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h+h cologne: The 'place to be' for international top decision-makers

Around 14,800 visitors from 68 countries at the International Trade Fair for Creative Handicraft and Hobby Suppliers - level of internationality of the exhibitors and visitors increases significantly again - trade visitors praise the first-class event programme

h+h cologne 2016, which came to a close on Sunday, 20 March 2016, achieved a high level of satisfaction among the exhibitors and visitors as well as full order books. Around 14,800 trade visitors from 68 countries made use of the trade fair to inform themselves about the current trends and place plenty of orders. With a 70 percent share of foreign exhibitors and for the first time a 37 percent share of foreign trade visitors, the International Trade Fair for Creative Handicraft & Hobby Supplies furthermore impressively confirmed its role as the world's most important trading platform for the industry.

The exhibiting companies expressly emphasised the very high decision-making competence and internationality of the visitors. Chief Operating Officer of Koelnmesse, Katharina C. Hamma: "h+h cologne is currently in an excellent position. It is so internationally well-aligned that as an important industry order platform it has become a fixed date in everyone's diary. h+h cologne is quite simply the 'place to be' for the international top decision-makers." With an increase in the number of exhibitors of around 5 percent and in total 399 exhibitors from 43 nations - including 87 new exhibitors - h+h cologne 2016 was completely fully-booked. With this remarkable result, it has been able to record growth for several years in a row and almost double the number of exhibiting companies from 2009 to 2016.

Selfmade is a philosophy of life - market volume lies at 1.28 billion Euros

In the meantime, it is much more than just a hobby - it is a philosophy of life that allures more and more people all the time. According to the DIY trend analysis by the Future Institute, "selfmade" has developed into a status symbol that stands for a new understanding of luxury - beyond pure material wealth. This change in values can also be seen from the market figures of the handicraft industry, which the association Initiative Handarbeit

announced in Cologne at h+h cologne. The overall market for handicraft supplies in



International trade fair for
creative handicraft and
hobby supplies
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www.hhcologne.com

Your contact:

Michael Steiner

Tel.

+49 221 821-3094

Fax

+49 221 821-3544

E-mail

m.steiner@koelnmesse.de

Koelnmesse GmbH
Messeplatz 1
50679 Köln
P.O. Box 21 07 60
50532 Köln
Germany
Tel. +49 221 821-0
Fax +49 221 821-2574
info@koelnmesse.de
www.koelnmesse.de

Executive Board:

Gerald Böse

(President and Chief Executive Officer)

Katharina C. Hamma

Herbert Marner

Chairwoman of the Supervisory Board:

Mayor of the City of Cologne

Henriette Reker

Headquarters and place of jurisdiction:

Cologne

HRB 15000

Initiative^{e.V.}
Handarbeit

Germany for 2015 is estimated to be 1.28 billion Euros, measured in end consumer prices. The market volume has thus once again reached a high level and is roughly the same as that of the previous year (2014: 1.30 billion). Today, more than 18.6 million people knit, crochet or sew regularly during their leisure time according to the 2016 consumption and media analysis (VuMA). That is 1.6 million people more than in 2013. Whereby, sewing has currently overtaken knitting as a trend theme, across all target groups. Fabrics saw a growth of 6 percent up to 475 million Euros (2014: 450 million Euros).

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According to predictions at the most important international trade fair, the outlook remains correspondingly positive thanks to the ongoing trend towards selfmade. Precisely this was also confirmed by Hedi Ehlen, Chairperson of the Trade Fair Committee of the Initiative Handarbeit e.V. in her summary of h+h cologne 2016: "It is therefore decisive for the future to continually set new impulses in order to further push the growth of the overall market. This includes continuing to support the professionalisation of the trade and encountering the changed demands of the DIY consumers with innovative products and concepts." Exactly this approach has already been implemented by many of the exhibitors at h+h cologne 2016 which was enthusiastically received by the international specialised trade, continued Ehlen.

The dynamic growth of the market and the fact that 'selfmade' has developed from a trend into a lifestyle is leading to more and more new, young companies stimulating the market. This is also reflected at the trade fair. For example, a group of companies, whose participation was subsidised by the 'Promotion Programme for Young and Innovative Companies' of the Federal Ministry of Economics, presented itself to the visitors for the first time at h+h cologne. In total, eight of these young start-ups were represented at h+h cologne 2016.

First-class supporting programme full of creative ideas

The supporting programme comprising of big trend fashion shows, workshops and special events, which offered the specialised trade manifold creative ideas for the point of sale, was an important pillar of h+h cologne's success. The stage of the event area "my lovely livingroom" - a meeting point for visitors and a networking platform for designers, bloggers and creative minds - with its daily trend watches, Talk Sofa, exhibition and workshops particularly attracted huge crowds of trade visitors and received their unanimous praise. The theme of sustainability was particularly under focus at many of the exhibition stands this year. h+h cologne dedicated an own special event to this growing and future-looking market. Among others, the ecologically

certified products of around 30 exhibitors were presented under the title "h+h cologne goes green!"

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The next h+h cologne will take place from 31.03 – 02.04.2017.

h+h cologne 2016 in figures

399 companies (2015: 379) from 43 countries (2015: 43) took part in h+h cologne 2016, of which 70 percent (2015: 68%) were from abroad. Including estimates for the final day of the trade fair, around 14,800 trade visitors (2015: 14,751) from 68 countries (2015: 67) attended h+h cologne 2016, of which 37 percent (2015: 30%) were from abroad.*

* All figures are calculated in accordance with the guidelines of the Association for the Voluntary Control of Trade Fair and Exhibition Statistics (Gesellschaft zur Freiwilligen Kontrolle von Messe- und Seite Ausstellungenzahlen, FKM) and are subject to checking by an auditor (www.ifz.com)

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