

Museen der Stadt Linz

Lentos and Nordico introduce their 2026 programme

In 2026, the Lentos Kunstmuseum and the Nordico Stadtmuseum Linz will open up diverse perspectives on artistic, social and urban topics. Together, their programme brings together different approaches and demonstrates how art can engage with current developments, contextualise them and invite public dialogue.

2026 at Lentos

In 2026, Lentos focuses on themes emerging from its collection practices and institutional history, while also engaging with new perspectives and contemporary global realities. A particular emphasis is placed on painting – in all its diversity, resilience and relevance – as both a foundational medium and a vibrant, contemporary practice.

The year opens with the continuation of **Being a Girl*!?**. The exhibition, on view until early April, explores the diverse visual worlds surrounding the theme of girlhood. With more than 150 works, it offers a nuanced perspective on identity, the body, and the cultural patterns that shape these ideas. Historical and contemporary positions – including Paula Modersohn-Becker, Pablo Picasso, Egon Schiele, Maja Vukojc and Sophia Süßmilch – illustrate how painterly approaches to the subject of girlhood have evolved over time.

A milestone follows in March: the reinstallation of **The Collection**. A special focus lies on the extensive integration of the significant gift from Erwin Hauser, including works that have not previously been accessible to the public. The new presentation showcases painting from Impressionism, the Biedermeier period, New Objectivity as well as Fantastic Realism, while placing greater emphasis on women artists and international perspectives. In doing so, it underscores the museum's responsibility for careful collection stewardship and for a contemporary, diverse representation of its holdings.

In late spring, the major retrospective on **Max Pechstein** opens, realised as part of the international touring exhibition of the KUNSTSAMMLUNGEN ZWICKAU Max Pechstein Museum. The exhibition places Pechstein's painterly phases at its centre. A Linz-specific focus will, for the first time, explore in depth Pechstein's relationship with Wolfgang Gurlitt, who represented him as a gallerist and facilitated his journey to the South Seas. With more than 100 works – including South Sea motifs, Baltic Sea paintings and portraits, many of them shown in Austria for the first time – the retrospective offers one of the most extensive insights into Pechstein's painterly oeuvre. It is complemented by paintings from the Lentos collection, including significant works associated with the Brücke artists' group.

Lentos Kunstmuseum Nordico Stadtmuseum

Programme 2026

From September, Lentos presents **Katrin Plavčak**, a distinctive voice in contemporary painting whose works address socio-political themes through vivid, multilayered visual worlds. Plavčak combines naïivist and surrealist elements, examining how perception is shaped in “turbulent times” marked by fake news, crises and unstable systems. Here, “sabotage” functions as an artistic strategy to disrupt the status quo. The exhibition continues the feminist and socially critical concerns that have shaped Lentos’ programme in recent years.

In the lower level, Lentos will open three exhibitions in 2026: Beginning in February, **The World Without Us** examines how our understanding of the world shifts when humanity is no longer imagined as its central measure. Artistic perspectives — including international contributions — open up views onto expansive temporal and spatial dimensions, foregrounding questions of perspective and the relationship between human and non-human. In May, **200 Years of Photography** follows, marking the medium’s anniversary by highlighting its artistic potential in both historical and contemporary forms — from early techniques to digital practices of the present. A rediscovery will unfold in October: in the first major solo presentation in decades, the work of **Erika Rössing** will be shown. Her serial, poetic still lifes enter into dialogue with works by her husband Karl Rössing, inviting audiences to rediscover the distinctive oeuvre of a painter largely forgotten today.

Lentos Director Hemma Schmutz: “The exhibitions demonstrate the many ways in which artists respond to their time — critically, poetically, experimentally and politically. Bringing these diverse positions together and making their relevance to our present visible is a central mission of Lentos.”

2026 at Nordico

In 2026, the Nordico turns its attention to those spheres of urban life in Linz that are formative yet rarely at the centre of museum discourse. As a city museum, Nordico highlights how a city’s identity is shaped and condensed through everyday practices, places and stories.

The year begins with the exhibition **A Longing for Peace. 80 Years since the End of War in Linz 1945/2025**, which examines life in Linz around the end of the Second World War in 1945 and the challenges of the post-war years.

