



Press Release

2025 Leica Oskar Barnack Award Winners

The winning series and the 2025 LOBA Shortlist have been announced and can now be seen in Wetzlar

Wetzlar, 9 October 2025 – Alejandro Cegarra and Serghei Duve are the winners of this year's Leica Oskar Barnack Award (LOBA). They were honoured during a ceremony on the evening of 9 October 2025 at the Leica headquarters. The LOBA award presentation represented yet another highlight in the Leica centennial celebrations, during which Leica's history has been lauded under the motto "100 Years of Leica: Witness to a Century".

In the 45th edition of the prestigious photography prize, the LOBA jury handed the main award to the photographer Alejandro Cegarra, who was born in Venezuela and lives in Mexico, for his series *The Two Walls*. The German photographer Serghei Duve was the winner in the LOBA Newcomer category for his series *Bright Memory*. The winning series prevailed over a wide field of candidates, with more than 300 submissions having been suggested to the LOBA jury by around 120 experts from the international photography scene in around 50 countries. The Leica Oskar Barnack Newcomer Award is bestowed in collaboration with 20 international institutions and universities from 17 countries.

Alejandro Cegarra: *The Two Walls* – 2025 Leica Oskar Barnack Award Winner

Photographer Alejandro Cegarra travelled the borderland between USA and Mexico for this long-term project. With his empathic black-and-white pictures, he draws attention to the plight of migrants and refugees and sheds light on their dramatic situation. Mexico was once known as a safe haven for refugees. In recent years, however, the country has entered into a partnership with anti-immigration politicians in the United States. In this series, Cegarra focusses on the struggles of migrants and their families who are suffering under harsh and inhumane conditions at Mexico's border.

The winning series was suggested by the Columbian photographer and LOBA nominator Federico Rios Escobar.

Statement by Alejandro Cegarra: "I worked on this series from 2018 to January of this year and was always between the borders. I wanted to concentrate on humanity and universally human emotions. In total, I took 35,000 pictures – of which I chose 20 for the LOBA series."

Alejandro Cegarra was born in Venezuela in 1989 and has lived in Mexico since 2017. He began his



career as a photographer in 2012 when he started working for Venezuela's biggest newspaper *Últimas Noticias*. Since then, his work as a freelance photographer has been published by *The New York Times*, Bloomberg, *National Geographic*, *The New Yorker*, *The Washington Post* and *TIME*. He has received multiple awards, including the Getty Editorial Grant in 2017, as well as the Global Award for Long-Term Projects from World Press Photo in 2019 and 2024. He already won the Leica Oskar Barnack Newcomer Award in 2014 for his series *The Other Side of the Tower of David* about squatters at an unfinished high-rise in Venezuela's capital Caracas. Cegarra has also been a LOBA nominator multiple times.

Serghei Duve: *Bright Memory* – 2025 Leica Oskar Barnack Newcomer Award

Through his very personal series *Bright Memory*, the photographer Serghei Duve, 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. In his pictures, he tries to visualise the sentiment captured by the Russian expression "bright memory", reflecting everyday life shaped by nostalgia and division.

The series was nominated for the LOBA Newcomer category for young photographers up to the age of 30 by the Visual Journalism and Documentary Photography department at the Hochschule Hannover – University of Applied Sciences and Arts.

Statement by Serghei Duve: "My work is about telling personal stories, but also about laying everything bare to draw attention to broader themes. I chose the title for this work after my grandfather died in March 2023 and one of my relatives offered his condolences with precisely these Russian words: 'Swetlaja Pamiat'. Even if it's actually just a cliché in Russian, these words touched me, and I found them to be very appropriate."

Serghei Duve was born in Chişinău, Moldova, in 1999. When he was one, his parents moved with their family to Hanover, Germany. He went to preschool and school there while growing up with Russian culture at home and speaking to his parents in Russian. He became interested in photography at the age of 10 when he was given a camera for his birthday. He has been studying in the Visual Journalism and Documentary Photography department at the Hanover University of Applied Sciences and Arts since 2021. In his projects, Duve explores identity and origin, often in connection with his own roots and experience.

Jury statement by Karin Rehn-Kaufmann, Art Director and Chief Representative of Leica Galleries International: "This year's Leica Oskar Barnack Award jury reached their decision with close consideration and a deep appreciation for photography's social impact. Alejandro Cegarra's path is



particularly moving: as a former winner of the Newcomer category, he returns with his impressive series *The Two Walls* – a work which highlights the topics of division, migration and human dignity with vivid imagery. His graduation from newcomer to the main category is a first in the history of the award and shows how photographic voices grow and are becoming more urgent than ever.”

Jury statement by Felix Hoffmann, Curator at Foto Arsenal Vienna (Austria): “The LOBA has established itself as a key reference point for the international photography scene, embodying quality, diversity and social relevance. The wide range of topics was striking this year: from very personal stories to global social issues.”

Jury statement by Jane Evelyn Atwood, photographer and 1997 LOBA winner (USA/France): “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, and people will likely see your work in a different light.”

Jury statement by Curt Holtz, Photography and Architecture Editor at Prestel Publishing (Germany): “The selection of photographers and pictures was very diverse, coming from around the globe. I think the LOBA is very important, especially for photographers working in the field of documentary photography. But it could receive greater attention and become more well known, as many artists have not heard about it (yet) and could really benefit from it.”

The LOBA is among the most renowned photography awards worldwide: the main LOBA prize is 40,000 euros in addition to Leica camera equipment worth 10,000 euros. The winner of the LOBA Newcomer Award receives 10,000 euros and a Leica Q3.

All of the LOBA series are now being presented at the Ernst Leitz Museum Wetzlar with the kind support of WhiteWall and in a comprehensive accompanying catalogue. Following the show in Wetzlar, the 2025 LOBA exhibition will be displayed at various Leica Galleries and featured at photography festivals.

Further information about this year’s winners is available at: www.leica-oskar-barnack-award.com.

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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