



PRESS RELEASE

The shortlist of the Leica Oskar Barnack Award 2023 has been selected

Wetzlar, 20th July 2023 Twelve finalists have made it onto the shortlist for this year's Leica Oskar Barnack Award (LOBA). 2023 brings us the 43rd edition of the internationally renowned photography competition. All the shortlisted photo series are now on display at www.leica-oskar-barnack-award.com/en/.

Once again this year, it will be exciting to see who will receive the Leica Oskar Barnack Award (LOBA). On 12th October, the winners of the main and the newcomer categories will be honoured during an award ceremony in Wetzlar, within the framework of a grand and festive photography event.

Following the tried and true procedure, the list of outstanding photography series was put together on the basis of proposals submitted by around 60 respected international photography experts from more than 30 countries. This year's jury then took the second step of determining the LOBA 2023 shortlist for the main and newcomer categories. The finalists for the LOBA Newcomer Award – open to photographers below 30 years of age –, are proposed in collaboration with important photography institutions and colleges from 15 countries.

The award ceremony on 12th October will mark the opening of a large exhibition of all the LOBA series, at the Ernst Leitz Museum in Wetzlar, realised with the kind support of WhiteWall. A comprehensive catalogue will accompany the event.

Following the initial exhibition in Wetzlar, the LOBA 2023 showcase of finalists and winners will appear in further Leica Galleries and photo festivals around the world.

The LOBA is one of the most prestigious and highly endowed awards in the field of photography: the winner of the LOBA receives 40,000 euros and Leica camera equipment valued at 10,000

euros; the winner of the Newcomer Award receives 10,000 euros and a Leica Q3.

The LOBA 2023 jury is made up of the following members:

Caroline Hunter, Photo Editor, The Guardian Saturday magazine, Great Britain;

Whitney Hollington Matewe, Photo Editor at TIME magazine, USA;

François Hébel, Curator, France;

Luca Locatelli, Photographer, Italy;

Karin Rehn-Kaufmann, Art Director and Chief Representative of Leica Galleries International (Austria)

Speaking about LOBA 2023, Karin Rehn-Kaufmann says:

“The significance of the LOBA is ever increasing, not least in view of Artificial Intelligence (AI). The nominated series were honest, expressive and impressive reflections of today’s world. Working together, and with mutual appreciation, the jury completed the challenging task of choosing the finalists and winners. The result is a LOBA edition of particularly strong, diverse and moving series.”

Caroline Hunter says about LOBA 2023:

“I think the LOBA is a fantastic opportunity for the winning entries to receive global exposure and recognition, which hopefully will lead to even greater opportunities in the future.”

An overview of the LOBA 2023 shortlist (main and newcomer categories in alphabetical order):

Eric Bouvet: Elevations

Mountains, glaciers and, inexplicably, a nail: as a tribute to the early days of photography, the French photographer (born 1961) has been working on his series for the last three years, using a large-format 20×25 camera, and a historical photographic procedure from the 19th century. His view of dwindling ice zones and climatic change in the French Alpine landscapes surrounding Mont Blanc, which he has captured in monumental motifs by using this elaborate procedure, is extremely topical.

Ismail Ferdous: Sea Beach

Colourful life at the beach: Cox’s Bazar lies at the southernmost point of Bangladesh. It is a popular destination for many of the country’s population, stretching along the Bay of Bengal. It

is considered a cultural melting pot, where people from every walk of life and place in society search for a few moments of relaxation and recreation. Though he is currently based in New York, the photographer (born 1989) originates from Bangladesh, and returned to this special place to capture the beach goers and atmosphere in brilliant colours.

Johanna-Maria Fritz: A Grave in the Garden

The Russian invasion of Ukraine began on February 24, 2022. Just two days later, the German photographer (born 1994) began her documentary work in the disputed areas. The pictures making up the series were taken within a year, in different places, and reveal the horrors of war and the cruel consequences for the population. The impressive reportage series provides a direct and unvarnished look at the daily existence of people who have to fight for their lives every day.

Natela Grigalashvili: The Final Days of Georgian Nomads

The Georgian photographer (born 1965) has been observing and exploring the village communities of Adjara, one of the outstanding mountainous regions of Georgia. Old traditions and nomadic lifestyles are still alive there, but the difficult social and economical conditions are bringing increasing changes to the area. People are moving away; whole villages lie abandoned; and ancient traditions are gradually disappearing.

