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EXPO 2025 OSAKA: FACTS AND FICTION CELEBRATES MULTIPLE AWARDS AT THE END OF THE WORLD EXPO

Expo 2025 Osaka close its doors on October 13th after six months. facts and fiction played a key role in designing the national pavilions for Germany, Austria and the European Union (EU) at the World Expo. The agency has already received multiple awards for the German and Austrian pavilions.

The World Expo in Osaka marks Japan's third such event, 55 years after Expo 1970 – also held in Osaka – and 20 years after Expo 2005 in Aichi. Under the theme "Designing Future Society for Our Lives", 150 countries and 25 international organisations took part. More than 25 million visitors explored the national and thematic pavilions. facts and fiction was responsible for three national presences: Germany, Austria and the EU. Looking back on 184 days of the World Expo, the agency can draw a highly positive balance.

18 Awards for Germany and Austria

The agency is proud to have received 18 awards for the German and Austrian pavilions. The international jury of the Bureau International des Expositions (BIE) awarded the German Pavilion – commissioned by the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy – the Silver Award for Theme Development (Self-built Pavilions – Type A, over 1,500 m²). In addition, the German Pavilion received the Sustainability Award, which recognises pavilions that exemplarily integrate sustainability in both concept and execution.

The Austrian Pavilion also impressed the jury, earning Bronze for Exhibition Design (Self-built Pavilions – Type A, under 1,500 m²). The Expo 2025 Official Participant Awards were presented in four categories: Architecture and Landscape, Exhibition Design, Theme Development and Sustainability. The prizes are awarded by the BIE, based in Paris, which oversees World Expos.

"The awards at the end of these intense months are a meaningful recognition of the entire team – and reflect what we experienced daily in Osaka: genuine enthusiasm and international connectedness," says Christopher Hecker, Director of the German Pavilion on behalf of Koelnmesse.
"Over the past six months, the German Pavilion has become a vibrant place of exchange, connecting people from all over the world. Its open and welcoming atmosphere inspired visitors to gain new perspectives on a circular future and engage in dialogue. A pavilion that will leave a lasting impression through its content and encounters."

At the EXHIBITOR Magazine's World Expo Award, facts and fiction also scored

highly: Germany received an Honourable Mention in the “Best Large Pavilion” category and Winner in “Best Exterior Design”. Austria was honoured in the categories “Best Exterior Design” and “Best Presentation/Storytelling” (Honourable Mention).

The German Pavilion also won Gold for “Best Sustainable Pavilion” at the World Expolympics Award, while the Austrian Pavilion received Silver for “Best Small Pavilion” and Bronze for “Best Activation or Engagement”. These awards recognise the most outstanding examples of experiential design at Expo 2025 Osaka.

“Expo 2025 in Osaka was more than just a project for us – it was a labour of love,” says Marco Hückel, Managing Partner at facts and fiction.
“In the pavilions of Germany, Austria and the European Union, we were able to tell stories about values, innovation and optimism. We wanted to show that the future can not only be envisioned but also experienced and felt. That our work has been recognised both by expert juries and millions of visitors is the greatest form of appreciation we could wish for. It proves that our narratives reach, inspire and move people – something that fills us with pride and deep gratitude.”

Additional architecture awards for the German and Austrian pavilions
The architecture of the German Pavilion, designed by LAVA Architects, represented a paradigm shift in construction: modular, demountable and realised largely using locally sourced, rented or reusable materials. This conveyed the principle of circularity at a glance – and earned multiple architectural awards. Alongside the ICONIC AWARDS from the German Design Council, these included the Green Good Design Awards and the Big SEE Architecture Awards.
The Austrian Pavilion, designed by BWM Designers & Architects, was shaped by an oversized musical score, which characterised the exterior. The timber spiral structure was also recognised by numerous juries, including the Green Planet Building Technology Award, an Honourable Mention at the BLT Built Design Awards in the “Architectural Design / Cultural” category, and a Special Prize in “Public Buildings and Municipal Construction” at the NÖ Timber Construction Award 2025.

The Circulars – a visitor magnet in the German Pavilion
Visitors were accompanied on their journey through the German Pavilion by the Circulars, the pavilion’s mascots. Inspired by the Japanese Kawaii aesthetic, the Circulars appeared in various forms throughout the pavilion – most prominently as next-generation audioguides.

The Circulars activated automatically at key points, lighting up and vibrating to attract attention. Over 40 touchpoints invited visitors to explore content and engage more deeply at their own pace. The mascots even interacted with one

another when brought together. This playful approach created emotional connections, sparked curiosity and made the Circulars a clear visitor favourite. Whether as audioguides, walking acts or plush toys in the shop – they became the highlight of the German Pavilion experience.

