



Press information

Leica Oskar Barnack Award 2021: The shortlist candidates

The nine finalists in the main category and four newcomers for the internationally renowned Leica Oskar Barnack Award photo competition are set.

Wetzlar, 22nd July 2021: The Leica Oskar Barnack Award will be presented for the 41st time this year. Around 100 top-notch international photography experts submitted their proposals. From this collection, this year's jury has now put together the LOBA Shortlist 2021.

On November 4, the winners in the main and newcomer categories will be honoured during an award ceremony in Wetzlar, as part of a large celebration of photography at which the Leica Hall of Fame Award will also be presented, and the Ernst Leitz Museum will be introduced internationally with its new orientation.

By November, all finalists from this year's shortlist will be presented in more detail on the LOBA website. www.leica-oskar-barnack-award.com. Following the award ceremony, all LOBA series will be shown in the Ernst Leitz Museum Wetzlar, in an exhibition kindly supported by WhiteWall and in an accompanying, comprehensive catalogue. After the presentation in Wetzlar, the LOBA 2021 will be shown in other Leica Galleries and at photo festivals around the world.

The prize money, which was significantly increased in 2020, will be maintained in 2021: the winner of the LOBA will receive 40,000 euros and Leica camera equipment valued at 10,000 euros, while the winner of the Newcomer Award will receive 10,000 euros and a Leica Q2.

The LOBA Jury 2021:

Sandra M. Stevenson, Assistant Editor, Photography, The New York Times (USA)

Ralph Gibson, Photographer (USA)

Santiago Lyon, Photographer and Head of Advocacy and Education, Adobe (Spain)

Dr. Michael Pritchard, Director Education and Public Affairs, Royal Photographic Society (Great Britain)

Karin Rehn-Kaufmann, Art Director and General Representative of Leica Galleries International (Austria)

Karin Rehn-Kaufmann about LOBA 2021:

“Working together with around 100 nominators and the distinguished jury was a great pleasure and enrichment for me again this year. The diversity and the high level of the series impressed and moved me. The global effects of the pandemic have also left their mark on photography – so we are all the happier to be able to award the LOBA in the familiar way, and in times when the relationship between humanity and the environment plays an even more important role than ever.”

Ralph Gibson about LOBA 2021:

“The LOBA award judging experience was intense; but in a very interesting way because the quality of the work was very high. It is worth noting how many of the images I recall several weeks later; proof of the quality of the work we discussed and considered. In my opinion all the shortlisted photographers are winners.”

Overview of the LOBA 2020 shortlist candidates and their series:

LOBA 2021 Shortlist (in alphabetical order)

Main category

Ana María Arévalo Gosen: Días Eternos (Eternal Days)

This series by the Venezuelan photographer (born 1988) focusses on the appalling living conditions for women in jail. The motifs were taken at prisons in Venezuela and El Salvador,

since 2017. Arévalo Gosen reveals the causes and consequences of imprisonment; not only for the women, but also for their families and Latin American society.

Enri Canaj: Say Goodbye Before You Leave

Earth, nature, trees, the sea: things that people are able to rely upon, when they have lost everything else. Enri Canaj was born in Albania in 1980. Based in Greece, the photographer has captured black and white motifs that document the tough living conditions for people in Niger, Greece and Italy, who have to depend exclusively on themselves, when fleeing to Europe.

Gabriele Galimberti: The Ameriguns

Private gun ownership is deeply embedded in US American society. The Italian photographer (born 1977) presents the extreme and eccentric impact of the constitutional right to bear arms: his series portrays families and individuals in homes and on properties, proudly surrounded by enormous weapon arsenals.

Graciela Magnoni: Nosotras (Us)

Moments of joy and simple existence: in her intuitive series about the daily lives of girls and women, the photographer – born in Uruguay in 1961 – presents intensive pictures that she took in thirteen countries and seventeen cities. The Spanish title (feminine Us) says it all; the motifs celebrate the diversity, common humanity and secrets of the feminine spirit.

Santi Palacios: On the Edge

The powerfully dramatic moments were taken at close range, along the three most important migration routes that pass over the Mediterranean Sea and connect Africa and the Middle East to Europe. From 2013 to 2020, the Spanish photojournalist (born 1985) accompanied people who were following these different routes, taking the life-threatening journey in the hope of a new and safer life.

Nicolò Filippo Rosso: Forgotten in Dust

Over the last five years, the Italian photographer (born 1985) spent periods of weeks and months in La Guajira, a Colombian peninsula that is home to the indigenous Wayúu people. Border struggles, a lack of water, poverty, coal mining in the middle of a desert, being a transit point for migrants and smugglers; all give rise to the toughest of living conditions.

Nichole Sobecki: Where Our Land Was

On-going civil war and, above all, climate change are having a catastrophic impact on Somalia. The long-term project by the American photographer (born 1986) shows the dramatic consequences of drought for the inhabitants of the East African country. The global climate crisis is no myth here; people and societies are already living on the edge of the precipice.

Nikita Teryoshin: Nothing Personal – The Back Office of War

An illuminating glimpse behind the scenes of the global arms business: the photographer, who was born in Russia in 1986 and grew up in Germany, reveals the complete opposite of killing fields. In his case, war is an oversized playground for adults. He found the motifs, between 2016 and 2020, at exclusive defence trade fairs in Europe, Asia, and North and South Africa.

Kiliii Yuyan: Rumors of Arctic Belonging

The Arctic is changing radically. In his impressive series, the American photographer (born 1979) offers insight into the fascinating imagery of the North. Both the icebergs and the local population are disappearing; within a couple of decades a future Arctic awaits us – not cold and unchanging, but living, dying and being reborn.

Newcomer

Emile Ducke: Kolyma – Along the Road of Bones

Thousands of gulag inmates from the Stalin era died while helping to build a high-speed road through the remote Kolyma region of Siberia. During his journey along the so-called “Road of Bones”, the German documentary photographer (born 1994), who is currently living in Moscow, was not only searching for remnants of the former forced labour camps, but also questioning how they are being remembered today.

Tom Hegen: Coal Mining Germany

The series by the German aerial photographer (born 1991) is dedicated to coal mining in Germany. The pictures, which he took from a great height, reveal the devastation of the landscape with surprising beauty, luminous colours and enthralling symmetry. From this

perspective, the consequences for the landscapes, as well as the complex relationship between humanity and the environment, become all the more fascinating.

Ingmar Björn Nolting: About the Days Ahead

Germany, during the time of the covid pandemic: conforming to strict security regulations, the German photographer (born 1995) took a 25,000 km road trip throughout the country last year. This very personal series reflects a changing society that oscillates between collective isolation, fear, despondency, and the unconditional desire for improvised normality.

Ranita Roy: Standing on the Edge

The east coast of India is one of the areas in the world that is worst affected by cyclones. The Indian photographer (born 1994) has documented the destruction and consequences of the cyclones in the Bay of Bengal, last year. Life goes on following the catastrophe; but with advancing climate change, densely populated areas will continue to be under enormous threat in the future.