

Press release



FAF

**FARBE · AUSBAU
& FASSADE**

The leading trade fair
for facade design and
interior architecture

Press talk in Mannheim: FAF tackles issues of the future

The press talk of GHM, which is organising the FAF Farbe, Ausbau & Fassade trade fair, took place in front of approx. 60 guests at MAFINEX in Mannheim. The high-calibre panel discussed the three trade fair themes of sustainability, digitalisation and human resources management.

New guiding star in the trade fair sky

The high level of interest in the FAF trade fair is demonstrated by the good registration figures that Bettina Reiter, head of FAF, was able to announce at the beginning: "Seven months before the fair, 230 exhibitors and co-exhibitors have already registered, and they now already occupy 14,000m² of exhibition space." A significant number of additional registrations are expected in the coming months.

This makes it clear that the fair will easily live up to its aspiration to be the leading European trade fair for the painting and stucco plastering sectors. Not least because it intensively addresses the three focus topics of sustainability, digitalisation and human resources management, which are currently the greatest challenges facing the industry – not only for painters and plasterers, but also for the related creative trades and manufacturers which expand the trade fair spectrum. FAF will thus be the most important forum for thinking about the industry's pressing questions for the future.

These questions were the focus of the panel discussion hosted by Lisa-Marie Niehoff. In addition to Bettina Reiter and the representatives of the sponsoring associations, Guido Müller, President Bundesverband Farbe Gestaltung Bautenschutz (Federal Association for Paint, Design and Building Protection) and Jörg Ottemeier from the Bundesverband Ausbau und Fassade (Federal Association for Finishings and Façades), 23-year-old Nils Kugler – freshly crowned European Vice Champion of Plasterers – was also present as a representative of the young generation.

Spotlight on sustainability

Sustainability is one of the focus topics at FAF 2024. This ranges from the protection and preservation of existing substances to the substitution of products that pose environmental and health problems, to the use of renewable raw materials in the construction sector. Jörg Ottemeier pointed out the contribution of his craft to thermal insulation and façade protection, which is the prerequisite for

**23.-26.04.
2024
COLOGNE**

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the sensible use of modern heating technologies. And Nils Kugler, whose generation is particularly dependent on the success of the climate transition, is eager to see what new technologies and ideas the industry will present at the trade fair.

Guido Müller commented on the focus topic of sustainability: "We in the trade sector don't talk about it much – we just do sustainability. This ranges from ecologically optimised service water treatment on the construction site to the major topic of renovation, i.e. the maximum preservation of the existing substance with minimum use of new resources. What is more sustainable than renovation? The longevity of buildings or other products is sustainability par excellence and thus the opposite of a throwaway mentality."

Spotlight on human resources management

The labour market has changed from a demand market to a supplier market. This is true at all levels of the career ladder. It has become difficult to fill all apprenticeship positions, to find trained staff or to find successors at management level. But there is not only cause for complaint. Jörg Ottemeier was able to report on two companies in Cologne and Bonn. One had found around eighty applicants in response to its apprentice campaign, the other gained ten young women as apprentices. "That's not surprising," says Nils Kugler, "because we create something, we design and develop what we are standing in, for example, right here and now. We have to create reality and show young people the positive prospects that await them in the skilled trades." The discussants agreed that FAF is a particularly favourable platform for human resources management. Bettina Reiter said: "We create the framework for encounters – not only during the actual trade fair, for example when we organise attractive evening events, but also with FAF CONNECT, our digital content portal that can be used by the industry even when there is no trade fair. There, the possibilities range from job exchanges to product finders and networks."

And master plasterer Jörg Ottemeier adds: "Campaigns to recruit young people in the trades are a community task. We have good arguments: many fail in academic studies, but vocational training is almost always a success. Start-ups elsewhere are an adventure with an uncertain outcome, start-ups in the crafts and trade sector bring the fastest win with the least investment. Digitalisation, such as the use of social media, is already helping to get these messages across to men and women."

Spotlight on digitalisation

It is undisputed that Germany has some catching up to do in terms of digitalisation. What is true for the country is also true for the trade sector. The Bundesverband Farbe Gestaltung Bautenschutz (Federal Association for Paint, Design and Building Protection), which has looked into the future of its craft in its own Delphi

study "Malerhandwerk 2040", sees comprehensive digitalisation not only as a major potential for change, but also as an essential prerequisite for the growth of businesses. "Craft will always remain craft," says the federation's president Guido Müller. "But completing jobs that can be digitalised will give us the freedom to do so, from planning and quotation preparation to orders and invoicing using intelligent software." Jörg Ottemeier also sees good opportunities for digitalisation on the construction site. "All of our construction site vehicles are equipped with tablets. And without CAD technology, for example, we would have a much harder time reconstructing historic vaults in heritage conservation."

Nils Kugler sees the lead among his peers when it comes to digitalisation: "In terms of digitalisation, we still have a long way to go, especially in the skilled crafts sector with its small and medium-sized businesses. But those driving the change will not be colleagues with forty years of professional experience; the driver is pure necessity. And this change is the task of my generation."

Anticipation – curiosity – excited expectation

There are only seven months left until the trade fair. Expectations are high and excited – not only for new ideas and products, but also for seeing familiar faces again and networking with new partners. Jörg Ottemeier and Guido Müller are looking forward to the exchange with suppliers and colleagues with confidence. And Nils Kugler is pleased that from 2024, apprentices will once again be able to participate in the trade fair experience, something that was denied to two generations of trainees.

Bettina Reiter, head of FAF, sums up: "The FAF 2024 in Cologne is the trade's Friends and Regulars Meeting. Its anticipation is palpable everywhere, in the skilled trades as well as in the industry. Everyone is longing to meet in the real world with actual people, for products to touch and surfaces to feel, for exchanges with colleagues and for impulses also from different perspectives."

About FAF FARBE, AUSBAU & FASSADE

FAF is the leading European trade fair for façade and interior architecture. It moderates between the trades of the creative finishing sector. The painting and stucco plastering trades are represented in particular. In addition, the new FAF also addresses associated trades, such as interior decorators and floor layers, as well as architects and planners. FAF offers an outstanding customer experience in which it addresses the relevant topics on materials, techniques, trends and questions of business management and thus makes industry participants fit for the challenging daily routine and the future. Its focus is on the German-speaking market, but the proportion of foreign trade fair participants – especially from neighbouring European countries – is growing continuously.

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