

German participants are on the home stretch of the Automechanika Body & Paint competition

Frankfurt am Main, 26 May 2021. German body and paintwork professionals are competing to reach the finals of the first international Body & Paint World Championships at Automechanika Frankfurt Digital Plus 2021. On 14 September in Frankfurt, an expert jury consisting of renowned trade journalists, designers and industry insiders will select Germany's winner. More than ten participants are at the start.

The German Body & Paint competition at Automechanika Frankfurt is playing host to dedicated body and paintwork professionals who hope to impress the expert panel with their work and earn a spot in the grand finale of the international Automechanika Body & Paint World Championships. Three finalists – the winners in Birmingham, Johannesburg and Shanghai – have already been chosen. In this contest, the entrants are called upon to create a car hood with a design inspired by their country. The creations are judged according to their technical perfection and creativity. The German competition is sponsored by AkzoNobel, Axalta, BASF, Carbon and SATA. The leading paint gun manufacturer from Kornwestheim has supported the competition from the very beginning.

Günter Blümel from Vienna and Diego Del Nilo from Munich are competing in the Body & Paint competition for AkzoNobel. Blümel (54), Managing Director of Autospenglerei Blümel GmbH in Vienna, is a huge fan of special effect paints, which he uses to create intense colours and creative designs. He had this to say about his design: "I've already got an idea for my car-hood design for the competition. I want to link Germany and Austria, as well as Frankfurt and Vienna, and both countries' flags will certainly play a role. I'd rather not reveal any more details right now, however." Daniel Kapeller, National Sales Manager for AkzoNobel Austria, knows what his entrant has to offer: "This competition is perfect for Günter. He has always danced to his own beat, and that's a good thing – he is extremely talented. This means he's not just good at what he does, but also a perfect entrant for this competition."

Airbrushing has been Diego Del Nilo's passion for more than 20 years. Now, this Munich-based master painter is taking part in the Automechanika Body & Paint competition and testing his skills against international competitors. "I think you have to be passionate about the job. That's why I'm always on the lookout for a creative challenge – and it's why I'm participating in the Body & Paint competition." He is competing on behalf of AkzoNobel because – as a master painter – he knows his materials inside and out and will only use premium quality paints. It goes without saying that he is keeping his design a secret, but he did offer a little hint: "I can tell you that I'll be staying true to my style and that my design will be focused on a particular city."

Axalta and its three refinish brands Standox, Spies Hecker and Cromax are also sponsoring the Body & Paint competition. "The Body & Paint competition – not only the finals, but also the competitions in which the finalists are selected – is of interest to all international companies in our sector," said Yasmin Armbruster, Director of Marketing

Service at Standox Germany in Wuppertal, who also works with Axalta's other refinish brands. "The fact that the grand finale is being held at Automechanika in Frankfurt is yet another reason for us to lend our support to this event."

Yet even beyond this, all three Axalta finish brands strive to promote the paintwork profession. Yasmin Armbruster: "Body and paint workshops are facing numerous challenging developments today, not only in the workshop area, but also on the administrative side. Examples include new materials and technologies, changing market structures, digitalisation and much else besides. Their core activity – top-quality craftsmanship – can sometimes be overshadowed by these developments, yet it is this craftsmanship that is the heart of what they do. That's why it's great that the Body & Paint contest is focused on creativity in paintwork. I look forward to the presentation of all the designs entered from around the world."

Alexander Hagemann (37) is a master painter at Karosserie Baur in Rottenburg am Neckar: "I read about the contest on the internet, and after talking with my boss, I decided to enter it. I love challenges like these." He has already begun work on his car hood, and has put a great deal of time into it: "I will be using 16 different painting techniques and effects – one for each of Germany's states." A lot of the materials he is using cannot be found elsewhere. That is because Hagemann creates his own by mixing paints with special pigments. When creating designs, he is 'old school', and he continues to draw his designs by hand: "It simply suits me better than doing designs on a computer. I am a tradesman, after all."

