



Press Information

Joel Meyerowitz receives the Leica Hall of Fame Award

Leica Camera AG honours and celebrates the lifework of the outstanding photographer with the Leica Hall of Fame Award and a big exhibition at the Leica Galerie Wetzlar.

Wetzlar, 17 January 2017. The acclaimed photographer Joel Meyerowitz will be honoured for his lifework with the Leica Hall of Fame Award and a major exhibition in the course of the 'A Celebration of Photography' event being held by Leica Camera AG on 18 January 2017. The exhibition in the Leica Galerie Wetzlar opens on 19 January and can be seen until 31 March 2017.

Without a doubt, Joel Meyerowitz must be counted among the most prominent representatives of US-American street and colour photography. Hardly any other photographer has such a perfect eye for capturing surprising, and often bizarre, moments of everyday life. His subjects, identified and captured in fractions of a second, always appear to be painstakingly arranged compositions. The turning point that led to Meyerowitz' decision to become a photographer was an encounter with Robert Frank in the early 1960s, who he met in the course of his work as art director for an advertising agency. Fascinated by the work of his great role model, the Leica Hall of Fame Award winner decided to dedicate his life to street photography. In the following years, he captured life on the streets of New York. Here, he found the electrifying stage for his precise observation of people and life in the big city. From 1962, Meyerowitz shot colour and, after the space of another year, also began to shoot in black-and-white. He refined the methods he learned on the streets of New York on an extended trip through many European countries in 1966/67. 'When I hold the camera in my hands, I often think it's a kind of divining rod. It guides me. I always feel that if you carry a camera, you have a licence to see', says Joel Meyerowitz.

‘Joel Meyerowitz is one of the most important protagonists and co-founders of street and colour photography. His eye for the situation, dynamic and driven by curiosity, his unmistakable style, his instinct for capturing the magic of everyday life and its special moments led to the creation of some of the most exceptional images in the history of photography. With the Leica Hall of Fame Award, we would like to honour his outstanding work as a photographer and his unique photographic signature. At the same time, we would like to express our particular appreciation of a rather special and sensitive person’, explains Karin Rehn-Kaufmann, Art Director and Director General of Leica Galerien International.

Joel Meyerowitz was born in New York in 1938 and grew up in the Bronx. He studied painting and initially worked as an advertising art director. Meyerowitz began shooting on 35 mm colour film in 1962. In the following year, he alternated this with black-and-white before returning to the richness of storytelling in colour. New York always remained the dominant focus of his life as a photographer – from his early works from the 1960s to his evocative images taken at Ground Zero in the aftermath of 9/11. Meyerowitz lives and works in New York and Tuscany.

The exhibition in his honour can be seen in the Leica Galerie Wetzlar from 19 January to 31 March 2017. The gallery is open from Monday to Friday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. and on Saturdays and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The Leica Hall of Fame Award

The Leica Hall of Fame Award, first awarded in 2011, shares the tradition of earlier awards instituted by Leica Camera AG and honours exceptional photographers for their particular contributions to the photographic genre or invaluable services to the Leica brand. Previous winners of this prestigious award are the Magnum photographer Steve McCurry, Barbara Klemm, for many years editorial photographer at the ‘Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung’, and Nick Út, for his momentous documentation of contemporary history in his images of the Vietnam war. Other prominent photographers honoured with the Leica Hall of Fame Award are René Burri († 2014), famous for his emotive images captured before and after the fall of the Berlin Wall, and Thomas Hoepker, who documented people and events of contemporary

history with his Leica M and decisively influenced the genre of reportage photography in the second half of the 20th century. Last year, the Leica Hall of Fame Award honoured Ara Güler, arguably Turkey's most eminent photographer, who impressively portrayed life in the city of Istanbul, his birthplace and home, for over 60 years, and is world famous for his incomparable black-and-white images of the metropolis on the shores of the Bosphorus from the 1950s and 1960s.