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A picture and the story behind it, longer photo series, short interviews – the LFI blog covers a diversity of formats, which the editorial staff fill regularly with new content. Another category is called LFI Gallery Photographers. This is where we exhibit photographers who have posted in the LFI Gallery and caught the attention of the editors. From street photography to portraits, from family albums to life on the streets of Manila – this is the segment where very different angles of perception come together. This offers photographers who have shared their pictures in the LFI Gallery even larger access to the public. For example, we have pictures by Kata Sedlak, who documents her family’s daily life; or the pictures by the Japanese photographer, Takanori Tomimatsu, who presents activity on the streets of Tokyo; or cycling photography by Phil Penman from NYC. Why not give your pictures a chance to be included in the blog; share them with us in the LFI Gallery: [link]

**Josef Koudelka**

“Whatever I do, essentially, I do for myself. If it helps something, I am very pleased. I go around the world and try to discover what interests me. For that reason, I never work for a magazine, I never did any fashion, I never made any publicity. For me, a project must interest me and have something to do with me.” Josef Koudelka has remained faithful to his beliefs. This portrait with the Leica was taken by Elliot Erwitt in Paris in 1974, the year Koudelka became a full member of Magnum Photos.

**Cris Toala Olivares**

Originally Toala wanted to be a doctor, but he quickly discovered a passion for photography, so he changed profession and decided to focus on the camera, on volcanoes and on the people who live with them. This work has taken him to remote places around the world – places often only accessible by air. And who was his mentor in questions of aerial photography? None other than the US nature photographer George Steinmetz, renowned for pictures taken from a motorised paraglider.

**Francesco Anselmi**

A lot of research preceded his journey along the border between the United States and Mexico: social media platforms and online dating apps put Anselmi in touch with certain gangs. It was on Craigslist that he got to know the gang members he later photographed around El Paso. Following his request, they had sent him photos of their tattoos beforehand. Consequently, the Italian photographer wasted no time on location, and knew before even setting out who he wanted to photograph.
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Josef Koudelka

EXILES
Headstrong and intense – Josef Koudelka’s photographic work is among the most unique today. “I am interested in one picture that tells many different stories to different people. That is to me a sign of a good picture,” the Czech photographer once said in an interview. Even today he is still a great story teller, who never tires of discovering new worlds.
Josef Koudelka’s imagery is incomparable, intense and always exceptional. For many decades he has been considered one of Europe’s most significant photographic voices. His series cover a very broad range of themes, which are always closely tied to the biographic stages of his life.

All the photographs shown here were taken between 1971 and 1979, during a period of his life when he felt like an exile. After he left Czechoslovakia with an exit visa in May 1970, he entered into a phase of alienation and anonymity. He moved to England, but his life over subsequent years was to be defined by travel and regular movement. This unsettled lifestyle was responsible for a somewhat distanced perception of the world, though his pictures always deal with the big questions surrounding human existence.

At a first glance, most of the motifs are rather puzzling. This also applies to the first picture in our portfolio: four men in long coats, turned away from the viewer, enclosed between concrete walls topped with barbed wire. Taken in Ireland in 1976, it offers a voyeuristic glimpse into a narrow, dingy pissoir: there is something objectionable and forbidding about the scene, yet it still sparks the viewer’s curiosity. Another picture illustrates even further the photographer’s approach to finding his motifs: three men kneeling down while leaning on walking sticks, in front of a craggy, coastal landscape. The picture’s composition (see page 10) is defined by the division between the dark, stony setting in the forefront and the airy, blurred backdrop. Another group of people also in the picture does nothing to explain the event, or why the men have adopted this humble posture. They appear lost, but what is their story? The caption of the picture offers the hint that the figures are pilgrims on Croagh Patrick in Ireland. That is at least something, because most of the picture titles just give the name of the places where they were taken, so that an understanding of the context or story remains elusive.

A typical aspect of the composition of Koudelka’s photographs is the connection between the people and their surroundings. The people and their activities may not be determined, but they appear in a complex relationship with their surroundings. Black and white further underlines the contrasts: the concrete surfaces, shapes and visual opposites, make many of those portrayed appear lost in reverie. This also creates a symbolic link back to the photographer, who considers himself an unattached global nomad. His images are never meant to be too explicit; but rather, their archaic expression refuses to define a clear time frame, while still aiming to produce a strong impact.

Even before his exile, Koudelka had developed his own, unique imagery, finding his way into photography through a diversity of projects. After studying at the Technical University of Prague, he started out working as an aerospace engineer. He began photographing with a Rolleiflex early on, so that, in addition to his job, he was collaborating with the theatre magazine Divaldo. In 1965, he became a member of the Czech Artists Association and in 1967, after giving up his career as an engineer, started dedicating himself exclusively to photography. It was also in the sixties that he began photographing the life of the Roma people, creating a series that was to become one of his most important projects in the following years.

The political changes at the time also left significant traces on his oeuvre. It was in August 1968 that he took his famous pictures of the Soviet march into the ČSSR. His photographs documented events on the streets of Prague, dramatic scenes and places where ordinary citizens of Prague stood in opposition to the Warsaw Pact troops. In 1969 the pictures were smuggled over the border and even reached the USA. Without mentioning his name, the Magnum Photo Agency →
JOSEF KOUDELKA
was born in Boskovice, ČSSR, on 10 January, 1938. He studied at the Technical University in Prague from 1956 to 1961, then worked as an aerospace engineer up until 1967. At the same time he was taking pictures for a theatre magazine, working as a reportage photographer and starting to become interested in the life of the Roma.

In August, 1968, he photographed Warsaw Pact troops marching into Prague, putting an end to the so-called Prague Spring. Koudelka was granted asylum in England in 1970, and the country remained the starting point for many of his journeys.

He became a full member of the Magnum Photo Agency in 1974. In 1987 he acquired French citizenship. Koudelka is the recipient of many honours and awards.

distributed the images, and they were published in most of the large, international magazines. Even today, these pictures are considered symbolic of the brutal invasion. The impact of his images is in the vibrant immediacy and intimate description of the situation. This reportage from an ‘anonymous Czech photographer’ received the Robert Capa Medal from the Overseas Press Club. Elliott Erwitt, who was the President of Magnum at the time, animated the images to make a short film for the US TV station, CBS. At first, the anonymity protected Koudelka and his family, and in April of the same year he was even permitted to travel to London to exhibit his photos of Divadlo Za Branou Theatre in Prague, in the foyer of Aldwych Theatre. He returned once more to Prague, and was granted a three-month travel visa to London in July of the following year. This time he did not return. The suspicion that the political situation in his homeland was getting too dangerous for him had been around for a long time. He remembers “the afternoon I sat in Hyde Park in London when I had to make the decision whether to stay or return. It took me an afternoon, but once I had decided, I didn’t question it anymore. I had to accept it. That house was destroyed so I decided to build a new and a different one.” The decision meant making a complete break from his old life; he not only lost the possibility of seeing his family, but also all his photography contacts in the ČSSR. For the next sixteen years, Koudelka was to remain stateless, living without a fixed domicile and travelling the world – though London remained his home port during that time.

In particular, Koudelka dedicated himself to continuing the development of his series about the Roma. The book Gypsies first appeared in 1975, and once again in an expanded format in 2011. His life and his photographic productions were organised and scheduled around dates of important Roma festivals and religious events across Europe. The routes he followed were to continuously expand over the years. Pictures produced during this time reflect, in particular, his paradoxical feelings between alienation and involvement. “I simply found myself outside of Czechoslovakia, and I decided to do what I could not do when I was living there: to see the world,” he says. This lifestyle came to a sort of ending with the publication of Exiles, even though it did not actually appear until 1988. The book represents both a taking of stock, and a coming to terms with the past.

Elliott Erwitt had invited Koudelka to become an associated member of Magnum back in 1971. At that point, he had begun working with two Leica cameras (with 35mm and 50mm lenses), that Henri Cartier-Bresson arranged for him. He connected quickly with the Magnum group, his professional network grew and the Paris office was soon to become an important residence for him. Thanks to a large degree to the help of Henri Cartier-Bresson, Koudelka became a French citizen in 1986 – his time as a stateless person was finished. The year also marked the beginning of a new phase in the photographer’s work: he began shooting with a panorama camera, and increasingly explored landscapes.

