



Press Information

Bruce Davidson receives the Leica Hall of Fame Award 2018

In June 2018, Leica Camera AG will be honouring Bruce Davidson for his lifework with a place in the Leica Hall of Fame – an accolade for an exceptional photographer whose photography has changed the world and touched hearts everywhere.

Wetzlar, 16 May 2018. On 15 June 2018, Leica Camera AG will be honouring American photographer Bruce Davidson with the Leica Hall of Fame Award. In his honour, a selection of pictures from his extensive oeuvre will be shown in the context of a major exhibition that will open to the public in the Leica Gallery in Wetzlar on 15 June and continue until 9 September 2018.

Many series of photographs shot by Bruce Davidson have long since become inscribed in the canon of the most important reportages and documentary records of everyday life in the USA. These include 'Brooklyn Gang', 'East 100th Street' and 'Subway' – and the story of Jimmy Armstrong, the dwarf-clown of the Beatty circus: These photos evoke emotions, then as now. Bruce Davidson is by no means one of those typical photojournalists who set out to capture sensations that are here today and gone tomorrow – his sensitive portrait series most often provide startling insights into worlds otherwise closed to the viewer's eyes.

This year, Bruce Davidson can look back on more than seven decades of life as a photographer. He began taking photographs at the early age of ten. In 1954, he bought his first Leica M3. In 1958, he became the youngest ever associate at Magnum and, only one year later, was already a full member of the agency. His interest in life and an open eye for his surroundings formed the basis for his exceptional photography, while, for him, trust and respect remain the essential and necessary constants that distinguish him as a leading representative of a genre of photography that bears the stamp of humanism.

‘Viewers past and present are inescapably drawn to the mixture of intimacy and detachment, curiosity and nonchalance, documentation and compassion, and his uniquely personal view of the world. Even so, the secrets of his pictures are still not revealed in all their facets. It is possible that precisely this is the decisive reason why we revisit his evocative images, time and time again. With the Leica Hall of Fame Award, we are now honouring Bruce Davidson for his lifework and his untiring and equally outstanding engagement as a photographer’, explains Karin Rehn-Kaufmann, Art Director & Chief Representative Leica Galleries International.

Davidson’s importance as a chronicler is shown particularly in his pictures of the American Civil Rights Movement that characterise his work from the 1960s. For someone who grew up in the peaceful Mid-West, and lived in the much more liberal city of New York, the violent clashes came as a shock. His work became increasingly political with the personal experience he gathered on his frequent travels and on reportage assignments. The historical value of his pictures is incalculable, but it was some time before their importance became clear. It was 2002 before a comprehensive collection titled ‘Time of Change: Civil Rights Photography 1961-1965’ was published in book form and documented his engagement.

Bruce Davidson, born 5 September 1933 in Illinois, lives in New York City and began taking photographs at the age of ten. In his last year at high school, he won first prize in the animal life category of the Kodak National High School Photographic Award. He studied photography at the Rochester Institute of Technology from 1951 to 1954 and, after graduation, began work as a darkroom technician at Eastman Kodak. He went on to study at the Yale University School of Design, and graduated from there in 1955. He has been a full member of Magnum since 1959. His first solo exhibition opened at the MOMA New York in 1963. He began his project ‘East 100th Street’ in 1966. He has already been honoured with numerous awards and prizes.

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 and invaluable services to the Leica brand. The award winners to date are Steve McCurry, Barbara Klemm, Nick Út, René Burri, Thomas

Hoepker, Ara Güler, Joel Meyerowitz and Gianni Berengo Gardin. Further information can be found at www.leica-camera.com