

Ellen von Unwerth – Press Release

30 October 2025 – 25 January 2026

Opening Reception: Wednesday, 29 October 2025, 5.30 – 7.30 p.m.; Christophe Guye Galerie, Zurich

Christophe Guye Galerie is delighted to present the first solo exhibition of Ellen von Unwerth in Switzerland.

Born in Germany in 1954, Ellen von Unwerth is widely regarded as one of the most influential photographic voices in contemporary fashion and portraiture. After a successful career as a model, she turned to photography in the late 1980s – a change of perspective that led to one of the most distinctive visual signatures in recent decades.

Von Unwerth rose to international prominence in the early 1990s with her sensual Guess campaign, followed by commissions for many of the world's leading brands including Absolut, Agent Provocateur, A.P.C., Aston Martin, Baccarat, Belvedere, Chanel, Chantal Thomass, Crazy Horse, Diesel, Dior, Elisabetta Franchi, Ferragamo, G-Star, Guerlain, H&M, Jimmy Choo, Lacoste, L'Oréal, MAC Cosmetics, Mercedes-Benz, Miu Miu, Revlon, Rolex, Shiseido, Tommy Hilfiger, Veuve Clicquot, and Victoria's Secret.

Her photographs regularly appear in the world's leading publications such as Vogue, Vanity Fair, i-D, Interview, ELLE, Numéro, The Face, Paper Magazine, Stern, and The New York Times, shaping the visual language of fashion and pop culture for more than three decades. Alongside her photographic work, von Unwerth has directed short films and commercials for Azzedine Alaïa, Dior, Guess, and Katherine Hamnett, as well as a range of music videos.

Her book projects are a central part of her practice: Snaps (1994), Wicked (1998), Couples (1999), the photo novellas Revenge (2003) and The Story of Olga (2012), Omahyra & Boyd (2005), Fräulein (2009), Die Spieler (2010), and Heimat (2017).

Her work has been shown in major museums and institutions around the world including Maison Européenne de la Photographie (MEP), Paris; Deichtorhallen, Hamburg; Fotomuseum Winterthur; Foam Amsterdam; National Portrait Gallery, London; and Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami. In 2018, Fotografiska Stockholm presented the retrospective Devotion! 30 Years of Photographing Women, which later travelled to Fotografiska New York and Tallinn. Her works have been featured in over thirty solo exhibitions and are included in numerous public and private collections worldwide.

Von Unwerth has received multiple awards for her contributions to photography, including first prize at the International Festival of Fashion Photography (1991), the LUCIE Award for Achievement in Fashion Photography (2019), the Royal Photographic Society Award (2020), and the Iconic Photographer Influencer Award (2021).

With her distinctive visual language – sensual, playful, and empowered – Ellen von Unwerth has reshaped the representation of femininity in photography and is today considered one of the most important artists of her generation.

Christophe Guye Galerie

About Christophe Guye Galerie

Founded in Los Angeles in 2006 by Christophe Guye and based in Zurich since 2010, the gallery is one of the leading international venues for contemporary fine art photography. It represents national and international artists who situate photography within the broader context of contemporary art practice and whose work makes significant contributions to art-historical discourse, the development of the medium, and contemporary art as a whole.

The gallery stages four to six exhibitions annually, featuring both its represented artists and guest projects. Its activities further include advising collections, curating and organizing exhibitions in collaboration with institutions, museums, and partner galleries, and regular participation in international art fairs such as Paris Photo, Photo London, MIA Milan, Unseen Amsterdam, and Photo Shanghai.

Interview Opportunity

The artist will be in Zurich from 29 – 30 October and is available for interviews. Please write to contact@christopheguye.com for requests.

Reception for the Artist

The opening of the exhibition in the presence of the artist will take place on Wednesday 29 October 2025 from 5.30 – 7.30 p.m. A personal invitation will follow.

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