Kunstverein
BRAUNSCHWEIG

## Press Release

***ars viva 2026***
**RYAN CULLEN, NAZANIN NOORI, PRATEEK VIJAN**
**December 5, 2026–February 21, 2027**

**Press Preview:** Thursday, Dezember 3, 2026, 11 am
**RSVP:** presse@kunstvereinbraunschweig.de
**Opening:** Friday, Dezember 4, 2026, 7 pm

**The Kunstverein Braunschweig presents the 2026 *ars viva* award recipients: Ryan Cullen, Nazanin Noori, and Prateek Vijan. Through works created specifically for the exhibition, the artists offer new perspectives on the cultural, social, and political structures shaping our present.**

Ryan Cullen, Nazanin Noori, and Prateek Vijan examine the images, sounds, and structures that shape our social reality, each from their own distinct artistic perspective.

Working across painting, sculpture, and film, Cullen explores the images and objects in which collective beliefs, political ideologies, and historical contradictions take shape. The exhibition brings together new paintings, a large-scale installation of readymades, and a new film. Through these works, Cullen addresses the contradictions inherent in systems of social order and the notions of progress that underpin them.

Noori combines compositions based on electronics and changing instrumentation with poetry and mysticism, creating immersive soundscapes that unfold questions of spirituality, power, and community. Taking the Jina Amini protests in Iran as a point of departure, she sheds light on political forms of oppression and resistance. She draws on religious and literary traditions, reexamining their meanings at the intersection of power, protest, and social change. Her work questions who wields power and who can claim the position of the oppressed.

In his installations, Vijan examines the hierarchies that govern access to spaces and social systems, revealing how the possibilities of entering, inhabiting and moving between spaces are unequally distributed, particularly when physical togetherness is complicated by economic, political and bureaucratic circumstances. For the *ars viva* exhibition, he presents a sequence of artificially illuminated rooms featuring robotically controlled daffodils. Connected via digital networks, the artificial flowers communicate with their counterparts in other parts of the world. Vijan's new work explores the possibilities and limitations of connecting with others across physical and linguistic distances.

Since 1953, the Kulturkreis der deutschen Wirtschaft im BDI e. V. has awarded the *ars viva* Prize for Visual Arts annually to outstanding artists under the age of 35 who live in Germany. Following its presentation at Marta Herford (March 14–May 25, 2026), the exhibition is now on view at Kunstverein Braunschweig, its second venue.

Curated by Cathrin Mayer and Junia Thiede

An exhibition by Kunstverein Braunschweig in cooperation with the Kulturkreis der deutschen Wirtschaft im BDI e. V.

Supported by Die Braunschweigische Stiftung, the Lower Saxony Ministry of Science and Culture, Péter Horváth Stiftung, and the City of Braunschweig – Department of Culture and Science.

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## Biographies of the award recipients

**Ryan Cullen** (*1992 in Boston, USA) focuses on the production of images and objects that feature elements of larger political and ideological structures. In a process in which painting and sculpture often overlap, the artist creates images that reflect Western society's tendencies toward self-destruction. Cullen studied at the Städelschule in Frankfurt am Main and at the Cooper Union in New York. His works have been shown in solo and group exhibitions, including Briefing Room, Brussels; The Meeting, New York; CLEARING, Brooklyn; Etablissement d'en Face, Brussels; Nassauischer Kunstverein, Wiesbaden; Portikus, Frankfurt am Main.

**Nazanin Noori** (*1991 in Wiesbaden) is an interdisciplinary artist working across sound, composition, performance, installation, directing, and text. Her practice examines religious and media power structures and the ways in which they appropriate or distort experiences of spirituality, protest, and collective truth. Her hypnoacoustic compositions shape a distinct sonic aesthetic for which she coined the term AMBIENT HARDCORE.
Her work has been exhibited at KW Institute for Contemporary Art as part of the Kyiv Biennial 2026, as well as at EIGEN+ART Lab, Auto Italia, Akademie der Künste, CCA Berlin, M Leuven, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Eye Filmmuseum and transmediale. She has staged performances and theatrical works at Martin-Gropius-Bau, Maxim Gorki Theater, Villa Massimo, Berghain, Schirn Kunsthalle, Schauspielhaus Zürich and ICA London. Noori has been shortlisted for the Future Generation Art Prize 2027.

