

PRESS RELEASE

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## **Bonn and the region at the virtual ITB NOW 2021 One year of the Corona pandemic and tourism is looking ahead**

In 2020, the ITB in Berlin was the first big travel trade show to be cancelled due to the Corona pandemic. Even now, one year later, ITB 2021 cannot take place in Berlin's exhibition halls as usual with thousands of visitors from all over the world. Thanks to the good networking mechanisms in the tourism industry, however, it was possible to react quickly and use digital means to maintain and further develop the fair continuously. Thus, the world's leading travel trade show will celebrate its premiere in virtual form this year from 09 to 12 March 2021 under the title "ITB NOW 2021".

The **Tourismus-& Congress GmbH Bonn/Rhein-Sieg/Ahrweiler** will be maintaining numerous online meetings and talks with partners from the tourism industry during the days of the online fair to discuss the future plans and opportunities for the Rhine region. The virtual walks and tours already created during the pandemic situation, the concerts, events and exhibitions planned in the course of 2021 according to the hygiene concept as well as the day-trip tourist destinations will be presented.

The year 2019 brought a new record for the region with more than 3.1 million visitors and the world-renowned travel guide "Lonely Planet's Best in Travel 2020" positioned Bonn in the top 5 city travel destinations worldwide. However, as expected, the visitor numbers in 2020 decreased with just over 1 million visitors (mostly from Germany) due to the altering circumstances. Nevertheless, they show that Bonn and the region have not lost their appeal even during the ongoing pandemic and the resulting limited opportunities.

And the tourism players have become creative, they have developed new concepts, which can be experienced virtually - in joyful anticipation of further openings. The entire hotel and restaurant industry of the region would love to be able to welcome visitors soon again. 14 establishments, bundled under "die Originale – Hotels mit Persönlichkeit aus Bonn & Region", are taking advantage of the opportunity and also presenting themselves at ITB NOW 2021. <https://bonner-hotels.de> The signal: the cultural and tourism establishments are in the starting blocks with the latest hygiene concepts.

The celebrations of the 250th birthday of **Ludwig van Beethoven**, the most famous son of the city of Bonn, were also massively interrupted in 2020 by the spread of the corona virus. However, the anniversary year goes into extra time until September 2021 which is guaranteed by the Beethoven Jubiläums GmbH. At ITB NOW 2021, the Beethovenfest, the Beethoven Haus and the Beethoven Orchester will present their current anniversary plans. In the meantime, the Beethoven players have adapted to the exceptional situation and have already created numerous virtual events and experiences around Beethoven. In this way, Beethoven's 250th birthday has experienced global radiance. Ludwig van Beethoven's baptism day on 17 December 2020 alone, with the highlight of the anniversary programme BTHVN2020 with

conductor Daniel Barenboim and the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, had an overwhelming response as a Europe-wide TV broadcast and reached several hundred million people worldwide. This event and many other digital projects can still be streamed online at <https://www.bthvn2020.de> .

The centrepiece in Bonn is Beethoven's birthplace, the **Beethoven Haus**. In keeping with the anniversary year 2020, the musician's museum has been redesigned to become an authentic place to experience Beethoven's life and work. 200 original exhibits such as Beethoven's ear trumpets, his writing tools, his instruments and numerous portraits can be seen in the exhibition. A breath-taking experience is the new "treasure chamber" with its scores and original manuscripts. Since the Beethoven Haus also had to close in the meantime due to the Corona Protection Ordinance, the permanent exhibition, special exhibitions and numerous other online exhibitions have been made virtually accessible: <https://www.beethoven.de/de/museum>.

