



Press Release

Fifty Years of Leica Galleries (1976–2026)

Leica Camera AG Celebrates Half a Century of Photographic Culture

Wetzlar, 17 February 2026 – This year, Leica Camera AG is celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the Leica Galleries. The opening of the first Leica Gallery at the company’s headquarters in Wetzlar in 1976 marked the beginning of Leica’s cultural commitment – with endeavours carried out under this concept continuing to be successful to this day. Over the past five decades, an international network of 26 Leica Galleries has been established worldwide. These galleries share a common vision of presenting photography as an art form, historical record and social voice that can be perceived and experienced by people around the globe. With around 150 exhibitions taking place each year, the galleries strike a balance between showcasing contemporary photography and displaying iconic works from the past. For half a century, they have embodied photographic excellence, as well as highlighting the diversity of photography.

To celebrate this milestone, Leica Camera AG is holding a major exhibition at the Leica Gallery Wetzlar in June 2026, in addition to other events. All current Leica gallery directors were invited to nominate the photographers to be included. The exhibition comprises 50 images by selected artists to celebrate 50 years of Leica Galleries. The pictures feature the full spectrum of Leica photography, capturing intimate moments, fascinating stories and creative perspectives presented by renowned photographers.

The culture around photography has been a key part of Leica’s corporate philosophy for over 100 years. By creating the Leica Gallery network, the company has extended its cultural mission around the globe: preserving, promoting and progressing photography. Leica Galleries are synonymous with outstanding images, cultural dialogue and the advancement of photography. Seeing themselves as places for encounter, reflection and exchange between photographers and an international audience, they provide space for visual narratives that address historical, political and social issues, sparking discussion.

“Our entire cultural programme is geared towards sharing our enthusiasm for photography with a broad target group. Works by professional photographers are an indispensable part of Leica’s world. From the Leica Galleries, a wonderful international network has grown – a Leica family in the truest sense. For me, photography is the most exciting artistic medium because a large proportion of the



population encounters it on a daily basis”, explains Karin Rehn-Kaufmann, Art Director & Chief Representative of Leica Galleries International.

When it opened in April 1976, the Leica Gallery Wetzlar became the first Leica cultural institution to present a unique concept: exhibiting high-quality documentary and artistic photographs closely intertwined with the Leica tradition. What began as a single exhibition venue in the foyer of the administrative building housing the former Ernst Leitz GmbH, displaying travel photography by German photographer Paul Gluske, continued with the Leica Gallery Solms when the company relocated in 1988. The concept evolved into a programme of monthly exhibitions and, over the decades, extended to a worldwide network. Further Leica Galleries were initially opened in cooperation with partners and respective national Leica companies in New York City (1994), Prague (2002), Frankfurt (2004), São Paulo and Melbourne (2005). In 2006, the network expanded with the opening of the second Leica Gallery in Tokyo, located within the Leica Store in the Ginza district.

Today, Leica Galleries have a presence in 26 cultural metropolises around the world. In Germany alone, there are seven locations, including one at the company headquarters in Wetzlar, which opened in 2014, as well as those in Frankfurt, Munich, Düsseldorf, Heidelberg, Constance and Stuttgart. Other cultural Leica hotspots can be found in Amsterdam, Boston, Kyoto, London, Los Angeles, Madrid, Milan, Melbourne, Mexico City, New York, Omotesando, Paris, Porto, Prague, Salzburg, Sydney, Taipei, Tokyo and Vienna. Leica Galleries in Chicago and Shanghai will also join the network this year.

With each new gallery, the geographical reach and diversity of content grow. Leica Galleries champion both established masterpieces of photography and new, promising talent. The series recognised by the Leica Oskar Barnack Award are a major feature of the annual exhibition program. Over the past 50 years, countless iconic exhibitions have been presented. These have included works by renowned photographers like Inge Morath, Barbara Klemm, Herlinde Koelbl, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Sebastião Salgado, Elliott Erwitt, Thomas Hoepker, René Burri, Steve McCurry and Ralph Gibson, as well as prominent figures including Bryan Adams, Lenny Kravitz, Andy Summers and Jamie Cullum. Legendary reportages, intimate portraits and impressive long-term projects have established the Leica Galleries as an integral part of the international photography scene.

The Leica Galleries will continue to be places promoting change and sparking inspiration in the future. Alongside classic exhibition formats and lectures on photography, new curatorial approaches and dialogue around AI in photography are becoming increasingly important. The Leica Galleries’ constant aim is to establish authentic photography as a relevant medium through open, critical and globally networked social discourse, even in the midst of digital transformation, and to focus on the truth



behind images. Photography enthusiasts benefit from the opportunity to build a unique collection of works by significant Leica photographs. Pictures from the exhibitions are available to purchase from the Leica Galleries, including, for example, the Leica Picture of the Year, which pays tribute to recipients of the Leica Hall of Fame Award.

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).

Please find further information at:

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