



Media information

Berlin, March 19, 2026

When Text Becomes Image: PalaisPopulaire presents a dialogue between two major collections

From March 20 to August 17, 2026, PalaisPopulaire hosts the exhibition *Seeing Words, Reading Images*, bringing selected works from the Written Art Collection and the Deutsche Bank Collection into a multifaceted dialogue. Curated by **Marie-Kathrin Krimphoff** of the Written Art Collection, and **Svenja Gräfin von Reichenbach**, Director of PalaisPopulaire, the exhibition showcases works by more than thirty international artists.

The Written Art Collection is among the world's most significant private collections of text-based art. Around 400 works from Europe, North America, East Asia, as well as the Near and Middle East, document a broad spectrum, from gestural abstract painting after 1945 to contemporary calligraphy and conceptual and media art.

"As selected works from both collections demonstrate," says **Britta Färber**, Head of Art and Culture at Deutsche Bank, "writing stands for thought, dialogue, and shared memory. It contains the roots that give us stability, foster a sense of belonging, and help us weather the storms of time."

At the heart of the exhibition is the complex relationship between text and image: as line, gesture, handwriting, calligraphy, typography, or script. *Seeing Words, Reading Images* shows how text-based art becomes a medium of global communication and the visual and linguistic possibilities it opens up for storytelling, from poetry and political commentary to historical reflection.

The show is structured into thematic chapters that make different artistic approaches tangible. It opens with **Lawrence Weiner's** room installation *THE GRACE OF A GESTURE* (2010), in which the pioneer of conceptual art demonstrates how text and image, literature and artwork, interweave and how a precisely placed gesture can transform an entire space into a work of art.

The first chapter takes its title from **Karin Sander's** *wordsearch*. Initiated by Deutsche Bank in 2002, this "translinguistic sculpture" translates all the languages spoken in New York City, as they appear in *The New York Times*, into a poetic grid. The connection between concept and poetry is also evident in the word collages of Nobel Prize-winning author **Herta Müller**, as well as in the lyrical leprellos of poet and artist **Etel Adnan**.

The chapter "Ulysses" is devoted to forms of storytelling, for example in **Marcel Dzama's** surreal homage to James Joyce, in the humorous donkey monument by the collective Slavs and Tatars dedicated to the legendary Molla Nasreddin, and in **Yinka Shonibare's** library bound in wax cloth.

"Map of Utopia" focuses on artistic alternatives to historical cartography. In *Anti-Mercator* (2010–2011), South African artist **William Kentridge** shows how surveying techniques function as instruments of colonial power, while **Qiu Zhijie** explores the potentials and limits of cartographic representation in *Mapping the World*.

"The Home of My Eyes" addresses themes of home and exile. The section is named after the portrait series that **Shirin Neshat** created in Azerbaijan in 2015. The artist photographed and interviewed people of diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds about their sense of home, overlaying their statements, translated into Farsi, onto the portraits like a delicate textual fabric.

The section "Small Right Hand Down" examines questions of democracy and human rights, for example in **Osman Bozkurt's** series *Marks of Democracy / Portraits of the Voters* (2002), featuring close-ups of fingers marked with indelible ink to prevent double voting, and in **Jenny Holzer's** *Redaction Paintings* (2005–2008), based on redacted documents relating to US war crimes during the Iraq War.

The exhibition concludes with the chapter "Seelenfenster" (Window to the Soul), which places gesture at its center. **Rebecca Horn's** installation of the same name combines text, image, and sound into a poetic cipher. The calligraphically abstracted works of **Charles Hossein Zenderoudi** and **Shiryū Morita** likewise demonstrate how writing itself becomes a gestural visual form.

Seeing Words, Reading Images is accompanied by an extensive public program including artist talks, guided tours, concerts, and readings:
palaispopulaire.db.com/events.

The PalaisPopulaire Digital Guide offers further information on the exhibited works. Artists on view include Etel Adnan, Mounira Al Solh, Siah Armajani, Joseph Beuys, Osman Bozkurt, Natalie Czech, Claudia Comte, Marcel Dzama, Larissa Fassler, Meschac Gaba, Ellen Gallagher, Jenny Holzer, Rebecca Horn, Yūichi Inoue, On Kawara, Annette Kelm, William Kentridge, Imi Knoebel, Ahmed Mater, Herta Müller, Shiryū Morita, Shirin Neshat, Qiu Zhijie, Karin Sander, Viviane Sassen, Yinka Shonibare, Slavs and Tatars, Agathe Snow, Lawrence Weiner, Wong Hoy Cheong, Yang Jiechang, and Charles Hossein Zenderoudi.

Seeing Words, Reading Images

The Written Art Collection in dialogue with the Deutsche Bank Collection

March 20 to August 17, 2026

Further information can be found at palaispopulaire.db.com

Press photos: www.photo-files.de/db-palaispopulaire

PalaisPopulaire, Unter den Linden 5, 10117 Berlin

Daily except Tuesday, 11 am–6 pm; Thursday until 7 pm

For further information, please contact:

Deutsche Bank AG

Communications

Dr. Klaus Winker

Phone: + 49 (0)69 910 32249

Email: klaus.winker@db.com

PalaisPopulaire

Sara Bernshausen

Phone: +49 (0)30 202093 14

Email: sara.bernshausen@db.com

About Deutsche Bank's commitment to art

With its involvement in contemporary art Deutsche Bank has set standards worldwide, be it with the Deutsche Bank Collection, one of the world's most important collections of contemporary artworks on paper and photography, with international exhibitions, or with the PalaisPopulaire in the heart of Berlin. For many years Deutsche Bank has been the Global Lead Partner of the Frieze Art Fair, which holds fairs in London, New York, Los Angeles and Seoul and starting in 2026, Abu Dhabi.