Later, when Koudelka made the transition to digital photography, Leica was once again able to help out: a custom panoramic camera based on an S2 was especially developed for him at the Leica factory. Today, he continues to work on a comprehensive project photographing archaeological sites in the Mediterranean basin, which has so far taken him to twenty countries. When asked what this project had revealed to him, “Nothing is permanent – that’s also what I learned from the gypsies. Bresson used to tell me that ‘your problem is that you don’t think about the future’, and that’s exactly what I learned from the gypsies. Not to worry much about the future.” ULRICH RÜTER

MAGNUMPHOTOS.COM
Robert Eliasson

AZÚCAR CRUDO

Fidel Castro passed away last year; his brother Raúl will step down in a few weeks. The sanctions imposed by the US are being loosened. Like raw sugarcane, Cuba is about to undergo a transformation. In his images, the Swedish photographer describes an everyday existence marked by continuous improvisation.

Future meets history: Cuba’s young generation wears Adidas shorts and hangs out in the ruins of Havana’s Cerro district. All images taken with the Leica SL and 28mm Summilux
Boxing continues to be Cuba’s number one national sport. Even the youngest are already hard at work. This outdoor boxing ring in the centre of the capital is open to anyone from the neighbouring districts. The trainer is, of course, a former world-class boxer.
Taxi cubano: An estimated 80,000 to 90,000 of these vintage cars are still being driven around the island – held together with chewing gum, as Cubans regularly like to joke
Beautiful but dilapidated – a typical apartment in the centre of Havana. Land of two currencies: only those with access to the peso convertible (whose value is pegged to the dollar) have a chance to escape poverty. In the meantime, many people rent out rooms ‘under the radar’
It is no secret that there are major drawbacks to Cuba’s dual currency system. The foreign exchange dictates the market, and tourists can easily be viewed as ‘walking dollars’
Eliasson was drawn to Cuba not least for the vibrancy of its colours. Often they are what makes the despondency of everyday life more bearable.

ROBERT ELIASSON

Eliasson became a self-taught photographer ten years ago, and was appointed Leica ambassador in 2012. Since then, his work has frequently been exhibited in collaboration with Leica. He was the first foreign photographer to present his work at the Fábrica de Arte Cubano, Havana. His series Azúcar Crudo will be on display at the Lydmar Hotel in Stockholm from 15 February to 31 May 2018.
LFI: Beach, rumba and mojitos – that’s what many people immediately associate with Cuba. And yet it’s not something we see in any of your Azúcar Crudo images.

Robert Eliasson: Many photographers, such as Alex Webb, for example, have captured exactly those scenes. I wanted to show another aspect of this fascinating country: its warm-hearted and resilient inhabitants. To me, they embody something we have lost sight of in our modern world. We don’t give proper care to our elderly, we live in single-person households, and find it difficult to meet new people. Our family ties seem increasingly fragile. In Cuba, by contrast, family takes first priority. People foster their neighbourly relationships, there is a strong sense of community. I’m interested in this idea of a collective solidarity.

What was it that first brought you to this particular topic? In 2009 I saw a TV programme about a bar in Cuba. I was struck by the sense of intimacy, as well as the brilliantly vibrant colours. A week later, I flew out to Havana. Since then, I’ve been going there three or four times a year.

The description of your project says you strive to capture ‘the essence and spirit of ordinary daily life beyond the cliché’. What exactly did you mean by that? The clichés I’m referring to are the beautiful vintage cars, the happy people dancing in the streets, the magnificent buildings with their appealing patinas. But when you look behind the façade, there’s another story to be told. The cars are so ancient, they can be dangerous to drive. The buildings are so run-down that many of them collapse in on themselves.

How would you describe a typical, quite normal day in Cuba? The logistics of daily life are a struggle, from procuring toilet paper to putting food on the table. Getting to work is always a headache. Because of the petrol shortage, everyday errands can take hours. The average Cuban can’t buy beef or fish. People eat with the seasons, and have a diet of rice, black beans, chicken or pork. Tourism is the country’s primary source of income, so the needs of the tourists always come first. There’s a dual-currency system: the domestic peso cubano is worth only a fraction of the peso convertible, which is pegged to the dollar. This creates a major gap between a government and a private sector income. So what you end up with are university professors driving taxis, and doctors who choose to work as barkeeps.

Your images capture broken mirrors and crumbling walls, almost like the remnants of a more auspicious time. Has the Cuban revolution failed? In some respects, Cubans are better off now than they were before the revolution. They’re not starving, have access to basic medical care and excellent schooling. But Cuba is a dictatorship, there’s no doubt about that. There is no private property, no freedom of movement and speech – unless you have money or connections.

How did you approach the project? I started out by taking pictures in the streets of Havana in 2009. I was mesmerised by the colours, the light, the cars – captivated by a city frozen in time. I was staying at a hotel near Havana’s Old Town. The next time I came, I took a room in a ‘casa particular’, a kind of private B&B. It was in an impoverished, notorious district in the heart of Havana. Behind these decaying façades, there must be a myriad of secrets just waiting to be told. I started to roam the city, and to gradually build relationships with extraordinary people, their families and their friends.

Your photographs emanate a sense of intimacy...

In my experience, time and patience are the only way to get close to your subjects and develop a feeling of trust. I repeatedly visited places and peo-

ple, was invited to birthday parties, weddings and religious ceremonies. I tend to stay in a place or situation until the moment feels right for me to start photographing. By that time, the people I’ve become close to are barely aware of me anymore. I work with the Leica SL with M lenses. It’s a combination that I really love, and the SL’s viewfinder is outstanding.

Many of your subjects are teenagers. What kind of future is the younger generation looking at? Cuba’s youth no longer has any connection to the revolution, apart from what they are told in history class. It’s almost as though the country skipped a generation. Their lives are dictated by smartphones and WiFi connections. One thing’s for sure: change will come. I’ve already noticed some new developments under the rule of Fidel’s brother Raúl, who will stay in office until February 2018, though they are primarily geared towards boosting the tourism industry.

You’ve mentioned that your Cuba project was inspired by the images of Czech photographer Josef Koudelka. Ten years ago, when I first got into photography, I looked for a copy of Josef Koudelka’s book Gypsies. I was fascinated by his images, and his ability to move within this closed community as though he was one of them. What was his secret? Koudelka stayed with the gypsies for two years, building up relationships. That really is the only way to become accepted. He completely immersed himself in this environment. And that’s essentially what I am also aiming for in my work.

INTERVIEW: KATJA HÜBNER

ARTUPON.COM/ROBERT-ELIASSON
LFI-ONLINE.DE/BLOG:
ONE PHOTO – ONE STORY
EQUIPMENT: Leica SL with Summilux-M 28mm f/1.4 Asph
Cris Toala Olivares

RING OF FIRE
Thick clouds of smoke, uncontrolled lava flows, the acrid smell of sulfur: photographer Chris Toala Olivares travelled to active volcanoes around the world to complete his project. The series does not focus exclusively on the natural phenomenon, but also on the people living on the slopes of these unpredictable mountains.
Above: A lava flow follows its course on Fogo Island, Cap Verde. Some plants survive despite the eruption.
Previous and left page: In 2015 Cotopaxi filled the air with ash and steam.
At home in the shadow of Cotopaxi: nearly 300,000 people live in an area of potential danger.
There are at least two volcano systems under Langjökull Glacier in Iceland. Previous page: The volcano Stromboli
Above: Torfajökull in Iceland is 1190 metres tall. It was once covered with a glacier, which has now mostly melted.
Below: A tourist highlight when travelling in Iceland – the ascent of Námafjall
CRIS TOALA OLIVARES
Born in Manta, Ecuador, in 1982, Toala studied medicine in the Netherlands before turning to photography. He sold his guitar to purchase his first camera. Toala’s pictures have appeared in National Geographic, GEO and others. His book The Amsterdam Canals was published by Terra Uitgeverij in 2015. His most recent project is dedicated to the Wadden Sea mudflats and its inhabitants.

TOALAOLIVARES.COM
LFI-ONLINE.DE/BLOG: TOALA’S VIDEO OF THE ERUPTION OF COTOPAXI
EQUIPMENT: Leica M240 with Summicron-M 35mm f/2

Stromboli, Italy 2013: The volcano and the island share the same name: Stromboli. An active, bedded volcano, recognisable by its steep form, with small eruptions taking place at irregular intervals. The islanders have learned to adapt their lives to explosions and blasts of lava. Many would consider it volatile, but for people living on Stromboli the mountain flows with life energy. Mario Ziaia, a guide and volcanologist, explained that the power of Stromboli awakens his fear and awe, and helps him to understand these feelings and deal with them. I myself returned time and again to Stromboli and always felt that my batteries were being recharged.

Of course, it is also the reason why so many visitors climb the 920-metre volcano: to feel the energy. The locals thank the volcano for their livelihood. They speak of it as though of a God. In view of its presence, people realise how small they are.

