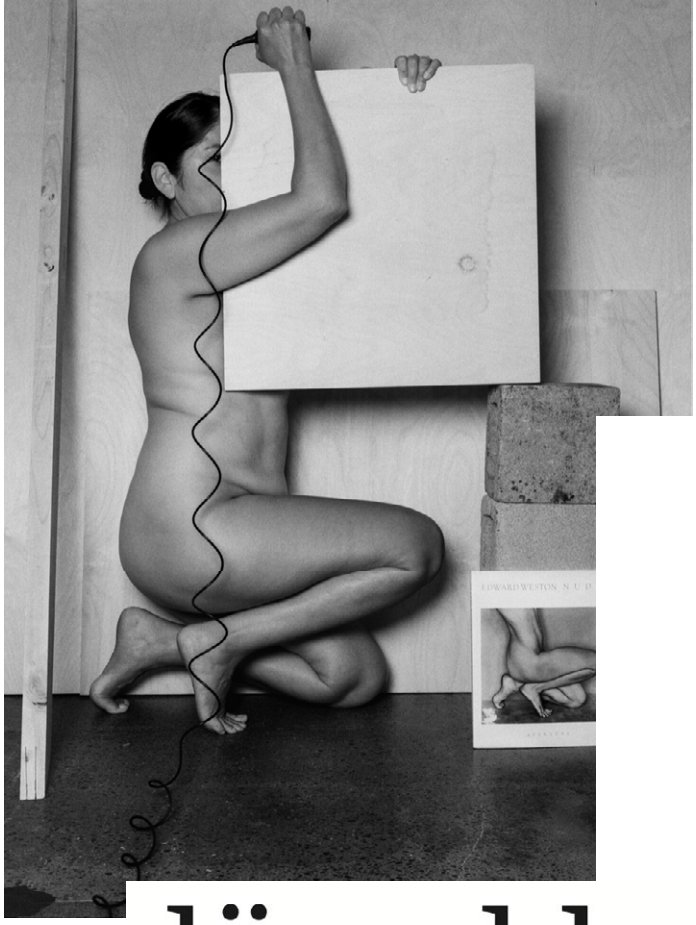






düsseldorf photo+ biennale 2027

Press Release – 11 November 2026

Finalised Curated Programme for the 4th Biennale

Biennale // 16 February – 29 March 2027

Opening Week // 16–21 February 2027

Gallery and Fringe Days // 5–6 March 2027

Entitled *Disobedient Bodies: Widerständige Körper in der Fotografie*, the fourth edition of the *düsseldorf photo+* Biennale 2027 will focus on societal notions of the human body. Under the direction of new artistic director, Jana Johanna Haeckel, the Kunstpalast will serve for the first time as the central exhibition venue of the festival, and will head up the curated main programme with its show, *The Body and the Archive*. More than 50 additional participating organisations from across the city's arts and culture scene will contribute to the diverse Biennale festival programme.

What distinguishes the Düsseldorf photography festival from others is that it will bring together specially curated exhibitions with a wide range of projects taking place across the city as a whole. Museums, public and private institutions, universities, galleries and independent exhibition spaces all work together to transform Düsseldorf into an exciting showcase for contemporary photography. Beyond the main exhibitions, *düsseldorf photo+* acts as an umbrella for a city-wide festival of photography featuring over 50 exhibitions, debates, guided tours, performances and screenings.

The curatorial approach to the Biennale

A human body is never just a physical body. It is also a canvas onto which societal expectations are projected; it is the theatre of power relations, as well as expressive of the self-determination of an individual. Running from 16 February to 29 March, the photography Biennale, under the title, *Disobedient Bodies*, will focus on this specific tension. Against the backdrop of political appropriation and digital control of imagery, the Biennale will explore how photographic images shape notions of the body, and how artistic strategies can offer resistance and challenge established narratives. The Biennale understands photography as an open field where differing media and artistic perspectives can encounter one another and alternative forms of visibility can emerge.

This year's Biennale represents an important departure in the festival's institutional and curatorial development with its appointment of Haeckel as independent artistic director and its first-ever collaboration with the Kunstpalast as key partner and exhibition venue.

In curatorial terms, the Biennale for 2027 revolves thematically around its main exhibition, to be held at the Kunstpalast, *The Body and the Archive*, curated by Jana Johanna Haeckel, which will juxtapose historical and contemporary perspectives on the subject. It will be accompanied by two other exhibitions, *L'Ami. Hervé Guibert und Benny Nemer im Dialog* at the Goethe Museum, and *Oddments* at the Theatermuseum. Taking these shows as a starting point, the Biennale's programme will extend outwards across the city as a whole. Further important artistic perspectives will be highlighted in close collaborations with the Sammlung Philara, the Filmwerkstatt Düsseldorf and the Künstlerverein Malkasten – the latter also serving as festival centre for the Biennale.





