building* by Hans Hollein

With the founding of a board of trustees in 1989, and the appointment of Heinrich Klotz as founding director, the realization of the ZKM became concrete. Three dates mark the ZKM’s foundation: the resolution by the local council dated May 9, 1989, the decision by the Council of Ministers of the State of Baden-Württemberg dated June 3, 1989, and the constitution of the board of trustees with effect from August 12, 1989. When initially founded, the ZKM was located in various buildings around the city. Prior to the move to its present location, the media art festival MultiMediale (MultiMediale 1-5, 1989-1997) took place at various sites.^[3]

For some considerable time, an area to the south of the Karlsruhe Central Station had been designated. To this end, an international architect’s competition for the new building was announced on March 1989, from which the visionary design by Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas was to result.^[4] However, the construction of the so-called Koolhaas-Cube was abandoned in 1992 for reasons of costs and space in favor of the conversion of the disused factory building.^[5] Karlsruhe opted for the conversion of the so-called “Hallenbau A” [Hall A], an industrial ruin erected between 1914 and 1918 by architect Philipp Jakob Manz as a weapons and munitions factory. The building, divided into ten atria and with a length of 312 meters had been built on the former factory site of the Industriewerke Karlsruhe-Augsburg (IWKA), an industrial wasteland since the 1970s to the south-west that separated the city center from the surrounding urban areas. The conversion, based on plans drafted by the Hamburg office of Schweger,^[6] as well as the extension of the Media Cube which takes account of the Koolhaas design, started in 1993. With the move to Hallenbau A in 1997, the ZKM disposed over a media theater, over concert and events spaces, a media center, studios and institutes for research and production as well as a media museum. In a second stage of construction, the spaces for the Museum of Contemporary Art (move in 1999) and the Karlsruhe University of Arts and Design (move in 2001) were finalized. From 2004 to 2005 the Museum of Contemporary Art was integrated into the ZKM.^{[7][8]}

The Basic Idea

“The task envisaged for the ZKM is the sounding out of the creative possibilities between the traditional arts and media technologies for the purpose of achieving innovative results. The objective is the enrichment of the arts, not their technical amputation. For this reason both

traditional and media arts must compete with one another. At the ZKM either aspect – each for itself and with one another – are given a voice. The Bauhaus, founded in Weimar in 1919, may serve as a model.” (Heinrich Klotz)^[9]

The basic idea as formulated by founding director Heinrich Klotz in 1992, was implemented and developed further in the years that followed. Today, the ZKM is chiefly characterized by four guiding ideas.

- The ZKM is a location for all forms of contemporary art. It is a platform for cross-border experiments between the fine arts and the performative arts. Research, production and presentation comprise all medial forms and methods, from oil painting through to App, from classical composition through to sampling. Exhibitions, publications and symposia open up new perspectives to new questions, the objectives of which are the setting of innovative and trend-setting themes.
- At the ZKM, people from all over the world and of all ages are invited to discover art. It is an open house that encourages its visitors to active participation, exchange and discussion. Actors from all social spheres – from the arts, sciences, politics, and the economy – are brought together for the purposes of exchanging together the essential questions of present and future.
- As a center of research and development both in theory and practice, the ZKM gathers together artists and scientists from various disciplines. Through the implementation of unusual methods, novel and innovative works, new knowledge and innovative and pioneering ideas begin to emerge.
- Through the collection and conservation of works of art and historic pieces of equipment, as well as the construction of a comprehensive archive for twentieth and twenty-first century arts, the ZKM takes up its role as the conservator of cultural heritage. Here, the conservation of “digital art” is attributed particular importance.

The ZKM

The ZKM | Karlsruhe is home to two museums, three research institutions, a media center, a laboratory as well as a number of events spaces: **Museums**

- ZKM | Media Museum
- ZKM | Museum of Contemporary Art

Institutes for Research and Production

- ZKM | Institute for Visual Media
- ZKM | Institute for Music and Acoustics
- ZKM | Institute for Media, Education, and Economics

Events Spaces

- ZKM_Media Theater
- ZKM_Lecture Hall
- ZKM_Cube

The two museums are open to the public as is the library together with media lounge. Furthermore, the Info Point, the Museum Shop^[10] and the Café/Restaurant ZetKaeM^[11] are located in the Foyer and accessible to visitors.

