



# 100 years of Leica: Witness to a Century (1925-2025)

## Dubai takes center stage for a worldwide celebration

Dubai, UAE - 23 January 2025: For Leica Camera AG, the year 2025 marks the 100th anniversary of the Leica I. Leica Camera AG's celebrations around the world are therefore being held under the motto "100 Years of Leica: Witness to a Century" with numerous cultural highlights and exciting new products.

'I hereby decide: we will take the risk', with these formative words the entrepreneur Ernst Leitz II decided to mass produce the ground-breaking invention of the "Ur-Leica" by Oskar Barnack which led to the Leica I in 1925, forever transforming visual storytelling with its compact 35mm format. For the first time, it was possible to take pictures of real life - capturing the decisive moment - this gave rise to entirely new possibilities for use and expression. As a result, the genres of reportage and documentary photography, along with street and artistic photography, were born.

Dubai takes the lead in a spectacular and exclusive celebration, becoming the first city to honor Leica's century. The choice of Dubai reflects its vibrant energy, forward-thinking vision, and seamless alignment with Leica's legacy of innovation and excellence. Following Dubai, the global festivities will continue in Milan, New York, Shanghai, and Tokyo, culminating in a grand celebration at Leica's headquarters in Wetzlar, Germany, in June 2025.

An exclusive gala dinner at Dubai Opera brought together over two hundred VIPs. The evening's highlights included the unveiling of the Leica M11 100 Years of Leica "DUBAI UAE", a collector's item limited to 100 units available for sale at Leica Store Dubai Mall. In addition, a commemorative book, *Dubai: Light, Lens, Legacy*, was published, featuring Sir Wilfred Thesiger's historic images of old Dubai alongside the modern perspectives of local photographers Hisham Khonji, Fatma Almosa, Saeed Nassouri, and Joseph Hutson, capturing the city's unique blend of tradition and innovation.

Issam Kazim, CEO at Dubai Corporation for Tourism and Commerce Marketing, part of the Dubai Department of Economy and Tourism (DET), said: "Dubai is honoured to be the first city to host the global celebration of the Leica I's 100-year legacy, and we congratulate the organisation on this remarkable milestone. The city's commitment to innovation and creativity aligns seamlessly with Leica's values, and we



are proud to be part of an event that celebrates both. The power of the camera has brought Dubai to the world, showcasing its unique landscape from the islands and beach fronts, and the sand dunes and desert lakes, to the spectacular architecture that combines the old and new, and the multicultural population that comes together to create a destination unlike any other. This special occasion marks yet another milestone in our ongoing journey to inspire creativity and provide a platform for iconic imagery."

Dr. Andreas Kaufmann, Chairman of the Supervisory Board of Leica Camera, stated, "Leica has borne witness to history through the eyes of visionary photographers, preserving moments that define culture and humanity. I am honoured to kickstart celebrations in Dubai, a dynamic city that embodies innovation while staying true to its essence—a spirit of progress that perfectly mirrors Leica's legacy."

Karin Rehn-Kaufmann, Art Director & Chief Representative of Leica Galleries International, officially announced the launch of an exclusive photography exhibition, set to run from 22nd to 26th January 2025 at Foundry, Boulevard Crescent, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Blvd, Downtown Dubai. The exhibition will showcase 100 iconic images by renowned photographers, photos that not only shaped history but also made a profound impact on the world.

Mr. Asaad Abboud, Managing Director of Leica Camera Middle East, added: "Although Leica's dynamic presence in Dubai began in 2015, making it one of the newest additions to the Leica family, the brand's exceptional success and its seamless integration with this remarkable city have propelled Dubai to the forefront, becoming the first city to lead such celebrations."

As Leica Camera commemorates a century of innovation and photographic excellence with '100 Years of Leica: Witness to a Century,' the city of Dubai has set a remarkable precedent as the inaugural host of this global celebration. Through exclusive events like the gala dinner at Dubai Opera, the limited-edition Leica M11 'DUBAI UAE' & a cultural showcase at Foundry Downtown, Dubai has underscored its commitment to fostering creativity and honouring Leica's enduring legacy. As festivities continue across the globe, Leica remains dedicated to inspiring generations of photographers worldwide.

#### About Leica Camera

Leica Camera AG is an international premium manufacturer of cameras, lenses and sports optics products with over 150 years of company history. As part of its growth strategy, the company has expanded its business to include mobile imaging (smartphones) and the manufacture of high-quality eyeglass lenses and watches and is represented in the home cinema segment with its own projectors.



Headquartered in Wetzlar (Germany) and with a second production site in Vila Nova de Famalicão (Portugal), Leica Camera AG has a global network of its own sales companies with over 120 Leica Stores. The company employs 2,400 people and achieved a turnover of 554 million euros in the 2023/24 financial year. The Leica brand stands for excellent quality, German craftsmanship and industrial design combined with innovative technologies. An integral part of the brand culture is the promotion of the culture of photography with around 30 Leica Galleries worldwide, Leica Academies and international awards such as the Leica Hall of Fame Award and the Leica Oskar Barnack Award (LOBA).

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