



Press Release

2025 Leica Oskar Barnack Award Shortlist Finalised

The 12 LOBA finalists have been selected and are presenting their series

Wetzlar, 10 July 2025 – The international jury for this year's Leica Oskar Barnack Award (LOBA) has chosen the finalists for the 45th edition of this prestigious photography competition – 12 remarkable photographic works that captivate with their striking visual language and deep emotional impact. The shortlisted image series can now be seen at www.leica-oskar-barnack-award.com. Explanatory texts and more detailed information will be added in the coming weeks.

The final shortlist was selected by this year's LOBA jury: **Jane Evelyn Atwood**, Photographer and 1997 LOBA Winner (USA/France); **Cyril Drouhet**, Deputy Director of Photography at *Le Figaro Magazine* (France); **Felix Hoffmann**, Artistic Director at Foto Arsenal Vienna (Austria); **Curt Holtz**, Editor-in-Chief for Photography and Architecture at Prestel Publishing (Germany) and **Karin Rehn-Kaufmann**, Art Director and Chief Representative of Leica Galleries International (Austria)

Leica Camera AG has been recognising exceptional photographers by awarding the LOBA since 1980. Once again this year, the jury selected the shortlist, choosing from proposals submitted by over 120 photography experts across nearly 50 countries. Every nominator has selected up to three photo series based on their personal expertise and experience. The Leica Oskar Barnack Newcomer Award is bestowed in collaboration with 20 international institutions and universities from 17 countries.

Anticipation is growing as we approach 9 October, when the winners will receive the main and newcomer award at Leica's headquarters in Wetzlar. Once again, the awards ceremony will be accompanied by a grand celebration, forming part of the Leica anniversary year, where the history of Leica will be honoured under the motto "100 Years of Leica: Witness to a Century". The winner of the LOBA main category will be awarded 40,000 euros and Leica camera equipment worth 10,000 euros, while the winner of the newcomer category will receive 10,000 euros and a Leica Q3.

After the award ceremonies on 9 October, all 2025 finalists will be celebrated in an exhibition at the Ernst Leitz Museum, supported by WhiteWall, and a comprehensive accompanying catalogue. Following its showcase in Wetzlar, the 2025 LOBA exhibition will be displayed at various Leica Galleries and featured at photography festivals.



An overview of the photo series featured on the 2025 LOBA shortlist (for the main and newcomer categories), in alphabetical order, is as follows:

Lynsey Addario: “Mom, I Want to Live” – A Young Girl Battles War and Cancer

The American photographer (born in 1973) focuses her series on the fate of a Ukrainian girl, who was diagnosed with a rare form of eye cancer in 2020 at the age of two.

The war prevented access to essential treatment for this typically curable condition. This series tells a powerful story of resilience – a young girl and her family’s unwavering struggle for survival amid the devastation of war.

Arlette Bashizi: Beyond Numbers

Through her personal project, the photographer (born in 1999) documents the impact of conflict in her homeland, the Democratic Republic of Congo, shedding light on the devastating consequences of war between rebels and the army. Over 6 million Congolese people have been forced to flee their homes. The photographer captures the daily reality of her community in North Kivu, in eastern Congo, where the lasting effects of conflict have shaped life since 2021. Through her work, she brings recognition to individuals who might otherwise remain faceless within the vast numbers of statistics.

Alejandro Cegarra: The Two Walls

Mexico was once known as a safe haven for asylum seekers. In recent years, however, Mexico has aligned more closely with US anti-immigration measures, aiming to limit the onward movement of asylum seekers to the United States. In his black-and-white series, the Venezuelan-born photographer (born in 1989), now based in Mexico, captures the struggles of individuals impacted by the harsh realities of life in the Mexican border region.

Serghei Duve: Bright Memory

The series explores imagery that embodies the sentiment captured by the Russian expression “bright memory”, reflecting everyday life shaped by nostalgia and division. Through his personal photographs, the German photographer (born in 1999), who started life in the Republic of Moldova, explores his family’s enduring connection to Transnistria – a territory that declared independence from Moldova in 1990, yet remains unrecognised internationally and supported solely by Russia.

Gideon Mendel: Deluge

The South African photographer (born in 1959) presents a deeply personal yet methodical approach to documenting the global climate crisis, illustrating how its impacts transcend boundaries of wealth, class, ethnicity and geography.



Since 2007, Mendel has photographed flooding in 13 countries around the world. His series juxtaposes direct portraits of individuals impacted by climate disasters with abstracted landscape imagery, forming a typology that encapsulates the effects of climate change.

Stanislav Ostrovs: Civilians. The Gray Zone

The Ukrainian regions of Donetsk, Kherson and Kharkiv continue to endure relentless shelling. Many who had the means to escape have fled their villages and towns. Only the poorest and the elderly have remained. Shops are closed, and electricity is unreliable. In this precarious grey zone, survival hinges on the dedication of volunteers. In his black-and-white series, the Ukrainian photographer (born in 1972) powerfully captures the stark reality of war, exposing the anguish of civilian victims caught in desperate circumstances.

Xiangjie Peng: The Rise of Queer Underground Party Culture in China

Since 2017, the Chinese photographer (born in 1961) has been capturing the experiences of the queer community across various cities in China. His portraits document spaces where individuals can freely express their identities within an open and accepting community. Set against the backdrop of clubs, parties and competitions, this black-and-white series explores vibrant spaces for self-expression within the LGBTQ+ community – cultural sanctuaries that flourish despite official restrictions. As foreign influences gradually permeate the country, underground spaces for freedom of expression are expanding.

