

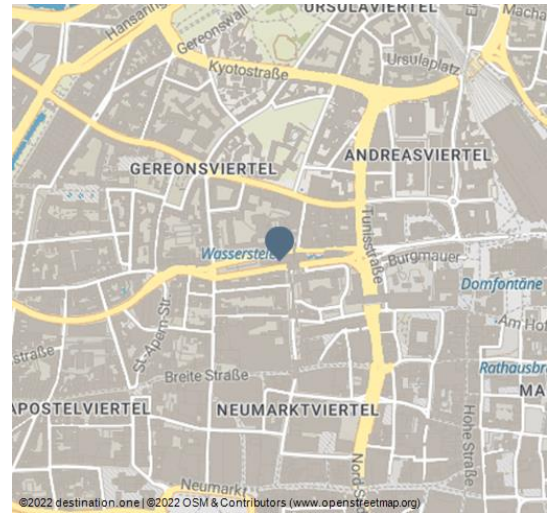


Winged car

Monument



KölnTourismus GmbH, Axel Schulten



HA Schult's golden car

Advertising or art? Art or advertising? Whichever is the case, the facts about Cologne's famous winged car are clear. It's a Ford fiesta model weighing four tons, and sprouting from it are two wings, each of which weighs 800 kilograms. It's gilded. And it has become a hallmark of our city.

This golden bird landed on the staircase tower of the historic Zeughaus building on April 25, 1991 — and has now been lording it over the city for more than three decades. Although the City Museum has moved out of this landmark building, the winged car remains on its roof and has become a favourite photo motif.

HA Schult's winged car: Will it stay there forever?

The winged car was originally part of the "Fetisch Auto" exhibition that was curated in 1989 by the Cologne-based performance artist HA Schult, who is known for his "Trash People".

Critics wrote that the exhibition was a farce and derided it as a special campaign that could not have been better tailored to glorify cars. That's because the golden Fiesta was created just in time for the delivery of a new model of the Ford Fiesta. But the bird stayed put, despite further attempts to persuade it to fly away. In 2012 the newspaper FAZ called this object a "pudgy golden car with wings" created by the "city's leading art buffoon". Cologne's District President Franz-Josef Antwerpes also wanted to pull the golden bird off its perch. The bird came down to earth, but only in order to be cleaned and refurbished. In 2013 Jürgen Roters, the city's mayor at that time, said the car would probably always stay on the roof.

The winged car as a tourist attraction: The 1989 model of the Ford Fiesta

The interior of the car with wings has been gutted and filled with 1.2 tons of railway tracks and lots of epoxy resin. Each of the wings is made of polyester resin and weighs 800 kilograms. The golden paint was renewed by trainees at the Ford plant in 2012, the year the car was refurbished. The bonnet, the boot lid and the hubcaps were also renewed.

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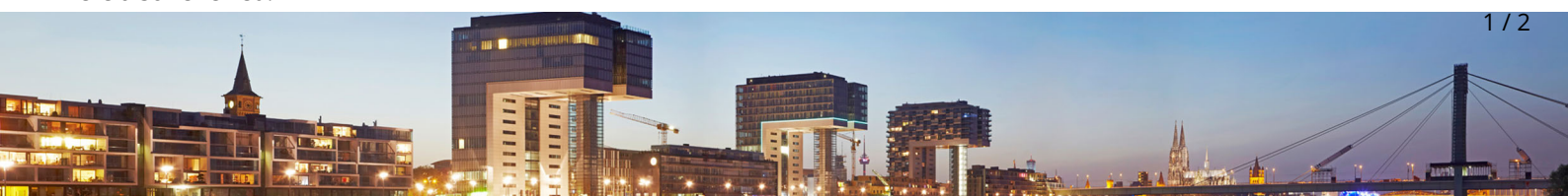
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The "Fetisch Auto" event: 11 Ford Fiestas scattered all over Cologne

The golden bird on top of the Zeughaus was originally only one of eleven modified Ford Fiestas. Back then, HA Schult and his manager, Elka Koska, promised viewers a "happening puzzle consisting of eleven dramatic image tableaux". The artcampaign was sponsored by the Ford plant in 1989 to commemorate the plant's 60th anniversary.

One of the cars was coated in "marble", for example. One looked as though it were made of ice, and another one was decorated to look like an Easter egg. One Fiesta floated on the Rhine disguised as a "wave", and yet another floated above the historic city centre in the shape of a "cloud". Another stood in the disco area of the Alter Wartesaal restaurant — and finally, a car disassembled into its gilded components rested in the atrium of the Romano-Germanic Museum.



Sandra Schweer

