

Internationale Photoszene Cologne: Preview 2025

From May **16 to June 15, 2025** the Photoszene festival in Cologne will once again take place at many locations in the city. In just under four months, on **May 16**, the festival will be officially opened at the Museum Ludwig! This press release gives you an initial overview of the planned main projects and our activities. The open call “Feelings & Photography” is open until **January 31, 2025**, to which international artists can apply and from which a curated exhibition for the festival will emerge. The exhibitions will be shown in a “Temporary Art Gallery for Photography” and in the art spaces at Ebertplatz in Cologne. Museums, galleries and art spaces from Cologne with an exhibition program on photography can register to participate in the Photoszene Festival until **February 15, 2025!** The choice of theme is free.

The **Artist Meets Archive** project has been an integral part of the curatorial program of the International Photoscene Cologne since 2018, we give first insights into the project.



Left to right: Jimmi Wing Ka Ho, Elena Efeoglou, Marta Bogdańska, Andrés Galeano, Pauline Hafsia M'barek
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Artist Meets Archive #4

The fourth edition of the **Artist Meets Archive** programme was launched in early 2024 with a major innovation: for the first time, an Open Call was issued for the residency programme jointly with the partnering institutions. The call invited international artists to dive into the photographic heritage of the City of Cologne and get on the trail of new photographic narratives within it. The outcomes of this artistic research and adaptation lead us from the fauna of Cologne all the way to Qingdao, China; they “zoom” from the micro level of photographic material into the expanse of space and, with undisguised curiosity, initiate a conversation between AI and iconic photographs. Each of the projects condenses the original visual material into a new photographic story that is equally speculative and scientifically precise and thus, using artistic means, recomposes not only the selected photographs but also a considerable piece of their respective archive.

Right on time for the Festival’s opening on **16 May**, Internationale Photoszene Köln is inviting visitors to embark on their own search for clues in the found and re-created pictorial worlds featured in the exhibition projects at the Kölnisches Stadtmuseum, the Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum, the Museum Ludwig, the Dombauarchiv and the Photographische Sammlung/SK Stiftung Kultur. The project is funded by the City of Cologne and the Kunststiftung NRW.

Artist Meets Archive #4 Exhibition Projects

Pauline Hafsia M'barek at the Museum Ludwig

A photo is not just an illustration, but a composition of chemical substances and compounds such as silver, copper, glass, salt and gelatine. These form complex, unstable image layers, which require protection against external influences by means of conservation processes. Pauline Hafsia M'barek takes the corporate photographs from the Agfa collection of the Museum Ludwig as the basis for an in-depth examination of this vibrant matter. As she does so, she explores the chemico-physical properties of the image and traces the photo-making process, which always delineates the precarious relationship between humanity and environment as well. In a multimedia assemblage, the artist interweaves photographs originating from the Agfa production site, toxic documents, and microscopic material analyses with film experiments on sensitive surfaces.

Marta Bogdańska at the Kölnisches Stadtmuseum

Animals and their life stories are only sparsely visible in a city's history, as in the case of the chimpanzee Petermann, who mounted a spectacular escape from Cologne Zoo in 1985. His visage, propagated in numerous photographs, has become part of the city's visual memory, unlike the countless animals that populate the conurbation with us, day in, day out. In her project, Marta Bogdańska looks for ways of occupying a non-anthropocentric perspective in the archive and its materials as a discursive space, a space which focuses primarily on a history of humanity and, in so doing, excludes the animal as agent. By juxtaposing historical photographs with video works produced in Cologne, the project intends to sound out the coexistence between humans and "non-human animals".

Andrés Galeano at the Dombauarchiv

In 2014, ESA astronaut Alexander Gerst took along a stone fragment from the buttresses on the south face of Cologne Cathedral on his flight into space and to the International Space Station (ISS). The stone's unusual journey and its return to Cologne Cathedral was documented for journalistic appeal and received extensive media coverage. Today, it is located in the Dombauarchiv, where, in a showcase in the foyer, it is now only viewable by visitors to the cathedral administration. Adopting archival working methods, Andrés Galeano becomes the cathedral stone's new biographer. With the assistance of photography as his research medium, he writes a detailed life story of this auratic item, taking an at once serious and amused look at his object of examination.

Museum Ludwig:

The Museum Ludwig is among the foremost museums of art of the 20th and 21st century, which besides Europe's largest Pop Art collection comprising around 70,000 works, also houses a significant and comprehensive collection on photography from the beginnings to the present day. It was one of the first museums of modern and contemporary art to bestow photography with a dedicated collection, back in 1977.

Kölnisches Stadtmuseum:

The Kölnisches Stadtmuseum has been collecting objects, including photographs, concerning Cologne's history from the Middle Ages to the present day since its establishment in 1888. Today, the museum's graphics collection comprises an extensive photo collection, whose focuses, initially, were the urban profile and architecture, pictures of traditional costumes, and photographic documents. However, from the mid-20th century onwards, the collection also began to centre on artistic photography, and hence also on the portfolios of photographers from Cologne.

Dombauarchiv:

The Dombauarchiv documents the construction and restoration measures carried out since the Middle Ages on one of the world's most important religious edifices and a landmark of the city – Cologne Cathedral. It encompasses almost the entire holding of documents on the cathedral's construction since 1816, along with approx. 20,000 plans and drawings, a comprehensive holding of some 50,000 historical and contemporary photographs, a large art and model collection, plus the extensive Three Magi collection which comprises visual testimonies and scientific literature on the Three Holy Kings. The Dombauarchiv is a scientific institution which stimulates, supervises and publicizes cathedral research in many fields.