Exhibitions and events

In the exhibitions and events, the ZKM shows approaches and themes of contemporary art, but also presents practically forgotten artists and art movements, as well as works of art in various media and genre – from App through to oil paintings.

ZKM | Media Museum

The central concerns of the Media Museum turn on the history and critique of the new media, which have been transforming the forms of everyday life for the past 50 years. Computer, telephone and Internet intervene in social and individual lives in that technical components become increasingly important. A further focus of the Media Museum is the interaction between observer and work of art: only through the actions and reactions of every single visitor do works actually emerge – the visitor itself becomes an element in the installation and, in this way, is able to explore the treatment with new technologies. With works of media art and interactive installations artists and scientists question media-technological developments and visions. Temporary exhibitions, such as “net_condition. Art/Politics in the Online Universe”^{[12][13]} (September 1999 to February 2000), “Iconoclasm. Beyond Image Wars in Science, Religion and Art”^[14] (from May to September, 2002) or “bit international”^[15] (February 2008 to January 2009) were highly respected both nationally and abroad.^[16]

ZKM | Museum of Contemporary Art

Since December 1999, the Museum of Contemporary Art has been located in the atria 1 and 2 of the former munitions factory. Across 7.000 sqm exhibition space, the museum displays works from private collections, namely the FER COLLECTION, the Sammlung Grässlin [Grässlin Collection], the Sammlung Siegfried Weishaupt [Weishaupt Collection], the collection of the Landesbank Baden-Württemberg, VAF-Stiftung / Museo di arte moderna e contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto [VAF Foundation / Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art of Trento and Rovereto] (MART), as well as the Boros Collection, together with exponents drawn from the ZKM Collection and further collaborating collections. Temporary exhibitions, above all from the second half of the twentieth centuries through to contemporary approaches in contemporary art are presented. Among others monographic exhibitions, on Bruce Nauman, Bill Viola, Sigmar Polke, Franz West, Sylvie Fleury, Martin Kippenberger and Tobias Rehberger have been taking place since 1999.^[18] Special, thematic exhibitions were, inter alia “Making Things Public. Atmospheres of Democracy”^{[19][20][21][22]} (March to October, 2005), “Light Art from Artificial



The 'Biennialist Headquarter' by Thierry Geoffroy/Colonel 2011 in the exhibition "The Global Contemporary. Art Worlds after 1989"^[17] (September 2011 to February 2012)

Light”^{[23][24]} (November 2005 to August 2006), “Medium Religion”^{[25][26]} (November 2008 till April 2009) or “The Global Contemporary. Art Worlds after 1989”^{[27][28]} (September 2011 to February 2012). Furthermore, smaller scale exhibitions are held in the museum project spaces.

Events

Alongside exhibitions, **events** as platforms for the exchange with visitors and actors from various spheres of social life such as politics, the economy or philosophy take place. The form and content of events vary: from opera with multimedial stages to scientific symposia and popular concerts through to performances, dance or film-screenings. Here, the ZKM functions both as an organizer and cooperation partner, but also leases out its facilities. The events take place in various spaces, among others, the Lecture Hall, the Media Theater, the Foyer and the ZKM_Cube.

Research and Production

The research institutes of the ZKM facilitate the development of trans-disciplinary projects. The research performance is, in part, carried out independently at the ZKM, but mostly as part of collaborations with further educational and research institutions. Their objective is to analyze and investigate the most recent image, music and communications technologies with respect to their applicability and relevance for art and an increasingly globally networked scientific (online) community.