Pico do Fogo, Cap Verde 2014: When I travelled to Fogo Island in 2014, lava from the erupting volcano had already demolished many homes. While staying with some locals before they were evacuated, I experienced what it was like to live in this environment: it was like being in the volcano’s womb. You felt the warmth all around you – like in an oven. This was also the first time I saw bright rivers of red lava. Nearly all the houses in Chá das Candeias, a community within the crater of the volcano, were destroyed, as well as the roads connecting to São Filipe, the island’s capital. I met Manuel, a volcano guide, in the middle of the chaos; he had stayed behind to help friends and neighbours to flee. The lava is so incredibly quick – you never know what direction it will take. In this kind of situation, people need to hold together and find a safe way. Luckily, the people there know and understand nature well – they live from cultivating fruit, beans, wine, coffee and potatoes. They fight for their land and say, “I was born with the lava and I will die with it.” Fortunately, things did not go that far this time.

Cotopaxi, Ecuador 2015: Cotopaxi lies just fifty kilometres south of Quito, the capital of Ecuador. It is considered one of the most dangerous, active volcanoes in the world; but the legends that surrounds it are linked to love. According to mythology, the warriors Cotopaxi and Chimborazo are supposed to have fought for the love of beautiful Tungurahua. I was born in Ecuador and I grew up with these legends. I have also heard many stories about the eruption in 1877, which caused the deaths of hundreds. In 2015, people saw their 5897-metre neighbour reawaken. While I was there I accompanied Segundo Benites, a farmer who was one of the last to leave the area. Tears poured down his face, because he had to abandon his home. After the death of his father he had committed himself to the land and had put down strong roots there. Family means a lot there – and people often refer to Cotopaxi as ‘Father Cotopaxi’, and learn to respect his explosive temper.

Volcano Island, Iceland 2016: With around 30 active volcanoes, Iceland is the largest volcanic island in the world. In July, I travelled around the country for two weeks to find out how people there live alongside the volcanoes. They take risks when building geothermal power plants, but they keep well away from the volcanoes. One engineer explained, “You have to accept what the earth has to offer.” Sometimes it offers you a lot, sometimes a little, and sometimes nothing at all. And sometimes it destroys everything. The only reason people there can take a risk is because they feel connected to the earth – knowledge and feelings come together. I took a lot of aerial photos of Iceland. The soil around the volcanoes is very fertile. From the airplane you can see minerals and colours in the sulfur, that creates fascinating shapes and patterns. CRIS TOALA OLIVARES
Francesco Anselmi

BORDERLANDS

The border between Mexico and the United States is 3200 kilometres long. Fences and walls existed along it before Donald Trump, but now things appear to be pointing towards change. Francesco Anselmi looked around on the American side: what is it like to live in the shadow of a wall?
Clockwise from the top: The wall that separates Mexico from the USA; Luis with his wife Lizeth and daughter Amberly in their house at the Colonia La Peñita in Texas. Here live the destitute migrants who were born along the border; Felipe and Maria also live here. They came to the US illegally two years ago — their son David is a US citizen. Previous page: Laine is a leader of the Border Guardians and is also involved in right-wing politics. The Mexican flag lies at her feet.
Clockwise from the top left: A money exchange in California is witness to the interaction between the two states; a celebration for a 15th birthday in the Colonia La Periita in Texas. The future has many open questions for young people living in the border region. How will Donald Trump’s presidency change life on both sides of the border? Will an exchange between the USA and Mexico continue to be possible?
Ethan is a member of a gang calling themselves Cripples. He lives in Las Cruces in New Mexico. Afro-American gangs fight against South American ones – both sides want to control the same territory.
Above: A young woman with a swastika tattoo poses during a National Meeting of the US National Socialist Party and the Ku-Klux-Klan in Pikeville, Kentucky. Right: Santos belongs to the infamous Mara Salvatrucha gang – its members earn their money smuggling drugs into the USA. Santos has just been released from prison. He admitted to a crime he did not commit. In this way younger members protect those higher up the ladder.
Pikeville, Kentucky: Members of the South Secessionist Party demonstrate against illegal immigrants, while waving the Confederate flag. For some, it is a reminder of tradition; for others, it is a symbol of oppression.
Clockwise from the top: A policeman during a demonstration in Pikeville, Kentucky. Many residents protest against the increasingly hostile climate; It is not felt everywhere: a Mexican couple spend their holidays on Padre Island in Texas; A signpost in the Sonora Desert warns against illegal immigrants and drug smugglers. Even so, every year thousands manage to cross the border; but migrants do not always find their way out of the desert.
FRANCESCO ANSELMI

Born in Milan in 1984, he studied at the International Center of Photography thanks to help from the New York Times Company Foundation Scholarship. In 2013, Anselmi won the Chris Hondros Fellowship Fund; in 2014 he was a Leica Oskar Barnack Award finalist. In 2016, he received the Visura Grant for Personal Projects. He has been dealing with the economic crisis in Greece. Anselmi lives in Milan and New York.
LFI: You have been taking photographs at the border between Mexico and the USA – it is not the only place with secured borders. Are we living in an era of discrimination?
Francesco Anselmi: Apparently yes. Nationalism is growing in every country affected by immigration. I personally believe the phenomena of migration will be among the big challenges of the next century. We should face it in the most constructive way possible instead of hiding behind walls.

Was this the reason you decided on this project?
I think the idea for this project comes from way back. I’ve always been fascinated by American culture and, as a European teenager growing up in the 90s, I was influenced by it. Music, literature, photography, movies, TV series and video games contributed to create a precise imagery of the United States that I somehow wanted to investigate. It’s a country that still represents top standards in many fields; but then, at the same time, it has unresolved problems, especially at the social level. I decided to start this project now, as I believe the theme of identity is crucial in contemporary American society. The country is at a turning point. I chose to begin my investigation along the US border with Mexico because I believe boundaries play a crucial role in the definition of people’s identity.

President Donald Trump plans to secure the border with a wall. How will this change the situation?
A wall, or a fence, has already been built by previous presidents and covers more or less one third of the 3200 kilometers border. Work being done in these months along the border was already planned by the Obama administration. During my trip, I found different situations and feelings. In South East Texas, the area adjacent to Mexico is mainly inhabited: villages and small towns literally developed right up to the border. This proximity played a significant role in the economic growth of the entire region during the past century, providing low cost manpower to various industrial sectors. Therefore, even Republicans in this area are against the wall or any commercial constraints in general.

Your pictures tell another story...
In Arizona, the situation is very different; areas bordering Mexico are deserts with very few remote settlements. Human and drug trafficking is frequent and people feel abandoned by the state. There’s a debate going on about the actual effectiveness of a wall, but the majority of people, Republicans or not, feel unsafe under the present conditions. In general, I believe people are always ahead of politics and, while in south Texas the economy brought the two sides together, creating the Tex-Mex sub-culture, in Arizona people are setting up armed civilian militias to face the cartels. Both these phenomena existed before Trump’s election.

Did you feel safe during your work?
In general I don’t feel safe when literally everyone around me is carrying a weapon; when a housewife is ready to shoot with a combat rifle kept under her sofa. As a paradox I felt safer meeting members of the infamous Mara Salvatrucha gang than when stepping into a private, conservative community property to ask for information: because you never know how a scared person carrying a gun might react.

Was it difficult then to connect with the people?
I did a lot of research before the road trip. An interesting way to meet people was through social media and online dating apps. For example, with regard to the gang members I wanted to photograph in the El Paso area, I posted on Craigslist explaining exactly what I was looking for and why. More than twenty people wrote back to me sending pictures of their gang tattoos. I started a month-long correspondence with a few of them in order to establish a connection and build mutual trust, until the day we met and finalized the image. I feel the social media methods I use are very explicative of the social fabric I move within, where the sense of isolation is really predominant.

Can you describe the atmosphere a bit more precisely?
In my eyes, surreal with a constant sense of isolation. I often felt surrounded by basic instinct in its rawest form – this idea that you have to constantly watch out permeated my trip.

Do you see yourself as a neutral observer?
It’s impossible to remain neutral when faced with topics that involve us all; and I believe that, as a photographer, it’s impossible to remain neutral. Every move we make depends on who we are and what we think. The photographer stops being neutral the moment he grabs his camera and decides what he wants to shoot; it’s not just a matter of how he’ll photograph his subjects. In addition to this I find neutrality extremely boring. I like engaging with my subjects in respectful conversations, and my images are often the result of this unconscious behaviour.

What can photography achieve in this context?
I believe that changes are politically and economically driven. Photography can contribute towards igniting debates about who we are as human beings, giving us different points of view. It is a practice that can expand our awareness about the roles we play in life.