In spring, **Made in Linz. Home to Trade, Industry and Crafts** presents a major exhibition on entrepreneurial urban cultures. Around one hundred businesses — from historic manufactories and family enterprises to industrial corporations — form a panorama of the economic history of Austria’s third-largest city. The exhibition not only tells stories of products, successes and ruptures, but above all of the people who have shaped Linz as a place of work and production.

In autumn, Nordico turns to a subject that is ubiquitous yet often taboo: death, with the exhibition **Death Positive. Because Dying Happens**. It sheds light on historical and contemporary ways of engaging with mortality — from funerary practices and places of farewell to cultural modes of expression. Archival material, biographical traces and artistic contributions open up new perspectives on the topic.

The special exhibitions continue to be complemented by the two collection presentations **Linz in Brief** and **A View of Linz**. “With the exhibitions in 2026, Nordico turns its attention to key spheres of urban life. Historical research is interwoven with contemporary questions — opening up new perspectives on the diverse experiences that shape Linz,” says Andrea Bina, Director of the Nordico Stadtmuseum.

Programme 2026

Cultural Responsibility and Contemporary Relevance

“Lentos and Nordico are key pillars of Linz’s museum landscape. While Lentos engages with artistic discourse and brings international perspectives to the city, Nordico demonstrates how vivid and dynamic Linz’s history and present truly are. Both institutions make an important contribution and strengthen the cultural identity of our city,” says Mayor Dietmar Prammer.

“The 2026 programme of Lentos and Nordico once again demonstrates how vibrant and multifaceted Linz’s cultural landscape is. A particular highlight is the reinstallation of the Lentos collection display, regarded as the museum’s heart. The new concept – with its focus on contemporary, diverse representation and the integration of the Erwin Hauser gift – signals careful and reflective collection stewardship. At Nordico, I am especially pleased to see how exhibitions such as *Made in Linz* bring urban life into view – with attention to the people, enterprises and stories that shape the city. Both institutions provide important impulses for a high-quality cultural programme in Linz,” says Doris Lang-Mayerhofer, City Councillor for Culture, Tourism and Creative Industries.

2025: Achievements and Highlights

The museum year 2025 was defined by notable achievements. Lentos generated significant momentum through two international collaborations: as part of **Ars Electronica**, the museum presented – for the second time – the exhibition of the Prix Ars Electronica winners. In addition, with **Vertical Horizon**, Lentos Kunstmuseum participated in the **Kyiv Biennial** for the first time – a project of considerable artistic and geopolitical relevance. This also marked the museum’s first collaboration with **Kunstraum MEMPHIS**, which likewise contributed an exhibition within the framework of the **Kyiv Biennial**. Another key focus was the major exhibition dedicated to the **Erwin Hauser** gift, which made central works from this important private donation visible for the first time and celebrated the largest expansion of Lentos’ holdings since 1953. With the exhibition **Being a Girl*!?** From Panel Painting to Social Media, Lentos placed both historical and contemporary representations of girlhood at the centre – attracting substantial public interest. Alongside this, **The Room**, an innovative art education project, was realised together with partner institutions from schools, cultural organisations and social services.

Nordico also recorded outstanding successes in 2025. The exhibition **It’s me, Toni** was extended until 23 March due to high visitor demand. A comprehensive solo exhibition was dedicated to Linz-born artist and environmental activist **Edgar Honetschläger**, accompanied by a film programme developed with **Crossing Europe Film Festival**, making Honetschläger’s cinematic work accessible to a wider audience. With the participatory format **We Open the Box. Talking about difficult history together**, Nordico established a new dialogue platform in which moderated conversations with the public addressed challenging chapters of the city’s past – particularly National Socialism in Linz. A standout moment was the Nordico dt being awarded the **2025 Austrian Museum Prize** – the nation’s highest honour for museums.

Both institutions were again presented with the **Austrian Museum Quality Seal** in 2025, confirming their continued excellence and relevance through 2030. Through initiatives such as the **Natur:Kunst Tage**, Lentos and Nordico also set shared thematic impulses: a diverse programme linked the exhibitions *Give Nature a Break* and *Touch Nature*, opening new perspectives on the interplay between nature, the city and art.

