

ARSENAL WIEN

FOTO



FOTO ARSENAL WIEN and Kunsthalle Wien present

Vienna Digital Cultures 2026—Alone or Together?

OPENING: May 21, 2026

OPENING DAYS: May 22–24, 2026

Alone or Together?

How can a sense of community and individuality develop when interactions are mediated by digital technologies—and how does this create new forms of solitude and belonging? Vienna Digital Cultures 2026 (VDC) explores this blurring of intimacy and distance, of visibility and disappearance. The festival brings together artists and theorists who challenge the individual decisions and collective practices that are possible today.

The Program

This year's edition of Vienna Digital Cultures (VDC) will open on May 21, 2026, at FOTO ARSENAL WIEN, offering an extensive program during the OPENING DAYS from May 22 to 24, 2026. VDC will present installations, performances, talks, screenings, and club nights at various exhibition spaces, public venues, and digital platforms. The accompanying exhibition *Lu Yang—The DOKU Trilogy* will be on view at FOTO ARSENAL WIEN from May 22 to September 6, 2026, alongside Fabian Knecht's installation *Lachen ist verdächtig* (2022–). Curated by Nadim Samman, this year's edition is titled *Alone or Together?*

The Festival

Vienna Digital Cultures is a platform for art, performance, and discourse that has been exploring the cultural implications of digital technologies since 2025. At its core is an annual festival that brings together international artists, experts, and communities to collectively examine the present in the context of digital transformation. It is complemented by a website that provides a space for artistic, curatorial, and scholarly contributions. Vienna Digital Cultures is organized alternately by FOTO ARSENAL WIEN and Kunsthalle Wien.

The 2026 Festival Program

May 21, 2026

The festival will kick off on Thursday at two venues. A light-and-sound installation by **Peter Kutin** will fill the Tank Hall (Panzerhalle) of the Museum of Military History with unsettling lights and sounds, stripping machines, which were built to separate the living from the dead, of their function and asking what remains in the silence. In the evening, **The DOKU Trilogy** will open at FOTO ARSENAL WIEN. The trilogy features video works by acclaimed Chinese artist **Lu Yang** that combine video game aesthetics, motion-capture technology, and the Yogācāra philosophy of Buddhism. It explores what happens to identity in an age in which consciousness can be represented, replicated, and endlessly reborn. The night will continue with a live set by **HYPER HYPER** and a closing set by **KAROLINA**.

May 22, 2026

In the afternoon, workshops and educational programs will take place in cooperation with the Vienna Business Agency. In the evening, a live performance of Peter Kutin's light-and-sound work will be presented in the Tank Hall (Panzerhalle), before the program moves to the Hall of Fame (Ruhmeshalle) for a **keynote** by acclaimed Austrian artist **Oliver Laric**, welcoming remarks by **Felix Hoffmann**, artistic director of FOTO ARSENAL WIEN and codirector of VDC, curator **Nadim Samman**, and **Georg Hoffmann**, director of the Museum of Military History.

May 23, 2026

The main day of talks will take place in the bistro of FOTO ARSENAL WIEN, featuring five consecutive speakers on topics such as online art commissions, technological abolitionism, digital inclusion, and AI culture. The morning will begin with a guided tour of Lu Yang's exhibition, and the afternoon will feature a comprehensive program of workshops and educational offerings. In the evening, the festival will move to **Badeschiff** for a club night in cooperation with **Wiener Festwochen**, featuring sets by **Rey Colino**, **Inland (Ed Davenport)**, **Apex Anima x FRZNTE**, and **THAO**, lasting into the wee hours of the morning.

May 24, 2026

On the final day, workshops on digital and analog practices, as well as the fundamentals of AI, will take place. In addition, three newly commissioned online artworks will be presented, extending the festival's reach beyond its physical venues. The lecture program, organized by the **Weibel Institute for Digital Cultures** (University of Applied Arts Vienna), will feature two panels on collective digital consciousness and "brain rot". Additionally, there will be a conversation on the prize-winning book *"If a Flower Bloomed in a Dark Room, Would You Trust it?"* (2025) by artists **Jakob Ganslmeier & Ana Zibelnik**, which addresses links between online fitness bubbles, spirituality, and right-wing radicalization.

All information and dates regarding the event program, the artists, and all participants are available online at:

viennadigitalcultures.at
@viennadigitalcultures

Installations

Lu Yang—The DOKU Trilogy (2018–25)

May 22 to September 6, 2026, FOTO ARSENAL WIEN

In the large-scale video installation *The DOKU Trilogy*, video game aesthetics, motion capture, and Buddhist philosophy are explored as the dissolution of the self within digital, biological, and spiritual systems. Lu Yang (b. 1984, Shanghai, China) examines the extent to which identity and consciousness are captured today and how identities can be digitally represented, replicated, and transformed.

