Presse und Marketing

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Press release

Museum Folkwang

Museum Folkwang presents its 2027 exhibition programme

Large-scale installations, photography, performance and posters addressing issues of social relevance: change in society and the arts shapes the exhibition programme for the coming year

Essen, 17 November 2026 – In 2027, Museum Folkwang will present an exhibition programme spanning international positions in contemporary art, photography and dance. Highlights include a major solo exhibition by internationally acclaimed artist Wangechi Mutu, an exhibition dedicated to influential photographer and collector Wilhelm Schürmann, and *WE ONLY LIVE ONCE. Poster delight*, which explores historical advertising posters and changing social ideas of pleasure and quality of life.
"The exhibitions show how our world is shaped by diversity and change, making these issues a central theme of our 2027 programme, not least in relation to the present. In doing so, we are continuing the Folkwang idea: change through culture – culture through change," says Peter Gorschlüter, Director of Museum Folkwang.

Wangechi Mutu: landscapes between mysticism and reality

With a major solo exhibition of Wangechi Mutu (4 June to 19 September 2027), Museum Folkwang will present one of the most influential artists working today. The Kenyan-American artist addresses questions of postcolonialism, feminism, identity and ecological interdependencies in a diverse body of work. Her practice encompasses collage, painting, drawing, sculpture, video and installation. Together, these media create visual worlds and landscapes that move between mysticism and reality.

The exhibition traces the development of Mutu's artistic practice and will present her work in Germany on a scale and breadth not previously seen. It will also open up new perspectives on the history of the Ruhr region and the founding period of Museum Folkwang, including the museum's holdings of African objects and works.

Photography: collection, contemporary art and new perspectives

The exhibition *THE ANALYSIS. Photographer and Collector* (19 February – 6 June 2027) focuses on the influential photographer and internationally renowned collector Wilhelm Schürmann. For more than five decades, he has turned his camera towards streetscapes, architecture, objects and figures. With a humorous and laconic perspective, he explores the interplay of order and chance.

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Alongside Wilhelm Schürmann's photographic work, the exhibition offers insight into his second major passion: collecting contemporary art together with his wife, Gaby Schürmann. Sculptures, paintings and objects by artists including Miriam Cahn, Edmund de Waal, Jenny Holzer and Jana Sterbak will enter into dialogue with his photographic work for the first time.

Posters between pleasure and social change
The exhibition *WE ONLY LIVE ONCE. Poster delight* (21 August 2027 to 9 January 2028) examines how social values and ideas of quality of life change over time. Drawing on historical advertising posters from the 1950s to the 1980s, Museum Folkwang looks at changing representations of the consumption of coffee, tea, chocolate, tobacco and alcohol in public culture.

What today may appear to be depictions of everyday consumer goods once represented luxury and lifestyle. The exhibition invites visitors to take a fresh look at the visual language and promises of advertising for these products as well as changing social ideas of pleasure and quality of life – both critically and with a sense of humour.

NEUER TANZ and performance
An exhibition dedicated to the work of VA Wölfl (22 October 2027 to 20 February 2028) will honour the performance artist, photographer and choreographer, who died in 2026. His radical, multidisciplinary practice gained international recognition, particularly through his work with the NEUER TANZ ensemble. The exhibition is being developed in cooperation with Folkwang University of the Arts.

The collection and concrete art
To mark his 80th birthday, Museum Folkwang will devote a single-room exhibition to Essen-based artist Norbert Thomas (29 October 2027 to 23 April 2028). His works combine geometric structures with controlled chance and are rooted in the tradition of Concrete Art. Presented in dialogue with works from the museum's collection, the exhibition explores the principles underlying his artistic practice.

Emerging positions and a culture of remembrance
Emerging artistic positions and the promotion of young photographic talent remain important components of the exhibition programme. From February 2027, the *6 ½ Weeks* exhibition format will once again present artists showing their work in a museum context for the first time.

Photography Masters (9 April to 1 August 2027) will feature selected final projects by graduates of the master's programme in Photography Studies & Practice at Folkwang University of the Arts.

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The *Dokumentarfotografie Förderpreise 16* of the Wüstenrot Foundation (22 October 2027 to 20 February 2028) will present new works by Elias Holzknecht, Victoria Jung, Aline Papenheim and Yana Wernicke. Their photographic projects explore people and communities within historical and contemporary social contexts.

Another thematic focus is the remembrance of National Socialist cultural policy. On 18 July 2027 – 90 years after the so-called "Degenerate Art" campaign – Museum Folkwang will join partner museums and international experts in examining the consequences of the National Socialist confiscation and destruction of artworks for the German museum landscape.

The exhibition *NEW WORLDS*, showing works from the Museum Folkwang collection, will remain open to visitors free of charge throughout the year – with a focus on the dialogue between the arts at the centre of its display.

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