INTERVIEW: KATRIN IWANCZUK

FRANCESCOANSELMI.COM

LFI-ONLINE.DE/BLOG:
ONE PHOTO – ONE STORY

EQUIPMENT: Leica M Monochrom with Summicron-M 35mm f/2 Asph
René & Radka

_ Tussie-Mussies_

The German-Czech photography duo, René & Radka, moved to L.A. four years ago. Inspired by the unexpected wealth of flowers they found in California, they began creating a homage to the language of flowers used in the Victorian era.
“At first there were our landscape pictures. We wanted to create a dream-like world, a fantasy world. Large areas of California are deserts, but during the so-called super bloom they look like Impressionist paintings. They radiate in every possible colour you can imagine.”
“For Tussie-Mussies we only use flowers that grow wild in California in springtime. In the series we refer to florigraphy, the language of flowers used in the Victorian era. Their significance in this very puritanical era was so important that there were even flower dictionaries with the meanings.”
The theme of René & Radka’s long-term photography project called *Tussie-Mussies* explores children and flowers – at times enfolding the youngsters, at times crowning them in artistic glory. Images are inspired by the ‘tussie-mussies’ of the Victorian era – small bunches of flowers or herbs that served as a means of secret communication. Tussie refers to ‘tussock’, and mussie comes from ‘moss’. Every flower within a bouquet holds a symbolic meaning that conveys a secret message: roses or forget-me-nots (love), yellow roses (diminishing love or infidelity), daisies (innocence), phlox (agreement). The photography team transferred this aesthetic concept to their child models, decorating them as tussie-mussies. “We only use local flowers. Nothing imported from Holland,” says Radka Leitmeritz. Some pictures are reminiscent of Frida Kahlo and Georgia O’Keefe, the photographers’ favourite artists.

Their work is founded on a joint fascination with the colours and sculptural forms of blossoming plants. “Our free projects have always centered around children and, because we were so enchanted by the quantities of flowers in and around Los Angeles, we tried to combine the two,” Leitmeritz explains. “Virtually every photographer in the world has photographed flowers, so it’s a challenge to do something new,” René Hallen adds. “The subject of children and flowers can quickly become kitschy. Picture by picture we looked for ideas,” Leitmeritz continues. “When it gets too dark or a child’s eyes are closed it can easily look like bereavement,” Hallen further explains. Circumnavigating all this was a challenge for the pair.

Since moving to Los Angeles four years ago, René & Radka have been impressed by the incredible wealth of flowers blooming at certain times. Every few years California experiences a ‘super bloom’, which occurs when two factors come together: first, there is enough rain in the winter, and second, the spring does not heat up too quickly. The otherwise sparse and desert-like landscape of the US state is transformed into an impressionist painting with myriads of rainbow-coloured lupins; red, yellow, orange and coral poppies; yellow and lilac phacelia; and bright, blue-white baby blue eyes. The seemingly barren, dusty and stony landscape, is covered with a surreal and expansive carpet of flowers. The transformation lasts only two to three weeks, after which the magic quickly comes to an end. Just like the Japanese and their Hanami celebrations of the cherry blossom, Californians look forward to the stunning floral display. Viewing stations are erected and there are super bloom weather reports. However, predicting a super bloom year remains a mystery; a question of luck. René & Radka waited a number of years for the spectacle to occur, but at long last a super bloom happened in the summer of 2016. The photographers, with children and equipment, set off in a camping bus heading for locations a few hours’ drive away. They also had to spend the night in the desert, “because we need morning and evening light for our pictures,” says Radka. They took the photos at well-known super bloom sites: Vasquez Rocks, a park in the Sierra Pelona Mountains in the northern part of Los Angeles County; Antelope Valley, a valley that stretches from Los Angeles County to the southeast of Kern County, and constitutes the western corner of the Mojave Desert; and the Anza Borrego Desert State Park in the Colorado Desert, the largest nature reserve in California and a place which has remained virtually uninfluenced by the intrusion of man.

Using backdrops of paper, the two photographers continue to work on their series *Tussie-Mussies* even when there are no carpets of flowers; even so, they still look forward to continue their enchanting series outdoors, once a super bloom appears again and the California desert blossoms once more.

CARLA SUSANNE ERDMANN

**RENE RADKA**

Born in Cologne in 1973, René Hallen studied at the Dortmund College of Photography. Radka Leitmeritz, born in Litomerice near Prague in 1974, was trained at the Film and TV School of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague (FAMU). They met in Paris at the end of the nineties, and now live and work together for fashion magazines and commercial campaigns.

**RENERADKA.COM**

**S-MAGAZINE PHOTOGRAPHY: INTERVIEW AND DIGITAL FEATURE ON TUSSE-MUSSE**

**EQUIPMENT:** Leica S (007) with Summarit-S 35mm f/2.5 Asph, Elmarit-S 45mm f/2.8 Asph (CS) and Summarit-S 70mm f/2.5 Asph
WITH THE LEICA CL AND THE TL2, PHOTOGRAPHERS NOW HAVE ACCESS TO TWO APS-C SYSTEMS WITH SEVEN EXCELLENT LENSES
THIS ONE ... OR THAT ONE?

LEICA APS-C SYSTEMS

Those who have not yet considered the TL family in their search for a compact, flexible camera system, should no longer hesitate to embrace this sweet dilemma: the choice between TL2 and CL has made Leica’s APS-C system more attractive than ever.

It has been said that competition is invigorating. If this is true, 2017 was certainly an energising year for Leica’s APS-C segment. First, there was the launch of a completely overhauled T model, the TL2. Just a few months later, Leica introduced another camera – also with TL bayonet mount and APS-C sensor, but developed around an entirely different concept: the CL. On top of that, a new 18mm pancake lens was added to the product line. All of this undoubtedly seems to suggest that Leica have great confidence in the potential of their APS-C based system. At its core is the 15.8 x 23.6mm sensor with a resolution of 24 megapixels, which allows for a very compact construction of both the camera body and its compatible autofocus lenses, while at the same time maintaining an excellent level of image quality. It really is time for the TL system to step out of the shadows – a position it has endured ever since the system’s original camera model elicited a, let’s say, rather mixed response from its target clientèle.

THE TL2: A FLAWED MASTERPIECE. The less-than-competitive autofocus performance of those early days is now firmly in the past. As we have previously reported, the photographic capabilities of the TL2 leave no wish unfulfilled. One particular characteristic, however, has remained unchanged – the one point in which the TL2 defies our traditional expectations of what constitutes a high-grade system camera.

Without doubt, the TL2 is an absolute pleasure to handle – from its ergonomics to the finish of its exterior; it offers an enormous display with an ingeniously implemented touchscreen operation; and yes, it is beautifully designed, both inside and out. But it also forces the photographer to work in ‘overt tourist mode’ – in other words: to shoot with an outstretched arm. This has become an extensively discussed topic whose relevance is apparently almost inexhaustible. The fact is that most customers in search of a high-performance system camera do not generally expect to have to buy a separate accessory viewfinder, in order to focus and capture their subjects in the way they find both most familiar and also most effective. And so, many photographers feel compelled to look elsewhere, even if they have already pretty much fallen in love with the camera. After all, even a touch of long-sightedness is often enough to reject the idea of framing shots via a display. This has more or less determined the fate of the T/TL models – and, consequently, that of their native lenses.

TL LENSES: HIGH-END MEETS APS-C. For quite some time now, we have been under the impression that Leica actually undervalue their own efforts when it comes to maximising the optical.

The Leica CL (top) fills the gap that was still left by the TL2 – turning the TL system into the most attractive APS-C system on the market.
Vario-Elmar-TL 18–56mm f/3.5–5.6 Asph, 18mm, aperture 3.5 (top),
Apo-Vario-Elmar-TL 55–135mm f/3.5–4.5 Asph, 67mm, aperture 4 (below)
Apo-Vario-Elmar-TL 55-135mm f/3.5-4.5 Asph, 135mm, aperture 4.5 (top), Vario-Elmar-TL 18-56mm f/3.5-5.6 Asph, 55mm, aperture 5.6 (below)
potential of lenses designed for the APS-C format. Ever since the X series, the company has been investing a great deal of brain power into refining both the optical designs and production methods of APS-C lenses. Nevertheless, even back then, there was some disappointment that Leica had not taken the step into a system-based solution. As it was, the X family never quite managed to dissociate itself from Leica’s compact camera category, and was generally perceived in a position just above the D-Lux series. In the same vein – if for different reasons – the T was never truly recognised as a proper system camera.

This seems an even greater shame when considering that the ambition behind it was to drive the optical performance of APS-C lenses to the quality levels of the 35mm format – which Leica successfully managed to do. To achieve this, the developers had to compensate for the fact that an APS-C image must be enlarged by a crop factor of 1.5 to reach the same output size as a 24 × 36mm image. Leica based their internal calculations on the premise that an APS-C lens would have to render 60 line-pairs per millimetre with an edge-to-edge contrast transfer of 50 percent, starting from an open aperture.

