



PRESS RELEASE

Elliott Erwitt is being honoured with the Leica Hall of Fame Award

Wetzlar, 12th October 2023. On 12th October 2023, within the framework of the Celebration of Photography, Leica Camera AG will be honouring renowned Magnum photographer Elliott Erwitt, with the Leica Hall of Fame Award for his life's work. The accompanying exhibition will be on display at the Leica Gallery in Wetzlar, up until end of January 2024. One of Erwitt's well-known motifs has been selected as Leica Picture of the Year.

Marilyn Monroe or Che Guevara, a loving couple in a rear view mirror or an elegant leap in front of the Eiffel Tower, portraits of people or dogs: many of Erwitt's iconic motifs are anchored in the annals of photographic history, and have made the 95-year-old a living legend. His incomparable pictorial humour brings delight around the world.

Erwitt's images have an emotional impact on the viewer, while usually guiding them towards more far-reaching and profound ideological considerations. To be able to capture all this in a single moment and transfer it into a picture, may well be the secret behind his photography. "You can find pictures anywhere. It's simply a matter of noticing things and organizing them. You just have to care about what's around you and have a concern with humanity and the human comedy," the brilliant storyteller explains in a rather understated manner. "You only need the humble ability to bring order into a motif, to compose a picture, or to recognise and reflect a certain mood. From time to time, you might produce an image that says something. That's already

enough. Of course, it also doesn't hurt when you happen to be in the right place at the right time." The best examples of his incomparable vision of the world can be seen in the accompanying exhibition at the Leica Gallery in Wetzlar, for which the photographer chose 50 of his favourite motifs taken over seven decades. Erwit's career began in New York in 1948, and developed in particular in 1953 when Robert Capa invited him to become a member of the Magnum Agency. He was on the move constantly, photographing actors, politicians and celebrities, as well as street scene, landscapes and urban settings. Furthermore, in addition to numerous commercial assignments, he always found time for his own motifs, whereby children, couples and dogs were to become his favourite topics. He has captured countless unforgettable moments, with humour, precision and charm. His motifs are direct and entertaining, sensitive and incisive, both American and cosmopolitan.

The son of Russian emigrants, Elliot Erwit was born in Paris on 26th July 1928. He grew up in Italy and France. In 1939 he emigrated to America with his family. His interest in photography emerged when he was a teenager living in Hollywood. He began working as a professional photographer in New York in 1948, and in 1953 Robert Capa invited him to become a member of the Magnum Agency, which Erwit was to preside over for a number of terms. His career over many decades led him to becoming one of the best known and busiest photographers of our times. Starting in 1970, he also began to make films and work for television. Erwit stepped back from photographic assignments over twenty years ago, and now gives his time to reappraising his life's work with numerous exhibitions and photo books. He lives in New York City, where the new Leica Gallery will also host an exhibition next year to celebrate Erwit's Leica Hall of Fame Award.

Leica Picture of the Year

A limited edition of one of Erwit's pictures will be on offer exclusively through Leica Galleries. The perfectly symbiotic portrait of a bulldog with his companion sitting behind him, was taken in 2000 very close to the photographer's studio in Manhattan's Upper West Side. Since 2021, Leica Camera AG has granted the Leica Picture of the

Year recognition to outstanding Leica photographers who have been inducted into the Leica Hall of Fame. Following Ralph Gibson and Thomas Hoepker in previous years, the 2023 Leica Picture of the Year is by Elliott Erwitt.

Leica Hall of Fame Award

Pictures that have touched the world, moments that remain unforgotten: Leica Camera AG has been inducting outstanding photographers into the Leica Hall of Fame since 2011 – artists whose vision of the world has moved something, has changed something. Timeless iconic images that reveal the *conditio humana*, and have become part of our collective memory, offer testimony to their creativity. Steve McCurry was the first photographer honoured with the Leica Hall of Fame Award in 2011. He was followed by Barbara Klemm, Nick Út, René Burri, Thomas Hoepker and Ara Güler. In 2016, the award was granted to Joel Meyerowitz, in 2017 to Gianni Berengo Gardin; and, in 2018, to Bruce Davidson and Jürgen Schadeberg. In 2019, Walter Vogel was honoured; followed by Ralph Gibson in 2021. With Elliott Erwitt, the number of recipients of the Leica Hall of Fame Award has reached thirteen.

In addition to honouring Elliott Erwitt with the Leica Hall of Fame Award during the Celebration of Photography, this year's winners of the 43rd edition of the Leica Oskar Barnack Award will also be celebrated. Furthermore, the winning and all shortlisted series will be exhibited at the Ernst Leitz Museum until the end of January 2024.

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.

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Leica Camera Malaysia Sdn Bhd

Kingston Saik

Senior Marketing & PR Executive

E-Mail: marketing.lcm@leica-camera.com