Figures & Finance 2025 / 2026

Review 2025

The financial situation in 2025 is highly positive: revenues developed very favourably across all business areas (admissions, shop, rentals, collaborations) and are expected to exceed budget projections by around 10%. All cost categories remained stable within planned levels. As in previous years, the Museen der Stadt Linz will therefore once again close the year with a balanced result – or even a “small surplus.”

Overall, the 2025 annual balance sheet is expected to record around 75,000 visitors (64,000 at Lentos and 11,000 at Nordico).

A milestone was also achieved in terms of infrastructure. With the conversion of the entire interior lighting at Lentos to LED – supported in part by the federal funding programme “Climate-fit Cultural Institutions” – a significant lever for strengthening sustainable museum operations was set in motion. Electricity consumption will be reduced by approximately 150,000 kWh, resulting in corresponding cost savings.

“In a 360-degree view of all aspects of museum work, 2025 certainly ranks among the most successful years since the Museen der Stadt Linz were founded. The award of the Austrian Museum Prize to Nordico is not only recognition of what has been achieved so far, but also a starting point for further momentum. The €20,000 prize money will be invested in structural improvements to expand Nordico’s art education programme, particularly for schools,” summarises Gernot Barounig, Financial Director, with satisfaction.

2026 Perspective

Economic Conditions

Several challenges are anticipated for the 2026 financial year. Inflation-driven cost increases have intensified again, and overall price levels remain comparatively high. This is particularly evident in operating expenses, IT costs and exhibition production costs. At the same time, public-sector budget consolidation requirements mean that the additional inflation-related needs cannot be fully compensated.

Funding and Budget 2026

The basic funding for 2026 is set at the same level as in 2025, amounting to €4.9 million. This consists of a €4.0 million contribution from Linz AG and a €0.9 million subsidy from the City of Linz. The organisation’s total budget for 2026 amounts to €5.8 million.

Exhibitions 2026 at Lentos

Exhibitions at Erwin Hauser Saal

Being a Girl*!? From Panel Painting to Social Media Until 6 Apr 2026

What motivates girls today and what role models have been handed down to us from the past? Contemporary art often deals with images of girls in socially motivated themes: Coming of age, self-optimisation tendencies – often in interaction with social media – fluid genders, issues of diversity, interculturality and inclusion. In addition to early representational portraits and images of saints, female children and adolescents appear throughout the ages as models of artists or as an expression of blossoming life in conflict with transience. In nine thematic circles, the exhibition moves towards the era of digital transformation along several intermediate temporal stages. With over 150 art works by international artists, the exhibition attempts to analyse and break up the current situation by referring back to modes of representation from earlier times. By taking the initiative, girls show the world who they really are!

Max Pechstein An Adventure into Expressionism 23 Apr to 30 Aug 2026

This comprehensive retrospective showcases major works from several creative periods of Hermann Max Pechstein (1881–1955). Alongside Dresden and Berlin, fishing villages on the Baltic coast were his most important creative venues. His works were presented to the Berlin public from 1913 onwards at the Fritz Gurlitt art salon. In addition, Wolfgang Gurlitt, owner of the gallery since 1907, sponsored Pechstein's journey to the South Seas. Once he arrived on the Palau Islands, the Expressionist painter sought a life in harmony with nature, but the First World War brought his adventure to a premature close. After the war, Pechstein rediscovered his creative energy in Berlin. In 1937, over 500 of his artworks were confiscated by the Nazis as part of their "Degenerate Art" campaign. Motifs from his South Sea voyage, painted from memory, reappeared in his later work in vibrant colours. In a section focusing specifically on Linz, the exhibition highlights Pechstein's special relationship with Wolfgang Gurlitt. Over 100 works – including portraits, paintings of the Baltic Sea and motifs from the South Sea – are on display for the first time in Austria.

