

The AUREA #8 winners

AUREA Award: MACK One brings the future of immersive entertainment to Europa-Park

February 5, 2026

With MACK One, Europa-Park once again became an international melting pot for creative visionaries, innovative technologies and bold entrepreneurs. On 2 and 3 February 2026, Michael Mack, managing partner of Europa-Park and founder of MACK One, invited industry leaders to the resort for the eighth AUREA Award ceremony. This year's theme was "Through the Looking Glass: Where Layered Realities Unfold", honouring innovations that are shaping our perceptions of reality, entertainment and immersion.



The AUREA Award recognises the achievements of the finalists in five categories and in the "Vox Populi" audience award

The AUREA Award has long been more than just a traditional award and is now considered an important platform for the digital future of the entertainment industry. "Every year, the finalists of the AUREA Award demonstrate how a strong idea can be turned into real-world applications – from immersive experiences to technologies that can be used in everyday life," explains Michael Mack. "As an entrepreneurial family, we are not only interested in ideas on paper, but also in projects that actually engage and inspire people. This event is therefore our way of creating a place where developers, creative minds and entrepreneurs can come together, test prototypes, share insights and turn concepts into real products and experiences." The owner of Europa-Park, Roland Mack, and the rest of the family of entrepreneurs have always championed innovation and technological progress, leaving a lasting impact on the industry with their ideas and developments.

The expert jury

Kathleen Cohen, founder of The Collaboratorium, once again chaired the jury. She was supported by Thomas Wagner, co-founder and managing director of VR Coaster, Emily Olman, CEO of Hopscotch Interactive, Christina Lee Storm of Secret Level, and Julian Reyes, winner of the AUREA Award #7. Awards were given in five categories. In addition, this year saw the first ever presentation of the "Vox Populi" audience award, in which visitors' votes directly influenced the award.

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This year, in addition to the various specialist categories, the "Vox Populi" audience award was presented for the first time, chosen directly by the audience in attendance.

Experience/Immersion: "Oktoberfest VR"

A visionary social VR experience that explores how real-world places can be transformed into shared digital destinations.

Innovation & Vox Populi (double winner): "Wall Town Wonders"

A mixed reality game that transforms your living room into a living, breathing miniature town.

Interaction: "Dreampark" and "Ballee"

"Dreampark" transforms any location into an interactive amusement park. "Ballee" leads the way in dynamic object tracking on Meta Quest.

Impact: “Uncanny Alley, a New Day”
Stephen Butchko directs groundbreaking live VR theatre.
Creative: “Bono: Stories of Surrender”
An immersive cinematic adaptation of Bono’s book that sets new standards in storytelling.

A glimpse into the future of digital technology
The event offered attendees an exclusive insight into the digital future of the leisure and experience industry. On the second day, panels, keynotes and workshops highlighted how these developments are already becoming a reality. A key talking point was the panel discussion led by Hilmar Koch of Autodesk, who explained how designers and storytellers can use AI as a creative partner. Instead of seeing AI as a threat, it should be viewed as a tool for solving complex problems and bringing visions to life. Experts from Holoride, Dolby and Lufthansa also discussed how entertainment technology is transforming the time we spend in cars and aeroplanes into real experiences.

A particularly exciting highlight was the live recording of the podcast “The World Beyond”. Together with visionary designer and filmmaker Keiichi Matsuda, Michael Mack delved into the future of augmented reality, artificial intelligence and immersive storytelling.

Further insights into the AUREA Award and MACK One can be found at:
Instagram: @mackoneofficial
LinkedIn: MACK One
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