Main Exhibition and other Curated Shows

The Body and the Archive
Kunstpalast, 17 February – 29 March 2027

Curated by Jana Johanna Haeckel

The exhibition, *The Body and the Archive*, will interrogate the power of photographic images. Who gets to be photographed, and how? Which bodies are made visible, categorised or excluded? Since its beginnings some 200 years ago, photography has documented and influenced societal notions of gender, racial and class background, and health. Drawing on Allan Sekula's eponymous essay, published in 1986, the main exhibition will juxtapose normative historical photographs with contemporary work that challenges classification of this kind. It will seek to show how the categorisation and control of bodies, as employed in early photographic archives, continues to be seen in today's AI-generated imagery. The work of contemporary artists as featured in this show will respond to such conventional ways of seeing things from feminist, queer, decolonial and anti-ableist perspectives, instead offering subversive alternative images. In expanding this purely visual medium to include physical traces, their work refuses straightforward interpretation and opens up alternative forms of visibility and corporeal knowledge.

An exhibition by *düsseldorf photo+* at Kunstpalast.

Participating artists: Felipe Romero Beltrán, Orso Caël, Sophie Calle, Ganslmeier & Zibelnik, Weronika Gęsicka, Moshtari Hilal, Jenny Holzer, Jonas Höschl, Katherine Hubbard, Tarrah Krajnak, Frida Orupabo, Jacolby Satterwhite, Allan Sekula, Farren van Wyk, Sheung Yiu.

L'Ami. Hervé Guibert und Benny Nemer im Dialog (L'Ami. A Dialogue between Hervé Guibert and Benny Nemer)
Goethe Museum, 20 February – 29 March 2027

Curated by Jana Johanna Haeckel

How is it possible for images and texts to promote human friendships across generations and even after the death of one of the protagonists? This exhibition sets up a dialogue between the work of French photographer, writer and AIDS activist, Hervé Guibert (1955–1991) and that of artist, Benny Nemer (b. 1973). In this show, Guibert's photographs and literary self-reflections will be juxtaposed with Nemer's oeuvre, which comprises letters, postcards and archives, and the encounter will offer new perspectives on memory, longing and vulnerability, on queer life stories, and on the long shadow cast by the AIDS crisis.

Oddments
Theatermuseum, 20 February – 29 March 2027

Curated by Jana Johanna Haeckel and Kim-Camille Kreuz

In their respective oeuvres, artists Iris Helena Hamers and Hedda Roman critically, subversively and defiantly examine the use of artificial intelligence, established pictorial language and accepted notions of reality. They appropriate, manipulate and combine digital visual material in their production of multimedia imagery. As a site of theatrical history, the Theatermuseum will serve as a point of departure for the artists' reflections on issues of staging and the creation of narratives.

Festival Centre and other Biennale events

Künstlerverein Malkasten: *Korpus Belichtet* (The Body Exposed) and Festival Centre
19 February – 29 March 2027

Curated by Judith Samen, Dominik Geis and Christoph Westermeier

To mark the Biennale, the exhibition, *Korpus Belichtet* (The Body Exposed) will transform the headquarters of the Künstlerverein Malkasten, the Jacobihaus, into both an exhibition space and a living archive.

The show will explore diverse photographic representations of bodies, providing a cross-generational overview of relevant material. It will equally turn its attention to the medium itself and will examine how the materiality of photography can itself take on a variety of physical forms. The exhibition will showcase a wide variety of approaches to artistic photography, with a focus on artists from the Rhineland.

Participating artists: Jana Buch, Alime Ertürk, Isabelle Faragallah, Claus Föttinger, Dominik Geis, Alex Grein, Dieter Kiessling, Claudia van Koolwijk, Ludwig Kuffer, Moritz Krauth, Anna Möller, Bärbel Möllmann, Jonas Monka, Anne Pöhlmann, Johannes Raimann, Sebastian Riemer, Judith Samen, Martina Sauter, Morgaine Schäfer, Berit Schneidereit, Christoph Westermeier.

The Künstlerverein Malkasten will also serve as the central hub for the Biennale, and will act as a venue for gatherings, events and educational activities, thus offering a link between *düsseldorf photo+* and the wider community during the festival. As a meeting place, particularly in winter, it will aim to enhance the quality of life in the city centre, free of charge.

Ed Atkins and his artist students
Sammlung Philara and Filmwerkstatt Düsseldorf, 5–29 March 2027

The Sammlung Philara and the Filmwerkstatt Düsseldorf will jointly showcase works by Ed Atkins and students attending his course in text, media and design at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf. Atkins will present recent video works at the Filmwerkstatt, including his time-lapse film, *Passive Mech* (2026), and feature film, *Nurses Come and Go, but None for Me* (2025). Simultaneously, Atkins and his students will create a new, site-specific photographic work to be displayed at the Sammlung Philara. The central theme of both parts of the presentation will revolve around the expansion in the use of photographic language in today's world.

Concurrently on show at Kunstpalast
Vivian Maier. Close-up
Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf, 17 February – 30 May 2027

Concurrently on show at Museum Folkwang
DIE ANALÜSE – Wilhelm Schürmann, Fotograf und Sammler
Museum Folkwang, Essen, 19 February – 6 June 2027

The full programme will be published in January 2027.
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