

PRESS RELEASE

Between 16 and 19 September 2026, Trbovlje will host the Speculum Artium festival, which, through works at the intersection of art, science and technology, challenges us to look beneath the surface and take responsibility.

Trbovlje, September 11, 2026 – The eighteenth edition of the Speculum Artium new media culture festival turns its gaze towards that which usually remains hidden. It reveals the infrastructure behind the extraction of rare earths, which lies behind seemingly weightless actions in the virtual world. It draws attention to the consequences that technological progress exacts on the environment and on our bodies. It reveals just how much human labour, energy and material resources artificial intelligence requires to function. It explores how to rouse people from their bubbles of complacent self-satisfaction, how to shift established ways of thinking, and how to foster an awareness that our actions have consequences, even if we do not see them at first glance.

Visitors will be able to try their hand at playing the laser harp together, experience the world through the eyes of a whale, listen to the sound memories of buildings and the night-time sounds of the forest, observe the dialogue between the human body and machines, embark on a virtual dance journey through various spaces in the Balkans, and discover how values and beliefs are also disseminated through video games. Above all, the artworks presented at the festival encourage the audience to participate, speak directly to them and invite them out of their comfort zone.

This year, the festival places particular emphasis on the **connection between contemporary dance and technology**, which allows movement to break free from the stage and take it out onto the streets, into nature and amongst people. **The CODA / Koda dance performance** will take place in the Trbovlje chimney, **the tallest chimney in Europe**, highlighting the changing relationship between the human body and the machine: assistance, imitation, replaceability. Virtual reality also makes dance performances more accessible, connecting audiences with different locations and artists. **The dance VR experience DanceScapes / Plesne krajine** weaves together the stories of five now-abandoned places with the movement of contemporary dance, breathing new life into them. Both performances are part of the international **Danube**

Dance Alliance project, which raises the profile of contemporary dance in the Balkans and is co-funded by the European Union.

The exhibition section of the 2026 festival features **42 artworks, with a significant proportion by Slovenian artists**. On display for the first time will be works from the series *Plastic Bloom* by the artistic duo Lumoskop _lab – comprising Sendi Mango and Jurij Pavlica – *Tempus* by Martina Testen and Simona Šerca, and *Anatomy of a Goldfish* by Nina Koželj, all **created in co-production with the Delavski dom Trbovlje**. They will be joined by Boris Beja, Victoria Vesna, Kate Crawford, Leonardo Bettinelli, Total Refusal and numerous other artists and students from Croatia, Austria, the United States, Serbia, Turkey, Mexico, Russia and Finland.

The festival's supporting programme includes **lectures, performances, meetings with artists and academics, educational and creative workshops**, and guided tours. The **DigitalBigScreen** section of the festival takes viewers into the worlds of art film, both on the big screen and through virtual reality headsets.

In 2026, the Speculum Artium Festival once again demonstrates that, in today's world, we increasingly need spaces that **rouse us from our digital slumber and hold up a mirror to us**. We look forward to sharing this experience with you.

For festival news, a behind-the-scenes look at the events, artist profiles and the world of new media, follow the Facebook and Instagram pages of the Trbovlje Workers' Home, as well as the Speculum Artium Facebook page and Facebook event.

Further details about the programme and the featured artworks can be found at: speculumartium.si

Contact:

Anja Doležalek Škrabar

+386 51 626 296

anja@dd-trbovlje.si