

PRESS RELEASE

VNGart / Art Prize / VNG Foundation / Central Germany

VNGart Prize 2026 awarded to two students from Central Germany

Art prize honours contemporary perspectives on community, memory and social change.

Leipzig, 24 April 2026. The VNG art initiative VNGart and the VNG Foundation today honoured David Kind (Burg Giebichenstein University of Art and Design Halle) and Dayoung Jung (Academy of Fine Arts Leipzig) with the VNGart Prize 2026. The prize for emerging artists includes a monetary award of 3,000 euros and was first presented in 2024. In the second edition of the art prize, two works were honoured that explore in depth the theme “Community in Transition – Artistic Perspectives on Cohesion” and artistically reflect on current discourses.

“We received almost 100 submissions from up-and-coming young artists. We were very pleased with the enthusiastic response, not least because art students from all over Central Germany were able to submit their works for the first time,” says Linda Liebscher, who oversees VNGart. The art competition was open to students and graduates in their first year after graduating from renowned art academies in Central Germany – including the Academy of Fine Arts Leipzig, the Bauhaus University Weimar, the Burg Giebichenstein University of Art and Design Halle and the Dresden University of Fine Arts. The two award-winning students were able to impress a jury of eight experts from the region with their work. The VNGart Prize is awarded every two years and is one of the few awards in Central Germany that promotes art.

“The VNG Foundation views support for students and contemporary art as closely linked to our responsibility for social cohesion in eastern Germany. With the VNGart Prize, we specifically support emerging artists whose work reflects on experiences of community, social upheaval and memory, thereby providing important impetus for social dialogue and the promotion of democratic values in the region. With the VNGart Prize, we want to amplify these voices and bring them to the forefront,” says Mandy Baum, Foundation Manager of the VNG Foundation.

“The jury was particularly impressed by the winning entries due to their conceptual depth, formal precision and high social relevance. They address current issues with great sensitivity and develop their own distinct, concise and moving visual language. The works of David Kind and Dayoung Jung combine aesthetic consistency with thematic complexity, opening up new perspectives on defining themes of our time,” explains Dr Jenny Graser, curator of the Museum of Fine Arts (MdbK) in Leipzig.

Exhibition “Present Collective II” in the Leipzig Baumwollspinnerei (25 April to 16 May)

The award-winning works are part of the exhibition “Present Collective II: Upheavals. Inspiration from Central Germany”, which opened this evening at the award ceremony in the Werkschauhalle (Hall 12) of the Leipzig Baumwollspinnerei, the site of a former cotton mill. The exhibition, curated by Juness Beshir, shows a large number of works by the prizewinners from 2024 and 2026 from the VNGart collection as well as other artistic works exploring the theme of upheavals. The exhibition is open to the

public free of charge from 25 April to 16 May 2026 and beyond as part of the spring tour of the Spinnerei galleries (opening hours: Wednesday to Friday, 12 noon to 5 pm; Saturday 11 am to 5 pm).

The award winners and their works

David Kind (*1990 in Gerolstein) is a student of time-based arts at the Burg Giebichenstein University of Art and Design in Halle. He works at the intersection of experimental film, documentary and media art. The works he submitted for the VNGart Prize examine social divisions, violence and memory and focus on community as a fragile construct. In the experimental documentary “*Gelände*”, Kind examines the social and historical contexts of right-wing violence and explores the mechanisms of repression and normalisation. The video installation “*Bastard*” addresses psychological violence in the context of the Russian war of aggression in Ukraine and explores the moral ambiguities of empathy and responsibility. In the personal short documentary “*There are many doors in my mother’s home*”, Kind focuses on patterns of domestic violence and how they are passed down through the generations. His works do not view community as a stable entity but as a fluid, conflict-ridden space in which vulnerability and change are equally inherent.

Dayoung Jung (*1992 in Suwon, South Korea) is a media artist and student in the Installation and Space class at the Academy of Fine Arts Leipzig. In her works, she explores spaces as carriers of sensory, emotional and historical narratives. In the video and installation work submitted for the VNGart Prize “*You next to us*” and the research project “*We, We, We and We*” she deals with collective memory and marginalised perspectives. Her works combine personal narratives with archived photographs and visualise forms of shared history that have long been overlooked. The central question is how memory can be preserved, conveyed and contextualized within history and whose voices form part of a shared culture of remembrance. In this context, Jung establishes a nuanced dialogue between the past and the present and conceives of community as a polyphonic and open narrative. Her works invite the audience to explore specific spaces and senses of memory themselves.

About VNGart

VNGart is an art initiative of the Leipzig-based energy group VNG AG. VNGart sees itself as an intersection between contemporary art, social issues and corporate responsibility. Through the VNGart Prize, exhibitions and other initiatives, VNGart promotes emerging artists and fosters social dialogue on topics such as transformation, social cohesion and shaping the future. VNGart works closely with cultural institutions, universities and regional partners. Back in the early 1990s, VNG laid the foundations for the VNGart art collection, which includes works by more than 180 artists, most of whom are from Leipzig and Saxony. VNGart is now one of the largest corporate art collections in Central Germany – with more than 1,100 works, including 220 paintings and prints and over 890 photographs. The works focus primarily on the period of reunification and social change in eastern Germany after 1989. More at: www.vng-art.de

About the VNG Foundation

The VNG Foundation was established by VNG AG in 2009 and supports projects in the areas of civil society & public welfare, democracy & cohesion, art & culture and popular sport & health in the focus region of eastern Germany. Together with many partners, the VNG Foundation is committed to strengthening the public good in eastern Germany, recognising voluntary work and promoting the establishment of new foundations in the region. More at: www.vng-stiftung.de

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