Culture will continuously play an important role in the future which is demonstrated by this very recent award: the UN Climate Change Secretariat has appointed the **Beethoven Orchester Bonn** as a "United Nations Climate Change Goodwill Ambassador", referring to the role as a special global ambassador for the topic of climate change. The programme of the interrupted Beethoven anniversary year continues flexibly: via video stream and as soon as possible on stage and with live audiences. As always, the music is the centre of attention for the BOB, but so is safety. The well-known concert series with top-class soloists and artists will be continued; a new addition is the video stream concert series "Beethoven Pur" at the Bonn Telekom headquarters, in which Ludwig van Beethoven's nine symphonies will be performed. For example, the special concert X-Rayed as part of the Beethoven anniversary is scheduled to take place on 15 May 2021 at the Bonn Opera House, as well as the Klassik!Picknick on 27 June 2021 at the KUNST!RASEN in Bonn's Gronau district. The complete programme of the Beethoven Orchester under General Music Director Dirk Kaftan is available here: <https://www.beethoven-orchester.de>.

For the summer season 2021, the **Beethovenfest** in Bonn will take place from 20 August to 10 September under the motto "Auferstehn, ja auferstehn". Intendant Nike Wagner chose these lines from the poem "Die Auferstehung" (The Resurrection) by Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock to express confidence for the new season. In this spirit, it is also permissible to congratulate belatedly on great birthdays. All nine of Beethoven's symphonies will be performed, beginning with Beethoven's Ninth. Other Beethoven-related highlights include the Prometheus-Projekt staged by the world-famous director Romeo Castellucci, the guest performance by the Ballet of the Lyon Opera and the concert in the Beethovenhalle by the renowned pianist and performer Mario Formenti. The grand finale is Mahler's "Auferstehungssymphonie " (Resurrection Symphony). <https://www.beethovenfest.de>

The Corona pandemic has also affected the "**BTHVN Music Picknicks**" outdoor events to Beethoven in the Rhein-Sieg Kreis: they will prospectively take place from May to August 2021 at six selected castles and palaces. Musical and artistic contributions in front of historical backdrops such as Odenhausen Castle, Lüftelberg Castle, Alfter Castle, Miel Castle, Himmeroder Hof and the Wolfsburg. The Rhein-Voreifel-Touristik e.V. is the main contact for the music picnics. <https://www.musikpicknick.nrw>

Since Beethoven has held piano and organ concerts in the region as a child and later worked here as an organist, the OrgelKultur series events were introduced as a funding project of the Beethoven Jubiläums GmbH in the Rhein-Sieg-Kreis. More organ concerts on Beethoven's music are also planned here for 2021. <https://orgelkultur-rhein-sieg.de>

Being active in nature, hiking and cycling - have been more popular than ever since the beginning of the Corona pandemic. Therefore, Bonn and the region offer a wide range of routes, even off the beaten track. A detailed overview with lots of useful and constantly updated information is available on the internet at T&C: <https://bonnregion.info/natur-erleben/>.

The path is clearly marked with this logo:



And if you are already in the Siebengebirge (Seven Mountains), you can take the historical train, the Drachenfelsbahn, which has already reopened with strictly limited seats, up to the Drachenfels or to Schloss Drachenburg. Until the castle is allowed to reopen, you can first take a virtual look inside. You can click your way through the different levels of the castle, the park and otherwise closed rooms and inaccessible rooms. <https://www.schloss-drachenburg.de>

With 400 kilometres of hiking trails, the **Naturregion Sieg** also offers plenty of opportunities to be active in nature on quiet routes. On rustic paths and trails, the 200 km long long-distance hiking trail Natursteig Sieg leads through the scenic Sieg Valley and the surrounding heights. Furthermore, the landscape along the Sieg is still considered as an insider tip.

The 26 themed circular trails through the most beautiful and unusual landscapes of the Naturregion Sieg also offer variety with sometimes easier and sometimes more difficult paths.