Fabian Knecht: Lachen ist verdächtig (2022–)

May 22 to September 6, 2026, FOTO ARSENAL WIEN

Fabian Knecht's installation *Lachen ist verdächtig* ("Laughter is suspicious") (2022–) appears abstract at first: a network of frayed green fabric strips. Knecht (*1980 in Magdeburg, based in Berlin) brings a largely unseen form of Ukrainian civilian resistance to FOTO ARSENAL WIEN. Since 2022, hand-knotted camouflage nets have helped conceal positions from drones. Collected across Ukraine, they form a dense field of care, resilience, and collective (analog) labor.

Peter Kutin—Para Bellum (2026)

May 21–24, 2026, Tank Hall (Panzerhalle), Museum of Military History

For a long time, it seemed that both tanks and the concept of war had been banished to museums in Central Europe. With *Para Bellum*, composer Peter Kutin (b. 1983, Leoben, Austria) dissolves this rigid perception, transforming it into a media meditation of sound and light that challenges our perception and points to a future long considered impossible. Building on works such as the film score for the documentary *Militantropos*, which premiered at the Cannes Film Festival in 2025, *Para Bellum* marks Kutin's renewed engagement with the ever-present theme of war.

Quotes:

Nadim Samman, Curator of Vienna Digital Cultures 2026

"Digital change reorganizes the ground upon which both solitude and connection are constituted. Today's blurring of intimacy and detachment, exposure and disappearance is shocking. VDC 2026 brings together artists and thinkers to explore what new forms of imagination are emerging under these conditions."

Felix Hoffmann, Artistic Director of FOTO ARSENAL WIEN and Codirector of VDC &

Michelle Cotton, Artistic Director of Kunsthalle Wien and Codirector of VDC

"Artificial intelligence, robotics, and the worlds of digital space are rapidly transforming our lives; VDC provides a space for inquiry and artistic exchange on an important topic that is relevant to all of us today and for generations to come."

Veronica Kaup-Hasler, Executive City Councillor for Cultural Affairs and Science,
City of Vienna

"Our lives are changing at a breathtaking pace due to digital technologies. We must ask ourselves how these developments—especially AI—can serve a digital humanism and thus strengthen human rights, freedom, and fundamental democratic values. Vienna promotes research into digital humanism because, as a society, we must carefully align technologies with our core values. A media arts festival such as Vienna Digital Cultures makes these values tangible on an emotional, deeper level—better together than alone."

All information:

Vienna Digital Cultures 2026

May 21–24, 2026

Press Conference:

Thursday, May 21, 2026, 10:30 a.m., FOTO ARSENAL WIEN

Opening (German / English / Austrian Sign Language):

Thursday, May 21, 2026, 7:00 p.m., FOTO ARSENAL WIEN

Venues for Vienna Digital Cultures 2026:

FOTO ARSENAL WIEN

Arsenal Building 19A

1030 Vienna

fotoarsenalwien.at

Museum of Military History, Hall of Fame (Ruhmeshalle)

Ghegastraße, Arsenal Building 1

1030 Vienna

hgm.at

Museum of Military History, Tank Hall (Panzerhalle)

Franz-Grill-Straße 13

1030 Vienna

Badeschiff

Schwedenplatz 5

1010 Vienna

Vienna Digital Cultures, FOTO ARSENAL WIEN, and Kunsthalle Wien, together with KÖR Wien (Public Art Vienna) and the Atelierhaus Wien, are part of Stadt Wien Kunst GmbH.

About FOTO ARSENAL WIEN

FOTO ARSENAL WIEN is the new center for photography and lens based media in Austria. Initiated by the City of Vienna in the fall of 2022, the institution presents and promotes contemporary photography in all its forms and applications. As a platform, FOTO ARSENAL WIEN also organizes FOTO WIEN—Austria's largest biennial festival for photography—and, together with the Kunsthalle Wien, the Vienna Digital Cultures festival.

About Kunsthalle Wien

Kunsthalle Wien is the City of Vienna's primary institution for contemporary art. At its locations in the Museumsquartier and on Karlsplatz, it presents an annual programme of exhibitions alongside public and educational programming that seeks to engage diverse publics. We provide a platform for artists, commissioning new works and partnering with individuals and institutions, both local and international, to develop exhibitions and publications based on original research. Kunsthalle Wien is committed to providing an inclusive space for exchange and debate and furthering the discourse on contemporary art in all its forms.

Sponsored by: Autotelic Foundation

Supported by: Stadt Wien Kultur

In cooperation with: Museum of Military History, Zoom Children's Museum, Mozarteum University Salzburg, Vienna Festival (Wiener Festwochen | Freie Republik Wien), Weibel Institute for Digital Cultures

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