

Press information

Museum Folkwang

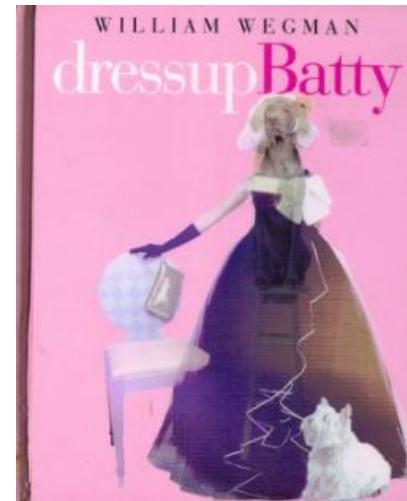
L is for Look – A photographic journey through 100 years of photography books for children and young people

Essen, 29 January 2026 – With *L is for Look*, Museum Folkwang will be dedicating itself to a hitherto little-researched chapter in the history of photography from 27 February 2026: photography books for children and young people. The exhibition traces their development over a period of around 100 years and asks how photography has shaped young readers' visual habits of the world.

L is for Look invites visitors of all ages on an interactive journey of discovery through the history of photography books for children and young people, 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. It draws on key figures in the history of photography, including **Alexander Rodchenko, Aenne Biermann, Dominique Darbois, Tana Hoban, Duane Michals, William Wegman and Broombberg & Chanarin**. 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. Particular attention is paid to the photobook as 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' view of the world around them.



William Wegman
Dress Up Batty, 2004

Museum Folkwang

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 process of creating photographic books. Interactive stations and a mobile photo studio allow visitors to experience photographic practice and image production first-hand. Museum Folkwang is setting up an additional reading room with current and historical children's books (selection from Kids Love Photography, Berlin). The exhibition includes a workshop room for children called 'M wie Mitmachen' (P is for Participation).

This first comprehensive compilation of photographic children's books was created as an international co-production initiated by the Institut pour la photographie des Hauts-de-France, Lille, and the Photo Élysée, Lausanne. Further partners are the Rencontres d'Arles photography festival, the Photographers' Gallery, London, the 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 conference: Thursday, 26 February, 11 a. m. at Museum Folkwang

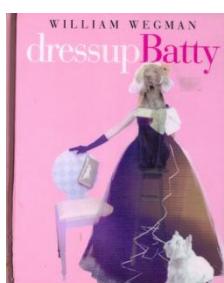
Exhibition opening: Thursday, 26 February, 7 p. m.

Save the Date: exhibition opening for children and families: Saturday, 28 February, 12 p. m.

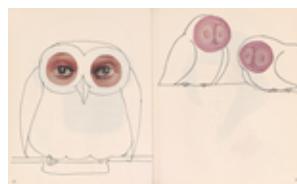
Free admission

More information at www.museum-folkwang.de

Press images



William Wegman
Dress Up Batty
 Design: Empire Design Studio
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Tomi Ungerer
Clic clac ou qu'est-ce que c'est ?, 1989
 L'École des loisirs, Paris
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