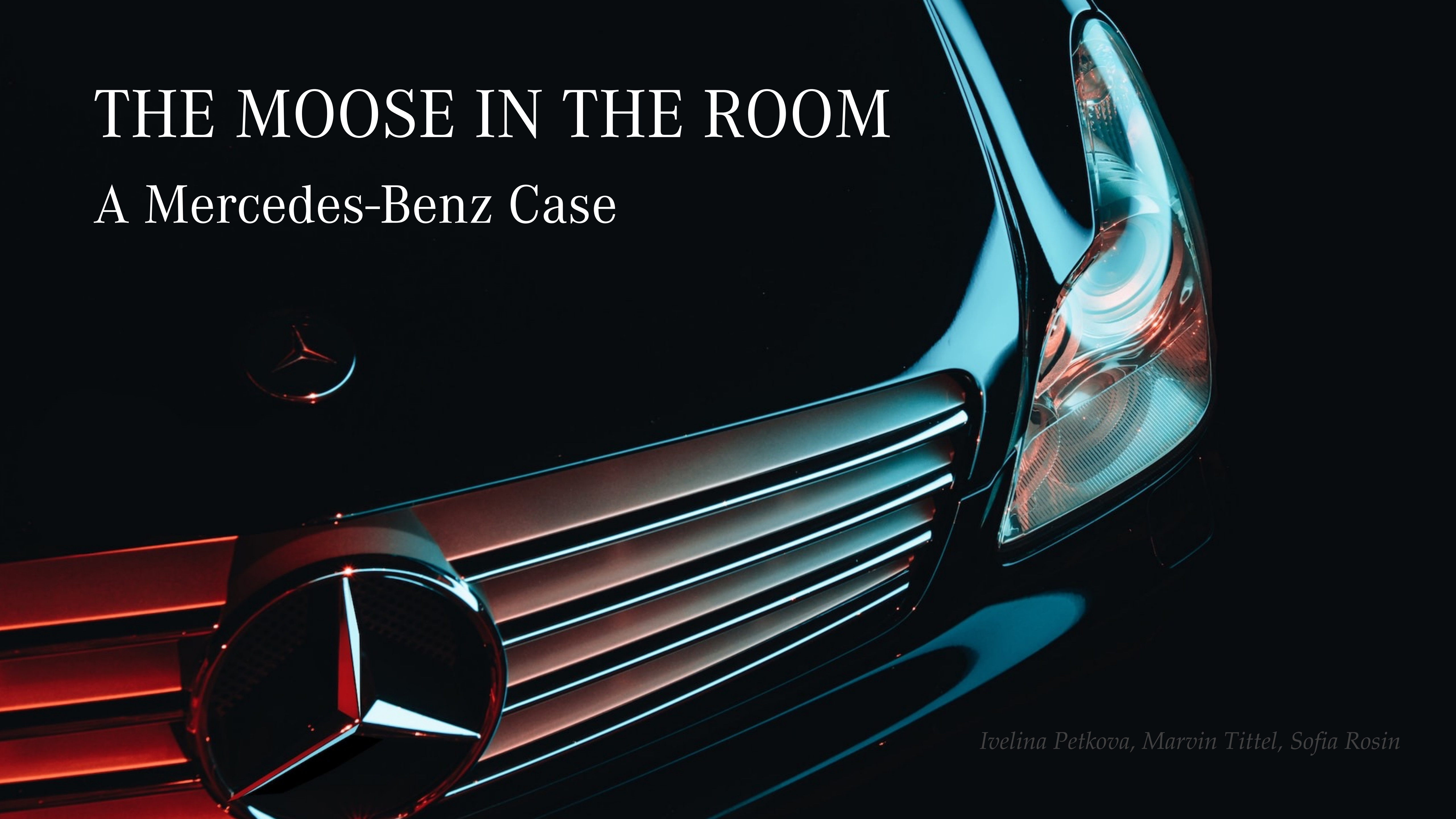


# THE MOOSE IN THE ROOM

A Mercedes-Benz Case



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# Agenda

Background & History  
of Mercedes-Benz

1

The Incident

2

Case Discussion

3

Management Decision

4



# Mercedes-Benz Brand History

Luxury automaker - high-end vehicles and innovative technologies

Karl Benz - Wilhelm Maybach - Gottlieb Daimler - Emil Jellinek

1926 merger Daimler-Motoren-Gesellschaft and Benz & Cie

Daimler-Benz AG

Ammunition maker in Nazi Germany -  
Controversial  
involvement with prisoners of war

Technological innovations:

the Antilock Braking Systems (ABS)  
the Electronic Stability Program (ESP)  
Pre-Safe Collision Detection



Tittel

Tittel, Sofia Rosin



# The Brand Mercedes-Benz

Mercedes-Benz aims to build the most desirable cars in the world

Focus on luxury vehicles, innovation and customer service

Customer-centric with top-notch customer experience

Typical car of the brand before the A-Class: A time-honoured  
Sedan in dark colours or silver

Before the A-Class - a serious and humourless brand!



