

‘Go and see Momo!’ – Michael Ende und his Fantasy Novel

In 2023 Michael Ende's (1929–1995) most successful work Momo will be 50 years old. Momo, also known in English as *The Grey Gentlemen* or *The Men in Grey*, has been translated into more than fifty languages and has sold more than twenty million copies worldwide. The book has long since become a classic while remaining, at the same time, astoundingly topical. The Museum Werdenfels is staging the exhibition ‘*Go and see Momo!*’ to mark the fantasy novel's anniversary year and takes a close look also at Michael Ende's life and thoughts. The question as to the future of planet Earth and humanity is a recurrent theme that runs through all of Ende's work.



Momo, Cassiopeia and Grey Lord as puppets | © Düsseldorfer Marionetten-Theater



Michael Ende, Momo, ink drawing | © Michael Ende Estate

Time for ‘Momo’

The exhibition begins with the author's childhood and traces his biography and work while taking a look at how his stories were adapted for the stage. The focus is on Momo that, even fifty years on, is more than just a book for children and young people. It translates criticism of consumerism and capitalism into a poetic tale: little Momo does not own anything other than time, what she finds and what she is given. When the ‘men in grey’ appear to appropriate people's lifetimes, it is left to Momo to stand up to the huge army of grey men with only the help of a tortoise. Time itself becomes the novel's theme, as the media art installation on Momo at the end of the exhibition also underlines.



Michael Ende, around 1939 | © Michael Ende Estate

Poet, philosopher, writer

Michael Ende was born in Garmisch-Partenkirchen. His father Edgar Ende (1901–65) was a painter and, like his mother, belonged to the circle around the theologian Johannes Müller who built Schloss Emau. The young Ende received encouragement early on within a highly intellectual family environment. He wrote poetry and initially wanted to become an actor before deciding on writing instead.

The exhibition captures the little-known but fascinating personality of Michael Ende who, as a thinker, could be serious, rational and clear, socially critical and philosophically political and who was, at the same time, a poet with a profound range of feeling. In the sculptural installation for the exhibition, his quotations and thoughts have been joined together like notes from a card index to form long flag-like banners of quotations rising up into the air. On the exhibits level, pictures of Edgar Ende, photographs from his childhood and life, drawings from Momo and *The Never-Ending Story*, audio clips from interviews and readings and a stage set from the Düsseldorf Puppet Theatre, among other things, contribute towards creating a multi-faceted picture of this exceptional writer.

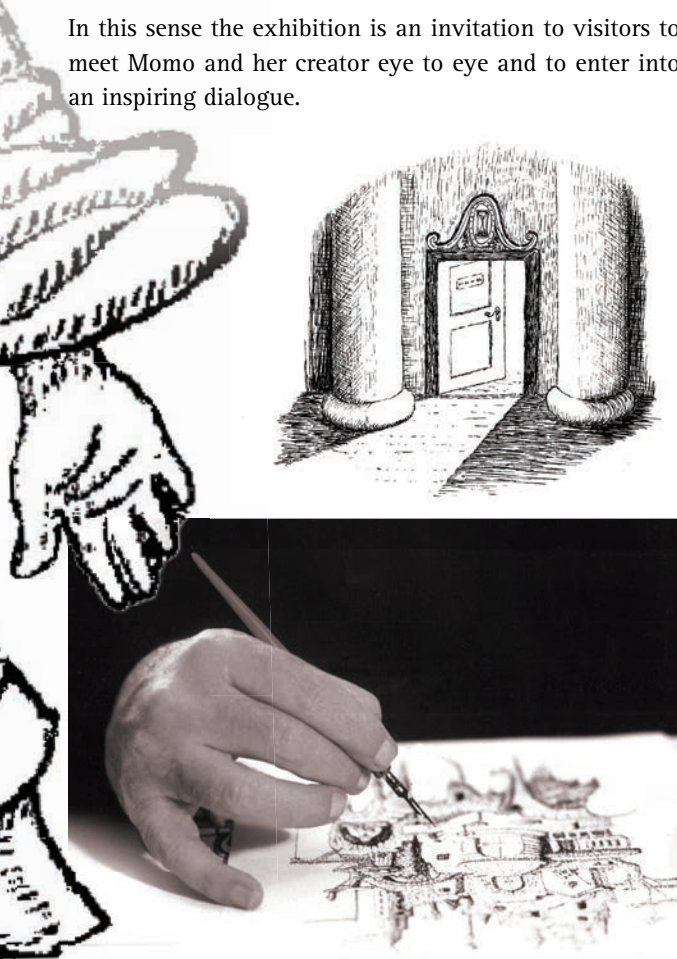


Writing in Genzano near Rome, 1983 | © Zoltan Nagy

Entering into Dialogue

In 1985 Michael Ende said: "For me, a book is something similar to entering into a dialogue with the reader. And the story I have written is the bridge to this dialogue. And if the book is good, if it is to function as a bridge, then it must be possible for the reader to make his own contribution, otherwise the whole thing remains merely a conversation from the top downwards [...]. And that is precisely what I want to avoid."

In this sense the exhibition is an invitation to visitors to meet Momo and her creator eye to eye and to enter into an inspiring dialogue.



Michael Ende, Nowhere House, ink drawing | © Michael Ende Estate
Michael Ende draws, 1990 | © Nomi Baumgartl

'Michael Ende Year 2023'

The 'Michael Ende Year 2023' in Garmisch-Partenkirchen presents a diverse range of events. The exhibition '*Go and see Momo!*' is also accompanied by museum-specific events and an educational programme.

Museum Werdenfels

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Opening times: Tuesday–Sunday, 10am–5pm
Also open on Mondays that are public holidays
Parking is available in the underground car park in Badgasse.



Edgar Ende, The Dancer, monotype, 1951 | © VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2023

Cover images (excerpts):

Michael Ende, Never Never Alley, ink drawing | © Michael Ende Estate
Edgar Ende, Shell Head, gouache, 1962 | © VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2023



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DAS LANDKREISMUSEUM
GARMISCH PARTENKIRCHEN



Design: Andrea Sorg



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