



Press Release

Leitz Photographica Auction 47

Leica formerly owned by Pope Francis achieves 6.5 million euros for charity

Vienna, 22nd November 2025. Vienna-based Leitz Photographica Auction is regarded by international collectors as a premier destination for acquiring and consigning historic cameras. Alongside exceptional rarities, special editions and prototypes, the auction house regularly offers pieces with prominent provenance. One such item was featured at Leitz Photographica Auction 47 on 22 November at Vienna's Hotel Imperial – the Leica formerly owned by Pope Francis (1936–2025), estimated at 60,000 to 70,000 euros, achieved a final price of 6.500.000 euros. Additional highlights included a Leica M3 produced for Queen Elizabeth II (1926–2022) and a rare Leica MP black paint.

In recognition of Pope Francis' longstanding commitment to social and humanitarian causes, Leica Camera AG presented His Holiness in 2024 with a unique Leica M-A paired with a Leica Noctilux-M 1:1.2/50mm ASPH. lens. "Both the camera and the lens bear the serial number 5000000. It has long been tradition at Leica to reserve such milestone serial numbers for exceptional pieces that are often presented to distinguished public figures," explains Alexander Sedlak, Managing Director of Leica Camera Classics and Leitz Photographica Auction.

Reflecting his tireless advocacy for charitable initiatives, Pope Francis chose to auction the Leica set, with all proceeds directed toward helping those in need. "It was a privilege for us to offer this set as a charity lot, and we deliberately decided to waive the premium – the usual surcharge on the hammer price that goes to the auction house. The entire proceeds of 6.5 million euros will now be donated to His Holiness's personal charity organisation," Sedlak notes.

Several advance bids had already pushed the set beyond its 60,000 to 70,000 euro-estimate by the time the auctioneer, well-known media figure Wolfgang Pauritsch, opened the sale. Intense interest continued throughout the bidding process. According to Alexander Sedlak, it was "certainly one of the most exciting bidding battles in our company's history—and entirely befitting this extraordinary lot."

Queen, press photography and Luxus

Another highlight of Leitz Photographica Auction 47, while not from prominent previous ownership, was originally created for a renowned figure. In October 1958, Theodor Heuss, the first President of



the newly founded Federal Republic of Germany, presented Queen Elizabeth II of England with a Leica M3 as a diplomatic gift. To ensure a backup in case of loss, Leica produced two identical units. This backup model—engraved with the initials “E II R” on the top plate and the inscription “To Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II – 20 October 1958 – Theodor Heuss” on the base plate – was now offered at auction. It achieved 156,000 euros including premium (against an estimate of 90,000 to 120,000 euros).

The auction also reaffirmed the consistently strong market demand for Leica MP black paint cameras. Engineered specifically for reportage photography, the “M Professional” was widely adopted by press photographers. Leitz produced only 412 units in total, of which just 141 were finished in black paint. The Leica MP black paint bearing the serial number MP-114 carried an estimate of 700,000 to 800,000 euros and ultimately realised 900,000 euros including premium.

Another standout from the 47th Leitz Photographica Auction appeared early as Lot 7. The Leica I Mod. A Luxus Special Outfit, serial number 34808, is one of the very few existing “Luxus” (“luxury”) models ever produced by Leica: only 95 were made starting in 1929, with this example dating from that year. The “Special” designation stems primarily from its accessories. This is the first Luxus set ever offered with matching 3x20 ‘Luxus’ binoculars, a gold-plated Leitz FINOT, and a FOFER-LUXUS rangefinder – also gold-plated. Accordingly, the estimate for the outfit was set at 300,000 to 360,000 euros. It ultimately sold for 360,000 euros including premium.

For more detailed information please visit www.leicashop.com and www.leitz-auction.com/auction/de/home

About Leica Camera

Leica Camera AG is a global premium manufacturer of cameras, lenses, and sports optics products, with a company history spanning over 150 years. As part of its growth strategy, Leica has expanded into mobile imaging (smartphones), high-quality eyeglass lenses and watch manufacturing, and is also present in the home cinema segment with its own projectors.

Headquartered in Wetzlar, Germany, with a second production facility in Vila Nova de Famalicão, Portugal, Leica Camera AG operates a global network of sales subsidiaries and more than 120 Leica Stores.

The Leica brand represents excellent quality, German craftsmanship, and industrial design, seamlessly combined with innovative technology. An integral part of the brand’s culture is its commitment to



fostering photographic culture, exemplified by approximately 30 Leica Galleries worldwide, Leica Academies, and prestigious 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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