# The Mercedes-Benz A-Class

brought in **1997** onto the market

## Three main goals

1

Expand product portfolio downwards and compete with other brands

2

Attract a new and younger buyer group (especially women)

3

Using economies of scale for purchasing, sales and development

Innovative car design that combine the inside space of a minivan with the exterior dimensions of a compact car

18 months before the market launch Mercedes-Benz started an advertising campaign to make people familiar with the car



# The Moose test

21 October 1997

the A-Class was tested by a Swedish magazine 3 days after release

first models had already been delivered to customers

“Moose Test” - abrupt swerve at approximately 65 km/h

A-Class tipped over during the test

A big disaster for Mercedes-Benz!







# Mercedes-Benz' Reaction

November  
1997

## Denial and a technical solution

- Ruling out an interruption of production
- Blaming the tire producer
- ESP & Press reaction

## The relaunch of the A-Class

- Inviting journalists to a test of the driving stability of the revised A-Class
- Heavy advertising

- Announcing a delivery stop of the A-Class for at least 12 weeks
- Launching a newspaper campaign with explanation

## Apologising and delivery stop

October  
1997

Dec 1997  
-  
Feb 1998

# Discussion Question

You take the role of the executive board of Mercedes-Benz 10 years after the incident.

You want to introduce the follow-up model of the A-class.

An advertising agency came up with the idea of using humour and giving away moose soft toys at dealerships.

Should we follow that advice and use humour in our campaign?

# Optional Question

Imagine you are on the board of Mercedes-Benz in 2022. You are currently planning an advertising campaign to celebrate 25 year-anniversary of ESP. Would you mention the moose test, and if so, in what way?

# Management Decisions

## 10 YEARS AFTER THE INCIDENT

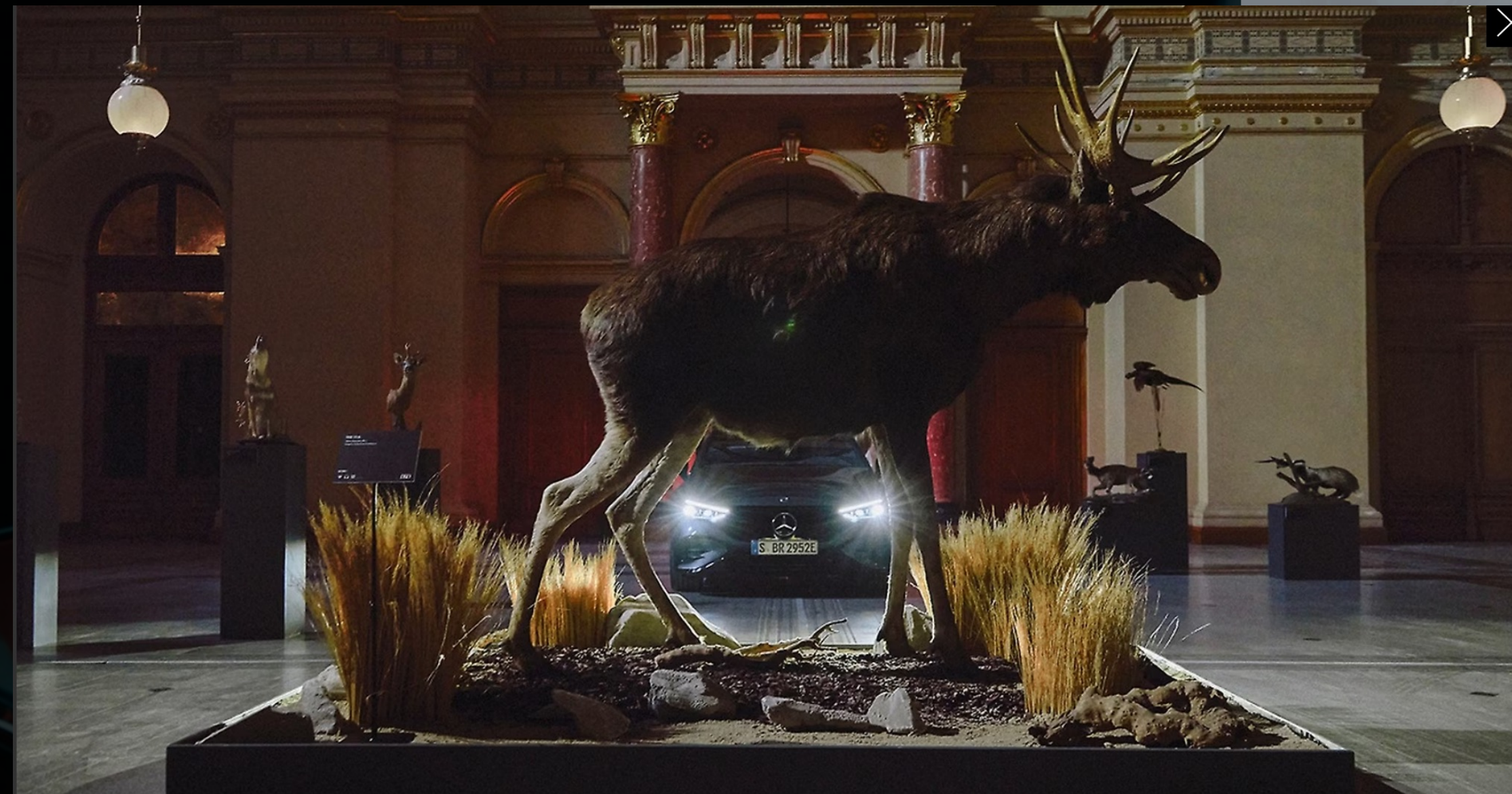


They did give away moose soft-toys at dealerships!

