



Weltmuseum Wien: New director Claudia Banz presents future programme

A museum as a safe space for cultural dialogue, for participation, for shaping the future: this is the vision Claudia Banz will present at her first press conference since taking over the role of Director of Weltmuseum Wien in February. The curator and expert in art and design history and material culture will present a diverse programme intended to further solidify the museum's role as an open and inclusive space.

"Today, museums carry a particular level of responsibility. They are spaces where we can – and must – come together to reflect on how we can organise our world democratically," says Claudia Banz. "The Weltmuseum Wien should be a safe space, characterised by trust, mutual respect and cultural participation. We want to tackle the big questions of our age – from a variety of perspectives and in dialogue with our visitors at all times."

A learning institute for the society of tomorrow

The Weltmuseum Wien is a learning institute, where academic research, artistic practice and social engagement meet and interact. The new director will focus on activating the museum's extensive collections and archives: "Our materials tell stories of human creativity, stories that have shaped the world. We want to present these stories in new contexts and from multiple different perspectives," says Claudia Banz.

New formats: WMW Contemporary, Material Lab and Storytelling

The Weltmuseum Wien plans to establish new formats. With WMW Contemporary, the museum will focus its sights on contemporary art and design and new media, as a way of addressing topics such as neo-colonialism, global economics, or identity and memory. Meanwhile, a Material Lab will shed light on the political dimensions of the museum's materials in historical and contemporary global processes – an innovative approach to issues of sustainability and cultural knowledge.

Banz is particularly focused on using the collections for storytelling: "Who tells whose story? And what perspectives are missing?" These are the questions that will inform work on the museum's permanent exhibition moving forwards. There are plans to work closely with international source communities and local stakeholders.

A "Museum without Walls" and digital future strategies

Using outreach programmes, mobile cultural mediation and hybrid formats, Banz wants to bring the museum closer to the City of Vienna and the surrounding areas. "We want to create a vibrant, inter-generational network that will facilitate long-lasting connections and offer barrier-free participation," says Claudia Banz. Alongside this, the Weltmuseum Wien is planning a new digital agenda, where open platforms and participatory formats will promote transparency, collaboration and knowledge transfer.

Exhibitions 2025: inter-cultural perspectives and artistic reflections

The programme for 2025 will journey far and wide across six special exhibitions: from the re-contextualisation of selected collections at the Weltmuseum Wien (*Who's wearing the pants?*, 25



March 2025 to 1 February 2026) and the intersection of botany and colonial trade (*Colonialism on the Windowsill*, 28 May 2025 to 25 May 2026), to indigenous cultural practices of weaving and dyeing.

Across three dedicated exhibitions, international artists Shannon Alonzo (Trinidad and Tobago, *Washerwoman*, The Theseus Temple, 16 May to 5 October 2025), Tabita Rezaire (French-Guyana, *Calabash Nebula: Cosmological Tales of Connection*, 17 September 2025 to 11 January 2026), and Indah Arsyad (Indonesia, *The Ultimate Breath*, 26 November 2025 to 25 May 2026) will engage with the asymmetrical power structures of the colonial past, healing and cosmic knowledge as decolonial strategies of history-writing, plus environmental crises and traditional mythologies. *The Colours of the Earth. Modern Textile Art in Mexico* (22 October 2025 to 6 April 2026), meanwhile, will honour the rich textile heritage of indigenous communities and shed light on the impact social media is having.

For more information on these exhibitions, see: www.weltmuseumwien.at/presse/

Profile: Dr Claudia Banz

Claudia Banz (born 1966) is a German curator, exhibition designer and expert in art and design history and material culture. She studied art history, Romance studies and classical archaeology in Heidelberg and Berlin and received her doctorate in 1996 on the topic of The Patronage of the Habsburgs in Brussels. She has been Director of Weltmuseum Wien since February 2025.

Claudia Banz has worked as a curator and advisor at renowned institutions such as the Hamburger Bahnhof – National Gallery of Contemporary Art, Berlin; museum kunstpallast, Düsseldorf; Museum Folkwang, Essen; Marres. House for Contemporary Culture, Maastricht; the German Hygiene Museum, Dresden; and the Biennial for Social Design, Utrecht. She was Head of Modern Art and Design at the Museum of Art and Industry in Hamburg between 2011 and 2017, and worked as Curator of Design and Outreach at the Museum of Decorative Arts (Kunstgewerbemuseum) in Berlin from 2017 to 2025.

Her most well-known exhibitions include *Fast Fashion. The dark side of fashion*; *Food Revolution 5.0. Design for the society of tomorrow*; *Connecting Afro Futures. Fashion x Hair x Design*; *Retrotopia. Design for Socialist Spaces*, and the project series *more-than-human. Design after the Anthropocene*. Her work is devoted to current design issues, global material cultures, and the future of the museum as an open, multi-perspective site of dialogue.



Press photos

Press releases and images for up-to-date coverage of special exhibitions and projects at the Weltmuseum Wien are available for download free of charge from our press area:

<https://www.weltmuseumwien.at/en/press/>

Claudia Banz
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Weltmuseum Wien
Exterior view
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**Opening times, tickets, entrance fees**

www.weltmuseumwien.at/en/information

Additional information regarding your visit

Guided tours, bookings, and reservations for events

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Information, questions, and suggestions

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Exhibition programme and events

All events are listed online in the Weltmuseum Wien [event calendar](#).

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