The routes are between 5 and 25 km long. Short tours are offered, for example, by the Burgweg (castle trail), the Wildwiesenweg (wild meadow trail) or the trails that are particularly interesting for children, such as the Räuberweg (robbers' trail) and the Eichhörnchenweg (squirrel trail). More challenging routes include the 20 km long Talsperrenweg (reservoir trail), the 18 km long Wälderweg Windeck (forest trail of Windeck) and the 17 km long Dreitälerweg Hennef (three valley trail of Hennef) around the town of Blankenberg. <https://naturregion-sieg.de>

In seven stages on a foray through Roman history. This is possible on the 120 km long **Römerkanal-Wanderweg** (Roman canal trail) from Nettersheim to Cologne, through the northern Eifel, the Rhine-Voreifel and the Rhineland. The Römerkanal-Infozentrum (Roman Canal Info Centre) in Rheinbach opened in September 2019. As soon as the Corona protection order allows it again, visitors will find everything worth knowing about the 2000-year-old Roman Canal here on site. <https://www.roemerkanal.de>

Particularly suitable for cyclists is the 124 km long "**Rheinische Apfelroute**", which was opened in May 2019 and leads through the largest fruit and vegetable growing area in NRW. The route goes around Bonn through the Voreifel region between the Rhine and the mountain ranges of the Eifel past cottages, vegetable fields and regional farm shops. <https://apfelroute.nrw>

Experience nature, discover new things, be active with the whole family. The **Radweg Sieg** (Sieg Cycle Route) is particularly well suited for this occasion. On 64 kilometres it goes from Windeck to the estuary of the Rhine, always along the Sieg, with only two short climbs and far away from road traffic. <https://naturregion-sieg.de>

The new cycling tour map through the Rhineland with many attractive routes has also been published for cyclists: <https://www.radregionrheinland.de>

Enjoy and feel the pure romance of the Rhine. A true experience on the numerous **Schiffstouren** (boat tours). The Bonner Personenschiffahrt and the Köln Düsseldorf Deutsche Rheinschiffahrt will present their offers at the virtual ITB NOW 2021. The scheduled trips of Bonner Personenschiffahrt, Personenschiffahrt Siebengebirge and also KD are planned again for Easter 2021, special trips will follow in the next weeks, of course all with special hygiene and protection concepts. <https://www.bonnschiff.de>  
<https://www.siebengebirgslinie-bonn.de> <https://www.k-d.com>

**Experiencing culture in Bonn and the region** was initially stopped in 2020 due to the Corona pandemic. However, those involved in culture have quickly switched to opening their houses and institutions digitally and made them accessible through numerous virtual exhibitions and tours. For many people, this increased their anticipation of slowly being able to explore the cultural institutions on site again.

To mark the 250th anniversary of Ludwig van Beethoven's birth, the **Bundeskunsthalle** in Bonn, in cooperation with the Beethoven-Haus, presented a central exhibition for the anniversary year. Initially, it was possible to walk around it, but those who were unable to do so can experience the exhibition "Beethoven - Welt.Bürger.Musik" from the comfort of their own homes: <https://my.matterport.com/show/?m=nLEbshwxJda>

The **Kunstmuseum Bonn** is showing in the prolongation of the anniversary year „Sound and Silence. Der Klang der Stille in der Kunst der Gegenwart“ ("Sound and Silence. The Sound of Silence in Contemporary Art") (27.05.-05.09.2021): The exhibition takes Beethoven's progressive deafness as an opportunity to address the question of how contemporary art makes silence and silence visible and audible. The sound of silence can be grasped in many different ways. [www.kunstmuseum-bonn.de](http://www.kunstmuseum-bonn.de)

