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EMOP GALLERY CONCEPT AWARD 2026/27 JURY STATEMENTS

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Jury Statement on the Winners of the EMOP Gallery Concept Award 2026/27

With the EMOP Gallery Concept Award 2026/27, the jury honours ten exhibition project proposals from Berlin galleries, which will be realised as part of the EMOP Berlin photography festival in March 2027. The more than 50 entries not only testify to the immense diversity of the Berlin gallery scene, which reflects the consistently high quality of the work of galleries in the field of international contemporary artistic photography, but also to the relevance of the artists they represent in public debate and within the art world. One of the jury's focuses when selecting the ten projects was on galleries that don't hesitate to include artists who work with photography in their cross-genre gallery programmes. They represent artists who frequently push the boundaries of photography and therefore continuously reflect on the status of the photographic image or even develop it further

The galleries in the top three places – Galerie Molitor, Galerie Thomas Fischer und Klemm's – are exemplary of the range of the prize-winning projects. Like **Klemm's**, a gallery that emphasises close and long-term collaboration with the artists featured in its programme, an approach that is reflected in its concept for Falk Haberkorn's solo exhibition *Méditerranées*. It will be presenting an artist who will draw on his archive and literally activate a long-term photographic project in conjunction with a work combining text and images, and increase awareness about current questions regarding the vulnerable relationship between nature and culture in his *political landscapes*. The young **Galerie Molitor** has been making an impact since it was founded in 2022 with a largely female intergenerational programme, and for the EMOP Berlin, it will be creating a joint exhibition with female artists Ketuta Alexi-Meskhishvili and Diane Severin Nguyen. Their work concerns how photographic and consequently mediated images circulate, and promises a high level of visual appeal through their experimental approaches to the medium, which are deeply rooted in the materiality of the photographic image: "imaginative, multi-faceted

world-building,” as the proposal describes. And finally, **Galerie Thomas Fischer** is synonymous with exhibitions that are always very subtly and sensitively conceived, celebrating the aesthetics of the photographic image while also pursuing high standards of content. The group exhibition *Leere Mitte* conceived by Boaz Levin for the gallery is a perfect example of this. The exhibition is based on Hito Steyerl’s film of the same name, which takes Berlin as the starting point for a visual investigation that examines the relationship between East and West, as well as the atmosphere of uncertainty in the period shortly before and shortly after 1989 – also making them relevant to current European issues.

The order of the first three places and the prizes of 25,000, 18,000 and 15,000 Euro will be announced at Paris Photo 2026.

The seven other exhibition project proposals that the jury will each award with 6,000 Euro also speak volumes about how Berlin Galleries and their artists provide significant impulses for exploring the medium of photography that reach far beyond Berlin. The award-winning individual exhibitions will be on show at the **Dorothee Nilsson Gallery** (Margot Wallard), at **Looock** (Tina Bara) and **Shahin Zarinbal** (Samuel Haitz). The galleries **BQ** and **ChertLüdde** will also receive prizes for their joint exhibitions (Carina Brandes and Jochen Lempert at BQ, and Sheyla Baykal and Annette Frick at ChertLüdde). Finally, the jury will honour proposals for group exhibitions at the galleries **FWR FeldbuschWiesnerRudolph** (*Transnationals*) and **Anton Janizewski** (*Ich, Du und die Anderen*, curated by Anna Voswinckel), which present young and mid-career artists. Short statements from the jury on all ten prize-winning projects are below in this document.

The prize is being awarded by the Senate Department for Economics, Energy and Public Enterprises and marks the 200th anniversary of the birth of photography. It remains to be said that, since its invention, photography has undergone rapid technological development, and how the medium is used has therefore also inevitably changed and continues to change even now. Artists who work with photography therefore have a special role in this regard: through their images, they show us as enthusiastically as they do critically how not just the world, but also our image of the world and our image of ourselves in the world, have changed and are changing. Those who provide a platform for this work and bring the debate into the public sphere – the galleries – are who the EMOP Gallery Concept Award 2026/27 celebrates. The jury is looking forward to these and many other first-class gallery exhibitions in the upcoming EMOP Berlin 2027.

