

Press material

Museum Folkwang



Content

1. Museum Folkwang
2. New Commissions: Contemporary Perspectives at Museum Folkwang
3. Preview: Exhibition *I, Gustave Courbet*

Museum Folkwang

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Museum Folkwang, Chipperfield-Building
© Museum Folkwang, Foto: Giorgio Pastore

Cézanne, Modersohn-Becker and Gauguin meet works by Rothko, Pollock, Richter and Fritsch: Museum Folkwang is one of the most renowned German art museums with an outstanding collection of 19th-century painting and sculpture, classical modernism and art after 1945, as well as photography. In addition, Museum Folkwang houses comprehensive collections of graphic art, archaeology, world art, decorative arts and the German Poster Museum. Museum Folkwang is particularly renowned for its international exhibition programme.

In 1902, Museum Folkwang (Old Norse Folkvangar: people's hall) was founded by Karl Ernst Osthaus (1874-1921) in the industrial town of Hagen. After Osthaus's death, the collection was acquired by the newly founded Folkwang-Museumsverein for the city of Essen and in 1922 was united with the Städtisches Kunstmuseum to form the new Museum Folkwang. As a place for collecting and communicating new and the latest art, the museum achieved world renown in just a few decades.

Under the title *New Worlds. Dialogue of the Arts*, visitors today experience the tradition-rich collection in a new guise: painting meets photography, sculpture or graphic art and enters into previously unseen and inspiring constellations with world art and posters. In this way, new worlds literally open up in front of favourite works or as yet unknown objects.

Opened in 1960 and designed by architects Werner Kreutzberger, Erich Hösterey and Horst Loy, Museum Folkwang's original building is regarded as one of the most significant museum buildings of post-war modernism. Characterised by its transparent design, light-filled courtyards and strong connection between interior and exterior space, it was expanded in 2010 with a new wing by David Chipperfield. Respecting the principles of the original architecture, the extension provides additional exhibition spaces and public facilities, creating a contemporary museum complex that seamlessly unites historical and modern architectural visions.

Museum Folkwang is the first German art museum of this size to offer all visitors free admission to its collection. This free admission is complemented by a varied programme of events and educational activities, featuring many free offerings. As a pioneer in sustainability, Museum Folkwang introduced the so-called 'Climate Ticket' in 2024. This gives visitors the opportunity to offset part of their carbon footprint.

Museum Folkwang

Direction and Organisation

Director: Peter Gorschlüter

Deputy Director and Artistic Coordinator: Hans-Jürgen Lechtreck

Collection Ownership: City of Essen and Museum Folkwang Association (Folkwang-Museumsverein e.V.), jointly owned in equal shares

Building

Old Building: Designed by Werner Kreutzberger, Erich Hösterey and Horst Loy; opened in 1960

Extension Building: Designed by David Chipperfield Architects; opened in 2010

Total Exhibition Space (including the original building): approx. 6,200 sqm

Exhibition Hall 1: 1,400 sqm

Exhibition Hall 2: 870 sqm

Collection

Painting, Sculpture and Media Art Collection (19th, 20th and 21st Centuries):
approx. 990 paintings, 370 sculptures, 220 video works

Prints and Drawings Collection: approx. 13,200 drawings and prints

Photography Collection: approx. 65,000 photographs

Archaeology, Non-European Art and Decorative Arts: approx. 1,800 objects

German Poster Museum: approx. 350,000 posters

Contact

Museum Folkwang

Museumsplatz 1, 45128 Essen

www.museum-folkwang.de

Opening hours

Tue – Sun 10 am – 6 pm,

Thu, Fri 10 am – 8 pm

Mon closed

Visitor's Office

T +49 201 8845 444

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Press information

Museum Folkwang

New Commissions: Contemporary Perspectives at Museum Folkwang

**Katharina Frisch, *Hahn und Podest*
Since March 2026**



Katharina Frisch
Hahn und Podest, 2013/2019
Polyester, steel, paintolyester, 375 x 200 x
200 cm
Courtesy of Matthew Marks Gallery
Photo: Ivo Faber, Museum Folkwang, Essen
© VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2026

With the acquisition of Katharina Fritsch's *Hahn und Podest* (2013/2019), Museum Folkwang is expanding its collection with a pivotal work of 21st-century art. From March 2026, the two-part sculpture, standing at nearly four metres tall, will be on display in the collection rooms. *Hahn und Podest* is considered one of the most striking works by the internationally renowned sculptor.

The vibrant blue Hahn was originally created in 2013 as a commission for the Fourth Plinth programme in London's Trafalgar Square. In the version developed in 2019 for indoor display, the animal rises on a tall, light-green plinth. In this version, the sculpture can now also be seen at the Museum Folkwang. Together, *Hahn und Podest* reach almost four metres in height: the 215 cm cockerel, cast in hand-polished polyester, presides over the viewers below, projecting a presence that is both proud and fragile. The monumental enlargement of animals plays a central role in the artist's work. *Hahn und Podest* is in line with key works such as *Elefant* (1987) and *Rattenkönig* (1992) and is one of the artist's most important recent works.

Katharina Fritsch (b. 1956, Essen, Germany) is one of the most important figures in contemporary sculpture. The artist established herself early on as part of a new tendency within European sculpture. Her figurative sculptures dissolve the boundaries between the ordinary and the bizarre or uncanny, touch on culturally deep-rooted dreams and nightmares, recall religious myths, fables and fairy tales, and evoke childhood memories.

