



Press Information

The shortlist candidates for the Leica Oskar Barnack Award 2020 have been chosen

Wetzlar, July 15, 2020. The twelve finalists in the main category and six newcomers for the internationally renowned Leica Oskar Barnack Award photo competition, that will be granted this year for the 40th time, are set. All the shortlisted picture series are available to see online at: www.leica-oskar-barnack-award.com.

Here an overview of the LOBA 2020 shortlist candidates and their series:

Matthew Abbott

There is virtually no country on earth as dramatically affected by catastrophic climate change as Australia. Record temperatures and an on-going drought were responsible for 25 million hectares going up in flames, during the summer of 2019. The impressive *Black Summer* series, by the Australian photographer (born 1984), reports on the inferno from up close.

Ragnar Axelsson

The Icelandic photographer (born 1958) considers that the Greenlandic sled dogs are among the greatest heroes ever known in the northern reaches. Shot in black and white, his *Arctic Heroes – Where the world is melting* series is a homage to both the dogs and to the Arctic way of life. Both are threatened with extinction, due to the devastating effects of global warming.

Giovanni Cocco

Destroyed by an earthquake in 2009, the central Italian town of L'Aquila lies at the heart of Cocco's series *Displacement – New Town No Town*. The Italian photographer (born 1973) presents the consequences of the catastrophe, and the loss of identity experienced by the

former citizens, who are living in emergency shelters outside the historic town in hope of returning home one day.

Vincent Fournier

In his *Space Project* series – on-going since 2007 – the French photographer (born 1970) tells the story of space exploration. He documents its very beginnings and continues into the future, with projects such as NASA's Space Launch System (SLS), which is planned to reach Mars. Fournier's pictures open up an exciting discussion about the future meaning and uses of outer space.

Emil Gataullin

In his *Mezen: By Sky's Edge* series, the Russian photographer (born 1972) introduces us to a slowly disappearing village on the banks of the Mezen, a river in Northern Russia. Once an important agricultural centre, the region has gradually lost significance; and the few people still living there are, once again, forced to be self-sufficient.

Maïmouna Guerresi

In her bright and colourful series *Beyond the Border – A Journey to Touba*, the Italian-Senegalese multimedia artist (born 1951) combines feminine spirituality with the symbolism of the Touba tree. Her highly artistic motifs deal with everyday life, caught between modernity and tradition, especially in Senegal.

Luca Locatelli

Future Studies is a long-term project, by the Italian photographer (born 1971), that is specifically aimed at exploring new ways for humanity to survive on planet Earth. He questions our concept of the need for permanent economic growth, and uses his project to open up an intense debate about our relationship to nature and technology.

Cristina de Middel

In her on-going project, *Journey to the Center*, the Spanish photographer (born 1975) makes reference to the surreal atmosphere and symbolism of the similarly titled novel by Jules Verne, as a way to present the current Central American migration route, through Mexico, as a daring and heroic journey. Documentation and fiction blend to create a multi-layered narrative.

Davide Monteleone

In his *Sinomocene* series, the Italian photographer (born 1974) explores the impact produced by the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which reflects China's growing presence around the globe. Spanning four continents, the project is documented photographically on location in - among other places - Ethiopia, Djibouti, Italy, Cambodia and Kazakhstan.

Hashem Shakeri

Over recent years, increasing numbers of Iranians have been forced to leave the capital of Tehran, due to drastically deteriorating economic conditions and the constantly increasing prices of property. In his *Cast Out of Heaven* series, the Iranian photographer (born 1988) takes a look at the depressing living situation in the newly-created satellite towns.

Namhun Sung

The massacres on the South Korean island of Jeju began in April, 1948, and were kept secret for a long time. Thousands of the inhabitants died in the wake of uprisings against the locally-imposed government. Making use of damaged large-size Polaroids, the Korean photographer (born 1963) found an unusual format and imagery for his *Red Island* series, capturing the island's gruesome past.

Anastasia Taylor-Lind

The war in Eastern Ukraine has defined the everyday lives of the people there for over six years. In her *5km from the Front Line* series, the British photographer (born 1981) turns her gaze towards the less obvious, but all the more devastating, consequences of the conflict. She reveals how people there have to deal with the constant threats and daily restrictions.

