



Press information

Leitz-Park – Ein Ort für das Wesentliche

Leica Camera AG presents numerous exhibitions to celebrate the opening of the new complex in Wetzlar

Wetzlar, 15 June 2018. With the opening of the new Leitz-Park complex, visitors have the opportunity to view numerous exhibitions in the new premises of Leica Camera AG and in the Leica Galerie Wetzlar. A particular highlight in the new museum building is the anniversary exhibition **'Eyes Wide Open! 100 Years of Leica Photography'**, which, after celebrating successes at numerous venues around the globe, is making a guest appearance at Leitz-Park **until the end of October**. The touring exhibition featuring impressive images by famous Leica photographers and numerous exhibits from 100 years of 35 mm photography focuses on the revolutionary changes prompted by a technical innovation, the compact and easily portable 'Ur-Leica'. The 35 mm camera not only brought about change and progress in the field of photography, it also triggered a significant shift in our perception of society and the world around us. In fact, most of the images that engraved themselves into our collective consciousness from the 1920s onwards were captured with the Leica ('Leitz Camera'), and thus impressively documented contemporary events.

The Leica Gallery will be presenting photography by **Bruce Davidson**, who will be honoured with this year's **Leica Hall of Fame Award** as a tribute to his lifework and his invaluable contribution to photography. Many of his photographic essays 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. 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 opening also brings three further exhibitions that can be viewed **until August** in the new Leica Store, including, for example, a selection of photographs by **Ray Barbee**. Born in sun-drenched California, Ray Barbee began skateboarding at the age of twelve – a hobby that paved his road to fame. Skateboarding gives him the freedom to try out new things and live life as he pleases. Because, the fewer the rules for an activity, the greater the room for self-realization. His attitude to photography is similar. For Barbee, it was hardly an enormous leap from the extroverted street-sports scene to the appreciation of each special moment as an observer. His photography expertly captures both the brashness and the undertones of life. They conserve serve his searches, his discoveries and his experiences, and, as if incidentally, tell the story of his own life. Almost always, the message of the intelligently observed grab shots is that we should make the best of the precious time available to us all. His black-and-white images radiate a sense of vitality and unbroken joie-de-vivre – despite his strict refusal to shoot in colour. Ray Barbee has created furore in the world of skateboarding since 1989. Today, he is also known as a jazz musician, recorded an EP in 2003, and has since recorded several albums. In the course of his career, he travelled and photographed the world, always with his Leica M6 close at hand, and went on to make a name for himself as a documentary photographer. In 2017, the magazine TransWorld Skateboarding honoured his contribution to skateboarding with the 'Legend Award'.

The second exhibition, showing the work of **Tine Acke**, contains photographs of the German rock-icon Udo Lindenberg. For her photo book titled 'Udo Lindenberg. Stärker als die Zeit – Die Stadion-Tour', the photographer toured with the 'Panic Rocker' for four years and shows a diverse portfolio ranging from intimate backstage close-ups to on-stage photography of

Lindenberg in monumental rock-star poses. The self-taught photographer will do anything to get a good shot – like balancing on a catwalk under the roof of concert halls, crawling under the drum kit or clambering about on a crane. That’s why Udo likes to call her ‘my slinky cat’. As Tine Acke never tires of saying in interviews, she loves being a concert photographer because it lets her become invisible. Friends and fans are thankful for her ‘really personal views of our Udo’. After completion of her university entrance exams in 1996, Tine Acke studied illustration design at the Bildkunst-Akademie Hamburg from 1998 to 2001. This was followed by numerous stints of practical training in the film and television industry. Her close creative collaboration with Udo Lindenberg began in 1999 and continues until today. She has worked as a freelance photographer and illustrator since 2002.

The black-and-white images from the project ‘Darker Than Blue’ by **Mathieu Bitton** reflect the harsh everyday world of Afro-American citizens in a life between hope and rebellion. He has a particular affinity for hands: with his images of delicately feminine fingers, rough and work-stained labourers’ hands or clenched fists, Bitton reveals more about a person’s character than one would have thought. In his constantly growing collection of hand-portraits are those of many celebrities Bitton met in his years as a concert photographer. In the everyday world, Bitton’s acute powers of observation also captured the souls of his subjects in high-contrast black-and-white portraits. Mathieu Bitton, born 1973 in France, left his home for the USA at an early age. The confessed lover of pop culture turned his hobby into a profession at prominent agencies in Los Angeles and New York and, in the course of time, got to know numerous stars of the music and entertainment industry. After a career as a designer of movie posters and box sets, he followed an increasingly professional course in the world of photography. Nevertheless, he will always remain true to the music scene.

A further exhibition, featuring, amongst other photographs, the work of **Michael Agel**, can be seen in the outdoor area. The focal point of this exhibition is the history of the Leitz-Park complex from the beginnings to its completion. Michael Agel was born in Wetzlar in 1970. Music plays the most important role in his work as a photographer: he has accompanied the concerts and tours of numerous musicians from different genres for many years. In recent years, his work has been showcased in many exhibitions and published in numerous photo books.