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GERMANY, AUSTRIA AND THE EUROPEAN UNION: THREE PAVILIONS FOR EXPO 2025 OSAKA WITH PARTICIPATION FROM FACTS AND FICTION

On 13 April, it was time: Expo 2025 Osaka officially opened. facts and fiction has played a major role in the pavilions for Germany, Austria and the European Union (EU) at the World Expo 2025. The creative agency has 25 years of Expo experience and a track record of participations for a total of 13 countries.

Expo 2025 is taking place from 13 April to 13 October 2025 in Osaka, Japan, on the artificial island of Yumeshima located on the waterfront. The World Expo in Osaka is the third to be held in Japan. 55 years after Expo 1970 – also held in Osaka – and 20 years after Expo 2005 in Aichi. With the overarching theme of “Designing Future Society for Our Lives”, 150 countries and 25 international organisations are participating. The organiser expects around 28 million visitors.

“We are delighted and honoured to be able to creatively design three pavilions for Osaka,” says Andreas Horbelt, Creative Director at facts and fiction. “It is a great challenge to represent different countries and organisations authentically. In the end, the German, Austrian and EU exhibitions all turned out very differently, exemplifying the wide range of our scenographic possibilities. It is always important for us to make complex messages and themes tangible in such a way that they stay in people's memory for a long time and, above all, appeal to visitors emotionally.”

25 years of Expo experience

facts and fiction has 25 years of Expo experience and a track record of participations for a total of 13 countries: The creative agency implemented its first pavilion for the German Chemical Industry Association (VCI) at Expo 2000 in Hanover, Germany. This was followed by country pavilions for Germany at Expo 2012 in Yeosu (South Korea), for Monaco and Kazakhstan at Expo 2015 in Milan (Italy), for France (sub-sector Total) and Azerbaijan at Expo 2017 in Astana (Kazakhstan) and for Germany, Monaco, Belgium and Jordan at Expo 2020 in Dubai. At this year's World Expo in Japan, the agency has designed and is implementing Germany's participation for the second time in a row and is responsible for the exhibitions for Austria and the EU as well.

“Our Expo teams are made up of interdisciplinary experts from the fields of architecture, design, scenography, conception, creation, technology and construction. With 25 years as a member of the international Expo family, we benefit from a strong global network. In addition to our own Expo experience, it is crucial for us and our team to be additionally informed by experts from the host country and the respective exhibiting country,” says Marco Hückel, Managing Partner at facts and fiction. “We consider it a great privilege to contribute to international exchange and understanding at a World Expo, bringing our creative expertise as well as extensive experience in managing major projects at expos,” adds Dietmar Jähn, Managing Partner at facts and fiction.

Germany, Austria and the EU: Three pavilions for Osaka

Germany: Wa! Germany

The German Pavilion at Expo 2025 in Osaka is dedicated to the theme around which our future – and the way we shape it – revolves: the circular economy. Circularity is the leitmotif of the German Pavilion; mutually shaping a circular world is the motto. In terms of design, everything is based on the shape of the circle: the pavilion itself, the visitor experience, the design, the technologies showcased and the futuristic visions. With its Pavilion, Germany is extending an invitation to the international community to mutually contemplate about a circular world where architecture, landscape and exhibition merge into a unified whole whilst creating a unique visitor experience that points out ways we can move towards a circular future.

The title of the pavilion is わ！ドイツ. This title is pronounced: Wa! Doitsu and translated means: Wa! Germany. In Japanese, there are multiple positive connotations to the term “Wa” (わ): It can mean “circle” and “harmony”, which is why it fits in perfectly with Germany’s leitmotif of circularity. And the word "Wa" also stands for “Wow!”, thereby expressing the enthusiasm that Germany and its pavilion will generate at the Expo.

Just one quick glance at the architecture of the German Pavilion – consisting of seven round structural elements made of wood – conveys the leitmotif of circularity. As a holistic entity, the Pavilion marries nature and technology, biosphere and human-made technosphere into one unique visitor experience. The pavilion exemplifies how architecture and urban planning can seamlessly unite sustainability and circularity with beauty and experiential designs for the future.

At the exhibition, visitors embark on an emotional and multisensory journey that offers tangible visions and insights into what life in a circular society could look and feel like. The circular exhibition tour was conceived as a series of immersive spatial experiences – similarly guided by the leitmotif: the cycle. After travelling around the biosphere and circular cities through closed material and energy cycles, the visitors return to a biosphere where humans and nature appear to have reconciled their co-existence.

On their tour around the pavilion, visitors are accompanied by little pavilion mascots called the Circulars. The idea was inspired by Kawaii – the Japanese cuteness aesthetic. Circulars can be encountered in various guises, shapes and forms everywhere around the pavilion, but primarily as speaking guides. These guides, developed by facts and fiction and thematically adapted to the exhibition experience, introduce visitors to the contents of the pavilion during their tour and explain what it means to live within the sense of a circular economy.