Incidentally, Leica now also utilise these valuable insights to achieve unprecedented resolution and contrast levels in their 35mm lenses, especially the latest SL lenses – making for a rare example of innovation being applied in an ‘upwards’ sequence.

Peter Karbe, head of...
Leica’s optical development department, emphasised on several occasions that Leica’s APS-C lenses were set to be the best lenses the company has ever built. With regards to the TL system, all that is needed now is something to revive this sleeping beauty: enter the Leica CL.

LEICA CL: THE PERFECT APS-C CAMERA. It would certainly seem that with the launch of the CL at this point in time, Leica took a decision to grab the bull by the horns. In any case, it is a move we welcome wholeheartedly – not least in light of the camera’s 2.36-MP integrated electronic viewfinder. It is a small detail, but a deciding one: here is a system camera which, from the very first moment, emanates a sense of complete conviction and large-scale appeal, and has the potential to recruit large numbers of people to Leica photography – even those who would never have considered getting a ‘true Leica’ before, or who have so far deemed anything beyond the SL and M as being too inflexible or marred by compromise.

So now there finally exists a Leica camera system to occupy the place below the M and the SL. This ‘lower’ position, however, only applies with regards to specific creative requirements: in a wide range of photographic situations, the gap will feel almost negligible due to the CL’s extraordinary quality level.

Photographers perusing the APS-C area of the market should give some thought to the Leica TL2 and CL duo, especially if they are looking for an affordable system camera, and have an appreciation for outstanding lenses. The CL’s display screen is of course smaller than that of the TL2, and its touchscreen operation is limited to the selection of the focus point. The exterior design is not as instantly ‘progressive’ as that of the TL2, but rather a modern interpretation of the classic Leica style.

Having said that, the sleek ergonomics of the CL’s operating elements are almost on par with the distinguished design of the TL2, so that the CL with its more classic lines is no less of an aesthetic masterpiece among its peers.

This new boost to Leica’s APS-C category inspired the author (a staunch M devotee) to go on a little excursion with the 18–56mm and 55–135mm Vario lenses. The latter, in particular, benefits from the stability offered by a built-in viewfinder, bearing in mind the lack of image stabilisation in TL lenses. Most of all, the experience highlighted what an excellent combination the lenses represent. If you’d like to discover a new camera system, the TL system is a delight in terms of optics and ergonomics – whether you opt for the TL2 (always with Visoflex) or the CL.

OLAF STEFANUS
SHARP YET SOFT

NOCTILUX-M 75MM F/1.25 ASPH

An extraordinary lens with an excessively optimised rendition of the focal plane – which is so thin that it is emphasised almost three-dimensionally against the exquisite bokeh: a seductive combination of characteristics.

Is it really possible that the already legendary performance of the Noctilux-M 50mm f/0.95 could be improved upon even further? The answer is yes – with the new Noctilux-M 75mm f/1.25 Asph. However, it is an accomplishment that inevitably comes at a price. Though you cannot spot it in the image to the left, the new Noctilux is the first M lens to feature a tripod collar – which photographers are well advised to use when shooting with a tripod, in order to ensure a stable setup. With its more than 900 grams, the 75mm Noctilux is a heavy-weight in every sense of the word, both literally and figuratively: when developing this lens, Leica truly pulled out all the stops – applying the enormous spectrum of their expertise in designing products that create unique visual aesthetics; which in this case meant: to enable an extraordinary sculptural plasticity generated by a wafer-thin depth of field – yet with no compromises in image quality, in spite of the large aperture this requires.

The lens is comprised of nine elements. Two aspherical surfaces, as well as the application of specialist glass types with a high refractive index, ensure the almost complete elimination of monochromatic flaws such as spherical aberration, coma, astigmatism or distortion. Glass elements with anomalous partial dispersion are used to limit chromatic aberrations. In unfavourable lighting conditions, small traces of lateral chromatic aberration can still manifest themselves in high-contrast areas of the image, leading to the notorious ‘purple fringing’ commonly associated with wide-open lenses – though this is a side-effect that can easily be remedied in digital processing.

NOTICELY HIGHER LEVELS OF CORRECTION. Yet while this phenomenon was a very frequent element of daylight shots with a wide-open 50mm Noctilux, the 75mm Noctilux offers significantly higher levels of overall correction. Photographer Jürgen Holzenleuchter, who created the images shown on these pages, was completely bowled over by the clarity and plasticity of the focal plane at f/1.25 – and not just at the centre, but also on the edges.

“Unbelievably sharp,” was his immediate first verdict – very quickly followed by, “incredibly demanding”. However, he was not actually talking about the challenges of achieving the correct focus in light of the minimal depth of field, but was referring to the physical handling of this hefty piece of glass and metal. We will get back to both of these points later on.

The fact that the second member of the Noctilux family features a 75mm focal length reflects a long-established Leica tradition – borne out of the experience that the construction of a 50mm lens represents a good basis for the subsequent development of a light-weight tele lens. →

A highly complex interior, both optically and mechanically; smooth focusing, aided by a wide control ring; the volume and weight, however, really are considerable.

Pleasant working distance and an impactful accentuation of sharpness and blur. Photography: Jürgen Holzenleuchter
It seems incredible that even with such a challenging f-number-to-focal-length ratio, the Noctilux-M 75mm f/1.25 Asph delivers image quality that is so excellent when shooting fully open (left and top), that stopping down (right, f/4) is merely needed to increase the depth of field.
Indeed, this is how the 75mm focal length was first introduced into the M system in 1980: Walter Mandler of Leitz Canada derived the Summilux 75mm f/1.4 from the Summilux 50mm f/1.4, which he had designed back in the 1960s. Famous for its wonderfully creamy rendition, the 75mm Summilux was, incidentally, already considered untypically large for an M lens at the time.

**IN THE SAME VEIN**, when Leica’s current head of optics, Peter Karbe, and his design team developed the Apo-Summicron-M 75mm f/2 Asph, they based it on the Summilux-M 50mm f/1.4 Asph — the first M lens equipped with floating elements to ensure a high performance at open aperture even in the close focus range. As the term ‘Apo’ — short for apochromatic correction, i.e. the correction of all wavelengths (colours) of light — indicates: a small reduction of the angle of view, along with a slightly more relaxed focal-length-to-aperture-ratio, instantly result in a significantly improved overall level of optical correction.

Similar considerations applied when deriving the Noctilux-M 75mm f/1.25 Asph from the Noctilux-M 50mm f/0.95 Asph. The choice of the 75mm Noctilux’s initial aperture was rooted in the practicalities of application: within the genuine ‘M approach’ to photography, navigating an even shallower depth of field would have been barely feasible. The other reason is based on the ergonomics of the hardware: due to the maximum diameter of the entrance pupil, the ratio of focal length to f-number was not allowed to exceed 60 mm, in order to ensure the unhindered operation of the rangefinder.

Even so, the lens still obfuscates a portion of the rangefinder window, meaning that at certain distances, the triangulation — i.e. the process on which the range-finder principle is based — may not work. In essence, this makes the Noctilux-M 75mm f/1.25 Asph an optical masterpiece that almost over-stretches the M principle. This inevitably →
On the M, the 75mm Noctilux does look rather out of proportion. And indeed, the diameter of the lens can make focusing with the rangefinder more difficult. Live View is one solution – alternatively, the lens is very well suited to the SL.

Certainly, the first M lens that has been specifically geared towards the Live View generation of M models.

**THE POTENTIALLY RESTRICTED VIEW** through the rangefinder window, for example, is obviously no longer an issue when using the Visoflex. In addition, being able to apply the Focus Peaking feature (or simply utilising the excellent electronic viewfinder of the SL without any focusing aids) makes it so much easier to accurately focus on picture elements beyond the centre of the image. In whichever way you choose to view this new lens and its compatibility with traditional M photography – it is simply a logical continuation of the tried-and-tested pairing of the 50 and 75mm focal lengths. It also serves as an impressive demonstration of Leica’s remarkable advancements in optical engineering – from mastering the characteristics of exotic glass types, to producing and processing aspheres, all the way to perfecting methods of lens barrel construction whose roots go back to the Leitz company’s production of high-precision microscopes.

Leica’s pursuit of these developments is marked by a dedication that remains unprecedented in the photography industry – and which ultimately gives photographers the tools to achieve unparalleled imaging results.