"The contest offers me a refreshing opportunity to put my mind to the test," laughed Andreas Kräßner. "So much of what I do during my everyday work is routine." Kräßner (31) has been working as a paintwork specialist at Hoffmann Karosserie und Lack in Schwelm for the past nine years. He even did his traineeship there. While Kräßner has taken part in a number of paintwork competitions, "I still haven't taken home first prize." For his entry, he envisions creating a design that is centred on Germany's strong engineering and automotive heritage. Kräßner also likes things colourful: "I love playing with colours, and with its excellent effect colours, Standox has a great deal to offer here."

With Laura and David Walther, the Body & Paint contest also boasts a married couple. Both Laura and David are master painters, and David even has competition experience, taking second place in the German Federal Skills Competition for paintwork specialists in 2013. The competition that year was held at Spies Hecker, and they have maintained a link with the Cologne paint brand ever since – their employer, Autolackiererei Lohs in Limbach-Oberfrohna in Saxony, uses Spies Hecker paints. Laura Walther: "We value its high opacity and speed of use. Their paints are also good for design projects." Both of them did a great deal of creative work while in technical college, and they even devote some of their leisure time to various painting techniques, including airbrushing. Laughing, David said that "It's not like master painters appear out of the blue."

Another company taking part in the competition is SATA. Their entrant: 19-year-old paintwork specialist Josephine Ellwein from Vaihingen an der Enz. Jari Pfander, Head of Marketing & Communications at SATA: "We at SATA are driven by our desire to equip paintwork specialists around the globe with the best tools for pursuing their trade. That is why we are especially delighted to see our products being used in the Body & Paint competition at Automechanika Frankfurt, making us part of this captivating international competition."

It is her love of new challenges and enthusiasm for the art of paintwork that drives Josephine Ellwein, who works for the Brinnig GmbH paint and bodywork shop in Vaihingen. She will be employing glazes, wraps, and painting using HVLP, RP and airbrushing techniques, to create a car hood bearing a design inspired by the City of

Frankfurt, its innovations and landmarks, and its position at the heart of Germany and Europe.

“The Body & Paint championships at Automechanika in Frankfurt are a big deal for us. Tina Allhoff, Director of Marketing Management Germany at BASF Coatings GmbH, which is also involved in the competition, summed it up nicely: “We produce and supply top-quality products, but it is always a real highlight to see what a paintwork technician can achieve when they put these products to work. When it comes to everyday repairs, a paintwork specialist can really show their skill by making it impossible to tell the difference between the new finish and the original paintwork. Many laypeople think this is a matter of course (and don’t appreciate the difficulty as a result), but it takes experience and skill to make it happen. There is rarely any time for creativity, because the desired result is usually predetermined. This makes it all the more impressive to see what all can be done when professional paintwork specialists work with excellent paint products. True artistry really shines through. It quickly becomes evident just how much emotion can be expressed through paint, and how objects, in this case a car hood, can be ‘brought to life.’”

Nick Habich, Director of the Workshop and the Paint & Design Centre at HM Habich und Miller, shared his reason for competing in the Body & Paint competition under the BASF banner: “For me, it’s about participating, being a part of the action, and seeing what other artists and paintwork specialists are doing not only in Germany, but internationally – I find this very exciting.” Habich, a native of Mammendorf (near Munich) who is a trained model- and mould-maker, has already determined the design of his submission: “I’ve decided to go with Bavaria as my subject and paint the car hood with the blue and white diamonds from the Bavarian flag. The design is topped off by four historical buildings – from Bavaria, naturally.”

Carbon is also participating as a sponsor and is entering a few dedicated painters who hope to emerge as the winner of the Body & Paint competition. They are certain to pour a great deal of creativity and passion into their concepts and designs.

The organisers are already looking forward to joining with all partners and sponsors at the awards ceremonies on 14 September (German finals) and 16 September (international finals). The awards will be presented by the person who came up with the idea for this contest: Wolfgang Auer, Editor-in-Chief of the trade journal fml and Michael Rehm, Editor-in-Chief of Lackiererblatt. There will also be a people’s choice award given to the design as chosen by trade fair visitors in person and online.

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*Preliminary figures for 2020