**"beuys 2021. 100 jahre joseph beuys"** will have nationwide significance at ITB NOW 2021, the super art year. The city of Bonn plays an important role in this: with the permanent collection „der ganze Beuys“ ("the whole Beuys") and the exhibition „Passierschein in die Zukunft“ ("entry ticket for the future") from July in the Kunstmuseum Bonn and as a highlight, the large special exhibition „Beuys- Lehmbruck. Denken ist Plastik“ ("Beuys- Lehmbruck. Thinking is sculpture") at the Bundeskunsthalle from June 2021: Few artists have caused such a lasting upheaval in the history of art as Joseph Beuys. He created the concept of social sculpture and thus attempted to transfer the liberal potential of art to every area of life and to dissolve boundaries between art and society, politics, science and education. In 1986, only a few days before his death, Joseph Beuys received the Wilhelm Lehmbruck Prize. In his acceptance speech, he emphasised that it was his encounter with Lehmbruck's expressionist work that led him to art in the first place. To mark the 100th anniversary of Joseph Beuys' birth,

the exhibition "Beuys- Lehmbrock. Thinking is Sculpture" at the Bundeskunsthalle explores this idea and is dedicated to the work of both artists.

For Beuys, our society was a great "social sculpture" in which we all participate together. Over the summer, the Bundeskunsthalle and the Kunstmuseum Bonn are making a "Future Office" on the Museum Square between the two houses, a place for discussion in this sense.

The **Kunstmuseum Bonn** has a rich fund of "Multiples by Joseph Beuys" in its collection. Today, the collection consists of more than 450 objects, postcards, prints, posters, videos and records that were created between 1965 and 1986, the year of Joseph Beuys' death. In the anniversary year, the exhibition "entry ticket for the future". Joseph Beuys, Katinka Bock, Christian Jankowski, Jon Rafman" will be on show. It deals with three main themes: Beuys as a draughtsman, nature as a metaphor for social processes, and Beuys' theoretical reflections and actions. They are the starting point for interaction with one contemporary artistic position each: Katinka Bock, Christian Jankowski and Jon Rafman. The two exhibitions are part of the NRW programme for the anniversary year "beuys 2021. 100 jahre joseph beuys", which will be presented at ITB NOW 2021.

The Kunstmuseum Bonn, famous for its August Macke collection, the art of the Rhenish Expressionists and German art after 1945, is showing its current exhibitions (also online): „Alexej von Jawlensky. Gesicht Landschaft Stillleben“("Alexej von Jawlensky. Face Landscape Still Life"), the „Dorothea-von-Stetten-Kunstpreis“ ("Dorothea von Stetten Art Prize") with young art from Switzerland as well as „Nur nichts anbrennen lassen“("Don't burn anything"), the new presentation of the collection. Further exhibitions in 2021 are the "Videonale.18", the children's and youth exhibition "Ultra All Inclusive - Frank Bölter", "Suzan Philipsz" with The Calling - a sound installation for the Viktoriabad and the phantom of painting "Walter Swennen".  
<https://www.kunstmuseum-bonn.de>

After reopening at the beginning of March, three magnificent exhibitions can finally be discovered again at the **Bundeskunsthalle**: „Max Klinger und das Kunstwerk der Zukunft“ ("Max Klinger and the Artwork of the Future"), which focuses on around 200 works from all of Klinger's creative areas and his monumental Beethoven sculpture from 1902, „Hannah Arendt und das 20. Jahrhundert“("Hannah Arendt and the 20th Century"), which reflects the life and work of one of the most important political thinkers of her era, and „Aby Warburg – Bilderatlas Mnemosyne – Das Original" ("Aby Warburg - Picture Atlas Mnemosyne - The Original"). Warburg's approach of making historically recurring visual themes and patterns recognisable still offers great inspiration and alternative routes for our visually and digitally dominated world.

From the end of May, all fashionistas will get their money's worth: „Dress Code. Das Spiel mit der Mode“("Dress Code. The Game of Fashion"), the successful exhibition from Japan, presents fashion classics and their further development as streetwear for the first time in Europe. The choice of our clothes is shown here as a communicative game that gives a new understanding of how we deal with our clothes. Further exhibitions in the renowned house on the Museum Mile: „Methode Rainer Werner Fassbinder – eine Retrospektive“ ("Method Rainer Werner Fassbinder - a Retrospective") and "Sammlung Hoffmann" ("Collection Hoffmann") and in 2022 the large show on the human brain, in which works from art and cultural history meet scientific research to explore the brain - like an unknown territory - and learn to understand it better.  
<https://www.bundeskunsthalle.de>.

