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PRESS RELEASE

Nadine Schemmann: As I Thought It Was Air Exhibition from 17 April to 30 August 2026

St. Matthäus Church, Kulturforum Berlin, Matthäikirchplatz, 10785 Berlin

Press preview: Thursday, 16 April 2026, 9.30 AM

Opening: Thursday, 16 April 2026, 7 PM

Air – the invisible volume of a space – plays a special role in church interiors: as a carrier of sound for words and music, as a medium of breath, and not least as a symbol of the spirit that, as an invisible force, connects heaven and earth, God and humankind. »The wind blows wherever it pleases, and you can hear it blowing, but you cannot tell whence it comes or where it is going.« (John 3:8)

For St. Matthäus Church, Nadine Schemmann developed a site-specific installation that encompasses both apse and nave, placing them in a dynamic relationship with each other. From the inner apse – the altar area – lengths of linen unfold into the space, linking the architectural zones of the church into a continuous pictorial field. Colours on canvas unite as a mobile, living body, incorporating layers, depth and energy. Through these lengths of fabric, as well as through the painterly process itself, a current emerges: a flow of colour moving through apse and nave, lending both spaces an equal presence.

The installation references the imperceptible, the transitions between matter and senses, between the visible and the invisible. Schemmann's painting oscillates between materiality and transparency, between physicality and light.

Through this sculptural intervention in the interior airspace of St. Matthäus, the stirring of the spirit and its connecting force between heaven and earth become particularly palpable in the period between Easter and Pentecost – the feast of the Holy Spirit. In this spiritual context, the works develop a distinctive resonance: the church interior, a place of contemplation, receptiveness and transcendence, becomes both counterpart to and integral part of the painting itself.

Linen panels spread out across the nave, framing the space. Light, tranquility and architecture become carriers of the fabric. The sacred space thus becomes a place of transition – between seeing and sensing, between material and spirit, between interior and exterior. Some works are suspended from the ceiling or unfold from the wall into the space. A living relationship develops between the work and the architecture, between the physical and the atmospheric.

The varying daylight causes the fields of colour to pulse. Colour enters into a dialogue with the light that streams in through the windows. Between fabric and air, between inside and outside, a visual breath emerges – a quiet, flowing, contemplative movement. The linen fabrics with Schemmann's characteristic flowing fields of colour hover in the air as they connect the heights and depths of the space, as they condense behind the altar and appear to permeate the church walls.

This creates a visual dynamic that connects heaven and earth, air volume and architecture, interior and exterior. Nadine Schemmann draws on the liturgical colours of the ecclesiastical year, which, in her opinion, are always an expression of touch and encounter. The church interior becomes a colour space – a three-dimensional painting and, at the same time, a symbol of the invigorating and creative force of the spirit.

In Schemmann's painterly works, colour is transformed into a breathing material. It is not fixed, but constantly changing: it expands, withdraws, overlaps and creates spaces that can be experienced both internally and externally. Where the altarpiece would normally be, there is now a sculpture crafted from fabric. Out of compacted bundles, individual lengths of fabric detach themselves and unfold upwards – a gesture of ascent, of opening, of connection between heaven and earth.

Schemmann's work is positioned at the intersection of painting, sculpture and installation. She uses linen not merely as a medium, but as a body, a skin, a boundary and at the same time as a passage. Fabric comes across as a breathing material: sometimes taut, sometimes loosened, sometimes flowing freely through space. Colour and canvas enter into a relationship that is constantly shifting – between concentration and dissolution, visibility and suspension. The material presence of the linen always remains tangible. It bears the traces of process, gesture and time.

Through techniques such as bleaching, layering and the free suspension of the fabric, fields of colour emerge that are permeable and integrate the surrounding space into their movement. Within the religious context of St. Matthäus Church, this interplay of materiality and immaterial presence attains a particular intensity. The expanse, the luminosity and the quiet presence of the church interior form a field of resonance in which Schemmann's painting can unfold.

The exhibition is devoted to the movement of colour, fabric and light, and to the question of how painting extends beyond its own surface into space. On raw linen, a painterly vocabulary develops in layers, traces and transitions, that is both corporeal and immaterial. Colour is transformed into movement in space – within the fluctuation of natural light, between surface and air, between inside and outside.

About the artist

Nadine Schemmann (born 1977 in Solingen) lives and works in Berlin. Following studies at the Cologne International School of Design and the Berlin University of the Arts, she increasingly turned to painting and installation art. Her works straddle the boundaries between image, object and space with the materiality of linen, pigment and light playing a central role. Schemmann considers fabric not merely as a carrier, but as an autonomous body – a skin, a resonant surface and a medium of transition.

She became widely known for her expansive installations and painterly works presented, among other venues, at Museum Wiesbaden, Kunstverein Dresden and in galleries such as Sommer Contemporary Art, Zurich, Galerie Norbert Arns, Cologne, and Haverkamp Leistenschneider, Berlin. Her works frequently detach themselves from the surface, hang freely in space and become lengths of fabric that breathe, shift and transform. For Schemmann, colour is not a fixed state but a process – a movement of concentration and dissolution, a visible breath.

Curated by Lisa Botti, curator at the Neue Nationalgalerie, and Hannes Langbein, director of the Stiftung St. Matthäus.

Accompanying Program:

Saturday, May 2, 2026, 3 PM

Artist talk with **Nadine Schemmann**, joined **Lisa Botti**, Curator at the Neue Nationalgalerie, and **Hannes Langbein**, Director of Stiftung St. Matthäus

Friday, May 22, 2026, 7 PM

Reading by Esther Kinsky and **Book Presentation: RAUHNÄCHTE (Nadine Schemmann/ Esther Kinsky)**

Opening Hours & Admission:

St. Matthäus Church, Matthäikirchplatz, 10785 Berlin

Tuesday to Sunday, 11 AM – 6 PM

Free Admission

Press Preview:

A press preview with the artist **Nadine Schemmann**, along with curators **Lisa Botti** (Neue Nationalgalerie) and **Hannes Langbein** (Stiftung St. Matthäus), will take place on **Thursday, 16 April 2026, at 9.30 AM**. We warmly invite members of the press to attend. Please register by Wednesday, 15 April 2026, via email at: info@stiftung-stmatthaeus.de.

Press Images:

Press images (see page 4 of the press release) are available for download on our website's press section:

<https://stiftung-stmatthaeus.de/pressebereich/pressemitteilungen/nadine-schemmann-als-ich-dachte-es-sei-luft/>

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Further Information:

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