In Cooperation with KUNSTSAMMLUNGEN ZWICKAU Max-Pechstein-Museum, Max Pechstein Stiftung and Institut für Kulturaustausch

Katrin Plavčak Painting Reality in Surreal Times 18 Sep 2026 to 10 Jan 2027

Katrin Plavčak's canvases are a hive of vibrant activity – but the cheerfulness of the colours and the subjects depicted only superficially belies the seriousness with which Plavčak reflects on scientific, social and political issues. The exhibition explores life and painting in turbulent times and questions how we perceive the world amid fake news, unstable political conditions and imminent crises. In this context, one of the most important keywords for Plavčak is "sabotage". The presentation invites visitors to refrain from simply accepting the status quo, but instead to rebel against it, while at the same time not to sabotage themselves amid the challenges facing society today in terms of social media, AI and the climate crisis. By combining quotations from pop culture, psychoanalysis and references to art history, Plavčak creates exhibition worlds that form a self-contained cosmos, encouraging both reflection and visual enjoyment.

Exhibitions 2026 at Lentos

Ausstellungen im Untergeschoß

The World Without Us

6 Feb to 10 May 2026

As a result of the Enlightenment, science extended the traditional Western conception of space and time into the realms of sheer infinity. The universe became older, larger and colder. This coincided with a sense of unease that mankind was no longer at the centre of the universe, no longer rooted in a world view that was capable of wresting ultimate meaning from history. The threat of an apocalypse gave way to a geological continuity of disasters and changes. There is a dawning awareness of an uncanny, sublime indifference towards the human scale in a universe that is neither empty nor animate, but rather undead. The exhibition brings together artistic positions that draw on concepts such as “deep time” – time periods spanning billions of years, in which human existence is little more than a fleeting moment – and “cosmic horror”, a feeling caught between fascination and terror when faced with non-human existence that is inconceivable to our notions of time and space.

200 Years of Photography

29 May to 16 Aug 2026

In 1826, French inventor Joseph Nicéphore Niépce succeeded in permanently capturing the view from his study on a coated tin plate. Today, this event is considered one of the first moments marking the birth of photography. Since then, the medium has not only changed our view of the world, but has also had a lasting impact on the way artists produce images and on their methods of working. In order to celebrate this anniversary, the exhibition focuses on the technical processes and material characteristics of the medium. At its heart lies the question of what it is that defines photography as a means of artistic expression, over and above its documentary function. The exhibition presents a selection of works, complemented by historical camera technology from the collections of the Lentos and Nordico museums: from the first photographic techniques of the 19th century and darkroom experiments of classical modernism through to contemporary works that exploit new digital processes.

erika roessing (1903–1977)

The Solitude of Objects

2 Oct 2026 to 24 Jan 2027

In her tranquil, poetic tempera paintings, erika roessing repeatedly rearranges similar objects – and yet each painting is unique. Her oeuvre, comprising some 180 still lifes, radiates calm and subtle colourfulness. Geometric surfaces structure the compositions, creating an ornamental quality and coalescing with impressions from her travels and favourite motifs such as apples, birds and jugs. Theme and variation are the hallmarks of the work of this artist, who deserves to be rediscovered and whose last solo exhibition took place in 1980 at the Neue Galerie der Stadt Linz. The retrospective at Lentos is exhibiting around one hundred paintings by the artist, who trained in Linz (together with Herbert Bayer, among others) and Gmunden (under Franz Zülow) and later lived in Essen, Berlin, Stuttgart and Gauting. The focus is on the collection of 50 tempera paintings donated by Karl Rössing in 1979, supplemented by a number of earlier loans. The exhibition shows erika rössing's still lifes in dialogue with major works created by her husband, and highlights the artistic symbiosis of the couple.

Exhibitions 2026 at Lentos

The Collection

Reorganization From March 2026

As the centrepiece of our museum, the Lentos Collection enjoys a generous amount of space: a total of ten rooms are devoted to showcasing the works of the collection in chronological and thematic order. In addition to highlights from art history, the numerous facets of the collection, which includes works from the 19th century to the present day, are also on display. In 2026, the permanent exhibition is being redesigned by the museum's in-house curatorial team. Works by VALIE EXPORT, Haus-Rucker-Co, Martha Jungwirth, Gustav Klimt, Oskar Kokoschka, Maria Lassnig and many other significant Austrian and international artists will be on display. Works from the Erwin Hauser Foundation – including artworks that have not been accessible to the public until now – will enrich the new exhibition.