Background Information:

On behalf of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Protection, Koelnmesse GmbH is responsible for the organisation and operation of the German Pavilion at Expo 2025 in Osaka. The concept, planning and realisation of the German Pavilion are the responsibility of the “German Pavilion Expo 2025 Osaka Consortium”, consisting of the companies facts and fiction (Cologne) and GL events Live (Lyon) with the support of the Japanese branch. facts and fiction is responsible for content, exhibition and media design; the pavilion is being built by GL events Live and GL

events Japan. The architecture and spatial concept were designed by LAVA Architects (Berlin).

Austria: Composing the Future

Austria's contribution to the World Expo 2025 in Osaka, "Composing the Future", draws on the unifying theme of music to empower its visitors to collaboratively craft a compelling composition of the future.

In Japan, Austria is regarded as the quintessential country of music. And few things hold as much power as music. Music envelops us, stirs feelings, conveys messages and can set entire nations in motion. In the Austrian pavilion, music becomes a metaphor for a global community where the triad of man, nature and technology re-creates a harmonious tone.

The pavilion's guiding design principle is an oversized band of musical notes. As an intertwined sculpture, it commences the pavilion's characterisation from the outside, continuing on its theme. Inside the exhibition, it becomes a projection and interactive surface for future-oriented technologies and innovative solutions that contribute to shaping a sustainable and inclusive society.

Inside the Austrian Pavilion, the exhibition is divided into three rooms. In the first room, the band of musical notes comes alive as a projection screen: Here, visitors can experience the diversity of the relations between Austria and Japan in a fascinating musical prelude. Afterwards, visitors can playfully explore that diversity and performance capacity of the Austrian economy and society using oversized interactive musical notes. The crescendo of the exhibition comes last – in the room of the future. Here, guests can interactively engage with the future by themselves working on a composition of the future. The world of tomorrow is not designed in Austria, it is composed there.

Background Information:

On behalf of the Austrian Federal Ministry for Economy, Energy and Tourism, the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber and the Expo Office of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, BWM Designers & Architects are responsible for the architectural design of the Austrian pavilion. facts and fiction conceptualised and designed the pavilion's exhibition, supported by Vienna-based Zone Media. The music was created in a collaboration between the Mozarteum Salzburg and the Berlin-based creative studio Kling Klang Klöng. As general contractor, the Nüssli Group is responsible for the construction and implementation of the Austrian pavilion.

European Union: Nurturing Tomorrow

The EU is committed to fostering a better future through sustainability, connectivity, inclusivity and security. At Expo 2025 Osaka, the EU Pavilion, themed "Nurturing Tomorrow," will showcase initiatives that bring these commitments to life.

The EU and Japan share a strong partnership. They work together to promote peace and democracy and solutions to global challenges such as climate change, digital transformation and food security. The Pavilion will highlight these collaborations, emphasising the deep political, economic, and cultural ties between the EU and Japan.

Inspired by Japanese ema plaques and the precision of origami, the facade features rotating, petal-like modules made from sustainable bamboo. These elements move naturally with the wind, mirroring the graceful movement of the sakura blossoms and bringing the pavilion's theme, "Nurturing Tomorrow", to life.

The pavilion's exhibition reflects the New European Bauhaus values by combining aesthetics, sustainability and inclusivity. It is a space for discovery, dialogue, and interaction: A Zen robot installation allows visitors to find a moment of peace as an interactive robot nurtures a Zen garden, tracing patterns in the sand and greeting guests in Japanese and English. Equally fascinating are the "Talking Plants": with one touch, the visitor can watch its virtual twin grow and reveal fascinating insights into EU initiatives on sustainable agriculture, food safety, and green alliances. Inspired by Japanese origami, visitors can also fold their own digital dove and release it into the installation as a symbol of hope and cooperation. Whoever wants to test their knowledge can take in the EU-Japan Relations Quiz and learn more about the strong partnership between the European Union and Japan.

Beyond its installations, the Pavilion serves as a dynamic forum for policy exchanges, cultural dialogue and high-profile talks on the future of our societies.

Background Information:

On behalf of the EU, a consortium led by GL events Live (Lyon) is responsible for the pavilion and a variety of accompanying measures. As part of the consortium, facts and fiction conceptualises and designs the pavilion's exhibition.

Captions

Germany: Mutually shaping a circular world – that is the motto of the German Pavilion. In terms of design, everything is based on the shape of the circle: the pavilion itself, the visitor experience, the design, the technologies showcased and the visions of the future. At the exhibition, visitors embark on an emotional and multisensory journey during which they learn about and grasp tangible visions of what living in a circular society could be like.

Austria: Austria's contribution to the World Expo 2025 in Osaka, “Composing the Future”, draws on the unifying theme of music to empower its visitors to collaboratively craft a compelling composition of the future. The scenography allows visitors to experience and explore Austria's role in shaping the future of people and society – bridging the fields of nature, tradition and innovation.

EU: In line with the theme of Expo 2025 Osaka, the EU Pavilion reflects the guiding principles of the New European Bauhaus: Aesthetics, sustainability and inclusivity. The pavilion is a place of discovery, dialogue and interaction.

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 currently developed the pavilions for Germany, Austria and the EU at the World Expo in Japan that will take 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 (BMUV).

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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