Playing the song 'Tubthumping' Chumbawamba's at motor shows:

"I get knocked down/but I get up again"

## 25 years after the incident

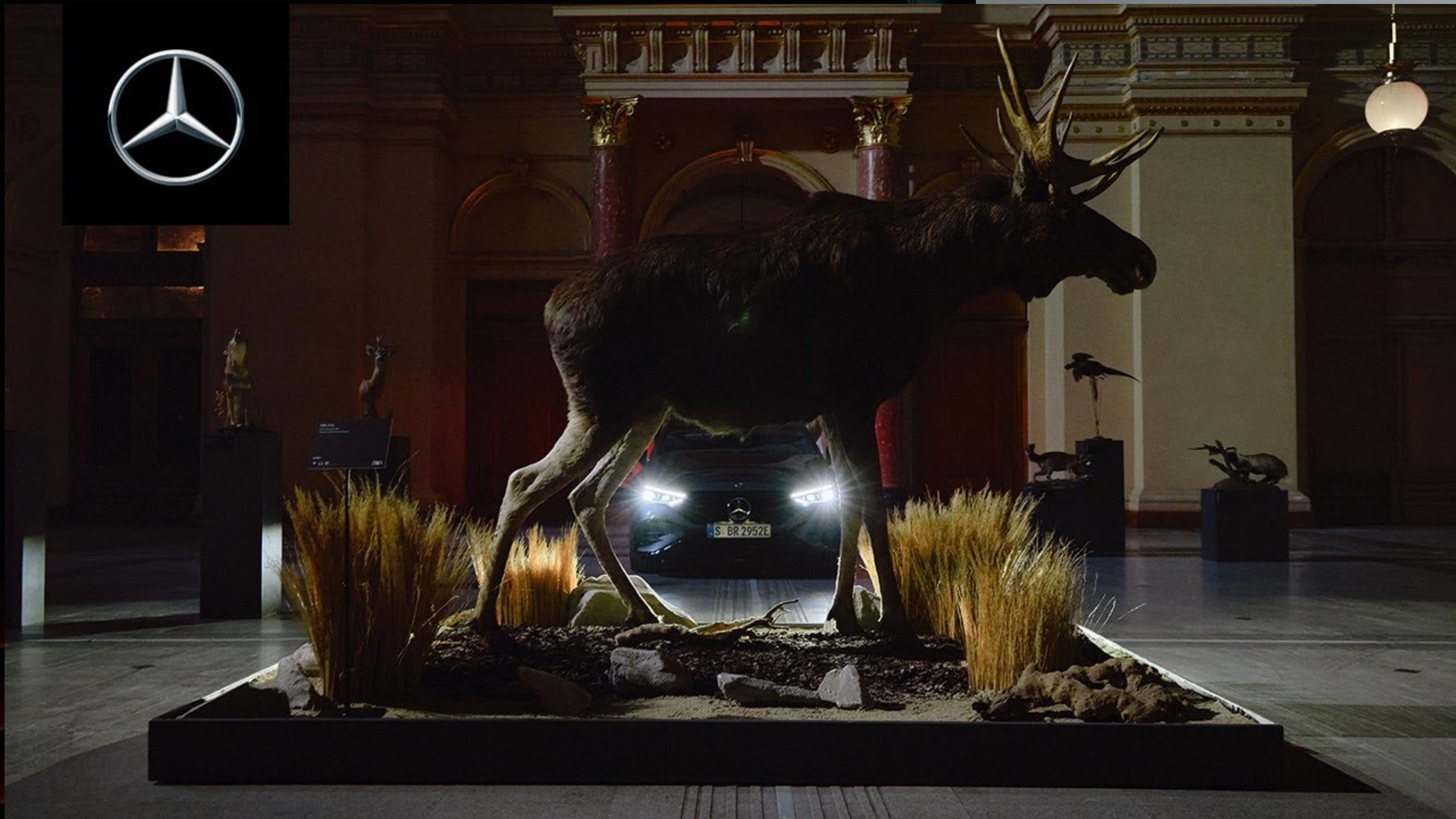


Electronic Stability Program (ESP) - 25 years anniversary

Devoted its social media accounts to the discussion of vehicle safety #allforsafety

One-minute promotional ad The Art of Safety: Here's to Over 25 Years of ESP

Moose in a museum - reference to the moose test



# Management Decisions

General Use of Humour



# Management Decisions

The Limit of Humour



Unautorisiertes Spot! Keine Verbindung zu Mercedes-Benz / Daimler AG  
Non-authorized spot! No affiliation with Mercedes-Benz / Daimler AG

Thank you for listening!