Exhibitions 2026 at Nordico

Exhibitions 1st floor

A Longing for Peace

80 Years since the End of War in Linz 1945/2025

Until 8 Mar 2026

Eighty years ago, the Second World War and the Nazi regime, responsible for millions of deaths, came to an end. Linz was largely destroyed; many residents were dead, injured, traumatised, homeless, or displaced. Supply systems had collapsed, and countless people had to wait for years in barrack camps for housing, their return, or onward travel. Under American and Soviet occupation, reconstruction was seen as a new beginning, while Austria often portrayed its Nazi entanglement as externally imposed. Occupation deepened the sense of lost freedom, which only ended in 1955 with the State Treaty. With Allied support, the foundations were laid for an Austria aiming to guarantee freedom, justice, and security. The exhibition explores how post-war life in Linz was shaped by these factors, what traces the past left behind, and also opens space for the present and personal impressions.

Made in Linz

Home to Trade, Industry and Crafts

27 Mar to 4 Oct 2026

From small one-man businesses to companies employing thousands of staff, the economic landscape of Linz is diverse and shaped by change. An intriguing arc can be traced, stretching from the first industry represented by the woollen textile mill in the 17th century to the innovative start-ups of the present day. The exhibition Made in Linz highlights the stories of selected businesses in compact stations and also places a spotlight on the people behind these companies: founders with a pioneering spirit, families who continued to run businesses across generations, and companies that became important employers in the city as a result of their products. The result is a vivid picture of economic endeavour in Linz – a glimpse into the creative cosmos of a city whose commodities have an impact far beyond its borders.

In cooperation with: WKO Oberösterreich, Kunstuniversität Linz, afo architekturforum oberösterreich, Kaufmannsmuseum Haslach

Death Positive

Because Dying Happens

23 Oct 2026 to 4 Apr 2027

Death is a very lively companion. Sometimes quiet, sometimes loud, often unexpected and at times longed for. And yet we prefer to push it far away from us. This exhibition brings it right into the center – gently, confrontationally and with humour and raw honesty. For we all have to die. So why not talk about it before it is too late? How do we deal with death as a society – and how do we approach it at a personal level? What has changed, what is being suppressed and what persists? From a taboo to a new culture of mourning, from traditions to extraordinary trends in the funeral industry. Linz also has its own stories and places of death – famous, touching and special in character. Installations, objects and works of art from the collection and on loan create spaces in which we can come together to reflect, empathise and pause for a moment. Death has many faces. In this exhibition, we come close to them – fearlessly, respectfully, filled with curiosity and even perhaps with an unexpected smile. An exhibition that lives and speaks of death.

Exhibitions 2026 at Nordico

Permanent Exhibitions

Linz in Brief

A Brief History of the City

Linz in brief allows visitors to experience a time lapse of the past 2,000 years of Linz's history. In the two rooms on the ground floor, various media are used to bring together formative events that have shaped the city and to present its development from a Celtic settlement to a provincial capital, from a supra-regional transport hub to an industrial location and ultimately to a self-determined city of culture. With plenty of scope for visitors to delve further and linger, this journey through the chronicle of the provincial capital offers something new for everyone. An animated film dedicated to the city can be viewed in the Linzer Zimmer [Linz Room], and there is an extensive reference library and freely available tablets with access to the Nordico media library and the online collection.

A View of Linz

A Focus on the City

The focus of the Stadtmuseum's collection is quite clear: the diversity of Linz in all its manifestations and facets. In this part of the collection on display, works of art along with folkloric objects and other rare documents bear witness in equal measure to the citizens of Linz, their traditions and to specific occurrences. This includes the ever-changing cityscape, urban life, as well as historical events and attributions such as that of steel city or "Führer city", the only one within Austria during the National Socialist dictatorship. What connects this past with the present and what continuities are still discernible today? We also ask ourselves the questions, what it is that typifies Linz and what it is like living in the Danube city on the edge of the Alps? The exhibits originate from different epochs and recount tales of forgotten, mundane and extraordinary moments from different perspectives. Together they reveal the special features of the city and create a vivid picture of Linz.

Credits

Opening hours

Regular opening hours:
Tue–Sun 10:00–18:00
Thu 10:00–20:00
Mon closed
Special opening hours can be found at www.lentos.at and www.nordico.at

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