



PHOTOGRAPHICA
AUCTION

PRESS RELEASE

Drag Queens from New York meet Angels from Bad Ischl: Photographs Exhibition and Auction "Gestures" at the Leica Gallery Vienna

Leitz Photographica Auction combines exhibitions with auction events. On October 18, the Austrian auction house will debut a new format for its annual photographs auction. For the first time, the auction – titled “Gestures” – will take place directly at the Leica Gallery Vienna. Starting on October 4, the gallery will also hold the eponymous exhibition showcasing the over auction 100 lots, with free admission. Highlights of the auction include influential works by renowned photographers such as Nan Goldin, William Eggleston, Alfred Eisenstaedt, and William Klein.



Jimmy Paulette on David's Bike © Leitz Photographica Auction – Nan Goldin (please note the terms of use stated below)

Vienna, 18 September 2024. Leitz Photographica Auction's upcoming event revolves around gestures, both in the literal and metaphorical sense. In their entirety, the works offered for sale reflect the immense diversity of the history of photography, bringing together a wide range of

styles, perspectives, and subjects from this wide-ranging art form. “Sharing the fascination of photography in all its facets with enthusiasts of the medium – and sparking that same passion in newcomers – has always been the goal of our auction house. This is especially evident in the exciting selection of lots we are offering as part of ‘Gestures’”, explains Alexander Sedlak, Managing Director of Leitz Photographica Auction.

One of many highlights of the auction and the respective exhibition is William Klein’s photograph “Hand, Beyrouth”. “It is a prime example of the relentless, direct, and radical visual language of the late artist who died in 2022. Beyond conventional norms, he allows his subjects to interact with the camera in unexpected compositions. Often, observers at the edge of the frame become unsuspecting protagonists, as seen in the present photograph, due to Klein's unconventional method: He used wide-angle lenses and worked with grainy contrast and blurring, challenging our perception of streets and sidewalks filled with people”, explains Caroline Guschelbauer, head of photographs auctions at Leitz Photographica Auction. Klein's photo essays which he published in now-legendary photobooks like “New York”, “Tokyo” or “Rome” captured the raw intensity of urban landscapes as if he wanted to intuitively and radically reimagine the city. “Hand, Beyrouth” from 1963 is an outstanding example of Klein's experimental approach to photography.

Eggleston’s framing of the “Kaiserbrunnen” in Bad Ischl

While gestures serve as the leitmotif of both auction and exhibition, human protagonists are absent in some of the most prestigious lots. William Eggleston’s shot of the “Kaiserbrunnen” (i.e. the imperial fountain) in Bad Ischl provides a case in point. „Eggleston photographed ordinary objects and everyday situations with what he called a ‘democratic’ working strategy. Through his lens, the commonplace turns into art. The reality captured by Eggleston is an excerpt from what is found; everything in the image holds equal stature, with neither a person nor an object dominating”, says Guschelbauer.

Eggleston’s pictures feature houses, cars, restaurants, their patrons, or, as in this case, a fountain. Visiting the festival Steirischer Herbst in 1983, the American artist made a stop in Bad Ischl’s Imperial Park where he took a picture of the “Kaiserbrunnen”. The selected framing of this tourist motif creates tension by revealing only part of the story while simultaneously unveiling the masterful hand of the artist himself.

Looking back at the future ahead

A gaze, not a gesture draws the eye in Nan Goldin's "Jimmy Paulette on David's Bike", the photograph gracing the cover of the newly expanded edition of Nan Goldin's iconic photobook *The Other Side*, originally published in 1993. It's a self-assured gaze into the future. A future in which transgender people and drag queens – whom Goldin portrayed in "The Other Side", a bar in Boston, from the early 1970s onwards – have conquered a place in society, pop culture and mainstream.

"The photograph, taken in 1991, depicts Goldin's close friends Jimmy and David, carefree as they ride through the streets of New York City. Jimmy sits on the rear rack of the bicycle, looking boldly and confidently into Goldin's camera, as if already sensing that the self-determination of gender and identity will one day no longer be an illusion. This striking image encapsulates the most significant attributes of Goldin's work: the intimacy of her portraits, the authenticity of her subjects, and the subtle yet powerful engagement with social and political issues", says Caroline Guschelbauer.

Swiss elegance in the interwar period

Another highlight of "Gestures" centers on the art of meticulously executed choreography. With a blend of vigor and elegance, René Breguet, head waiter of the Grand Hotel St. Moritz, glides effortlessly over the ice. In the early 1930s, guests were treated to an extraordinary spectacle. Elegantly attired waiters, donning ice skates, served champagne and cocktails on the furnished ice rink in front of the hotel. Breguet exhibited such mastery of this skill that he could leap over chairs without spilling a single drop. The rigorous training required for such proficiency was documented by Alfred Eisenstaedt in a series, which depicted young waiters in practice and was published in LIFE Magazine in 1936.

Photographs in October, cameras in November

The photographs auction "Gestures" will take place on 18 October 2024 from 6:30 pm at the Leica Gallery Vienna and will feature a total of 107 lots from photographers such as Nan Goldin, William Klein, William Eggleston, Horst P. Horst, Harry Callahan and Robert Frank. One month later, on 23 November, the next auction organised by Leitz Photographica Auction will follow – the 45th edition of the eponymous Leitz Photographica Auction, the world's leading auction series for cameras and camera accessories.

„Gestures“ exhibition opening:

Thursday, 3 October 2024, 6:30 pm

Leica Gallery Vienna

Seilergasse 14, 1010 Vienna

The exhibition 4. bis 18. Oktober (Auktionsbeginn)

„Gestures“ auction:

Friday, 18 October 2024, 6:30 pm

Leica Gallery Vienna

Seilergasse 14, 1010 Vienna

The after sale ends on 15 November 2024

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For more detailed information please visit www.leitz-auction.com and www.classic.leica-camera.com.

About Leica Camera Classics:

Traditional German camera manufacturer Leica Camera AG has two subsidiaries in Vienna: Leica Camera Austria GmbH and Leica Camera Classics GmbH. The latter specialises in vintage cameras and has around 500 units on display at its Leica Classic Store at Westbahnstraße 40. This location also houses the world’s largest spare parts warehouse for historic Leica cameras. Due to this unique stock, the technicians on site can examine historic Leica cameras according to the highest collector standards and restore them prior to auction if necessary.

Twice a year - in mid-June and at the end of November - Leica Camera Classics organises the Leitz Photographica Auction, the world's most renowned auction of vintage cameras, attracting bidders from over 100 countries. Leica Camera Classics also operates the Leica Market Place, an online store that offers vintage and pre-owned cameras as well as historical rarities from all over the world with a focus on the Leica brand.

Press inquiries:

Leica Camera UK

UK PR Coordination

E-Mail: pr.uk@leica-camera.com

Website: www.leica-camera.com/en-GB