*Olaf Stefanus*
The Special Edition APO-Summicron-M 50mm f/2 Asph marks the 50th anniversary of the Leica Historical Society of America (LHSA) in 2018. To commemorate the occasion, Leica have produced a special edition of the APO-Summicron-M 50mm f/2 Asph. The lens has been designed to resemble the Summicron 50mm f/2, which was introduced in 1954 together with the Leica M3. Though originally launched as a retractable lens, it was subsequently also available as a rigid version from 1956. The contemporary APO-Summicron-M 50mm f/2 Asph is the first lens to fully exploit the capabilities of modern digital camera systems in terms of contrast and resolution. With the LHSA Special Edition this unparalleled imaging performance has been combined with the vintage look and feel of a 1950s Summicron. The lens body features a brass exterior with either a black paint or silver chrome finish. The era of early Summicron lenses is further referenced in the separate lens hood and lens cover, both of which are also made of brass, and finished to match the selected lens.

The LHSA Special Edition is limited to 500 units, comprising 300 black paint and 200 silver chrome models. The distance scale is engraved in red, while all other engravings are inlaid either in white (on the black paint models) or black (silver chrome models).

Leica Camera AG have collaborated with the Leica Historical Society on several special editions to date. The LHSA, which also publishes a quarterly magazine titled Viewfinder, is specifically dedicated to the exploration of Leica’s history and products. Previous LHSA special editions include a set comprising a classic Leica MP of 1956 with a retro-style Summilux-M 50mm f/1.4 Asph; a black-paint M6 TTL; and a Leica MP (released in 2003) with Leicavit, in a hammertone finish.

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**MEISTER CAMERA**

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SLIMMING DOWN

MATE 10 PRO

Huawei’s latest flagship smartphone launches with a slimmer optical construction, 6-inch OLED display, AI mode and fast Summilux lenses for its Leica Dual Lens Camera.

The release of Huawei’s Mate 10 Pro phablet on 16 October 2017 came just one-and-a-half years after the launch of the very first Huawei smartphones with a Leica Dual Lens Camera – the P9 and P9 Plus. Over the course of those 18 months, the companies had continued with their collaboration, introducing two further smartphone generations during that time: the Mate 9 (December 2016) and the P10 and P10 Plus (February 2017). This highlights the speed with which the smartphone cameras in question are currently evolving.

It all started in April 2016, with a Leica Dual Lens Camera equipped with two Summarit-H 27 mm f/2.2 Asph lenses: one of them recorded images on a 12-megapixel colour sensor, the other on a monochrome sensor of the same size. When the Huawei Mate 9 and P10 were developed, the lenses stayed the same, but the resolution of their monochrome sensor was increased from 12 to 20 megapixels. This, in turn, is the same sensor that has now been built into the Mate 10 Pro – but this time, it has been combined with two significantly faster lenses: the Summilux-H 27 mm f/1.6 Asph. The previous Summilux lenses featured in the P10 Plus offered a maximum aperture of f/1.8 – suggesting that Huawei and Leica have decided to skip one evolutionary stage, which would have been the Summicron f/2. You could almost entertain the notion that this latest Summilux-H is inching closer towards one of the crown jewels of Leica lens construction –
the legendary Noctilux – considering the f/1.25 aperture of the new Noctilux-M 75 mm f/1.25 Asph (see page 88).

As we unfortunately did not receive our test model in time for this issue, we must base our report on what we know about the Mate 10 Pro on paper, which is as follows: the phablet is powered by a Kirin 970 octa-core processor. It is distinguished by a Neural Processing Unit (NPU) – an AI unit which, in conjunction with a dual Image Signal Processor, increases the phablet’s performance and efficiency – not least during photographic tasks. The operating system is the Android 8.0 Oreo, which runs under the latest version of Huawei’s own user interface, EMUI 8.0. The Mate 10 Pro offers 6 GB of RAM and 128 GB of internal memory. In contrast to previous models, the internal storage can no longer be increased using microSD cards. The full-HD OLED display with a 2:1 aspect ratio has a resolution of 2160 × 1080 pixels (pixel density: 402 ppi). All of this is contained within a dust and waterproof, IP67-certified body with the slim dimensions of 154.2 × 74.5 × 17.9 millimetres. A powerful, 4000-mAh battery keeps the Mate 10 Pro going between charges, with the manufacturers promising a runtime of up to 505 hours in stand-by mode.

Looking at the current flagship smartphones of other manufacturers, it seems that the megapixel counts of camera sensors have reached something of a stagnation. 12 MPs have become the norm, occasionally it might be 13. The LG V30 with standard-angle lens records 16 MPs. This makes the 20 MP resolution offered by Huawei’s monochrome sensor very much an exception, which was borne out of the special concept behind the Dual Lens Camera: because the final image is created by calculating information from both cameras, the Dual Lens Camera is able to generate superior-quality photographs – both colour and black-and-white. A monochrome camera obviously has no
need for a colour filter array (such as a Bayer filter) over the sensor – which enables it to record fine details at a higher resolution. The result is a sharper image with increased resolution, less noise and a higher dynamic range. The monochrome camera delivers not just more, but also different information than its RGB counterpart. This also facilitates additional features such as a zoom function, which allows you to record at a 2x magnification with no loss of quality (with a resolution of 12 MP).

In reality, there is indeed very little sense in driving up the megapixel count of smartphone camera sensors, given that their pixels are already so small that they could not absorb enough light to prevent noise in challenging lighting conditions. The solution would be to have bigger sensors – but this is not only associated with considerable costs, but would also take up more space inside the smartphone bodies, which would, in turn, hardly be compatible with their current, very slim designs. And while larger displays theoretically free up extra space, this is inevitably taken up by the larger batteries required as a result. With this in mind, Huawei’s decision to place their current focus on providing faster lenses certainly seems like the wiser move.

With regards to image quality, smartphone manufacturers traditionally optimise their imaging results with the aid of algorithms calibrated to the camera and display, over which the user has very little influence. In the past few years, however, this method has been enhanced by additional processes designed for specific shooting situations. Examples include Apple’s Portrait Mode, as well as Huawei’s Wide Aperture function, which allows you to imitate the bokeh of Leica lenses, even after an image has been taken.

Which brings us to the Mate 10 Pro’s AI features. The Neural Processing unit is designed to improve performance and efficiency, increasing lens speed is a more sensible strategy than tinkering with the resolution capacity of a smartphone camera’s tiny sensors.

for example in the form of voice and image recognition. If the user wishes to implement this feature, the camera recognises certain selected subjects, and optimises the shooting parameters for this specific situation. An icon on the display indicates if the process was successful. To begin with, the AI unit currently supports the following 13 scenarios: Blue Sky, Flowers, Stage, Food, Dog, Cat, Night, Plant, Portrait, Snow, Sunset, Beach, and Text. How useful this is in practical applications is a question we will explore in one of the upcoming issues of LFI.
SELFIE

“When travelling throughout the central highlands of Mongolia, I stayed with host families so as to get to know the nomads’ culture and traditions. In Naiman Nuur I was chatting with Enkhjargal, my host’s eldest daughter. We also talked about selfies, and she showed me that she is well versed in the culture of modern technology.”

Callie Eh
Leica Q, Summilux
28mm f/1.7 Asph
FISHING NETS

“Mui Ne is a fishing village in the south of Vietnam. As I was walking along the beach, I saw this woman in front of her hut, working on her nets. After taking the picture we smiled at each other, but I really don’t think she understood what I found so special about her daily occupation.”

Bob Chiu
Leica SL with Vario-Elmarit-SL 24-90mm f/2.8-4 Asph

OPPOSITE
RIVER BANK

“The city of Varanasi on the Ganges is a sacred place for Hindus, visited by many pilgrims. Because it is not built up, locals and pilgrims go over to the opposite bank using it as a place to relax. For a couple of rupee, they can ride and let themselves be led around by young men like this.”

Sébastien Pipo
Leica M240 with Summilux-M 35mm f/1.4 Asph
“In 2014, the year after Haiyan, the strongest tropical storm ever registered, hit the Philippines, I visited the town of Tacloban in the Eastern Visayas Region to document how the people there were trying to cope with the consequences of the catastrophe. Here they are dismantling a stranded ship to make it easier to transport.”

Sungsoo Lee
Leica MP 0.58 with Summicron-M 1/2/35 mm and Kodak Tri-X
"This picture is named after the beat of country music in Thailand. The dancers wear colourful, ruffled skirts of the kind produced at this seamstress's workshop. It's located in a hectic but dismal market, and it caught my eye because of the bright colours."

Tanet Sae-Au
Leica M240 with Summicron-M 35mm f/2 Asph
BRICK GIRL, NEW DELHI

“There was a construction site opposite my hotel in New Delhi. It was only women who were responsible for transporting the bricks, balancing the heavy loads on their heads. They virtually never used their hands to support them.”

Tim Ayres
Leica X1,
Elmarit 28mm f/2.8 Asph

SÉRTAR COUNTY

“This picture was taken in Sêrtar County in the Tibetan autonomous region of Garzê, which is part of Sichuan Province, China. It shows how many nuns and monks have moved to the surroundings of a Tibetan Buddhist monastery.”

