



Press Information

40 Years of LOBA – The exhibition at the Ernst Leitz Museum Wetzlar

On the occasion of the 40 year jubilee of the Leica Oskar Barnack Award (LOBA), Leica is presenting a comprehensive retrospective of all LOBA winners, at the Ernst Leitz Museum. The exhibition opens on October 23. At the same time, the works of the 2020 LOBA winners will be on display at the Leica Gallery Wetzlar.

Wetzlar, 29. September 2020. The exhibition represents a wonderful opportunity to look back over forty years of Leica Oskar Barnack Awards: touching and evocative stories, exciting rediscoveries and new encounters, with a great variety of perspectives! This exhibition offers a clear testimony to the visual richness of the LOBA winner and newcomer series over four decades, and present photojournalism in all its diversity and constant changes. The common denominator is LOBA's humanistic concept: Right from the very beginning the award was directed at photographers with a "keen talent for observation and for vividly expressing humanitarianism, as well as the relationship between humanity and the environment", as can be read in the earliest submission requirements for the competition.

Consequently, it is above all socio-relevant issues that define the winning series, many of which have lost none of their topicality to this day. Whether everyday life or emergency situations, research, politics, lifestyle and leisure, the photographers capture vital processes and incite societal discussions; for example, around how to deal with medical problems, poverty or social injustice. Reportages about specific people, living communities and forms of society, that have appeared in series and have captured the diverse range of lifestyles, seem to be even more significant. Whether peace marchers, centenarians, nomads in Siberia, the Roma, the Mennonites, or caravan tourists, whether images of masculinity in the Islamic world, or dancers in China, to just mention a few examples: the overall retrospective of the LOBA series offers a

glimpse into unknown worlds, creating a multi-layered kaleidoscope – as seen through the eyes of world renowned photographers such as Sebastião Salgado, Gianni Berengo Gardin, Wendy Watriss, Jane Evelyn Atwood, David Turnley or Max Pinckers. Many careers received a decisive boost as a result of the LOBA.

The idea for the competition came about on the occasion of the centenary of the birth year of Oskar Barnack (1879–1936), the ingenious inventor and developer of the new type of camera, with which Leica would go on to write photographic history, and which was to revolutionize amateur photography and, in particular, photojournalism. The Leica Oskar Barnack Award, which was launched in 1980 with just a few black and white reportages, evolved over the following decades to become one of the most prestigious, international honours. In this jubilee year and with the aim of further enhancing the LOBA's reputation, the submissions procedure was once again optimized, with the support of numerous photography experts.

The *40 Years of Leica Oskar Barnack Award* exhibition offers a unique opportunity to draw up an overall impression, that focuses not only on photographer personalities and their stories, but also on four decades of photographic history, in which both the form and the self-image of photojournalism have fundamentally changed.

The comprehensive presentation that spreads over both floors of the Ernst Leitz Museum, presents over 350 exhibits. The accompanying, richly illustrated catalogue documents all 52 LOBA series – 40 main winners and twelve newcomers. In this manner, the reader will have the chance to experience and discover an extremely lively archive of the history of photojournalism.

Further information can be found at: www.ernst-leitz-museum.de

LOBA 2020

In addition to the exhibition *40 Years of Leica Oskar Barnack Award* at the Ernst Leitz Museum, the current award-winners of 2020 are presented at the Leica Gallery Wetzlar. The winners of the Leica Oskar Barnack Award 2020 will be announced on 22nd October 2020.

The exhibitions have been realised with the kind support of WhiteWall and Halbe Rahmen.

Further information can be found at: www.leica-oskar-barnack-award.com

About Leica Camera

Leica Camera AG is an internationally operating, premium-segment manufacturer of cameras and sport optics products. The legendary reputation of the Leica brand is founded on a long

tradition of excellent quality. In combination with innovative technologies, all Leica products fulfil a common objective: better pictures, wherever perception and visualization matter. Leica Camera AG has its headquarters in Wetzlar, in the state of Hessen in Germany, and a second production site in Vila Nova de Famalicão, Portugal. It also operates its own worldwide network of regional organizations, Leica Retail Stores, Leica Galleries and Leica Akademies.

Quotes:

“Despite the many changes the world of photography has undergone and is undergoing, the LOBA offers an extraordinary constant: right from the beginning, the organizers placed the relationship between humanity and the environment at the centre of the competition. This humanistic idea, which still defines the LOBA to this day, will undoubtedly become even more important in the future.”

Karin Rehn-Kaufmann, Executive Vice President Leica Galleries International

“LOBA is an important platform for photographers to present their work in today’s world of photography!”

Dr. Andreas Kaufmann, Chairman of the Supervisory Board of Leica Camera AG

“Leica signifies excellence in the field and LOBA represents the fact that a photographer’s work has been recognized at the highest level. To be honored with the LOBA can be a game changer for a photographer’s career.”

Mark Lubell, Executive Director of the International Center of Photography, New York City

“LOBA is definitely one of the most prestigious photography awards. It’s incredible to look back at its history, which – considering the talented award-winners – is like looking at the history of photography.”

Alessia Glaviano, Brand Visual Director Vogue Italia

“The range of subject matter, aesthetics and execution of the winning images feels unique to the LOBA. There’s always an emphasis on interesting storytelling, and Leica as a brand is synonymous with quality and style, with a well earned place in photographic history.”

Caroline Hunter, Picture Editor of The Guardian Weekend magazine

“The first thing is the durability and consistency of the LOBA; the 40th anniversary is special, and for photographers that validation over four decades means all the more. The other thing is the association with a camera maker that has played a big part in the history of photography. The roll call of previous LOBA winners is really impressive.”

Azu Nwagbogu, Founder and Director of the LagosPhoto Festival and the African Artists’ Foundation

“The LOBA’s strength is rooted in the photographic history of the last 40 years. I’ve been following the project for years because it focuses on the relationship between man and the environment.”

Krzysztof Candrowicz, Independent Curator and Founder of the International Festival of Photography in Lodz

“The continuity of the LOBA speaks for itself, including last year’s winners, of course. The LOBA represents quality and stands out among the many other photo awards.”

Gen Sadakane, Co-Founder and Creative Director of EyeEm