The **Deutsches Museum Bonn** has taken advantage of the Corona pandemic and is rebuilding and reinventing itself. After the current announced opening steps, the start is planned for 16 March 2021. The Deutsches Museum Bonn will of course remain a museum for contemporary research and technology, but it is increasingly broadening its perspective in the direction of the "Forum for Artificial Intelligence". The first stage begins as part of the „Mission KI – erleben, verstehen, mitgestalten“ ("Mission AI - experience, understand, help shape") to open up with the „Erlebnisraum Künstliche Intelligenz“ ("Artificial Intelligence Experience Space"). Using current application examples on robotics, image recognition, cybercrime, the development of autonomous driving, the ambivalence of voice assistants or "artificial creativity", artificial intelligence can be experienced. It is about questions like "What does artificial intelligence mean?", "How intelligent are machines actually and where do we come into contact with this technology?", "Does AI steal my job or does it open up undreamt-of economic opportunities for us?". As part of the "Mission AI", the Deutsches Museum Bonn wants to become the central experience site for artificial intelligence in NRW. By 2022, large parts of the previous static permanent exhibition will make way for new, ever-changing experiential spaces. <https://www.deutsches-museum.de>

The **Haus der Geschichte of the Federal Republic of Germany** with all its politically important stations since 1945 could be discovered with video insights during the shutdown. The current exhibition is a trip down memory lane through the "soundtrack of contemporary history". „Hits & Hymnen“ ("Hits & Hymns") generates emotions. Not only does music itself evoke unique feelings, but memories of concerts and the hope of future live experiences are especially gripping during the Corona pandemic. In the exhibition, rock musician Bruce Springsteen picks up his guitar - and more than 300,000 people at the Berlin-Weißensee cycling track break into frenetic cheers. It was the biggest concert event in the history of the DDR - and it was also a political event. Springsteen's speech was well prepared: "It's good to be in East Berlin. I am not here for or against any government. I came to play rock'n'roll for you, for you East Berliners, in the hope that one day all the barriers will be torn down." Only 16 months later, the Berlin Wall did indeed fall. With around 500 exhibits, the exhibition takes a look at the tense relationship between music and politics since 1945, transports visitors to punk concerts or keeps them puzzling over which anthem is being graphically depicted: whether it's the national anthem or Beethoven's 9th Symphony. The exhibition is inclusive, with texts and songs in sign language and inductive hearing loops. The exhibition "Hits & Hymns" will be on display until October 2021. <https://www.hdg.de>

The **Museum Alexander Koenig** switched to virtual exhibitions on „Museum Koenig@zuhause“ during the shutdown and visitors were able to experience the permanent exhibition „Unser blauer Planet – Leben im Netzwerk“ ("Our Blue Planet - Life in the Network") online. Visitors are also able to take a look behind the scenes and experience experiments in nature. To experience the centerpiece of the museum live is priceless: the walk-in savannah landscape in the atrium of the museum building. The exhibition area Central Europe conveys knowledge about the animals of its own homeland, the bird world shows native and exotic bird species. Last year, the exhibition areas "Regenwald" ("Rainforest") and "Süßwasser" ("Freshwater") were newly established and added to the exhibition. Historical fact: On September 1, 1948, the ceremonial opening of the constituent session of the Parliamentary Council, which drew up the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany, which was officially proclaimed on May 23, 1949, took place in the atrium of the museum. <https://www.zfmk.de>

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The Tourismus-& Congress GmbH Bonn/Rhein-Sieg/Ahrweiler is looking ahead with all the players from Bonn and the region and is looking forward to a smooth switch to normality.

**For further information please contact**

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