

Press Release
Hamburg, February 4, 2026

9th Triennial of Photography Hamburg 2026 Alliance, Infinity, Love – in the Face of the Other

11 exhibitions in 8 museums and art institutions

From June 5 until September 22 the 9th Triennial of Photography Hamburg 2026 presents eleven exhibitions in eight renowned museums and art institutions in the city. The international festival, under the artistic direction of London-based **Mark Sealy**, celebrates the importance of photography in our time and demonstrates that it can do more than merely observe: photography can connect people and inspire reflection on justice, responsibility and humanity.

The theme of the 9th Triennial is: **Alliance, Infinity, Love – in the Face of the Other**. These three guiding concepts form the common thread running through all eleven exhibitions and invite visitors to move beyond the mere contemplation of photography and become active participants in a shared cultural experience.

Alliance – Community, Solidarity

The term *Alliance* stands for solidarity and collective action, as exemplified by the exhibition ***Franki Raffles. Photography, Activism, Campaign Works*** at the **Museum of Work**. Raffles was a British photographer who placed the working realities of women in the 1970s and 1980s at the focus of her social documentary work. She used photography as a tool to combat injustice—whether in Scotland, the former Soviet Union, China or Zimbabwe—and, as an activist,

combined her observations of social and gender-specific inequalities with a call for global solidarity.

The exhibition *Resonating Images from Peru* at **MARKK – Museum am Rothenbaum. World Cultures and Arts** takes the historical photographs and audio recordings from the country's colonially shaped past, created by the German amateur researcher Hans Heinrich Brüning (1848-1928), as a starting point for facilitating new perspectives on identity, remembrance and cultural self-determination. Contemporary protagonists, scholars and artists from Peru reinterpret the historical documents and transform them into a living archive.

The solo exhibition *Whispers* by **Melike Kara** at the **Kunsthaus Hamburg** also engages with the theme of *Alliance*. In a large-scale installation Kara reflects on her Kurdish heritage, which she has researched, archived and explored through her art practice over the past years. The focus lies on questions of identity, memory and healing. Here, *Alliance* means rethinking relationships with responsibility and mutual respect, beyond the bounds of cultural attribution.

Hamburger Kunsthalle's exhibition *BUT I WORLD I SEE YOU** provides a philosophical and historical grounding for the exploration of photographs, films and artifacts informed by personal experience, myth and ideology. Across its three sections, the exhibition meditates on landscapes of memory, the transformations of form, and the poetic and political charge of the archive. Through artists ranging from William Henry Fox Talbot and Marcel Duchamp to Jo Ractliffe, Akram Zaatari, and Khadija Saye, the exhibition reveals the image as a site of vulnerability, trace, and profound relational depth. To see the world—and to see the self within it—requires an openness that aligns with this Triennial's constellation of collaborative alliances. (*Rémy Zaugg)

Infinity – Continuity, Difference

Under the term *Infinity*, photography is understood as a medium that does not merely represent reality, but opens up perspectives that connect past, present and future. In the exhibition *Care. Reconsidering Photography* at the **Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg**, **Sara Sallam** explores how colonial pictures continue to exert their influence. Drawing on examples from the museum's

Press contact

PR-Netzwerk

Christine Gückel-Daxer,

Annette Schäfer

Telephone: +49 (0)30 61 65 11 55

E-mail: presse@pr-netzwerk.net

archaeological and photographic collection, she develops counter-narratives that challenge colonial histories and invite more compassionate encounters with the past. Here, infinity is not an abstraction but a call to the infinite positive force of humanity.

In her first institutional solo exhibition at the **Kunstverein in Hamburg**, **Nina Porter** experiments with new pictorial forms, mixing photography and sculpture. Her most recent work troubles the dynamic between camera, subject and image. One medium leans on the other to find its form, thus opening wormholes onto scenarios for the analogue photography of the distant future.