Elena Efeoglou at the Photographische Sammlung / SK Stiftung Kultur

With his “People of the 20th Century”, August Sander significantly shaped not only photography history, but also our understanding of images today. Elena Efeoglou takes a closer look at selected portraits within this iconic oeuvre. They provide the basis for her self-penned fictional stories, which she combines with AI-generated images to create imaginary narratives. In this manner, the lives of the illustrated persons take on specific contours and dimensions that open up alternative interpretations. With her multimedia work, Efeoglou not only explores the narrative potential of the photograph(s) and of Artificial Intelligence, but she also fills the archive with new visions and observations.

Jimmi Wing Ka Ho at Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum

German-Chinese colonial history has rarely been the object of public notice. Jimmi Wing Ka Ho takes up this point and traces the history of the city of Qingdao, which was under German occupation from 1898 until 1914. Starting from holdings from the photographic archive of the RJM, he takes along his camera on an evidential search into Qingdao’s colonial past, examining its influence on the urban profile to this day and the memories that are transmitted. In dialogue with historical material, the photographs and video works created on location open up diverse – sometimes contradictory – angles and cause the boundaries to blur between archival memory and lived experience.

Die Photographische Sammlung/SK Stiftung Kultur:

Die Photographische Sammlung / SK Stiftung Kultur is devoted to objective documentary photography in the artistic context. With the August Sander Archive, extensive bundles by Bernd and Hilla Becher, and an extensive collection inventory including international positions, the collection comprises important portfolios which have fundamentally shaped this genre both aesthetically and formally. Based on these deposits, the institution realizes rotating exhibition projects and publications of both historical and contemporary positions.

Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum:

The Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum is a museum undergoing upheaval, that is seeking new ways to transform itself into an interdisciplinary forum for a post-migration society. The collection encompasses some 60,000 day-to-day and ritual objects and around 100,000 historical photographs, which are closely connected, geographically and temporally, with the German colonial past. Working with the museum’s photographic holding entails opening the archive on the search for new forms of expression and decolonial spheres of action.

In addition to these projects, Cologne’s vibrant art scene will once again take part in the festival with its own exhibitions. Since 1984, the Photoszene Festival has been known as a participatory exhibition format and Germany’s oldest photography festival. The various participating exhibitions in museums, galleries, art spaces and studios open up a broad perspective on the photographic medium, its media extensions and uses. An extensive program of events is planned for the festival, including guided tours, artist talks, portfolio reviews and a photo book fair. All further information can always be found on social media, on our [website](#) or in our newsletter.



Open Call to artists and collectives: “Feelings & Photography”

Once again, Internationale Photoszene Köln issues an Open Call which will culminate in a group exhibition for the Photoszene Festival in May 2025 in Cologne. Application deadline: **31 January 2025**

Feelings Are Our Reality!

[Direct link to registration >>](#)

Internationale Photoszene Köln is issuing an Open Call on the theme of “Feelings & Photography”. The search is on for works of art that engage with the theme of feelings.

The Open Call focuses on contemporary phenomena in photography, and simultaneously takes a look at what stirs our feelings in the world. Equally, it poses the question of what, under what circumstances, prompts our compassion. Feelings are one of the last specifics of human – or natural – life and appear to be a significant marker of differentiation against the supremacy of machines. At the same time, feelings are quite deliberately incorporated into media-based and visual communications, and algorithms get daily emotional reactions out of us as consumers of images. They are something internal, but shaped by society at the same time; feelings are profoundly personal and yet not private; feelings are political dynamite and are simultaneously often negated; feelings influence life paths and create new visibilities; feelings form connectedness and transform social structures at the same time. In short: Feelings mould our existence and our togetherness in the world.

Questions we pose for guidance:

- What role can photography play during engagement with feelings and what role do feelings play in contemporary photographic concepts?
- How do feelings find their way into the picture and in what way do they reach beholders?
- And all other open questions that can be additionally raised and answered!

Although feelings, by definition, are immaterial and subjective, photography can make them visible, experienceable and comprehensible – and stir and amplify them, too. Every day, through being disseminated in the media, the potentials of photographic images influence our entire life sphere; they convey to us emotions, states of mind, attitudes and equally, perspectives onto what prompts our feelings.

With the Open Call, Photoszene offers a platform to current photographic positions and looks forward to a diverse array of entries from artists and image designers who work with the medium of photography and its extended tools. The submitted works will be viewed by a diverse jury and selected for a group exhibition as part of the Photoszene Festival in May 2025. Each juried position will receive a €500 exhibition fee. The application deadline is 31 January 2025.

The Open Call and the “Feelings & Photography” exhibition are supported by the LVR’s cultural funding and the Victor Rolff-Foundation. All info on taking part at www.photoszene.de

Presseservice

Weitere Pressebilder und -meldungen stehen Ihnen auf der Presseseite der Internationalen Photoszene Köln zum Download zu Verfügung:

<https://www.photoszene.de/de/photoszene/presse/>

Wir freuen uns über einen Beitrag in Ihren Medien und das rege Teilen unserer Veranstaltungshinweise auf Ihren Sozialen Medien!

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