Jonas Kakó: The Dying River

The Colorado River used to run for 2,000 kilometres, from the Rocky Mountains to the Gulf of California; but recent decades have seen the diversion of water for agriculture and for the growing cities, which has led to the river running dry in places. In his series, the German photographer (born 1992) reveals the struggle for the water which around 44 million people depend upon. The future appears particularly grim for the indigenous Cucapá people living in the Colorado Delta: without the river, their culture will die out.

Ziyi Le: New Comer

The Chinese photographer (born 1993) started his project using Weibo, a Twitter-like portal for short messages in China, where he found people interested in his sensitive portrait series. He finds that staged photo shoots represent a reflection of his own self-doubt, as well as the feeling of alienation and growing emptiness. The outcome is a touching portrait of the “New Comer,” a generation in search of personal development and their place in society.

Edu León: Unearth the Memory

The Spanish photographer (born 1977) has been living in Latin America for over ten years. He photographed the series nominated for the LOBA in regions of Colombia most affected by armed conflict: Buenaventura, Cacarica, La Ciénaga and El Salado. Together with his protagonists, he developed motifs to serve as a way to remember, and to give visibility to the women and their experiences. There are images of pain, but also of hope for a peaceful future in this violence-ridden land.

Rania Matar: Fifty Years Later

Lebanon is still suffering from the consequences of the civil war that began fifty years ago. Following brutal clashes, corrupt governments and months of lockdown during the Covid pandemic, the explosions in the Port of Beirut, in 2020, plunged the country even deeper into the abyss. Born in Lebanon in 1964, the American photographer dedicates her series to the women of the country: images capturing their presence, creativity, strength, dignity and resilience are representative of the hopes, dreams and fears of a whole generation.

Gustavo Minas: Liquid Cities

People in places of transition: the pictures taken by the Brazilian photographer (born 1981) are characterised by feelings of isolation, alienation, and even fear. By frequently integrating reflections into his pictures, the photographer captures various levels of reality, which are defined by the diverse personal needs of different social and societal groups. This exciting series was photographed in various major cities – primarily in the Americas, but also in Europe.

Seamus Murphy: Kingdom

The Irish photographer (born 1959) has been living in Great Britain for over 35 years. He appreciates British politeness, coupled with anarchic eccentricity. When Brexit happened, he began to rethink his relationship to the country, and to see details, daily gestures and public rituals in a new light. Consequently, since 2016, this has given rise to a series full of bitter irony, empathy and criticism of social and societal conditions. The photographer suggests that the sound of a quirky military band could make a fitting musical accompaniment for his shots.

Jordi Ruiz Cirera: On This Side There Are Dreams, Too

The starting point for this series: daily life for people along Mexico's northern border – a region

stretching 3,000 kilometres from Tijuana, on the Pacific, to the Gulf of Mexico. This border region is covered most frequently by the media when they are reporting on violence and migration conflicts. In contrast, the Spanish photographer (born 1984) focuses his quiet series on hopes and dreams, everyday stories and the unique landscape.

Laetitia Vançon: Tribute to Odesa

This series was taken in Odesa and the region surrounding the Ukrainian city, in June, 2022: it is a symbolic and strategically important place for both sides of the conflict. The Russian aggression had been going on for months; the city had been hit but resisted the attacks. The Munich-based, French photographer (born 1979) focussed her reportage on quiet and simple moments of everyday life, revealing how people cling to their daily routines, in the hope of regaining a sense of normality.

Leica Camera – A Partner for Photography

Leica Camera AG is an international, premium manufacturer of cameras and sports optics. The legendary reputation of the Leica brand is based on a long tradition of excellent quality, German craftsmanship and German industrial design, combined with innovative technologies. An integral part of the brand's culture is the diversity of activities the company undertakes for the advancement of photography. In addition to the Leica Galleries and Leica Akademies spread around the world, there are the Leica Hall of Fame Award and, in particular, the Leica Oskar Barnack Award (LOBA), which is considered one of the most innovative sponsorship awards existing today. Furthermore, Leica Camera AG, with its headquarters in Wetzlar, Hesse, and a second production site in Vila Nova de Famalicão, Portugal, has a worldwide network of its own national organisations and Leica Retail Stores.

Please find further information at:

Leica Camera AG

Ann-Kristin Löhr

Global PR Coordination

E-Mail: Ann-Kristin.Loehr@leica-camera.com

Internet: www.leica-camera.com