

## Press release

# Museum Folkwang

## Chronicler of an eventful century: Museum Folkwang devotes a major retrospective to the avant-garde photographer and writer Germaine Krull

Essen, 28 November 2025 – From 28 November 2025 to 15 March 2026, Museum Folkwang is presenting the work of Germaine Krull (1897–1985) in a comprehensive retrospective. **GERMAINE KRULL: Chien Fou. Author and Photographer** is the first exhibition to present the artist not only as an important protagonist of the photographic avant-garde, but also as a writer. On display are around 400 photographs, texts, documents as well as audiovisual material from the extensive estate that Museum Folkwang has maintained since 1995.

Germaine Krull is still best known today for her pioneering photographic work dating from the 1920s and 1930s. However, the exhibition shows the much wider range of her oeuvre: she wrote autobiographical and auto-fictional texts, reports, political articles and literary narratives, which she produced alongside her photographic work from the late 1920s onwards. With reference to *Chien Fou* – her alter ego as well as the title of her first auto-fictional work from 1934 – the exhibition presents Krull as an independent voice in a turbulent century.

By placing Krull's texts and photographs in direct dialogue with one another, the show reveals her self-image and self-confidence as an artist, thinker and woman. It traces how external circumstances – in particular the Second World War – shaped both her life and work, and how Krull ultimately made a conscious decision to leave Europe behind in order to find a new home in Thailand and India.

The exhibition tour opens up perspectives ranging from Krull's student days in Munich in the 1910s to her groundbreaking photographic work in the interwar period. It focuses on all phases of her photographic work and highlights her role as a writer and chronicler of the 20th century. Against this backdrop, the exhibition takes particular account of the political, transnational and also transcultural complexity of her life's work and – in addition to her texts – focuses on her so-called photographic 'late work', which has received only marginal attention from researchers to date.

The exhibition is complemented by an educational station developed in collaboration with students from the University of Duisburg-Essen, including an exhibition library that invites visitors to further explore the subject matter.

Moreover, an **open access database** is being launched in collaboration with Duisburg-Essen University Library, making all of Krull's digitised texts freely accessible.

Access: <https://doi.org/10.17185/estate-germaine-krull>

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Accompanying the exhibition, **MACK Books** (London/Berlin) is publishing *Germaine Krull. Chien Fou. Selected Writings* (edited by Kerstin Meincke and Petra Steinhardt). With approximately 320 pages, the book combines photographs with many newly discovered texts by Krull in German, English and French.

In collaboration with the University of Duisburg-Essen and the University Library as well as the support of the Quality Improvement Commission of the Faculty of Humanities.

Funded by Kunststiftung NRW

The exhibition *GERMAINE KRULL: Chien Fou. Author and Photographer* will also be shown in Wetzlar from 22 May 2026 onwards as a collaboration between the Städtische Museen Wetzlar and the Kunstverein Wetzlar.

## Information

### **GERMAINE KRULL: Chien Fou**

#### **Author and Photographer**

28 November 2025 to 15 March 2026

Admission: €9, €5 (concessions)

Exhibition opening: 27 November 2025, 7 p.m.



#### **Unknown photographer**

*Germaine Krull with Contax*, ca 1932

Gelatin silver print, 11.5 × 14.5 cm

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