Museum Folkwang



Yussef Agbo-Ola
BÍBÍ: 3 Seed Altar, 2025
Photo: Jens Nober, Museum Folkwang,
Essen
© Yussef Agbo-Ola

Yussef Agbo-Ola, *BÍBÍ: 3 Seed Altar* Since winter 2025

With *BÍBÍ: 3 Seed Altar* (2025), the Museum Folkwang has added a site-specific installation by the artist and architect Yussef Agbo-Ola to its collection. The work was created specifically for one of the museum's inner courtyards and combines art, architecture and living nature to form an ever-changing space of experience. Planted with climbing plants that grow, wither and renew themselves, the installation is constantly transformed by the interplay of sun, rain, wind and insects.

BÍBÍ is inspired by the internal structures of the seeds of Nigerian medicinal plants found in the Òmò Forest. The form of the altar draws upon microscopic cellular architectures, translating nature's hidden patterns into an immersive sculptural structure. The work alludes to the invisible processes of germination, fertilisation and transformation that take place beneath the earth's surface. At the same time, as a space for contemplation, it invites reflection on the relationships between humanity, nature and ecological cycles.

Yussef Agbo-Ola (b. 1990, Newport News, Virginia, United States), who lives and works between London, Lagos and the Amazon region, explores natural energy systems, cultural rituals and ecological interconnections through his interdisciplinary practice. Operating at the intersection of art, architecture and anthropological research, his work has been presented internationally at leading institutions and exhibitions. With *BÍBÍ: 3 Seed Altar*, Museum Folkwang expands its collection with a work that brings together ecological inquiry, spiritual references and participatory spatial experience in a particularly compelling way.

On Sunday, 21 June 2026, 4 p.m., artist Yussef Agbo-Ola will inaugurate his installation *BÍBÍ: 3 Seed Altar* with a musical performance.

Museum Folkwang

Kate Newby, *I'm asking*
Since June 2026



Kate Newby
I'm asking, 2026
Concrete, oxide, found glass (Essen)
17,85 m and 19,77 m
Good Sound, 2026
Glass, produced at Ateliers Loire (Chartres)
118,0 x 228,6 cm
Courtesy of the Artist and Galerie Art:
Concept
Installation view;
Photo: Museum Folkwang, Tanja Lamers

From June 2026, Museum Folkwang presents *I'm asking*, a new site-specific installation by artist Kate Newby (born 1979), known for her materially driven practice that engages closely with place and process. Developed especially for Museum Folkwang, the project brings together glass and concrete in a subtle intervention that responds directly to the architecture and conditions of the site.

For this commission, Newby selected the transitional area between the museum's original building, opened in 1960, and the extension completed in 2010. Despite their different periods of construction, both buildings share the formal language of modernist architecture, characterised by clean lines, rectangular courtyards, and expansive glass façades.

Drawing on glass and concrete, two key materials of modernist architecture, Newby creates works that foreground touch, process and perception. In *Good Sound*, hand-drawn lines and fingerprints embedded in the glass surface respond to changing light and movement, while its linear forms extend outdoors in the concrete sculpture *I'm asking*.

Kate Newby (b. 1979, Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand) lives and works in Texas, USA. She is among the most internationally recognised artists of her generation and is known for her site-responsive works that engage architecture, materiality and subtle perceptual shifts.

Press images are available for download at www.museum-folkwang.de/en

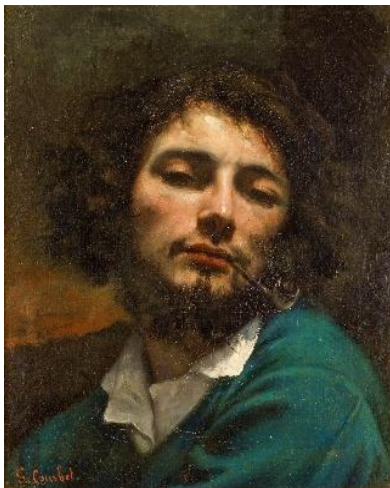
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I, GUSTAVE COURBET

Painter and Rebel

17 July – 8 November 2026

Museum Folkwang



Gustave Courbet
L'Homme à la pipe, um 1849
© Musée Fabre de Montpellier
Méditerranée Métropole /
Foto Frédéric Jaulmes

Museum Folkwang is dedicating a major retrospective – ***I, Gustave Courbet. Painter and Rebel*** – to one of the most influential artists of the 19th century. This major exhibition will be held from 17 July to 8 November 2026. The extensive exhibition in Essen features around 90 works by Courbet, including major pieces such as ***Le Fou de peur*** (1844), ***L'Après-dînée à Ornans*** (1849), ***Jo, la belle Irlandaise*** (1866) and ***L'Homme à la pipe*** (1849).

The exhibition focuses on his influence on modern art. Courbet was not only an artistic innovator, but also a lively and politically engaged figure. He rejected the idealised aesthetics of his time and instead depicted the lives of ordinary people and social reality in his art. The exhibition explores key themes in Courbet's extensive body of work: self-image and the public sphere, social reality, erotic representation, as well as landscape and exile.

Spanning some 900 square metres, the exhibition brings together loans from international museums and collections, including Musée d'Orsay in Paris, Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, Kunstmuseum Bern, Alte Nationalgalerie in Berlin, Leopold Museum in Vienna and Musée Fabre in Montpellier.

The exhibition is organised in cooperation with the Leopold Museum, Vienna.

Under the High Patronage of Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Emmanuel Macron, President of the French Republic, and the Honorary Patronage of Alexander Van der Bellen, Federal President of the Republic of Austria.

Admission: €16 (regular) / €12 (reduced)
Tickets: www.museum-folkwang.ticketfritz.de

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