**Prateek Vijan** (*in 1991 in New Delhi, India) lives and works in Berlin. The starting point for his artistic practice is his personal history, which he understands and reflects upon as a web of political, bureaucratic, and social influences. His work focuses on the arbitrary claims to ownership made by colonial powers, their consolidation in society, and their continuing influence in institutions and their colonial historical structures. Vijan studied in New Delhi and Hamburg. His work has been exhibited mainly in Germany, most recently in solo exhibitions at Galerie Khoshbakht in Cologne in 2026 and at Kunstverein Hamburg in 2025 with *and Others who wish to remain anonymous*. In the same year, he participated in *BPA// Exhibition 2025: A place never fully held* at KW Institute for Contemporary Art. In 2024, his work was shown at Kunstverein Neue Kunst in Hamburg e. V. and in the scholarship exhibition at the Falckenberg Collection. He has received several grants and fellowships, including the working grant for visual artists awarded by the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg. From January 2027, he will be an artist-in-residence at Between Bridges in Berlin.

## About the *ars viva* Prize

Since 1953, the Kulturkreis der deutschen Wirtschaft im BDI e. V. has awarded the annual *ars viva* Prize for Visual Arts to outstanding artists under the age of 35 living in Germany. To date, more than 350 artists have received the award, including Rosemarie Trockel, Candida Höfer, Wolfgang Tillmans, Omer Fast, Cemile Sahin, and Sung Tieu. The jury focuses on artistic practices that develop a distinctive visual language and engage with social and cultural issues. The *ars viva* Prize is supported by the Péter Horváth Foundation. For more information, visit https://arsviva.kulturkreis.eu/en/

## About the Kulturkreis der deutschen Wirtschaft

Founded in 1951, the Kulturkreis der deutschen Wirtschaft im BDI e. V. is Germany’s longest-established institution dedicated to corporate support for the arts and culture. As an independent network of committed businesses, it advocates for artistic freedom as a cornerstone of democracy. For more than 70 years, its work has focused on supporting emerging talent in architecture, visual arts, literature, and music. Through membership contributions and donations, the Kulturkreis has supported numerous artists at the beginning of their careers, including such

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distinguished figures as Heinrich Böll, Ingeborg Bachmann, Günter Grass, Georg Baselitz, Sabine Meyer, Katharina Sieverding, Tabea Zimmermann, Rosemarie Trockel, Candida Höfer, Robert Menasse, and Thomas Demand.

## Catalog

The *ars viva 2026* catalog is published by DISTANZ Verlag and edited by Min-young Jeon for the Kulturkreis der deutschen Wirtschaft. This bilingual publication (German/English) features works by award recipients Ryan Cullen, Nazanin Noori, and Prateek Vijan, alongside texts by Nikita Dhawan, Bitsy Knox, Nora O Murchú, and Skye Arundhati Thomas. The catalog is available from DISTANZ Verlag and through the Kunstverein Braunschweig shop.

## Press & Downloads

**Press Kit for the Exhibition**

## Social Media

**@kunstvereinbraunschweig**
**@nznnsmmnr**
**@prateek_vijan**
**@kulturkreis_eu**

#KunstvereinBraunschweig
#ArsViva2026
#RyanCullen

## Visitor Information

Location: Kunstverein Braunschweig e. V., Lessingplatz 12, 38100 Braunschweig
Opening Hours: Tue–Wed, Fri 12–6 pm, Thu 12–8 pm, Sat–Sun 11 am–6 pm
Admission: €5 regular / €3 reduced
Free admission: Every first Sunday of the month

**kunstvereinbraunschweig.de/en**
**kunstvereinbraunschweig.de/en/calendar**

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