

William Wegman's Dog Gets Retrospective

The photogenic Weimaraner who helped launch the artist to fame is the subject of a new exhibit.

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She's been a voodoo priestess, Wonder Woman, and a farm hand. And now Fay Ray, William Wegman's Weimaraner model-muse, is the subject of "William Wegman: Fay" her first retrospective, at the Allentown (Pa.) Art Museum.

The dog, the second of Wegman's many Weimaraner models, died in 1996, and helped Wegman become one of the country's most successful – though controversial – artists.

(Critic Roberta Smith called Wegman "the art world's most amusing heavyweight lightweight.")

Now Wegman is speaking about the dog he called powerful. "She had a certain arch in her pose that was pretty extraordinary," he told the Allentown Morning Call. "She had a really nice shape to her, although in terms of dog showing, her tail set was too low. And those eyes, those round, haunting eyes."

Still, Wegman says he wasn't sure the occasionally skittish dog would enjoy being photographed. "Somehow, she really took to it," Wegman says. "She had a terrific way of being still while I put things on her. The [20-by-24-inch, 235-pound] Polaroid camera is enormous, as big as a refrigerator. It takes up the space of the photographer. I'm off to the side; she didn't really see me. My assistant would say 'Ready, Bill' and for some reason she would look into the lens."

"William Wegman: Fay" runs through Sept. 7. For more information, visit www.allentownartmuseum.org