Jury Statements on the Top Three Galleries in the EMOP Gallery Concept Award 2026/27

The listing of the award-winning galleries is in alphabetical order and is not a ranking. The final order will be announced on 12th November 2026 at Paris Photo and online at emop.berlin.

Galerie Molitor

DARK DAWNS

Artists: Ketuta Alexi-Meskhishvili, Diane Severin Nguyen

The young Galerie Molitor has attracted considerable attention with its intergenerational female programme since it was founded in 2022. For the EMOP Berlin 2027, it will be creating a joint exhibition with Georgian-American artist Ketuta Alexi-Meskhishvili and Vietnamese-American artist Diane Severin Nguyen. Both artists have a deep connection to photography.

Their work fundamentally concerns – as does each of their new series of works, which will also be on show in the exhibition – how photographic and consequently mediated images circulate. Through their shared experimental approach to the medium, deeply rooted in the materiality of the photographic image, they promise powerful visual imagery and a corresponding aesthetic experience. Their use of found images – in Alexi-Meskhishvili's work, images of the Moon taken by astronauts on NASA's Artemis II mission; in Nguyen's work, images from body cameras used to increase police accountability – is undoubtedly driven by a desire to explore new aesthetic languages. At the same time, they question the high evidentiary value that their found images supposedly possess based on their sources. Photography, and the way in which both artists use it, becomes “a uniquely suitable mode for imaginative, multi-faceted world-building,” as the proposal describes.

Galerie Thomas Fischer

LEERE MITTE

Artists: Joachim Bandau, Dörte Eißfeldt, Seiichi Furuya, Wiebke Loeper,
Michael Schmidt, Hito Steyerl
curated by Boaz Levin

Since it began, Galerie Thomas Fischer has never shied away from taking risks and has often chosen to work long-term with artists who had been on the sidelines of the art market for a long time. Recently, for example, there have been exhibitions of Irmel Kamp and Dörte Eißfeldt. The gallery's extremely carefully curated intergenerational programme regularly reverberates in institutions. This is also because Galerie Thomas Fischer is synonymous with very subtly and sensitively conceived exhibitions that celebrate the aesthetics of the photographic image and at the same time pursue high standards in content. The group exhibition *Leere Mitte* conceived by Boaz Levin for the gallery is a perfect example of this. The exhibition is based on Hito Steyerl's 1998 film of the same name, which was made over a period of eight years and therefore created in a time when it was not yet quite clear which direction things would take: "The rise of extreme right-wing terror and xenophobia existed in parallel with socialist squatter utopias and protests – debates about urban planning and remembrance culture were entangled with the question of who had a right to the city," the proposal observes. The exhibition takes the city of Berlin as the starting point for an investigation of the relationship between East and West, and conveys the atmosphere of uncertainty shortly before and shortly after 1989 in several important series of works from the time – while also making them relevant to current political debates in Europe today.

Klemm's

FALK HABERKORN. MEDITERANÉES (working title)

Artist: Falk Haberkorn

The gallery Klemm's programme is generally associated with cooperation with artists who primarily work conceptually, many of whom through photography. This programming is combined with a commitment to consistently precisely curated exhibitions. The gallery is also known for its long-term approach to working with the artists it represents. The gallery's proposal embodies all this: a concept for a solo exhibition by Falk Haberkorn, entitled *Mediterranées*. For the exhibition, the artist will draw on his photographic archive and bring to life a long-term photographic project in conjunction with a work combining text and images, which both address current questions about the vulnerable relationship between nature and culture. However, he also asks phenomenologically orientated questions of photography itself. Haberkorn writes: "The initial spark came from a genuinely photographic moment during a trip to Cyprus in 2008: the physical experience of the almost painfully bright Mediterranean light, and at the same time the sudden realisation of the reverse of this allure, a dark feeling, formless at first, that even the most seemingly natural things still exist in the shadow of human history. And so, starting solely from this concrete phenomenon, I began a photographic investigation that also became a search "within photography": an inquiry into the medium's capacity for representation at all, caught in the tension between evidence and myth."

Jury Statements on the Seven Other Recipients of the EMOP Gallery Concept Award 2026/27

The listing of the award-winning galleries is in alphabetical order.

