



Press Release

Leica Camera AG Launches New Project Fund: First LOBA Women Grant Open for Applicants in 2026

A new category of the Leica Oskar Barnack Award (LOBA) has been introduced with project funding for female photographers

Wetzlar, 11 November 2025 – The substantial funding provided by the LOBA Women Grant will offer female photographers the opportunity to realise a new project concept and image series, which will subsequently be presented as part of the Leica Oskar Barnack Award (LOBA). This means that, in future, the LOBA will not only include awards in the Main Prize and Newcomer categories but will also feature the LOBA Women Grant as an additional distinction. Unlike the existing categories, this new grant will be awarded for a project concept, which will be showcased for the first time at the LOBA taking place the following year. This new type of photography funding represents an additional highlight of the 2025 Leica centenary celebrations: throughout the year, the anniversary of the first mass-produced Leica I is being commemorated under the title “100 Years of Leica: Witness to a Century”.

Building on the experience gained through the previous Leica Women Foto Project Award, initiated by Leica Camera USA in 2019, the new LOBA Women Grant will extend its reach even further from this year onwards by going global. Female photographers around the world are encouraged to share their projects with the public. In response to the ongoing gender imbalance within the field of photography, the LOBA Women Grant will provide female photographers with recognition and international visibility.

The LOBA Women Grant is aimed at professional female photographers aged 21 and over. In contrast to the two existing LOBA awards, proposals for this competition will for now not be made by nominators; instead, applicants are free to submit their ideas, accompanied by a meaningful project outline. Female photographers may apply with either a new project or an existing one. Following the submission phase, the LOBA jury, which changes every year, selects the candidate and facilitates completion of the project in time for the next LOBA round the following year. The LOBA Women Grant series will subsequently be included in the LOBA shortlist. The LOBA Women Grant amounts to 10,000 euros. The selected applicant will additionally receive a Leica Q-Camera and professional support throughout the project implementation and production period.



The thematic focus is open, but must align with the LOBA guidelines, which recognise photographic series exploring the richly nuanced relationship between people and the environment in all its complex facets. “In addition to critically engaging with social, ecological or political challenges, we encourage female photographers to submit projects that offer hopeful perspectives, document inspiring solutions or visualise pathways to change. Series that encourage and highlight positive change are an equally important part of the discourse and are very welcome”, says Karin Rehn-Kaufmann, who, as Art Director and Chief Representative of Leica Galleries International, also leads the LOBA.

Applications for the first LOBA Women Grant will be accepted from 11 February to 15 March 2026. Full details regarding the requirements, deadlines and conditions for application can be found here:

www.leica-oskar-barnack-award.com/en/

As part of the LOBA award ceremony, the series of the first winner will be shown in Wetzlar in October 2027, following which it will be displayed at various Leica Galleries and featured at photography festivals.

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. With its compact and handy format, it opened up a whole range of new photographic applications. All around the globe, Leica Camera AG is celebrating 100 years of continuous camera production and the camera that 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, which took place at the company’s headquarters in Wetzlar in June, marked 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. 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, having its headquarters in Wetzlar, Germany, and a second production site in Vila Nova de Famalicão, Portugal, operates a global network of its own distribution companies with around 120 Leica Stores worldwide.



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) – now enhanced by the LOBA Women Grant.

Please find further information at:

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