ZKM | Institute for Visual Media

Founded in 1991 the Institute for Visual Media creatively and critically investigates the permanently transforming media culture. Unique artistic developments, the cooperation with internal guest artists (William Forsythe, Bill Viola et al.) as well as cooperation with culture and research institutes, comprise some of the elements of the institute’s work. The work results which follow from this are presented in the context of exhibitions and conferences. The Institute’s production spectrum ranges from digital video and 3D animation to interactive installations and environments, from software systems through to the real-time generation of natural and architectonic environments and audio-visual applications for performance contexts. Until 2011, one of the institute’s focal points comprised the sphere of immersive projection environments (e.g. PanoramaScreen), in the context of which hardware and software solutions for artistic projects were developed. Since then, emphasis has been placed on, among others, the development of augmented reality productions.^[29]

ZKM | Institute for Music and Acoustics

The Institute for Music and Acoustics carries out research and development in the field of electro-acoustic and experimental music, as well as in the spheres of digital sound systems and algorithmic composition. It also supports guest artists and scientists in productions, organizes contemporary concerts and initiates symposia and festivals. Thus, the European meeting of the electronic studios, called “next_generation”, takes place biannually and the concert festival Quantensprünge [Quantum Leaps] on a six-monthly basis. In addition to this, the institute awards the Giga-Hertz Prize^[30] that is the most generously endowed award for electronic music, as well as the Walter-Fink Prize^[31] for Dance, Electronic Music and Media since 2009. Located in the interior of the “Blue Cube” there is a sound studio for artistic productions.

ZKM | Institute for Media, Education, and Economics

The Institute for Media, Education, and Economics was founded in 2001 as an interdisciplinary research institute and applications-oriented institute. In the context of contract research, the institute is dedicated to scientific research of economic and social phenomena which arise in connection with the use of the new media. The emphasis of the institute's project work is placed on the analysis and clarification of previously unknown processes in this context in order to facilitate the use of new resources. In connection with the research results, the institute also assumes an advisory function for public institutes and private businesses. The institute's additional thematic fields include "Media and Migrants", "Internet-based Communication" and "Scientific Communication".

Archives and collections

The **ZKM Collection** was founded by the ZKM's first director, Heinrich Klotz, at the beginning of the 1990s and has been augmented ever since. It is sub-divided into the collections: the Museum of Contemporary Art and the Media Museum collections, the Video and Audio collections as well as several archives. The collection is based on a specific approach to various artistic genre and media: whereas painting and sculpture were hermetically sealed off from new influences of video art and photography which were gradually establishing themselves, the ZKM's collecting activity is marked by the transcendence of such traditional genre borders.^[32] While the Museum of Contemporary Art collection embraced works of art from all genre from the outset, the Media Museum collection initially contained only works of interactive media most of which were produced in-house. Over 500 international guest artists^[33] produced a vast number of works, which then became part of the ZKM Collection after being initially presented in Karlsruhe. Consequently, the ZKM disposes over one of the largest collections of media art extending back to the beginning of video art, electronic installation and holography. To these also belong the collection of approx. 1.200 art videos and 13.800 audio tracks, which are not stored in the museum but are accessible in the ZKM | Media Library.^[34] They may also be found on Dieter Mankau's four listening chairs and, for the most part, can be researched via the Internet.

The **Video Collection** was constructed as the first of its kind in Germany and increased the public awareness of video as an independent art form. The collection encompasses works of video art ranging from the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, among others, the video magazine "Infermental". Through the Laboratory for Antiquated Video Systems, which is connected to the Media Library it has been possible to rescue comprehensive video collections in Europe and the USA from decomposition, and make them accessible to the public.

The **Audio Collection** comprises the titles of contemporary music with an emphasis on electro-acoustic music. In addition to audio recordings, the collection includes scores, specialist publications, historical photography and posters. Especial importance is attributed to the International Digital Electro-acoustic Music Archive (IDEAMA), which includes pieces of electro-acoustic music from its inception through to the present.

In addition to works of video art and electronic music, the ZKM collects **archives** and documents on the electronic arts, such as on video art, electro-acoustic music, computer art and inter-medial forms. It provides researchers with insight and an understanding for the artistic developments of the foregoing 50 years.

