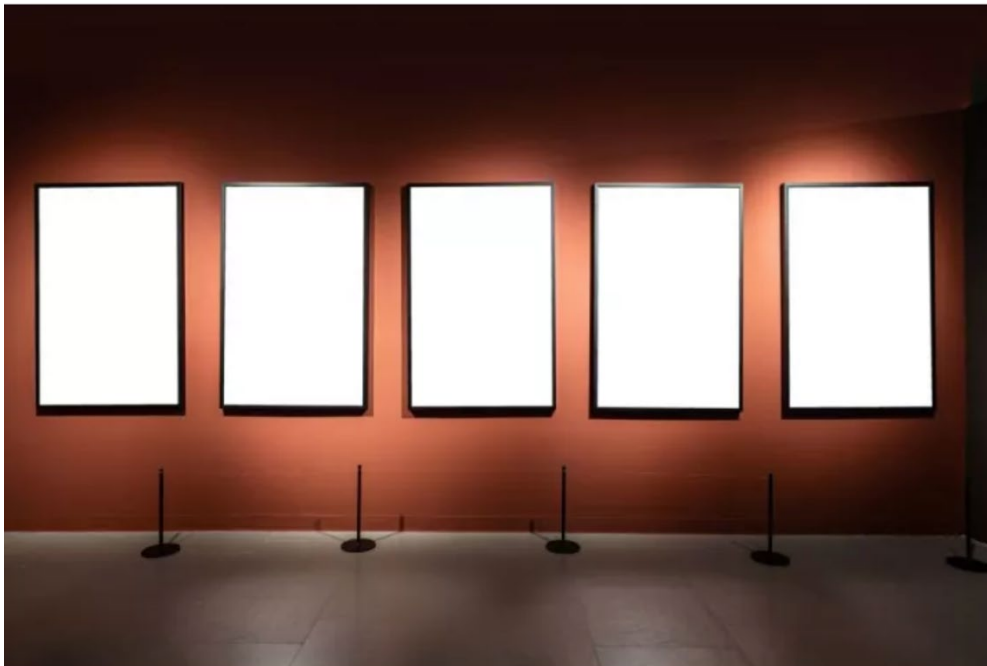


Press Release  
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Emerging Photographer Award 2024. Foto © Daruna

## **EMERGING PHOTOGRAPHER AWARD 2024** **Mika Sperling is the very first award winner**

**The German Photographic Association (DGPh) is presenting the EMERGING PHOTOGRAPHER AWARD for the first time this year. The sponsorship prize of the DGPhs Art, Market & Law section is supported by the WhiteWall photo lab. The award ceremony will take place at Paris Photo in November 2024 at the Leica Gallery Paris.**

The aim of the EMERGING PHOTOGRAPHER AWARD is to promote up-and-coming photographic artists.

Geschäftsführender Vorstand:  
Michael Biedowicz, Dr. Martina Mettner (Vorsitzende)  
Hanns-Peter Frenz – Anna Gripp – Dr. Adelheid Komenda  
Daniel Oschatz – Rainer Schlautmann

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The winner of the first EMERGING PHOTOGRAPHER AWARD is the artist Mika Sperling, nominated by Jule Schaffer. Honorable mentions go to Elliott Kreyenberg, nominated by Candice M. Hamelin, and Marco Dirr, nominated by Prof. Tamara Grcic.

In total, the jury received over 70 nominations from representatives of the international art market (gallery owners, collectors and employees of institutions), who were invited to nominate a photographic artist for the EMERGING PHOTOGRAPHER AWARD who, in their opinion, is worthy of an award. The nominee had to be a photographer who - regardless of his or her age - has not been present on the photographic art market for no longer than three years and deserves greater attention.

The jury for the first EMERGING PHOTOGRAPHER AWARD 2024, moderated by Thomas Gerwers (Chairman of the Art, Market and Law Section of the DGPh), included Celina Lunsford (Artistic Director Fotografie Forum Frankfurt), Ute Noll (gallery owner and curator), Sophie-Charlotte Opitz (curator Bucerius Kunstforum Hamburg), Simone Klein (photography specialist and consultant), Michael Biedowicz (DGPh chairman, gallery owner, curator, lecturer) and Sebastian Lux (curator Stiftung F. C. Gundlach Foundation) represent the who's who of the German photographic art scene.

Simone Klein: "With the DGPh EMERGING PHOTOGRAPHER AWARD, presented for the first time this year, the Art, Market and Law section honors a photographic series by an up-and-coming photographer and encourages her on her way into the art market. It is a prize for promoting talent and also offers support with such important aspects of career planning as international networking and cultivating contacts."

### **The award winner**

"The jury's decision to award Mika Sperling's series "I Have Done Nothing Wrong" honors a strong, personal, unique work that is able to depict the individual, traumatic experience of child abuse in a visually complex and sophisticated way and involves the viewer emotionally and intellectually. The special nature of the topic and the multi-layered material-visual realisation is very touching and convinced this year's jury," says Simone Klein.

