

SPIEL Essen opens in early October for hundreds and thousands of board game fans

- Exhibition space fully booked for the first time
- Golden Demon painting competition new to the supporting programme
- Tickets available at an early-bird price

This year, there are two public holidays in Germany on 3 October: the Day of German Unity and the day when board game fans from all over the world flock to Essen to celebrate their favourite hobby for four days. Opening its doors from 3 to 6 October, SPIEL Essen, the world's largest board game fair, will transform exhibition venue Messe Essen into the epicentre of the gaming world.

Proven hall structure

SPIEL Essen has seen strong growth: Covering 68,500 m² of exhibition space, all six exhibition halls set aside for this year's event have been fully booked for the first time. More than 850 exhibitors from over 50 nations will be presenting their new titles and inviting visitors to try and buy. Like last year, SPIEL has adopted a theme-led hall concept to make it easier for visitors to find their way around the huge exhibition grounds. Following the positive feedback on the hall structure, there have only been some slight changes and minor fine-tuning this year. The area dedicated to role-playing games has been expanded into Hall 2 whilst manufacturers and business exhibitors have moved to Hall 4. The layout of the halls and exhibitors can be found online on the interactive hall plans on the Merz Verlag [website](#).

Highlights of the supporting programme

In addition to the games, Merz Verlag is once again offering an exciting supporting programme. This will kick off on Thursday with the cross-genre project "Finsterwacht" ("Darkenguard") from the world of the well-known role-playing game "The Dark Eye". The band Saltatio Mortis – whose frontman Alea is also the face of this year's SPIEL Essen advertising campaign –, bestselling authors Bernhard Hennen and Torsten Weitze and game publisher Ulisses Spiele have joined forces in this project to merge music, novels and role-playing games. With autograph sessions, musical interludes, talks and role-

playing rounds on the first day of the fair, they will show how well these different cultural forms complement each other. On Thursday and Friday, SPIEL.talks will focus on sustainability and the cultural value of games. The tried-and-tested “Educator's Day” for teachers follows on Saturday. The Golden Demon painting competition from Games Workshop will also be taking place for the first time at SPIEL Essen. Painters from all over the world can submit their painted Warhammer miniatures during the fair and compete with the most talented miniature artists in various categories. A jury of experts will decide on the winners of each category as well as the winner of the legendary Slayer Sword, all of whom will be announced at an award ceremony on Sunday. Merz Verlag will once again be streaming all contributions on its YouTube channel.

SPIEL app, mascot and game for the show

The free and useful app for SPIEL Essen has become a real trade-fair hit with over 45,000 downloads. This year, Merz Verlag has once again expanded the app and added new functions. It is now also possible to display individual games in the navigation and newly added games are specially highlighted in the lists. The update will be available at the end of August. The mascot Meeps, who has been melting gamers' hearts since last year, will be making an appearance at the exhibition centre as a walking act, selfie spot and plush toy. Also new to the merchandise shop is “Loot”, the official game for SPIEL Essen. This captivating, family-friendly roll-and-write game was specially developed by the successful author Ralf zur Linde together with his son Roy at Skellig Games together with Merz Verlag.

Merz Verlag is expecting around 200,000 international board game fans. Day and season tickets are available at the [online shop](#). A reduced early-bird price applies until 31 August. SPIEL is open from Thursday to Saturday from 10 am to 7 pm and on Sunday until 6 pm.

Images are available at www.spielwarenmesse-eg.de/media.

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SPIEL Essen

SPIEL Essen is the world's largest public fair for board games and brings passionate board game fans together with national and international exhibitors in the heart of the Ruhr region. The fair has been around for over

40 years and presents thousands of new releases from exhibitors from over 50 nations. The focus is on socialising and playing together, as the new titles can be tested directly on site at the booths at SPIEL Essen.

Spielwarenmesse eG

The multifaceted positioning and international orientation of Spielwarenmesse eG is representative of the toy sector and other consumer goods markets. With its legal structure as a cooperative, the business is unique among trade fair companies and is highly successful. Its 60-member team operates from the 'ToyCity' of Nuremberg and is supported by representatives in over 100 countries. Its portfolio includes two major global fairs: the **Spielwarenmesse** in Nuremberg is the lead international event for the B2B sector, as is **SPIEL** in Essen for the B2C field. To these can be added **Kids India** in Mumbai and the **World of Toys by Spielwarenmesse** trade fair programme, which opens up new markets for manufacturers through joint activities in **Hong Kong, Tokyo and New York**. The Company's own subsidiaries in the key locations of **China and India** ensure that appropriate expertise is available locally. With its accumulated knowledge and global network, the trade fair producer is becoming an ever stronger initiator and groundbreaker in the industry's issues and trends. The most recent example of this is **BRANDmate** in Offenbach, which casts an unconventional and future-directed spotlight on the topic of licensing and partnerships. With its combination of events and online activities, Spielwarenmesse eG (www.spielwarenmesse-eg.de) is active all year round.