



PRESS RELEASE

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Leica Camera AG is honouring Herlinde Koelbl with the Leica Hall of Fame Award

Wetzlar, 09th October 2024. She has long been considered one of the most significant and renowned German photographers: now Herlinde Koelbl is being honoured with the Leica Hall of Fame Award for her lifetime achievements. The ceremony will be part of this year's Celebration of Photography from 9 to 10 October at Leica Headquarters in Wetzlar, Germany. The complementary exhibition will be on display at the Leica Gallery Wetzlar up until 26th January 2025. One of the photographer's motifs has also been chosen as Leica Picture of the Year 2024.

Koelbl is a precise observer, an experienced author, a versatile artist and sensitive chronicler of her times: over the past five decades, German photographer Herlinde Koelbl has created an unequalled, multi-layered body of work. She devotes herself intensively to her subjects, and publishes her long-term studies mostly in book form, supplemented by comprehensive exhibitions. Her first photo book, *Das Deutsche Wohnzimmer* (The German Living Room) from 1980, was designed as a sociological study, and enjoyed great success. The combination of documentary images with personal statements by the people depicted has become one of the photographer's trademarks. The impressive *Jewish Portraits* project, first published in 1989, which she worked on over many years and in which the direct black and white photographs are complemented by long interviews with contemporary witnesses, received much acclaim, and provided an emotional examination of contemporary German history. She became best known for her project *Traces of Power – The Transformation of People Through Governance* in which she observed German politicians over a period of eight years, starting in 1991. Following that, Koelbl portrayed and conducted interviews with Angela Merkel up until 2021. The six pairs of images selected for the exhibition from her *Traces of Power – Angela Merkel 1991–2021* series are a clear demonstration of the photographer's conceptual way of working. Her most important and tried and true strategy is to approach new subjects without

prejudice, with curiosity and impartiality, but always well prepared. Whether *High Society*, *Clothes Make the Man*, *Bedrooms*, *Hair*, *Portraits*, *Writers* or *Metamorphoses* – just to name a few of the projects presented in the current exhibition – Koelbl always succeeds in developing her thematically and stylistically-diverse long-term projects in a fascinating manner, while also sensitising the viewers to socio-political issues. Leica cameras were the favourite tools for many of her series, initially due to the discretion needed; however, even in digital times they have proven to be reliable instruments for capturing the finest nuances. With 47 works from ten series, the exhibition at the Leica Gallery Wetzlar provides insightful glimpses into the photographer's rich life's work.

Herlinde Koelbl was born on 31st October 1939 in Lindau. After first studying fashion, it was in the mid seventies that she discovered photography as her creative medium of expression. She subsequently began to work on assignments for magazines, as well as creating an enormously productive series of publications of her own long-term photographic projects, which were often accompanied by interviews. Some of the projects also resulted in documentary films. Her sensitive and often philosophical interviews appeared regularly in the ZEITmagazin. Her 35mm-range work was primarily carried out with Leica cameras, and her medium format with a Hasselblad. Koelbl has published more than 20 photo books and has received numerous awards, including the Medal of Excellence (1987), the Dr Erich Salomon Prize of the DGPh (2001), the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany (2009) and the Bavarian Order of Merit (2013). She lives and works in Neuried near Munich.

Leica Picture of the Year

A limited edition of one of Koelbl's pictures will be on offer exclusively through Leica Galleries. The motif belongs to the photographer's most recent series, *Metamorphoses*, where she traces the beauty of transience in the form of wilting flowers. 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, Thomas Hoepker and Elliott Erwitt in previous years, the Leica Picture of the Year 2024 is by Herlinde Koelbl.

The 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 and Elliott Erwitt last year. With Herlinde Koelbl, the number of members inducted into the Leica Hall of Fame has risen to 14.

During the Celebration of Photography Herlinde Koelbl will be honoured with the Leica Hall of Fame Award, alongside the celebration of this year's winners of the 44th edition of the Leica Oskar Barnack Award (LOBA). The LOBA winning series, together with all the shortlisted series, will be on display at the Ernst Leitz Museum up until 26th January 2025.

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:

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