

PRESS RELEASE

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**DGPh Manfred Heiting Medal of Curatorial Excellence in Photography 2026
Awarded to Sarah Greenough and the National Gallery of Art**

The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Photographie honors the American curator and author as well as the museum in Washington, D.C.

The German Photographic Society (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Photographie, DGPh) is awarding the **DGPh Manfred Heiting Medal of Curatorial Excellence in Photography 2026** to American curator Sarah Greenough and the National Gallery of Art. The award honors an internationally distinguished individual and institution who have jointly built a significant collection and made it accessible to a broad audience through research, exhibitions, and publications.

The award recognizes the museum which established the Department of Photographs in 1990 under Sarah Greenough, thus placing photography as an equal collecting discipline alongside painting, sculpture, prints, and drawings. It also honors Sarah Greenough, whose dedication and outstanding curatorial achievements not only helped build photography as an independent area of collecting and exhibition, but also played a decisive role in shaping it.

Sarah Greenough served as Senior Curator and Head of the Department of Photographs at the National Gallery of Art until her retirement in 2026. Before joining the museum, Greenough received her B.A. from the University of Pennsylvania and her M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of New Mexico, where she studied under renowned photography historian Beaumont Newhall. In 1990, she became the founding curator of the Department of Photographs and was responsible for building and expanding the National Gallery's photography collection, which spans the period from 1839 to the present. She also established the museum's photography program, which presents one or two major exhibitions each year, along with numerous smaller presentations. Photography has thus secured a permanent and visible place in the museum's exhibition program.

The National Gallery of Art itself can also look back on an outstanding history in the field of photography. Since the beginning of systematic collecting in 1990, the collection has grown to more than 25,000 photographic works, documenting the history of the medium from its beginnings in 1839 to the present day.

With the opening of a suite of galleries in the West Building in 2004, photography was given a permanent place for ongoing presentation within the museum. Today, the department's exhibition and publication program is considered one of the most internationally renowned of its kind. This development was celebrated in 2015 on the occasion of the department's 25th anniversary with

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three major exhibitions and the publication *The Altering Eye: Photography at the National Gallery of Art*.

During her tenure, Greenough realized numerous highly acclaimed exhibitions devoted to key figures and themes in the history of photography, including *Alfred Stieglitz* (1983), *On the Art of Fixing a Shadow: 150 Years of Photography* (1989), *The Art of Paul Strand* (1990), *Modern Art and America: Alfred Stieglitz and His New York Galleries* (2001), *André Kertész* (2005), *Irving Penn: Platinum Prints* (2005), *Looking In: Robert Frank's "The Americans"* (2009), *Beat Memories: The Photographs of Allen Ginsberg* (2010), *Sally Mann: A Thousand Crossings* (2018), with Sarah Kennel, and *American Silence: The Photographs of Robert Adams* (2021).

In addition to her curatorial work, Greenough's contribution as an author and editor deserves particular recognition. Her key publications include *Alfred Stieglitz: The Key Set* (2002), which comprehensively documents Stieglitz's photographic collection at the National Gallery, as well as *My Faraway One: Selected Letters of Georgia O'Keeffe and Alfred Stieglitz* (2011). Other works, including *Walker Evans: Subways and Streets* (1991), *All the Mighty World: The Photographs of Roger Fenton, 1852–1860* (2004), and *The Altering Eye: Photographs from the National Gallery of Art* (2015, co-edited with Sarah Kennel, Andrea Nelson, Diane Waggoner, and Philip Brookman), are internationally regarded as standard references in the field of photographic history.

Greenough's work has received numerous awards, including the Publications Award from the International Center of Photography for *On the Art of Fixing a Shadow*, the George Wittenborn Memorial Book Award for *Alfred Stieglitz: The Key Set*, and, together with Diane Waggoner, the Alfred H. Barr, Jr. Award from the College Art Association for the catalogue *The Art of the American Snapshot: 1888–1978*. For *Looking In: Robert Frank's "The Americans"*, she received the Outstanding Museum Catalogue of the Year from the Association of Art Museum Curators (2009) and the Infinity Award for Publications from the International Center of Photography (2010).

Award Ceremony

The award ceremony will take place on October 24, 2026, as part of the DGPh Photography Awards at the Museum für Angewandte Kunst Köln (MAKK). On the same day, the 2026 Cultural Award, the 2026 Dr. Erich Salomon Award, and the Otto Steinert Prize / DGPh Photography Fellowship Award will also be presented.

The **DGPh Manfred Heiting Medal of Curatorial Excellence in Photography**—initiated and supported by internationally renowned photography expert Manfred Heiting (DGPh)—was presented for the first time in 2025 to Dutch curator Mattie Boom and the Rijksmuseum. The award honors an institution as well as the outstanding achievements of an internationally distinguished individual who has built a high-quality collection there and made it accessible to an interested public through research, exhibitions, and publications.

Image Material

Press images are available for download on the [DGPh website](#) and can also be requested through the DGPh office. The images are made available free of charge for editorial publication in connection with the DGPh Manfred Heiting Medal of Curatorial Excellence in Photography 2026. Please reproduce the specified image credit in full.

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About the National Gallery of Art

The National Gallery of Art is the United States of America's art museum, welcoming all people to explore art, creativity, and our shared humanity. Through its renowned collection, special exhibitions, and public programming, the institution shares the ever-changing story of how art reflects our nation and world. The National Gallery's collection—featuring over 160,000 works spanning the history of Western art from classical to contemporary—includes some of the most iconic works of art ever made and is a singular resource for the American nation.

Founded as a gift to the American people, the National Gallery of Art was conceived by Andrew W. Mellon, a financier and art collector who served as secretary of the treasury under three presidents from 1921 to 1932 and believed that the United States should have a world-class national art museum. In 1936, Mellon wrote to President Franklin D. Roosevelt offering a gift of his art collection to establish a new museum to be built and financed with Mellon's own funds and located on federal land in Washington, DC. President Roosevelt dedicated the National Gallery's first building, designed by American architect John Russell Pope and now known as the West Building, on March 17, 1941.

The East Building was added to accommodate the National Gallery's growing collection of modern art and scholarly programs. Designed by architect I. M. Pei, the building was dedicated by President Jimmy Carter on June 1, 1978. Today, the East Building houses the National Gallery's significant collection of modern and contemporary works, its library and archives, and the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts (the Center), the renowned cultural research institute established in 1979.

Today, the National Gallery of Art is one of the most visited art museums in the world, attracting several million visitors each year to its various exhibitions. Its renowned collection comprises more than 160,000 works of art ranging from antiquity to the present day. The museum's stated mission is to make art and creativity accessible to everyone.

About the DGPh

The German Photographic Society (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Photographie DGPh) is a registered association with approximately 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 professional audiences and society at large, as well as on reflecting upon and discussing current developments such as digitization, artificial intelligence, and new image media.

Its work addresses the diverse fields of application of photography in art, science, education, publishing, business, and politics, as well as their interfaces and interactions. As a central institution for communicating groundbreaking photographic achievements to the public, the DGPh presents several prestigious awards each year, including the Cultural Award, the Dr. Erich Salomon Award, and the Manfred Heiting Medal of Curatorial Excellence in Photography.

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