Newcomer 2020

Hugh Kinsella Cunningham

In his haunting series *Wildfire (Ebola Amidst Conflict)*, shot between May and October 2019, the British photographer (born 1994) documents the desperate battle against the renewed outbreak of the Ebola virus in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The affected communities,

already traumatised by neglect and war, were even more susceptible to the virus this time around.

Fabiola Ferrero

In her *The Blue Side of Fire* project, which she began in 2015, the Venezuelan photographer (born 1991) takes an indirect approach to exploring the progressive decline of her once prosperous homeland. She contrasts the current crisis with the beauty and magic of the country, as well as quiet poetic moments from the everyday lives of its citizens.

Gonçalo Fonseca

The *New Lisbon* series underlines the current dramatic situation of apartments and housing in Lisbon. As a result of the exploding property prices in the capital, over 10,000 tenants have already lost their homes. Highlighting individual stories, the Portuguese photographer (born 1993) reveals the consequences of progressive gentrification.

Sharon Pulwer

The Israeli photographer (born 1995) lives in New York, and her *God Fearing Women* series documents the lives of women belonging to the Jewish Orthodox community, Chabad Lubavitch, in Brooklyn. Her motifs draw attention to the contradictions between family and profession, tradition and self-realisation.

Lindokuhle Sobekwa

In *Daleside*, the South African photographer (born 1995) describes the transformation of the community south of Johannesburg, which was once dominated by white people, and that he visited as a child. The portraits, taken in recent years, reveal the changes and show how the problems of Daleside compare to those of other places in the country.

George Voronov

We Became Everything presents a photographic attempt to document spiritual experience. The Irish photographer (born 1993) portrays young people belonging to religious communities: revealed in mysterious motifs, his series aims to combine what is considered the real world, with the mystical spiritual world that is hard to grasp.

This year brings us the 40th edition of the Leica Oskar Barnack Award. This jubilee year represented a good opportunity for Leica Camera AG to enhance the LOBA's renown, by applying a new selection process. In addition to the prize money being increased, the application process was completely restructured. This year, 65 top-notch, photography experts from over 30 countries, submitted their proposals. From this collection, this year's jury has now put together the LOBA 2020 shortlist. On October 22, the winners in the main and newcomer categories will be honoured during an award ceremony in Wetzlar, Germany. With the kind support of WhiteWall, there will also be exhibitions presenting the work of the winners, as well as a comprehensive presentation, *40 Years Leica Oskar Barnack Award*, with accompanying catalogue, at the Ernst Leitz Museum. In the meantime, all the finalists in this year's shortlist are being presented on the LOBA website.

For LOBA 2020, the winner will receive prize money amounting to 40,000 euros, as well as camera equipment valued at 10,000 euros. The winner of the newcomer award will receive an assignment, a two-week tutoring course at Leica Camera AG Headquarters in Wetzlar, and a Leica Q valued at 5,000 euros. Furthermore, the winning series will be on display as part of a worldwide touring exhibition, e.g. at Leica Galleries.

The LOBA 2020 jury is made up of:

Joel Meyerowitz, Art Director and Photographer (USA/Italy)

Pauline Benthede, Exhibitions Director for Fotografiska International (Sweden)

Malin Schulz, Art Director at ZEIT and member of the paper's Editorial Office (Germany)

Klaus Kehrer, Publisher (Germany)

Karin Rehn-Kaufmann, Art Director and Chief Representative for Leica Galleries International (Austria)

Quotes from jury members:

Karin Rehn-Kaufmann:

"I was impressed by the high quality level of the submissions. I was touched by the great awareness of the photographers' eyes and hearts. With unique stories, they used very individual and creative ways to deal with the important issues of our times."

Pauline Benthede:

“The quality of the submissions was high. In general, the photographers often touched on heavy issues, there were not a lot of sunshine stories. It might be part of the tradition of documentary photography, but also it says a lot about our time.”

Joel Meyerowitz:

“My experience during the jurying of the LOBA competition was often uplifting. I saw a diverse and serious range of works covering the human condition as it was perceived by these artists, and we, the jurors, were expressive and honest in our discussions about the works. I’m happy to have been a part of it.”

Note for journalists:

Downloadable image material: <https://extranet.leica-camera.com/s/ZGqMd5fg2n8qi3s>

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