

Save the Date - Special Exhibition

Perceived Truths. Zeppelins and National Socialism

May 22, 2026 - April 4, 2027

Press conference: Wednesday, May 20, 2026, 11 am

Opening: Thursday, May 21, 2026, 6 pm

Perceived truth: Zeppelins were apolitical. *Perceived truth:* Technology is neutral. *Perceived truth:* There were no Nazis in Friedrichshafen. *Perceived truth:* Zeppelins served international understanding. *Perceived truth:* Museums are neutral.

In 2026, the Zeppelin Museum celebrates its 30th anniversary. On this occasion, the exhibition “*Perceived Truths. Zeppelins and National Socialism*” confronts the museum’s own history and, for the first time, comprehensively examines the entanglements between Luftschiffbau Zeppelin and the Nazi state. Central to this approach are “perceived truths,” a timely phenomenon based on subjective, emotionally charged assumptions—statements we have heard somewhere and never questioned, which have solidified over time and consistently displace verifiable facts. They run as a guiding thread through the exhibition and the museum, serving as a framework for deconstructing romanticized narratives of Zeppelin history.

To this day, perceived truths continue to shape the image of Zeppelins as nostalgically glorified, positive technology. For example, the belief persists that Zeppelins and the companies that built them were apolitical. Yet whether in the German Empire or the Weimar Republic, Zeppelins were already highly charged with ideological and political meaning long before the Nazi era.

Press Information

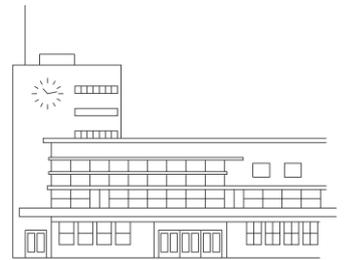
March 18, 2026

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Zeppelin Museum

Friedrichshafen

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88045 Friedrichshafen

www.zeppelin-museum.de

#zeppelinmuseum

Opening hours

May–October:

Mon–Sun, 9am–5pm

November–April:

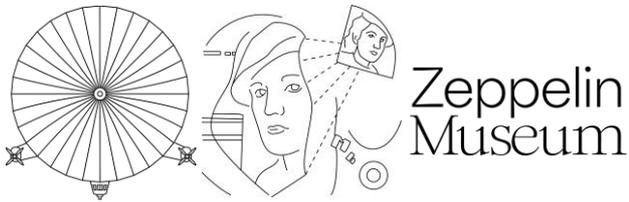
Tue–Sun, 10am–5pm

Zeppelin Museum

The Zeppelin Museum

Friedrichshafen offers a multimedia experience of innovations in technology and art, and invites visitors to engage in an interactive dialog.

Interdisciplinary, discursive, participatory and inclusive, it is dedicated to historical, current and future social developments and debates.



From 1933 onward, Zeppelins and the people who built and operated them were directly integrated into the Nazi state and its propagandistic self-representation. The notion that this occurred solely involuntarily and without enthusiasm is itself an example of “perceived truths” that emerged after 1945 and remain influential to this day. These narratives continue to play a significant role in both the self-image and external representation of Friedrichshafen as an industrial and armaments center.

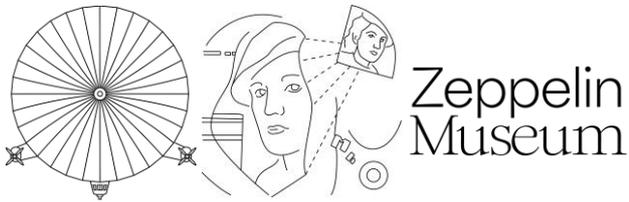
To address this complex subject, the exhibition adopts a multi-perspective and interdisciplinary approach. It opens up perspectives on the period of National Socialism (1933-1945) within the context of historical continuities and explores the relationship between Luftschiffbau Zeppelin GmbH and National Socialism through both “key figures” and symbolic “key events.” In doing so, it traces the gradual political shifts and intensifications within society—developments that, much like in our present, seem to be everywhere. Revealing these mechanisms and consciously countering idealizing narratives and gaps through critical deconstruction is the declared aim of the exhibition.

The artistic approach of Jonas Englert, whose work is generously supported by RE-SEARCH. The ZF Fellowship for Artists, formulates a deconstruction in itself. At the center of his work is the airship as a visual and imaginary phenomenon: Englert formulates a critical reflection of its visual constitution and exposes the affective structures and functions that operate beneath the surface of its representations.

This media-critical approach is taken up in the exhibition’s educational program, which aims to equip visitors with essential (media) competencies, demonstrating how a source-critical and memory-oriented engagement with the past can be shaped today. In this respect, the exhibition explicitly seeks to connect historical research findings with current cultural and political discourses.

A comprehensive accompanying publication will be released for the opening of the exhibition, documenting new research findings and aiming to stimulate further scholarship.

In the context of the exhibition, Friedrichshafen has also been selected as the venue for the 5th Historical Conference, “*Historical Knowledge and the Social Educational Mandate: The Example of National Socialism in Upper Swabia*,” which will take place on June 17 and 18, 2026 at the Museum. The conference is organized by the Research Department for the History of Medicine at the Center for Psychiatry South Württemberg / Department of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy I at Ulm University in Ravensburg-Weissenau, and the NS Documentation Upper Swabia Memorial Board, in cooperation with the Zeppelin Museum Friedrichshafen. The patron is the City of Friedrichshafen.



Curators: Jürgen Bleibler (Head of Zeppelin Department), Felix Banzhaf (Research Associate, Zeppelin Department), Kathrin Wurzer (Research Associate, Zeppelin Department), Dominik Busch (Head of Discourse & Communication), Dr. Tabea Widmann (Digital Mediation and Format Development)

Project Management: Felix Banzhaf (Research Associate, Zeppelin Department)

Supported by: Cultural Foundation of the German Federal States, ZF Art Foundation, Lotto Museum Prize 2024



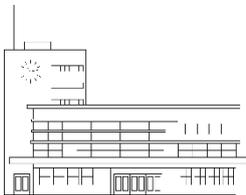
ZF kunststiftung

RE-SEARCH

ZF-Forschungsstipendium



Media Partner: SWR Kultur



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Zeppelin Museum: Art meets Technology, on the Shores of Lake Constance

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