BQ

UNSUNG HEROES. CARINA BRANDES & JOCHEN LEMPERT

Artists: Carina Brandes, Jochen Lempert

BQ is receiving an award for an exhibition project proposal for a promising juxtaposition of two artists working outside the mainstream: *Unsung Heroes. Carina Brandes & Jochen Lempert* promises a chain of associations about opposing themes like familiarity and strangeness, inside and outside, and animals and humans, in which fundamental questions about the authenticity of photography are also posed.

ChertLüdde

ANNETTE FRICK UND SHEYLA BAYKAL

Artists: Sheyla Baykal, Annette Frick

In recent years, Annette Frick's photographs of queer nightlife in Berlin during the 1990s and 2000s have finally received institutional recognition. Her perspective is enlarged with works by Turkish-American artist Sheyla Baykal, who captured the sexual emancipation in avant-garde circles in New York's East Side in the 1970s, before AIDS wiped out an entire generation. The exhibition promises an interesting dialogue and at least one new discovery.

Dorothee Nilsson Gallery

MARGOT WALLARD. ORAN – ON Y SERA ENSEMBLE

Artist: Margot Wallard

Oran – On y sera ensemble is the title of the exhibition of work by Margot Wallard, born in 1978 in Paris. In terms of genre, the project is a photographic journey, a return to her family's roots through family albums and memories, and to the actual place. That place is Oran, Algeria, which her grandmother, who came from a family of French descent, was forced to leave after independence. The exhibition thus highlights the history of the Pieds-Noirs, which is largely unknown in much of Europe. Wallard's work understands memory as a continuous process in flux: by challenging one-sided narratives, it opens up spaces where a descendant's perspective on her family's history is given equal weight alongside a critical examination of European colonial history.

Galerie FWR FeldbuschWiesnerRudolph

TRANSNATIONALS

Artists: Ilit Azoulay, Marta Djourina, Sara-Lena Maierhofer, Nasan Tur,
Mirjana Vrbaški

With its proposal for a group exhibition, Galerie FWR promises to “turn away from the national perspective and move towards a cartographic exploration in the spheres of exchange of media and society.” This approach inspires curiosity, particularly in light of the overall theme of the EMOP 2027, *Common Ground. Letters from Europe* – and especially since the gallery, along with the invited artists, succeeds in examining the use of photography in different media.

Galerie Anton Janizewski

DU, ICH UND DIE ANDEREN (working title)

Artists: Jonas Höschl, Donja Nasser, Sophie Thun
curated by Anna Voswinckel

The prize-winning group exhibition curated by Anna Voswinckel at Galerie Anton Janizewski exposes mechanisms of racism and colonialism, right-wing extremism and radicalisation, as well as voyeurism and pornography, through work by Jonas Höschl, Donja Nasser and Sophie Thun. The selected series of works invite the viewer to challenge certain narratives, to reflect on photography as a medium of reception and also highlights ways towards self-empowerment in a crisis-ridden present.

Loock Galerie

TINA BARA. BUNA EINE ZEIT

Artist: Tina Bara

curated by Candice M. Hamelin

Since being founded in East Berlin in 1988 – back then under the name “Wohnmaschine” – Friedrich Loock’s gallery has stood out for its exhibitions of significant GDR photographers. What was quite a risky move in the beginning has paved the way for many artists into institutions and public debate. In keeping with this tradition, the gallery has decided to collaborate with contemporary artist Tina Bara, who, following *Lange Weile* (2016), has once again compiled her earliest photographic work into a photographic film in *Buna – eine Zeit* (2025), thereby reorientating what she was prohibited from doing as a young woman in the GDR: giving an account of the conditions of people’s lives and weaving her own biography and ideas into that.

Shahin Zarinbal

SAMUEL HAITZ. NOT DOING IT

Artist: Samuel Haitz

The award for Samuel Haitz’s solo exhibition at Shahin Zarinbal honours an emerging artist who, through approaches that reflect on the medium itself, explores the possibilities of breaking established norms. The subjects dealt with in his work range from desire and projection to originality and appropriation, all the way to practices of reading and archiving, and demand that we fundamentally sharpen our perception.

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