Press release

Leitz Photographica Auction 49

Leica BOX prototype, a Leica R6 owned by photography icon Sebastião Salgado, and outstanding lenses in the spotlight

Wetzlar, 29 October 2026 The auction house Leitz Photographica Auction is staging the 49th edition of its namesake event dedicated to historically significant cameras and vintage photographic equipment. Among the highlights of the auction, which will take place on 28 November at Leica World in Wetzlar, are an exceptionally rare Leica BOX camera from the 1950s, a Leica R6 owned by Magnum photographer Sebastião Salgado (1944–2025), and a re-edition of the Elcan 66 mm f/2. In addition, an exhibition celebrating 60 years of Leica Noctilux will open at Leica World during the auction weekend.

More than 400 lots will be offered at Leitz Photographica Auction 49. While Leica cameras, lenses and equipment make up the majority of the lots, numerous items from other renowned manufacturers will be offered as well. Estimates range from the three-figure to the six-figure euro range.

“We are delighted to once again present, in the 49th edition of our auction, an exciting selection of cameras and photographic equipment from the past 100 years, alongside the collectibles of tomorrow,” says Alexander Sedlak, Managing Director of Leitz Photographica Auction. “As always, we expect particularly strong interest in historically significant rarities and special editions. One such highlight is the Leica BOX camera, of which only one operational example is known to exist today.”

The Leica BOX 18x24mm prototype

The Leica BOX camera offered at auction is a prototype produced in the mid-1950s. Developed as an extremely compact 18 × 24 mm camera, it measures just 100 × 64 × 48 millimetres, making it one of the smallest Leica cameras ever built. Only two units were produced. One is on display at the Leica Museum in Wetzlar and was constructed as a non-working design study, whereas the camera offered here – bearing the serial number 000.01 – is fully operational. The Leica BOX is regarded as one of the most exceptional rarities in the Leica universe. Its estimate ranges from 400,000 to 500,000 euros.

The Summicron-M 66 f/2 with the serial number 001

One of Leica’s most celebrated lenses has its origins in the company’s former Canadian subsidiary, Ernst Leitz Canada. Dr Walter Mandler developed the Elcan 66 mm f/2 on commission for the US Navy. According to Mandler, the Navy’s intelligence service requested a lens that “looked like any

other but delivered an unparalleled level of resolution." In the late 1960s, Ernst Leitz Canada produced merely 200 units of the Elcan 66, making it one of the rarest lenses ever made for the Leica M system.

This year saw the release of the Summicron-M 66 f/2, a re-edition of the Elcan 66, limited to 660 units. The Summicron bearing the highly collectible serial number 001 will now be offered at Leitz Photographica Auction 49. Its estimate ranges from 16,000 to 20,000 euros.

Yet another lens will take centre stage during the auction weekend. Leica began production of the Noctilux in 1966 and presented it at *Photokina* in Cologne, Germany, that same year. At the time, it was the fastest lens of its kind, making it possible to capture images with remarkable detail and contrast even in low ambient light.

Sebastião Salgado set: Camera, limited edition photobook and photographs

Alongside rarities and special editions, cameras and photographic equipment with distinguished provenance have traditionally proved particularly popular at Leitz Photographica Auction. In this respect, the upcoming auction features an exceptional highlight: a Leica R6 owned by Sebastião Salgado (1944–2025). The Brazilian-born, renowned Magnum photographer used the camera to document the burning oil fields of Kuwait during the Gulf War – images that contributed significantly to his international reputation. Two photographs from this series are included in the lot, together with a signed copy of Salgado's limited edition photobook *Workers*. The estimate ranges from €28,000 to €32,000.

Leitz ON returns for its second edition

In addition to the event in Wetzlar, Leitz Photographica Auction is once again hosting its online auction, Leitz ON. Designed as an accessible entry point into the world of collecting, the auction features a broad selection of cameras and photographic equipment from a wide range of manufacturers, as well as photographs dating from the 1920s to the present day. Bidding will be open from 29 October to 29 November. Information on the lots and details of the bidding process are available at www.leitz-auction.com.

Live on site, in written form, online or by telephone

Leitz Photographica Auction 49 takes place on 28 November at 12 am (CET) at Leica World in Wetzlar. Bids can be submitted in advance online (www.leitz-auction.com), in written form, or by telephone. Live bidding during the auction will be available via www.leitz-auction.com and www.liveauctioneers.com.

For more information please visit: www.leitz-auction.com/auction

About Leica Camera Classics

The German Leica Camera AG has two branches in Vienna: Leica Camera Austria and Leica Camera Classics. The latter specializes in vintage cameras and has approximately 1,500 devices on display in its store at Westbahnstraße 40. The location also houses the largest spare parts warehouse for historic Leica cameras in the world. Because of this unique inventory, on-site technicians can inspect historic Leica cameras to the highest collector standards and restore them as needed before they are auctioned.

Twice a year – in mid-June and late November – Leica Camera Classics organizes the Leitz Photographica Auction, the world's most important auction of vintage cameras, attracting bidders from over 100 countries. In addition, around 5,000 products are permanently offered in the LCC online store.

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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