

Press release

Museum Folkwang

'Oh To Believe in Another World' – William Kentridge, Germaine Krull and Paula Rego. Strong positions and social tipping points characterise the 2025 annual programme at Museum Folkwang

Essen, Germany, 4.12.2024 – Museum Folkwang has an exciting exhibition year 2025 ahead. The exhibition programme is dedicated to the major themes of our time across epochs and disciplines. Art becomes the starting point for dialogues between past and present, the local and the global. High-calibre exhibitions such as *William Kentridge. Listen to the Echo*, innovative collaborations and an increased involvement of urban society characterise the coming year.

From the dance performance *Lunar Cycle* by the internationally renowned choreographer **Richard Siegal** and the retrospective of the Portuguese-born British painter **Paula Rego** to the cosmopolitan pioneer of artistic photography **Germaine Krull**, an artistic arc spans more than a hundred years of sociopolitical transformations across all genres. In autumn, Museum Folkwang is presenting a retrospective of **William Kentridge**, who has devoted many years to poetically addressing social and political issues that are of great relevance, not only in his home country of South Africa.

'With the 2025 annual programme, Museum Folkwang is creating a space in which social tipping points in the past, present and future are negotiated in an artistic way – a place of reflection, empathy and imagination. Our exhibitions invite people to think together about key social issues and to imagine a different, better world,' says Peter Gorschlüter, Museum Folkwang Director.

From Viennese modernism to hip-hop

Museum Folkwang will kick off the exhibition year 2025 with *Walk this Way* and *Photography Masters*. Yusuf Hassan/Blackmass Publishing's presentation on hip-hop and street culture sheds light on the cultural influence of 50 years of hip-hop, combining visual and musical positions, primarily from black culture. At the same time, *Photography Masters* will be showing final projects from the Photography Studies and Practice programme at Folkwang University of the Arts.

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The spectacular performance by US-American choreographer **Richard Siegal** will mark the opening in the large exhibition hall. His immersive installation **Lunar Cycle** (15 March – 13 April 2025) combines dance, music, light and audience participation to create a poetic exploration of climate change. Over the period of a lunar phase cycle from full moon to full moon, the long-term performance brings together geodata of melting polar ice caps with movement and live music. The collaboration with renowned partners such as Ballet of Difference, Folkwang Tanzstudio and Ensemble Musikfabrik emphasises the interdisciplinary approach of the work.

From mid-March, Museum Folkwang will be showing the exhibition **Woman in Blue** (20 March – 22 June 2025) as part of the cooperation project **Double portraits. Alma Mahler-Werfel in the Mirror of Viennese Modernism**. The show sheds light on the obsessive relationship between the artist Oskar Kokoschka and the Viennese composer and salon lady Alma Mahler. For the first time in over 30 years, works from international collections from this creative cycle will be brought together – an impressive testimony to expressionist art.

A dialogue between museums and reflections on the history of the collection

From 11 April to 27 July 2025, RuhrKunstMuseen will be guesting at Villa Hügel with **21 x 21**. This is the first time that the network's 21 museums will jointly present highlights from their collections – a unique dialogue between modern and contemporary art. From hidden treasures to major works, the exhibition gives a panoramic overview of the region's museum landscape, linking local and international developments in 20th- and 21st-century art.

In his oeuvre, **Raphaël Denis** (*1979) repeatedly questions public and private art collections about their role during the Nazi era: May 2025 marks the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II. To mark this occasion, the museum is showing an installation by the French conceptual artist entitled **D'un Musée L'Autre** (from April 2025), which examines the confiscations carried out in 1937 in the context of the Folkwang collection.

Politics and poetry

In early summer, the retrospective **The Personal and The Political** (16 May – 7 September 2025) presents the work of Portuguese-born British artist **Paula Rego** (1935–2022). In around 120 works, including drawings, paintings and dolls, the show traces the development of a

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unique visual language in Rego's work and illustrates how the painter processes intimate experiences, personal experiences and political history in her unsparing pictorial worlds. Her works also touch on sensitive themes such as state and sexualised violence, contrasting these with self-determination, community and affection.

William Kentridge and the big questions of our time

To mark his 70th birthday, Museum Folkwang is bringing the exceptional South African artist William Kentridge to Essen with ***Listen to the Echo*** (4 September 2025 – 18 January 2026). His impressive drawings, animated films and installations spanning four decades show the social and political concerns of an oeuvre that extends to the present day. The exhibition thematically focuses on Kentridge's views of industrialisation and colonialism, which also resonate in the Ruhr region. The interdisciplinary work *Oh To Believe in Another World* with music by Dmitri Shostakovich, which will be premiered in Germany in cooperation with Philharmonie Essen, underlines the dialogue between the arts. The exhibition is being organised in close collaboration with the artist and the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden.

Contemporary witnesses and the artistic voices of the present

With the exhibition ***Stimmen der Zeit – An Oral History*** (10 October 2025 – 4 January 2026), the autumn months will be dedicated to the protagonists of 20th-century photography, who come to life in historical photographs and interviews. The works of young artists from the 15th round of Wüstenrot Stiftung's ***Documentary Photography Awards*** (10 October 2025 – 4 January 2026) offer current perspectives on social and political reality.

With ***Germaine Krull: Chien Fou*** (28 November 2025 – 15 March 2026), Museum Folkwang is commemorating the role of the cosmopolitan pioneer of artistic photography. For the very first time, the exhibition will honour the journalistic and biographical works of Germaine Krull (1897–1985) and thus opens up new perspectives on the life and work of the photographer, whose estate is held by Museum Folkwang.

Young art at Museum Folkwang

The **6 ½ Weeks** exhibition format will be continued in 2025 and present young international artists in four shows. The New Folkwang Residence scholarship programme will also be continued and invites two young international artists to work in Essen on a five-month scholarship.

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Free admission to the collection

The presentation of the museum collection entitled **NEW WORLDS** will be continued in 2025 with new thematic rooms. It brings together art from different centuries and different media in the spirit of the Folkwang idea. It can be visited free of charge on all opening days.

Service

Opening hours 2025

Collection and exhibitions: Tuesday to Sunday, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m., Thursday and Friday, 10 a.m. – 8 p.m., closed Mondays

Special opening hours: Richard Siegal. *Lunar Cycle*: Thursday and Friday, 10 a.m. – 8 p.m.
Saturday and Sunday 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Permanent collection

Admission to the permanent collection is free on all opening days.

Booking of guided tours

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