The exhibition ***Inner Mornings, or Forms of Counterculture*** at the **Falckenberg Collection**, which takes the work of Surrealist photographer and writer Claude Cahun as its point of departure, presents artistic resistance as a continuous process: The questioning of societal narratives and power structures, making aesthetic strategies of disruption and resistance visible, and exploring alternative artistic, political and imaginative spaces can all be found in the work from internationally renowned artists such as Halil Altındere, Maja Bajevic, Bernd and Hilla Becher, Sophie Calle, Claire Chevrier, Jeremy Deller, Valie Export, Fischli & Weiss, Walid Raad, Martha Rosler, Wolfgang Tillmans and others.

Love – Humanity, Responsibility

The focus of the third thematic field at the 9th Triennial is the human. **PHOXXI** presents two contemporary positions—**Abdulhamid Kircher** and **Akosua Viktoria Adu-Sanyah**—that engage experimentally and spatially with analogue colour photography, activating its emotional frequencies. In this context, the darkroom becomes a space of reflection, transformation and healing, where personal as well as historical experiences, relationships and memories are processed and reshaped. Photography is made tangible here as a medium of proximity, while at the same time being pushed to its material limits.

As a collector of photographs, **F.C. Gundlach**, the influential fashion photographer and founder of the Triennial of Photography Hamburg, focused on images of the human being in all its facets—including emotionally deep dimensions and aspects that transgress social norms. With ***Cocktail Prolongé. F.C. Gundlach special***, the **Deichtorhallen Hamburg** present works from his collection that

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explore the photographic staging of the body as an expression of identity and freedom, desire and vulnerability, extravagance and queerness. Around 70 photographers are represented in the exhibition, including, amongst others, Diane Arbus, Richard Avedon, Hans Bellmer, Larry Clark, Jiri Georg Dokoupil, Jenny Holzer, Robert Mapplethorpe, Irving Penn and Cindy Sherman.

The **Bucerius Kunst Forum** presents F.C. Gundlach's work as a dialogue between fashion, people and society. The exhibition ***You'll Never Watch Alone*** shows Gundlach as networker, photographer, collector and patron. In addition to his iconic photographs, the exhibition also features unpublished black-and-white and colour photographs, and works by people who inspired him, his contemporaries and successors. The exhibition takes Gundlach's work as a starting point to illuminate the emergence of photography as a visual culture, its associated milieu, and the relevance of photography for social movements.

Alliance, Infinity, Love

The exhibition that gives its title to the 9th Triennial of Photography Hamburg 2026, ***Alliance, Infinity, Love – in the Face of the Other*** at the **Deichtorhallen Hamburg's Hall for Contemporary Art**, is curated by the Artistic Director, Mark Sealy. It addresses the festival's central theme and celebrates the cultural and artistic diversity of photography, its healing and transformative power. It presents over 30 artistic positions spanning photography, video and film, which tell of different places and cultural experiences. The exhibits reflect personal histories, the joy of community, and foster tenderness, dignity and intimacy. With works from H el ene Amouzou, Sandra Brewster, Didier Ben Loulou, Mario Cravo Neto, Rotimi Fani-Kayode, M onica de Miranda, Tyler Mitchell, Lee Shulman and Omar Victor Diop, Inuuteq Storch, Matthew Thorne and Derik Lynch, Nil Yalter and others.

The 9th Triennial of Photography Hamburg 2026 stands for a new understanding of visibility. Photography shows that every gaze carries responsibility. In a world shaped by conflict, this Triennial's goal is to reflect on the complex nature of humanity and to bring us closer together in our understanding of each other through signposting acts of solidarity, openness and insistence on our ability to love.

Press contact

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Further information on the 9th Triennial of Photography Hamburg 2026 can be found under: 2026.phototriennale.de/en

The main sponsor of the 9th Triennial of Photography Hamburg 2026 is the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg, Ministry of Culture and Media.



Sony is the official partner in the field of camera technology for the 9th Triennial of Photography Hamburg 2026.

SONY

The Triennial of Photography Hamburg has been held every three years since 1999 in cooperation with the city's major museums, exhibition houses and cultural institutions and is an important German-wide photo event with an international reach. With a large number of photo exhibitions under a common theme, it illuminates contemporary photographic trends. The Triennial is accompanied by international symposiums. Since 2014 the Triennial of Photography has been organised by the Deichtorhallen Hamburg GmbH.

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