

Press release

Museum Folkwang

***L is for Look* – A photographic journey through 100 years of book art for children and young adults**

Essen, 2 March 2026 – Starting on 27 February 2026, the exhibition *L is for Look* will present around 100 international children's and young adult photography books in an interactive presentation at Museum Folkwang. In six sections, it brings to life how photography has shaped the viewing habits of young readers over the past 100 years – from classics to contemporary experiments.

L is for Look invites visitors of all ages on an interactive journey of discovery through the history of children's and young adult photography books, from the early experiments of the 1930s to the present day. The exhibition brings together around one hundred international children's photography books that stand out for their original and creative use of photography. Drawing on key figures in the history of photography, including **Alexander Rodchenko, Aenne Biermann, Dominique Darbois, Tana Hoban, Duane Michals, William Wegman** and **Broomberg & Chanarin**, the exhibition illustrates how educational concepts and social perceptions of childhood in the Western world have changed over the past 100 years. Their publications reflect not only aesthetic developments, but also changes in educational concepts and the changing social position of children in the Western world.

With the advent of new image-based teaching methods in the early 20th century, photographs found their way into a wide variety of children's literature, from picture books to fiction. The photo book in particular has proven to be a collaborative medium. While photography helped to revitalise the genre, the collaboration between graphic designers, artists, illustrators and authors also created new and very specific uses for the photographic form.

Female photographers play a key role in this publishing genre. Children's photo books combine two areas that have historically often been considered feminine: child-rearing and photographic portraits of children. In the 1970s, this culminated in the emergence of a specific genre that contributed to shaping young readers and their view of the world around them.

In addition to historical and contemporary books, *L is for Look* places great emphasis on education. Original designs, teaching models and working materials provide insights into the creative process behind photographic books in six sections – *Pedagogy, Education, Fiction, Animals, Photography* and *Inspiring Creativity*. Interactive stations such as a mobile photo studio

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and a workshop room for children called 'M wie Mitmachen' ('P for Participation') enable visitors to experience photographic practice and image production up close. The museum is also setting up an additional reading room with current and historical children's photo books (selection from Kids Love Photography, Berlin).

This first comprehensive compilation of photographic children's books was created as an international co-production initiated by Institut pour la photographie des Hauts-de-France, Lille, and Photo Élysée, Lausanne. Further partners are Rencontres d'Arles photography festival, Photographers' Gallery, London, Centre national de l'audiovisuel, Dudelange/Luxembourg, and Foto Arsenal Vienna.

Information

L IS FOR LOOK

Photo books for children and young people

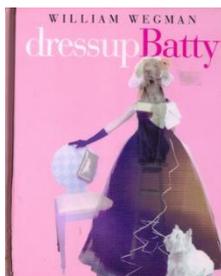
27 February – 7 June 2026

Press event: Thursday, 26 February, 11 a.m. at Museum Folkwang

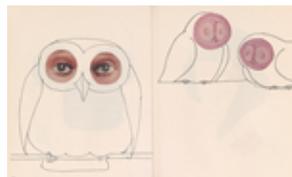
Free admission

More information at www.museum-folkwang.de

Press images



William Wegman
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Design: Empire Design
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