



## PRESS RELEASE

### **Claudine Doury: *Between Magic and Reality***

**From 22<sup>nd</sup> October to January 2023, the Leica Gallery Wetzlar is presenting works by the multi-award-winning French photographer.**

**Wetzlar, 20<sup>th</sup> October 2022.** Time and again, the Paris-based photographer manages to captivate us. She takes the viewer to faraway locations: with delicate colours and sensitive images, she speaks of lesser known and wonderfully dreamlike places; yet she never drifts into nostalgia, but proves herself a precise observer and empathic companion, without revealing every secret. Over recent decades, Central Asia, Crimea and Siberia have been her preferred areas of exploration. The distinguished photographer, who won the Leica Oskar Barnack Award in 1999, is presenting three series in an exhibition at the Leica Gallery Wetzlar – all taken with her analogue Leica M6.

In the mid-nineties, Doury explored Russia's northern reaches, where she documented the lives and traditions of the last nomadic people living there. She covered thousands of kilometres, travelling from the Amur River, all the way to the lands beyond the Polar Circle. Her black and white LOBA series, *The Last Nomads of Siberia*, captured the tough everyday living conditions of the people who, even then, were caught between an omnipresent, but disappearing, cultural heritage and a rapidly changing world.

The second series, *Artek*, was a long-term project that began in 1994, and centred around youths at a summer recreation camp in Crimea. Established back in 1925, Artek had, once again, become a popular place for the children of privileged families in the post-Soviet era. Over a span of ten years, Doury captured sensitive portraits of a generation in transition from child to adulthood. Her touching images have lost none of their intimacy.

The third and most comprehensive part of the gallery exhibition is dedicated to pieces from her *Loulan Beauty* series, produced in Central Asia. "From 2002 to 2005, I was able to travel

through the Aral region of Kazakhstan, to Uzbekistan, Xinjiang and on to the banks of the Issyk-Kul in Kyrgyzstan,” Doury explains. Poetic moments, portraying “the heirs of sunken kingdoms, fishermen without a sea, and children who dance to bring back their parents who work far away.”

In all three series, the photographer asks fundamental questions that explore the relationship between people and nature, memory, transience and transition, loss, change and new beginnings.

Claudine Doury was born in Blois near Orléans, France, in 1959. After studying Journalism, she first worked as a photo editor, before turning fully to photography. She has received a number of awards for her work: in addition to the Leica Oskar Barnack Award (1999), she has been honoured with a World Press Photo Award (2000) and the Prix Niépce (2004) for her complete photographic oeuvre. Her photography has appeared in solo and group exhibitions around the world, and her work has been published in numerous photo books. Doury has been a member of the Agence VU', since 1991, She lives and works in Paris. [www.claudinedoury.com](http://www.claudinedoury.com)

Speaking of her series, Doury says:

“With *The Last Nomads of Siberia*, my interest was to know who these people were. We didn't know much about them, and I wanted to show their specific culture and way of life.”

“I decided to shoot *Artek* in 1994, when I first heard about it. Since the Soviet Union had collapsed, I wanted to see what still remained of that camp. I like to photograph young people because they live in a sort of ‘in between’ space, where everything is possible.”

“*Loulan Beauty* is the story of a slow disappearance – into the sand and in time. The end of a world – a trip through post-soviet central Asia and Xinjiang province in China.”

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