

## Press release

# Museum Folkwang

### ***Blumenfeld Studio*** **Color, New York, 1941–1960** **March 2 – May 5, 2013**

During the 1940s and 1950s, Berlin-born photographer Erwin Blumenfeld (1897-1969) was one of the world's most sought-after portrait and fashion photographers. His imaginative and unconventional photographic creations led to contracts with top US publications such as *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Life* and *Look*. *Blumenfeld Studio* uses a series of rediscovered, original photographs in its examination of the little-known history of his photography studio at 222 Central Park South in New York.

After fleeing to the USA in 1941, the avant-gardist and experimental photographer Erwin Blumenfeld dedicated himself entirely to contract photography completed in his New York studio. Clothes, cosmetic products and fashion accessories form the focus of his stagings, which are in part intended to conform to the guidelines laid down by the magazines' art directors, in part to the technical requirements of the lighting effects, makeup and props he used. Yet despite these limitations, Blumenfeld was always inventive, working with cropped images, multiple exposure, color filters, transparencies and a simple yet effective manipulation of pictorial planes.

In his carefully staged images, Blumenfeld not only looks to his own photographic creations but to art history alike, as a way of making us forget the commercial nature of the products advertised. In awe, Alexander Liberman, Art Director at *Vogue*, described him as "the most graphic of all photographers and the one who is most deeply rooted in the fine arts."

The exhibition is centered on some 100 color photographs as well as a series of large-format slides that originally served as high-quality printing templates for contemporary fashion publications. After more than half a century, the images found in these faded photographs have been digitally restored. Furthermore, the vintage black-and-white prints and originals provide key insights into the magazine culture of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century, which was fundamentally shaped by Blumenfeld's work.

The exhibition was devised and curated by Francois Cheval, Musée Nicéphore Niépce (Chalon-sur-Saône), Ute Eskildsen (Museum Folkwang, until autumn 2012) and Nadia Blumenfeld-Charbit, the photographer's granddaughter. Florian Ebner, Head of the Photographic Collection at Museum Folkwang was in charge of the exhibition's execution.

An English-language catalog with an insert in German has been published to accompany the exhibition (Steidl Verlag, € 28).

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## Service

### Opening Times

Tues – Sun 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Fri 10 a.m. – 10.30 p.m.

Mon closed

### Prices

*Blumenfeld Studio* and *Cairo. Open City* incl. permanent collection

Standard: € 8

Concession: € 5

### Information and registration

#### Visitor Information

T +49 (0)201 8845 444

F +49 (0)201 889145 444

### Visitors and postal address

Museumsplatz 1, 45128 Essen

### Catalog

“Blumenfeld Studio Color, New York, 1941–1960”

Published by Nadia Blumenfeld Charbit, François Cheval, Ute Eskildsen

English-language catalog with insert in German containing texts by Nadia Blumenfeld Charbit, Emile Bernard, Sylvain Charles, François Cheval, Ute Eskildsen and Rudolf Gschwind, among others.

Steidl Verlag, Göttingen, 2013

Price: € 28

Further information at [www.museum-folkwang.de](http://www.museum-folkwang.de)

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**Images** are available for downloading at [www.museum-folkwang.de](http://www.museum-folkwang.de)

**Opening Hours** Tue – Sun 10 a.m. – 6 p.m., Fri 10 a.m. – 10.30 p.m., Closed Mondays

**Visitor Office** Museumsplatz 1, 45128 Essen, T +49 201 8845 444/000,  
[info@museum-folkwang.essen.de](mailto:info@museum-folkwang.essen.de)

**Press Office** Anna Littmann, T +49 201 8845 160, [presse@museum-folkwang.essen.de](mailto:presse@museum-folkwang.essen.de)