Riksa Dewantara
Leica M240 with Apo-Summicron-M 90mm f/2 Asph
“My journey led me to India, to Christians in the area of Dabhi. It was my wish to spend a whole day and night with them. The encounter in the village gave me a feeling of homelessness, or of coming home. It was a lovely experience that I remember fondly.”

Bert Meyer
Leica M8 with Elmar-M
24-mm f/3.8
BOILING POINT

“I managed to take this picture in a famous tea house in Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan Province. The tea house has a century-old tradition. In the picture, the chef is pouring freshly brewed tea into visitors’ pots.”

Oliver Yeung
Leica SL with Vario-Elmarit-SL 24–90mm f/2.8–4 Asph
Eddo Hartmann: Guard in Blue, Kimjongilia Flower Exhibition Hall, Pyongyang 2015
EDDO HARTMANN
HUIS MARSEILLE, AMSTERDAM

It is just like the *Truman Show*. At the end of the day it is all a set, and life is no more than an illusion: sociorealistic monuments to remember revolutionary acts of heroism, propaganda slogans on posters and buildings, portraits of former and current heads of state. Pyongyang, the Utopian model town holds onto the idea of the ultimate, socialist society, by using all the decorative means at its disposal. The Dutch photographer Eedo Hartmann set out for the country that considers itself an ambassador of socialism and progress. From 2014 to 2017 he visited North Korea four times – not without supervision, of course. “Within the collective character of North Korea, the individual is just a pixel. I looked specifically for that pixel and its significance in the city,” he explains. But, how do people move within an architecture that has been built around them? On a stage set of enormous, orchestrated parades? What is their daily life like?

In his *Setting the Stage: Pyongyang, North Korea, Part 2* series, Hartmann tried to extract the individual from the collective and their surroundings. His portraits reveal clean and orderly inhabitants, often in their working clothes and always in public spaces. They appear like extras in a masque. In contrast, the pictures of anonymous masses dissolve into a shimmering whole. Hartmann has produced impressive images of emptiness and fullness, both monumental and intimate at the same time. Pyongyang 2017: a city where time appears to have stood still.

9 December 2017 – 4 March 2018; Photo: Eedo Hartmann: October Ten Parade, Tongdaewon Street, Pyongyang 2015

ADOLF DE MEYER
THE MET, NEW YORK

*Quicksilver Brilliance* led fellow photographer Cecil Beaton to call de Meyer the ‘Debussy of the camera’. After nearly twenty years, the Met is dedicating an exhibition to the artist (1868–1946). 40 pieces will be on display, including a documentation of the ballet *Afternoon of a Fawn*, by Vaslav Nijinsky, based on the music of Claude Debussy.

4 December 2017 – 18 March 2018; Photo: Adolf de Meyer: Josephine Baker, 1925–26

THE TAYLOR WESSING PHOTOGRAPHIC PORTRAIT PRIZE 2017
NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY, LONDON

In 2017, the Taylor Wessing Photographic Portrait Prize is being granted for the tenth time, and the three pieces nominated could hardly be more different: the first picture shows a migrant, rescued from the Mediterranean off the Libyan coast; the second portrays a girl fleeing from Mosul in Iraq to escape from ISIS; and the third presents the Japanese android Erica. The connection between the three is the present. Flight, danger and technology. 59 portraits by 50 artists will be on display.

16 Nov. 2017 – 4 Feb. 2018; Photos: César Dezfuli: Amadou Sumaila, Maija Tammi: One of Them Is a Human #1

LUCIEN HERVÉ
JEU DE PAUME, PARIS

With just one detail he created a whole ensemble. Hervé (1910–2007), photographer of Le Corbusier, was also an observer of the world: children, old men, gestures or movements. In *The Geometry of Light*, the abstract and the humane in his work are exhibited in juxtaposition.

18 Nov. 2017 – 27 May 2018; Photo: Lucien Hervé: Observatory, Delhi, India 1955
Photography is able to capture the fleeting moment. There was such a moment in 1975. Four sisters were standing in front of the camera of the American photographer Nicholas Nixon (born 1947). They posed in front of the lens looking innocent in their white blouses, but also self-confident and provocative. A picture that tells a lot – about the relationship between them, of trust and respect, but also about letting go and following the individual path that each has to follow. If a moment is photographed repeatedly, then it loses its fugacity.

It becomes constant, and the photography captures the passage of time. The Brown Sisters is a series of group portraits. For 42 years, Nixon has been photographing his wife and her three sisters – as a record of interpersonal relationships, as an expression of constancy, and as a motif for reflection. The Persistence of Vision exhibition is now presenting the complete series, from 1975 till today. “In his numerous series, Nixon gets to know his subjects while photographing them, making the role of time, inherent to the medium of photography, an integral part of the content and process of his work,” says curator Eva Respini. The show presents 113 pieces, with each of the portraits from Nixon’s on-going project appearing side by side with other photographs from each respective year: family and self-portraits, pictures from his series about people with AIDS. Nixon is dedicated to uncovering moments of daily life; and his vision is his tenacity.

13 December 2017 – 22 April 2018;
LEICA GALLERIES

GERMANY

WETZLAR
Kurt Hutton
Am Leitz-Park 5, 35578 Wetzlar
29 November 2017 — end of February 2018

FRANKFURT
Collectible Icons
Großer Hirschgraben 15,
60311 Frankfurt am Main
16 December 2017 — 13 January 2018

NRW
Lars Beusker
Mies-von-der-Rohm-Weg 1,
52062 Oelde-Stromberg
16 September 2017 — 13 January 2018

NUREMBERG
Craig Semetko: Funny Business
Obere Wörthstr. 8, 90403 Nuremberg
3 December 2017 — 24 February 2018

ZINGST
Heidi und Robert Mertens
Am Bahnhof 1, 18574 Zingst
21 September 2017 — 25 January 2018

AUSTRIA

SALZBURG
Oskar Anrather: Mein Salzburg. Mein Leben
Galsbergstr. 12, 5020 Salzburg
19 October 2017 — 13 January 2018

ARENBERG CASTLE
Lambert Creighton: Hindenburgline Project
Arenbergerstr. 10, 5020 Salzburg
12 November 2017 — 11 February 2018

VIENNA
Per-Anders Pettersson: African Catwalk
Wolfganggasse 1, 1010 Vienna
October 2017 — 13 January 2018

CZECH REPUBLIC

PRAGUE
Ara Güler
Školníká 28, 110 00 Praag 1
23 November 2017 — 28 January 2018

POLAND

WARSAW
Wojtek Wieteska: Travelling
Mysło S. 00-496 Warsaw
9 December 2017 — 25 January 2018

ITALY

MILAN
At time of publication unknown
Via Mengoni, 4, 20121 Milan

PORTUGAL

PORTO
Gilles Caron: Conflicts
Rua d. Só da Bandeira, 48/52, 4000-427 Porto
4 November 2017 — 10 January 2018

TURKEY

ISTANBUL
Anni Leppala & Nazif Topcuoglu
Beyazit, 34367 Şişli/Istanbul
14 December 2017 — 5 March 2018

USA

LOS ANGELES
Jean Pigozzi: Johnny’s Pool
8783 Beverly Boulevard, CA 90048
9 November 2017 — 9 January 2018

BOSTON
Michael Benari: Reality-Deconstructed
74 Arlington Street, Boston, MA 02116
4 January 2017 — 24 February 2018

BRAZIL

SÃO PAULO
Icons — Michael Grecco
Rua Maranhão, 600 Higienópolis,
01240-000 São Paulo
8 December 2017 — 9 February 2018

JAPAN

TOKYO
The World of Marc Riboud
6-4-1 Ginza, Chuo-ku, Tokyo
22 September 2017 — 14 January 2018

KYOTO
Marc Riboud: Japanese Women as seen by Marc Riboud
570-120 Giornoichi Minamigawa,
Higashiyama-ku, Kyoto
23 September 2017 — 18 January 2018

SINGAPORE

SINGAPORE
Elliott Erwitt: City of Love
Fullerton Hotel, 1 Fullerton Square, #01-07
7 December 2017 — 31 January 2018

SPECIAL GUEST
Ellen von Unwerth
ROGER BALLEN
BALLENESQUE – A RETROSPECTIVE

“When I first obtained a Leica M Monochrom in 2014, I was sceptical, as I had been using a square-format Rolleiflex almost exclusively since 1982. To my great surprise, I began to create lasting photographs with the Leica, proving to me, once again, that the camera is a tool of mind.” While Leica images only account for a small portion of the South African photographer’s (born 1950) latest book, they seamlessly blend into his overall body of work – which has never before been presented in such chronological abundance. Ballen’s approach counts among the most radical positions in contemporary photography. His pictorial mini-dramas, grotesque visual worlds and absurd orchestrations are unmistakable characteristics of his imagery, whose extreme psychological realism polarises audiences. He also frequently moves beyond the two-dimensional medium in the form of equally challenging spatial installations. Encompassing both well-known images and previously unpublished series, Ballenesque takes us on a rich and complex journey through the artist’s work, and traces the stylistic evolution of a more than four-decade-long career.

