

**Press Release**  
November 11, 2024



## DGPh 4WARD | EMERGING PHOTOGRAPHER AWARD 2024



DGPh 4WARD | EMERGING PHOTOGRAPHER AWARD 2024. Award winner Mika Sperling and Thomas Gerwers (Director of DGPh Section Art, Market & Law). Leica Gallery Paris.

### Award ceremony during PARIS PHOTO

#### Mika Sperling honored

The German Photographic Association (DGPh) has presented the 4WARD | EMERGING PHOTOGRAPHER AWARD for the first time as a new sponsorship prize of its Art, Market & Law section with the support of the WhiteWall photo lab. The award ceremony took place at Paris Photo on November 8, 2024.

Geschäftsführender Vorstand:  
Dr. Sandra Abend (Vorsitzende)  
Stephan Jürgen Schulz (Schatzmeister)  
Ruediger Glatz – Teona Gogichaishvili – Roy Hessing – Rainer

Amtsgericht Köln, VR 5800

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Paris Photo offered a unique environment for encounters and discussions and is the most important platform for photographic art worldwide.

The DGPh 4WARD ceremony was held in the exclusive setting of the renowned Leica Gallery Paris with around 100 guests from the international art scene, including the Art Director and General Representative of Leica Galleries International, Karin Rehn-Kaufmann, and WhiteWall Managing Director Thomas Alscheid, as well as numerous representatives of renowned galleries and institutions worldwide.

The newly elected DGPh Chairwoman Dr. Sandra Abend: "With the 4WARD | EMERGING PHOTOGRAPHER AWARD, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Photographie (DGPh) is sending a strong signal of its ongoing commitment to promoting and recognizing exceptional photographic talent. The recognition by experts strengthens confidence in the work of the award winners, creates new networks and ensures increased public awareness - both for the award winners and the DGPh. This award for young photographic artists sharpens our understanding of what photography can be and how the public perceives the current themes and visual forms of expression of our time."

The winner of the first 4WARD | EMERGING PHOTOGRAPHER AWARD is the artist Mika Sperling, nominated by Jule Schaffer. Honorable mentions went to Elliott Kreyenberg, nominated by Candice M. Hamelin, and Marco Dirr, nominated by Prof. Tamara Grcic.

The official laudation was held by juror Celina Lunsford: "The DGPh presents the 4WARD | EMERGING PHOTOGRAPHER AWARD to Mika Sperling for her strong, personal and unique series of works 'I Have Done Nothing Wrong', which depicts the individual, traumatic experience of child abuse in a visually complex and sophisticated way and involves the viewer emotionally and intellectually. Her sensitive handling of the complex topic, her sensual use of different materials and the complexity of her argumentation convinced the jury of the high artistic potential of the prizewinner nominated by Jule Schaffer."

Mika Sperling: "I couldn't be happier to receive the honor of this award alongside the release of my book, I Have Done Nothing Wrong. This recognition affirms me both personally and professionally, strengthening my motivation to keep pursuing my path, pushing the boundaries of both photography and my own creative limits, while challenging social taboos through my work."

The DGPh also honored Elliott Kreyenberg and Marco Dirr with honorable mentions.

Marco Dirr impressed the jury with his series of works entitled "Aporia". His photographs question the way we see and interpret the world around us.

Elliott Kreyenberg received an honorable mention for his series of works "Something was missing within", in which he deals with the stereotype of masculinity in an artistically documentary, complex and aesthetically multi-layered way.

The award, sponsored by WhiteWall, is endowed with prize money of 3,000 euros. Dr. Sandra Abend: "The previous name, EMERGING PHOTOGRAPHER AWARD, is now complemented by 4WARD to give the prize an additional profile and ensure distinctiveness. After all, 4WARD

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perfectly encapsulates the purpose: propelling emerging talents forward with an award," stated the chairperson of the DGPh.

In the future, 4WARD will be announced every two years, with the next call for entries in spring 2026.

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