

PRESS RELEASE

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Samuel Solazzo Receives the Otto Steinert Prize 2026

Samuel Solazzo (B.F.A. Visual Communication, Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, and M.A. Photography Studies and Practice, Folkwang University of the Arts, Essen) has been awarded the 1st Prize of the Otto Steinert-Preis. DGPh-Förderpreis für Fotografie (Otto Steinert Prize). The prize comes with a €5,000 grant to support the realization of his planned project A Collection of Valuable Copies.

Samuel Solazzo impressed the jury, consisting of Alexander Hagmann, Heide Häusler and Helena Melikov (Board of the Photography Section), Aliona Kardash (2024 award winner), and Katharina Täschner (curator at C/O Berlin), with his project proposal A Collection of Valuable Copies. Its far-reaching conceptual and formal-aesthetic relevance was recognized not merely on a theoretical level, but as an independent artistic position. The project's conceptual strength lies in its combination of scholarly archival research and an artistic-photographic representation of material culture, based on the plaster cast collection of the Museum of Antiquities of Leipzig University.

In his work, Solazzo explores memory, the archive, and the image as a copy. He uses photography less to depict the world directly than to reflect on reproduction, the fragment, and dissolution, often in dialogue with archaeology, sculpture, and the printed book as the original medium.

"Where, actually, is the original, and what would be authentic about it? With Solazzo, it is almost impossible to say anymore – ancient sculptor, Roman copyist, nineteenth-century plaster caster, archivist of glass negatives, photographer today, and then the bombing night of 1943, which deformed or destroyed a large part of the collection. Each stage recorded what was considered 'real' at that particular moment – and yet each time it was slightly mistaken. Solazzo shows that there was never one single, definitive image. And he leaves it at that. That is precisely what makes the work so beautiful: it answers nothing; it opens things up. This willingness to question the familiar anew is what we want to support with the Otto Steinert Prize." (Ralph Baiker, Chair of the Photography Section)

He regularly participates in group and solo exhibitions with his photographic work, most recently in DIE GROSSE NRW 2026 at Kunstpalast, NRW-Forum, Düsseldorf; Dissolving Views at the Städtische Galerie Lüdenscheid; and Photography Masters at Museum Folkwang, Essen.

In addition to receiving the Otto Steinert Prize, he has already received various awards and grants, including Plat(t)form 2024 – Fotomuseum Winterthur, Switzerland; the Märkisches Scholarship for Fine Arts 2024 – Photography; and the Bauhaus Graduation Scholarship from Bauhaus-Universität Weimar. In 2018 and 2020, his publications KORRELATIONEN and

Geschäftsführender Vorstand:

Ruediger Glatz (Vorsitzender)
Michael Kaune (stellvertretender Vorsitzender)
Rainer Schlautmann – Stephan J. Schulz
Frank Schumacher – Ira Stehmann

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Fotografie e. V.

Rheingasse 8-12, 50676 Köln
T: 0221 - 9 23 20 69
F: 0221 - 9 23 20 70
E: dgph@dgph.de, www.dgph.de

KORRELATIONEN II were shortlisted for the German Photobook Award. At the 2022 Triennale of Photography in Hamburg, he presented the performance Foto-Intervention. Ein performativer Abend zur Fotografie.

Award Ceremony

The Otto Steinert Prize. DGPh Award for Emerging Photography will be presented on October 24, 2026, as part of the DGPh Photography Awards at the Museum of Applied Arts Cologne (MAKK). On the same day, the 2026 Cultural Award, the 2026 Dr. Erich Salomon Award, and the 2026 DGPh Manfred Heiting Medal of Curatorial Excellence in Photography will also be presented.

The **Otto Steinert Prize** is presented by the Photography Section of the DGPh and supports outstanding positions among emerging professional photographers. Announced every two years, it is intended for photographic projects yet to be realized; the award is not tied to any particular style or subject matter. The prize is endowed with a total of €6,000: a €5,000 grant and two €500 commendations. First presented in 1979, the prize was awarded for the 23rd time in 2026. It is named after Otto Steinert (1915–1978), physician, photographer and professor of photography, who is regarded as one of the most influential teachers and advocates of photography in Germany. In 1947, Steinert opened his first studio for artistic photography in Saarbrücken. A year later, he took over the photography class at the Staatliche Saarländische Schule für Kunst und Handwerk, becoming its director in 1952. In 1959, he began teaching at the Folkwang Schule für Gestaltung in Essen, after having been appointed professor in Saarbrücken in 1954.

About the DGPh

The German Society for Photography (DGPh) is a registered association with around 1,200 members throughout Germany and is based in Cologne. The DGPh is committed to promoting photography as a cultural asset and thereby strengthening its social and cultural significance. Its activities focus on communicating photographic topics to professionals and the wider public, as well as reflecting on current developments such as digitalization, AI and new image media. They encompass the diverse fields in which photography is applied, including art, science, education, journalism and publishing, business, and politics. As a central institution for communicating pioneering achievements in photography, the DGPh presents several prestigious awards each year, including the Cultural Award, the Dr. Erich Salomon Award, the DGPh Manfred Heiting Medal of Curatorial Excellence in Photography, and the Otto Steinert Prize. DGPh Award for Emerging Photography.

Images

Press images are available for download via the DGPh website and can also be requested from the office. The press images are cleared for publication free of charge in an editorial context related to the Otto Steinert Prize. DGPh Award for Emerging Photography 2026. Please provide the full image credit as indicated.

Press Contact

German Society for Photography (DGPh)
Regina Plaar, Press and Public Relations
regina.plaar@dgph.de, Tel. +49 221 923 20 69
Rheingasse 8–12, 50676 Cologne, www.dgph.de

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