The common **ZKM Library** shared with the Karlsruhe University of Arts and Design (HfG) comprises approx. 53.000 books, journals and digital storage media. Thematically, its inventory concentrates on twentieth and twenty-first century art and, above all, on media art, architecture, design, media theory, film, photography and electro-acoustic music. All the library's inventories may be researched on the Internet.^[35]

Publications

In cooperation with publishers, the ZKM publishes exhibition catalogs and specialist works on the monographic and thematic exhibitions.

ZKM Publications (a selection):

- *Beuys Brock Vostell. Aktion. Partizipation. Performance.* (Hrsg.): Peter Weibel, ZKM - Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie, Hatje Cantz, Karlsruhe, 2014, ISBN 978-3-7757-3864-4.^[36]
- Hans Belting, Jacob Birken, Andrea Buddensieg, Peter Weibel (Eds.): *Global Studies: Mapping Contemporary Art and Culture.* ZKM | Karlsruhe; Hatje Cantz, Ostfildern 2011.
- Christoph Blase, Peter Weibel (Eds.): *Record again! 40jahrevideokunst.de Teil 2.* Hatje Cantz, Ostfildern 2010. Exhibition i.a. at ZKM: Juli 17 – September 6, 2009
- Gregor Jansen, Thomas Thiel (Eds.): *Vertrautes Terrain: aktuelle Kunst in & über Deutschland (Contemporary art in & about Germany).* ZKM | Karlsruhe; Kehrer, Heidelberg 2009. Exhibition at ZKM: May 22 – October 12, 2008
- Harald Falckenberg, Peter Weibel (Eds.): *Paul Thek. The Artist's Artist.* MIT Press, Cambridge (Mass.) 2009. Exhibition i.a. at ZKM: December 15, 2007 – March 30, 2008
- Peter Weibel, Andrea Buddensieg (Eds.): *Contemporary Art and the Museum: A Global Perspective.* ZKM | Karlsruhe; Hatje Cantz, Ostfildern 2007
- Peter Weibel, Gregor Jansen (Eds.): *light art from artificial light. Light as Medium in 20th and 21st Century Art.* ZKM Karlsruhe; Hatje Cantz, Ostfildern 2007 Exhibition „Lichtkunst aus Kunstlicht” at ZKM: November 19, 2005 – August 6, 2006
- Bruno Latour, Peter Weibel (Eds.): *Making Things Public. Atmospheres of Democracy.* ZKM | Karlsruhe; MIT Press, Cambridge (Mass.) 2005. Exhibition at ZKM: March 20 – October 3, 2005
- Jeffrey Shaw, Peter Weibel (Eds.): *Future Cinema. The Cinematic Imaginary After Film.* ZKM | Karlsruhe; MIT Press, Cambridge (Mass.) 2003. Exhibition at ZKM: November 16, 2002 – March 30, 2003

Publications about the ZKM (a selection):

- Peter Weibel, Christiane Riedel (Eds.): *ZKM Guide 1989–2009.* ZKM | Karlsruhe, 2010, ISBN 978-3-928201-40-7
- Jörg Reimann, Peter Weibel (Eds.): *99,9% und mehr : Künstler-Gruppenprojekte "vor" dem ZKM.* Karlsruhe, 2009, ISBN 978-3-928201-37-7
- Hans-Peter Schwarz (Ed.): *Medien-Kunst-Geschichte.* Prestel, München 1997, ISBN 3-7913-1836-5
- Heinrich Klotz (Ed.): *Kunst der Gegenwart.* Prestel, München, 1997 ISBN 3-7913-1835-7

See also

- New media
- New media art

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External links

- ZKM home page (<http://www.zkm.de/>)
- Thierry Geoffroy / Colonel at ZKM in 2011 (<http://www.global-contemporary.de/en/artists/69-thierry-geoffroy>)
- Professor Herbert W. Franke at ZKM in 2007 ([http://on1.zkm.de/zkm/stories/storyReader\\$5767](http://on1.zkm.de/zkm/stories/storyReader$5767))
- Best of ZKM: Videoart from the collection (http://creative.arte.tv/fr/space/ZKM_Shots_-_by_Peter_Weibel/messages/)



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