



Press Release

100 Years of Leica: Witness to a Century (1925–2025)

Leica Camera AG celebrated the first series-produced Leica 35mm camera with a centenary event in Wetzlar

Wetzlar, 3 July 2025 – This year, the Leica Camera Group is celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Leica I together with a global community of photography enthusiasts. After international events organised by Leica national subsidiaries in the major cities of Dubai, Milan and New York, celebrations took place at the company headquarters at the Leica Welt in Wetzlar last week, representing a further milestone of the centennial. Around 800 invited international guests from the fields of politics and business and the photography community, as well as representatives from Leica's subsidiaries around the globe, were treated to a diverse programme with product launches, exhibitions and photography talks as well as an auction, which included an exceedingly rare historic camera.

Precisely 100 years ago, the introduction of the Leica I represented a milestone that revolutionised the world of photography. As a homage to this landmark invention, the Leica M11 100 YEARS OF LEICA "WETZLAR GERMANY", limited to only 100 cameras, was presented along with a number of other exclusive limited editions labelled "100 YEARS OF LEICA". These include the Leica D-Lux 8, the Leica SOFORT 2 and 10×40 binoculars from the Trinovid range. However, the highlight is the Leica M11-D set, limited to 100 units and including two lenses.

Three prestigious exhibitions were opened as part of the centenary celebrations. The Ernst Leitz Museum has put together the comprehensive retrospective *The Pleasure of Seeing* exploring the life's work of the renowned American photographer Joel Meyerowitz, who has been one of the most influential photographers in the United States since the 60s. In the exhibition titled *Witness*, Leica Gallery Wetzlar is presenting a selection from series by the French journalist and photographer Édouard Elias. He is part of a group of young photojournalists committed to bearing witness to social and humanitarian crises taking place all over the world. The gallery is also hosting the very personal exhibition *These Are the Days* by musician and Leica photographer Jamie Cullum.

During this centenary year, there is considerable excitement around the documentary *Leica, A Century of Vision* directed by Reiner Holzemer, which is being released in 2025. An exclusive sneak preview took place. The film showcases significant photographers, their artistic work, the Leica brand and its considerable impact on the world of photography. The photographers include Steve McCurry,



Joel Meyerowitz and Sebastiao Salgado, who recently passed away, as well as young artists like JR, Sarah M. Lee and Dominic Nahr, who each describe their work with poignancy and enthusiasm, and in their own way.

The book *100 LEICA STORIES* was also presented. Encompassing 100 stories, the book is a collection of personal moments, iconic pictures, technical milestones and behind-the-scenes glimpses, which tell the story of 100 years of Leica.

The 46th Leitz Photographica Auction wrapped up the celebrations by offering up one of the most remarkable cameras in the world of photography: the O-Series No. 112, built in 1923 and one of the few surviving prototypes of the Leica I, was auctioned off for 7.2 million euros including the premium.

Dr Andreas Kaufmann, Supervisory Board Chairman of Leica Camera AG:

“Over the last 100 years, Leica has been profoundly influencing the technological and cultural development of photography through its innovative strength, craftsmanship and engineering. The focus is on the essential: passion for photography. For this reason, it was only logical to celebrate 100 years of camera production with partners, journalists, politicians and photographers. I especially thank the approximately 2,400 Leica employees worldwide, who foster Leica’s culture with their technical prowess and innovative spirit.”

Karin Rehn-Kaufmann, Art Director and Chief Representative for Leica Galleries International:

“A hundred years ago, Leica paved the way for documentary and artistic photography, giving rise to a completely new means of expression and a diversity of imagery. But even more importantly, the Leica camera has changed our view of the world forever. It is more than just a tool: it is a symbol for passion, innovation and the tireless drive to capture moments full of emotion for eternity. With our 28 Leica Galleries worldwide, the 95-year-old Leica Akademie, our renowned Ernst Leitz Museum, our Leica Oskar Barnack Award and our Leica Fotografie International magazine, we have championed the culture of photography worldwide from the very beginning.”

Matthias Harsch, CEO of Leica Camera AG:

“The camera segment and sports optics make up the essential pillars of our company’s accomplishments. With innovative products and business segments related to photography, sports optics, smartphones, home cinema, spectacle lenses and watches, we will continue to write our company’s success story going forward.”

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, Leica Camera AG is celebrating this camera, which revolutionised the world of photography, under the motto "100 Years of Leica: Witness to a Century". 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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