Sebastian Lux: "With her impressive series of work 'I Have Done Nothing Wrong', Mika Sperling convinced the jury of her high potential. Her sensitive approach to a complex topic, her sensual use of different materials and the complexity of her argumentation promise many more exciting works in the coming years."

Dr Sophie-Charlotte Opitz: "Creating a photographic work that manages to combine the intimate with the discursive, the unspeakable with what urgently needs to be said, and not least what has been experienced with its empowerment, is a major undertaking. It is this multi-layered, courageous and yet sensitive quality of 'I Have Done Nothing Wrong' that persuaded the jury to honor Mika Sperling with the EMERGING PHOTOGRAPHER AWARD".

### **Honorable mentions**

The jury of the first DGPH EMERGING PHOTOGRAPHER AWARD also honors Elliott Kreyenberg and Marco Dirr with honorable mentions.

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DGPh Chairman Michael Biedowicz: "Marco Dirr's award-winning work entitled Aporia is originally a 6-channel slide projection. The motifs appear briefly in several places in the room and then disappear again. The term "aporia" refers to the feeling of amazement or confusion that arises when one encounters a problem for which there appears to be no solution. Indeed, it is unusual perspectives and fragmented representations of bodies and body parts that Marco Dirr presents, enigmatically and seemingly arbitrarily assembled. Aporia is an intellectual and emotional challenge and magically involves the viewer in the process of thinking and reflecting. Marco Dirr's photographs analyse the way we see and interpret the world around us. Just as there are no simple or clear solutions if we want to do justice to the complexity of our world and our time. Aporia reminds us of this."

Jury member Ute Noll: "In his series 'Something was missing within', Elliott Kreyenberg deals with the stereotype of 'man' in his own generation. Contrary to social change, often there is still the expectation that men must be strong and must not show any weakness or feelings to the outside world if they want to belong socially, politically and privately. According to this understanding, they are not allowed to behave vulnerably, sensitively, tenderly or empathetically. This begins in childhood and can later lead to toxic behavior in all areas of life. Elliott Kreyenberg has photographed men who are or feel exposed to this pressure of expectation. Instead of heroically presenting them as torn, insecure and oppressed, he combines these portraits with associative and enigmatic images to create a tableau. Kreyenberg's pictures are artistically documentary, complex in content and aesthetically multi-layered. They raise questions - also against the background of current crises and wars."

### **The award**

The EMERGING PHOTOGRAPHER AWARD, which is endowed with prize money of 3,000 euros and sponsored by WhiteWall, will be presented every two years in future.

Sebastian Lux: "The new DGPh EMERGING PHOTOGRAPHER AWARD fills a gap: Great photographers and distinguished personalities from the photography scene will now be joined by promising talents who will be honored with an award from the German Photographic Society. The award winners contribute the high reputation of the institution founded in 1951 and the diverse expertise of its members, while the DGPh also benefits from the freshness of the visual languages, the relevance of the themes in the award winners' work and from a new audience for its activities. Networking is therefore a central component of the EMERGING PHOTOGRAPHER AWARD alongside the prize money. The award ceremony at the Paris Photo will present the award-winning works to an international audience of experts, and even before that, the members of the jury will make an offer that is maybe just as important: they will offer the award winners advice and support on their path to the public and the art market if desired."

The award ceremony will take place on November 8, 2024 in the exclusive setting of the renowned Leica Gallery Paris with around 100 guests from the international art scene. Paris Photo offers a unique environment for encounters and discussions and is the most important platform for photographic art worldwide. This year's edition will take place from November 7 to 10, 2024 in the newly renovated Grand Palais, not far from the Leica Gallery. Simone Klein: - "There could not be a more ideal time to directly benefit from the award!"

Prof. Celina Lunsford: "By creating the Emerging Photographer Award the (DGPh) German

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Society of Photography clearly states its ongoing dedication to analyzing and honoring photographic talent. The multiplicity which such an international prize brings with it is remarkable. Recognition by experts in the field allows greater confidence for the photographers to pursue their work, new networks are formed, important platforms such as the Paris Photo art Fair extend communication for those honored as well as the organization. This prize for rising talent will broaden our scope to what photography can be and how audiences are receiving the issues and picture languages of our time.”

### **The DGPh section Art, Market and Law**

The Art, Market and Law Section is the newest, but with around 400 members also the second largest section of the renowned DGPh, which was co-founded in 1951 by photo collector L. Fritz Gruber. It is home to the DGPh's concentrated expertise in the art market. Members of the section include gallery owners, curators, exhibition organizers, representatives of auction houses and many other art market experts such as publicists and art consultants.

Download the press release and a selection of press photos at: [DGPh/news/press](https://www.dgph.de/news/press)

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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