Ivor Prickett: War on the Nile – Fragmented Sudan

Away from the focus of global public attention, a brutal civil war has been raging in Sudan for over two years.

More than 11 million people have been displaced and up to 150,000 have died. Last year, the Irish photographer (born in 1983) succeeded in travelling to the war-torn country to document its devastation for *The New York Times*. His photographs highlight one of the world's most severe humanitarian crises. The harrowing images show the devastation unfolding in the country, portraying both the scale of tragedy and the desperate plight of refugees caught in the conflict.

Frederik Rüegger: I Am a Stranger in This Country

For two years, the German photographer (born in 1993) documented the lives of English and Irish Traveller communities, capturing their struggle to preserve their traditional way of life amid growing challenges. Exclusion and discrimination, driven by Brexit and growing nationalism – and further intensified by misinformation and hostility on social media – endanger the freedom of Traveller



communities. The photographs capture scenes from horse markets – one of the few remaining spaces where Traveller communities can openly celebrate their culture.

Anastasia Taylor-Lind: 5km from the Frontline

For the past 10 years, the English photographer (born in 1981) has been documenting the war in Ukraine alongside journalist Alisa Sopova. She chronicles the lives of those affected by the war, with a particular focus on the Donbass region in eastern Ukraine. The war started there in 2014 and has remained especially violent and destructive ever since. This compelling long-term project seeks to convey, with raw immediacy, the daily reality of survival amid military violence and constant threat.

Jodi Windvogel: Life Under Occupation – Cissie Gool House

At the heart of the series by the South African photographer (born in 1992) is Cissie Gool House, a former hospital in Cape Town that was occupied in 2017 by Reclaim the City (RTC), a social movement advocating for affordable housing. It became a refuge for over 2,000 people. A resilient community took shape, resisting marginalising urban planning and enduring injustices rooted in apartheid – until their eviction last year.

Youbing Zhan: Migrant Workers in China's Assembly Line

China's 300 million migrant workers play a crucial role in sustaining the country's economic growth. They leave rural areas in search of employment in more economically developed regions. For three decades, Youbing Zhan (born in 1973) has documented the daily lives of migrant workers in Dongguan, a megacity where they make up over 70% of the population. As both a colleague and a self-taught photographer, he has captured their relentless work routines and fleeting moments of leisure. The selected motifs were captured primarily over the past two years, though some date back 16 years.

Statements from the LOBA jury for 2025:

Karin Rehn-Kaufmann: "This year's Leica Oskar Barnack Award jury reached a decision on the back of keen attention and a deep appreciation for photography's social impact."

Curt Holtz: "Our LOBA team was thoughtfully assembled, bringing together experts from every field of photography: book and magazine publishers, museum curators and a photographer, together with Karin Kaufmann and the Leica team. The meeting preparations were carried out efficiently and with professionalism. The setting at Leitz Park was, of course, exceptional."



Felix Hoffmann: "In recent years, the LOBA has expanded its international reach, attracting entries from around the globe. It's encouraging to see European perspectives represented, seamlessly integrated into a rich and diverse global landscape. The competition has become more relevant than ever, with a noticeable increase in cultural diversity and perspectives."

Cyril Drouhet: "The LOBA serves as a significant gauge of global photographic trends and themes. It provides not only recognition but also a platform for talents that might otherwise remain less visible. The LOBA has established itself as a key reference in the international photography scene, embodying quality, diversity and social relevance."

Jane Evelyn Atwood (LOBA winner in 1997): "The LOBA is a highly prestigious award, widely recognised for its excellence. For those fortunate and talented enough to receive it, it marks an exceptional achievement. Winning the LOBA brings recognition, elevating how people perceive and engage with your work."

100 Years of Leica: Witness to a Century

In 2025, Leica Camera AG is celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Leica I, which was first presented to the public at the Leipzig Spring Fair in 1925. As the first 35 mm still camera to be mass-produced, it exceeded all expectations. Because with its compact and handy format, it opened up a whole new range of new photographic applications. All around the globe, under the motto "100 Years of Leica: Witness to a Century", Leica Camera AG will be celebrating this camera, which revolutionised the world of photography. Cultural projects and extraordinary special-edition products will be launched throughout the year at international events organised by the Leica national subsidiaries in the major cities of Dubai, Milan, New York, Shanghai and Tokyo. The anniversary week, taking place in Wetzlar, the company's headquarters, in June, marks the high point of the celebrations. On top of that, visitors can look forward to top-class exhibitions in the worldwide network of Leica Galleries with works by outstanding photographers.

About Leica Camera

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



Leica Camera AG, with its headquarters in Wetzlar, Germany, and a second production site in Vila Nova de Famalicão, Portugal, has a worldwide network of its own distribution companies with over 120 Leica Stores.

The Leica brand stands for excellence in quality, German craftsmanship and industrial design, combined with innovative technologies. An integral aspect of the brand culture is the promotion of the culture of photography, with around 30 Leica Galleries worldwide, the Leica Akademie and international awards such as the Leica Hall of Fame Award and the Leica Oskar Barnack Award (LOBA).

Please find further information at:

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