At the Expo Characters World Festival in mid-September – the world championship of mascots – the German Pavilion's Circulars were voted the most popular mascot of Expo 2025 by visitors.

"For us, the Expo in Osaka was a fascinating journey with three very special projects. Each pavilion, in its own way, showed how vibrantly and compellingly future topics can be communicated. In particular, the Circulars in the German Pavilion became a true crowd-puller – with humour and lightness, they conveyed complex content in a personal way. Seeing visitors leave the pavilion with a smile every day was the best feedback we could imagine," says Andreas Horbelt, Creative Director at facts and fiction.

Looking ahead: Next World Expos in Serbia (2027) and Saudi Arabia (2030)
After Expo is before Expo: the next World Expo will take place from 15 May to 15 August 2027 in Belgrade – the first specialised Expo in Southeast Europe. The next major Expo will follow from 1 October 2030 to 31 March 2031 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

"We hope to once again contribute pavilion concepts in Belgrade and Riyadh. Expo 2025 in Osaka has once more shown us the power of shared engagement with the big questions of our future. With the pavilions of Germany, Austria and the EU, we were able to create spaces where visions could be experienced and dialogue could flourish," says Dietmar Jähn, Managing Partner of facts and fiction. "Being part of this global conversation is a privilege and a responsibility. The many awards our pavilions have received are both a recognition of this work and an incentive to keep pushing forward."

25 years of Expo experience
facts and fiction brings 25 years of Expo experience, having delivered 13 national participations. The agency's first pavilion was realised for the German Chemical Industry Association (VCI) at Expo 2000 in Hanover. This was followed by national pavilions for Germany at Expo 2012 in Yeosu (South Korea), for Monaco and Kazakhstan at Expo 2015 in Milan (Italy), for France (Total) and Azerbaijan at Expo 2017 in Astana (Kazakhstan), and for Germany, Monaco, Belgium and Jordan at Expo 2020 in Dubai.

At the World Expo in Japan, facts and fiction conceptualised and delivered the German Pavilion as part of the German Pavilion Consortium on behalf of BMWK for the second consecutive time, and was also responsible for the Austrian and EU

exhibitions.

Background information

Germany: Wa! Germany
Commissioned by the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWE), Koelnmesse GmbH was responsible for the organisation and operation of the German Pavilion at Expo 2025 Osaka. The concept, planning and realisation were delivered by the consortium “German Pavilion Expo 2025 Osaka”, consisting of facts and fiction (Cologne) and GL events Live (Lyon), supported by their Japanese subsidiary. facts and fiction was responsible for the content concept, exhibition and media design, while GL events Live and GL events Japan managed the construction. The architecture and spatial concept were designed by LAVA Architects (Berlin).

Austria: Composing the Future
Commissioned by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour and Economy, the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber and its Expo Office, BWM Designers & Architects designed the architecture of the Austrian Pavilion. facts and fiction conceived and designed the exhibition, supported by Zone Media from Vienna. The music was developed in cooperation between Mozarteum Salzburg and Kling Klang Klong (Berlin). Construction was handled by the Nüssli Group as general contractor.

European Union: Nurturing Tomorrow
Commissioned by the EU, a consortium led by GL events Live (Lyon) was responsible for the pavilion and a range of supporting activities. As part of the consortium, facts and fiction designed and produced the exhibition for the EU Pavilion.

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About facts and fiction
facts and fiction is an interdisciplinary creative agency with more than 70 full-time employees in Cologne and Berlin. The agency was founded in Cologne in 1992. facts and fiction conceptualises, designs and implements innovative analogue and digital projects in the fields of art, culture, business and science. The focus is on museums and exhibitions, Expo pavilions, events, exhibits and digital solutions for participative and individualised experiences.

facts and fiction has developed the pavilions for Germany, Austria and the EU at the World Expo in Japan that took place from April to October 2025. The agency has 25 years of Expo experience and will now have implemented a total of 13 country participations including Japan. Large-scale, previously realised projects in the public museums and exhibitions sector include the Mining Museum in Bochum and the Berlin Exhibition at the Humboldt Forum in Berlin. The agency is currently working on the design of the Zeppelin Tribune and Zeppelin Field learning and meeting centre in Nuremberg, the permanent exhibition of the Buddenbrook House in Lübeck, Germany and a permanent exhibition at the Natural History Museum in Basel, Switzerland. In Berlin, facts and fiction is active in the tension-charged field of political communications: The agency develops a wide variety of analogue, hybrid and digital event formats and exhibitions for ministries, institutions and associations in the context of political discourse. In 2024, the budget was again awarded to facts and fiction by the German Ministry of the Environment (BMUKN).

facts and fiction has implemented over 700 projects in 50 countries and has already won numerous awards for its work, including the BIE Award, the iF Communication Award, the ADC competition, the Galaxy Award and the Red Dot Award.

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