

Artist: Julian Irlinger

Institution: Manifesta 16 (Ruhr)

Exhibition Venue: Liebfrauenkirche, Duisburg

Curators: Michael Kurtz & Henry Meyric Hughes

1) Chronotopia

35mm film transferred to digital, stereo sound, 10'10" (loop)
2026

Julian Irlinger's film takes the history of Kulturkirche Liebfrauen as its point of departure. It uses the style of mid-century modern animation to portray architects who seem to have no control over the drawings and environments that change around them. The work highlights a contrast between the church, designed by Toni Hermanns in the mid 1950s, and its locality, including the less magnificent underground car park, district court fence and building site that now surround it. Chronotopia loops seamlessly, visualising a never-ending competition between clashing styles and forms from different time periods. Modernist design is sometimes associated with the assertion of grand artistic visions onto society by individual "geniuses." Here, however, architects and planners appear powerless against the unpredictable forces of history and the chaos of urban life.

Co-produced by Fluentum, Berlin

Animation: Julian Irlinger

Cel Painting: Jackson Beyda

Original Score & Sound Design: Julián Galay

Colour Grading: Maren Henke

Scanning: HQS High Quality Scanning

Film Laboratory: WFDiF, including Jarosław Migala (D.I. Specialist), Paweł Dąbrowa, Bogusław Miller (Laboratory Technicians), Magdalena Rosińska (Film Negative Inspection), Mateusz Leszczyński, Michał Popieliński (Negative Scan)

Courtesy of the artist.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.

2) Sonne, Mond und Sterne

Cardboard, transparent paper, cable, light bulbs
2026

Across large parts of Europe, and especially Germany, children parade through the streets with handmade paper lanterns on St Martin's Day each November. This ritual is a popular part of the Christian calendar, though its origins are pre-Christian, and crafting lanterns is a regular feature of art classes in primary schools. Scattered through Kulturkirche Liebfrauen, Julian Irlinger's sculptures reinvent these familiar decorative objects using sharp modernist geometries. To prepare the series, he investigated the history of the altar in Kulturkirche Liebfrauen, which was initially part of the Vatican's display at the 1958 Brussels World Expo, and then based the lantern shapes on the architecture of national pavilions that featured in the same exhibition. The work reflects on this episode of post-war history, when the modernist style was used by nations to present themselves as progressive and democratic. It sets up a contrast between the fragility and spirituality of lanterns and the supposedly rational, solid forms of mid-century modern design. Courtesy of the artist.

With the kind support of Galerie Thomas Schulte.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.