336 pages, 330 duo-tone and colour images, 30.5 × 32.5 cm, Thames & Hudson

ED ECKSTEIN
GRUNTS

Turning civilians into soldiers: During the Vietnam war, the American photographer accompanied a group of young men on their compulsory, nine-week basic training in the U.S. Army. With his Leica, he created a profound and candid reportage, which not only captures a historical era, but also remains deeply relevant in our current times.

128 p., 116 black and white images, 23 × 23 cm, Schiffer Publishing

LUIS COBÉLO
ZURUMBÁTICO

Zurumbático refers to “someone who acts in a foolish way. A ninny, bewildered, slow, melancholic, enigmatic, half-drunk, half-mad”. In this hypnotic swirl of exotic imagery, the Colombian-born photographer (b. 1970) takes us to the region around Aracataca – the birthplace and source of inspiration of Gabriel García Márquez, author of One Hundred Years of Solitude. The novel’s magic realism profoundly influenced the photographer’s work: intoxicated by feelings and impressions, he found the extraordinary within the ordinary – capturing vibrantly colourful images with his Leica M9 that are filled with humour and tragedy, stillness and ferocity. The scenes contain no explanation, but invite the viewer on an exploratory journey. “It is what it is,” or, in the photographer’s words, “Everything is unreal until proven otherwise.”


ELGER ESSER
MORGENLAND

Hazy air, delicate colours and a sense of timelessness bring to mind a heat-induced mirage; yet what we see are real places in the Near East, captured by the German photographer (b. 1967) in a skilful, vexing interplay of history, myth, poetry – as well as the present day, as all images were taken between 2005 and 2015.

180 p., 131 colour and duo-tone images, 24.5 × 30 cm, Schirmer/Mosel
It was a landmark exhibition, though few could have predicted it at the time: in early 1967, the Museum of Modern Art in New York presented a display of 94 photographs by three little-known young artists. Today, Diane Arbus (1923–1971), Lee Friedlander (born 1934) and Garry Winogrand (1928–1984) count among the most renowned representatives of American post-war photography. With a visual language that was both radical and understated, they articulated a profound shift in the landscape of documentary photography. The exhibition subsequently toured numerous museums in the USA; yet it seems that not even its curator, John Szarkowski, expected such lasting significance, considering that there was no budget for a catalogue.

This has now finally been remedied: released in celebration of the exhibition’s 50th anniversary, the volume not only features full-page reproductions of the show’s legendary images, but also documents the exhibition’s history with an abundance of archival material. The result is a long-awaited legacy, and a fascinating document of photography history.

170 pages, 100 black and white images, 23.5 × 27.5 cm, Museum of Modern Art
“WE BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF IDEAS AND DISCIPLINES.”

INTERVIEW

A few months ago, twelve photographers and four creatives established the Maps Images Agency. We spoke with photographer Gaël Turine, one of the founders, and Laetitia Ganaye, agent and co-owner, about plans and opportunities for this enterprise.
Dominic Nahr (right): Independence celebrations, Juba, South Sudan, 9 July 2011
Gael Turine (left page and far right): In the Pamplona Alta district of the Peruvian capital, Lima, July 2017

Cédric Gerbehaye (left): Relatives grieving for Mohammad Daggia, Kashmir, India, April 2017
Hannah Reyes Morales (right): In a night club in Angeles City, Philippines, April 2016

Alessandro Penso (far left): Seasonal worker from Burkina Faso, Basilicata, Italy, 2011
John Vink (left): Demonstration in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 2 July 2013

LFI: How did you get the idea to start a photo agency?
GAËL TURINE: Cédric Gerbehaye and I had been thinking about this idea for a while and two years ago we decided to mention it to Christian Lutz. All the signs were negative except our motivation and goals, but the quality of the group and our idea to involve creatives was to make the difference, and in the end it happened.

LFI: What is your intention with Maps Images (Maps)?
LETTITIA GANAYE: The initiative for creating Maps was taken by a small group of photographers that further developed into the group that we are now: 12 photographers and 4 creatives.
TURINE: A group of contributors, made up of a cartoonist, videographers, writers, are also part of the content production creatives. Maps has all the necessary creatives to manage the whole process of creation: from the very first concept note to the final presentation in various forms.

LFI: What does Maps have to offer?
GANAYE: The idea was to have a structure in which all members would be on the same level, photographers and non-photographers, building projects together that would include different fields of expression, such as music and writing. We aim to produce multidisciplinary works in order to give different approaches around a common theme, and to reach the widest audience possible.
TURINE: Photographers intend to upgrade the quality of their proposals, enlarge the scope of thinking, and so we thought we could include non-photographers: creatives with strong experience in different fields yet connected to photography. We believe in the power that can be brought by the diversity of visions and disciplines.

LFI: What are your main goals?
TURINE: Maps plans to realize projects with final forms of presentation that target a wider audience. Photographic works must be presented in dedicated venues like galleries and museums, but also in unexpected locations with a very creative form, provoking an experience in the viewer’s mind. Editorial series can be published both on paper and in the digital press, and also in an individual and original printed version, where the form and content enter into a dialogue. Maps wants to be present and follow today’s dissemination platforms like social media and the online media, but also proposes presentations that require ‘time for reading’, where the reader or →
viewer would be asked to take the necessary time to plunge into the story.
Festival in Baie de Saint-Brieuc, where our first group project, Unrest, was shown in early October.

LFI: Tell us about your collective projects concept – especially the Unrest project.
TURINE: Maps wanted to work on a first collective project which identifies Maps in a profound manner. We wanted to work on a theme offering a large range of approaches and interpretations, instead of ‘constraining’ ourselves in a too defined and limited field. Different subjects and visual languages are connected to each other by this one true word: Unrest. The whole project got funded by the International Photoreporter Festival in Baie de Saint-Brieuc.

LFI: How has the feedback been so far? What has been your greatest success?
GANAYE: I think the fact that we made it to the launch is already a great success! We got enthusiastic feedback from the market. I have the feeling that people very much value the fact that we are open to other fields of expression, and that the photographers and creatives form a group of professionals all working together at the same level.
TURINE: All our members share the vision that Maps is a project, a proposition, an organic laboratory, where ideas and skills meet up to generate coherent and relevant projects. Let’s see where this takes us to.

INTERVIEW: Carla Susanne Erdmann


GAËL TURINE Born in Nieuwpoort, Belgium in 1972, Turine studied photography in Brussels and then worked as a freelance photographer. His work has been published internationally. He teaches workshops as a freelancer, and at the main public university in Brussels (ULB). He is a co-founder of Maps Images.

EXHIBITIONS: For info on upcoming events, please check the Maps website www.mapsimages.com
ULRICH MACK

MY PICTURE

Childhood delight, freedom and happiness: the photographer sees all these feelings coming together in this picture he took of his son at Lake Piön

Julian at Lake Piön, 1972

We had a little summer place at Lake Piön for many decades. It was not very far from Hamburg. The family always looked forward to spending weekends, or longer in summer, out in the country. It was only a few metres down to the water, and you could reach Möweninsel (Seagull Island) in a few minutes with the outboard motor boat. Back then you could even collect seagull eggs there. Today it is forbidden: the island is now a nature reserve where you are no longer allowed to land.

The picture of my happy, jubilant son also always reminds me of my own childhood, because I too found freedom in nature; in my case, at the mouth of the Oste river, a left tributary of the Elbe in Lower Saxony, Germany. I was happy when I was out there, which is why I was also happy to have a place for my own kids that was like a home for us.

Ulrich Mack (b. 1934), with his many long-term documentations and publications, is considered one of Germany's most renowned photographers. He worked for magazines such as Quick, pien and Stern, and was a Professor for Visual Communications in Dortmund.
THE MOMENT

LEICA SL

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Photo shot on Leica SL from the series "Parkour Motion", © Ben Franke
LEICA M -
IT DOESN'T NEED TO BE JUST BLACK AND WHITE
Life is so colourful!

In 2016, Leica Camera produced the iconic LEICA APO-Summicron-M 1:2/50 mm ASPH. in a red anodized, limited Edition. Now we present you the LEICA M (Typ 262) in this fascinating finish. The Edition - as the APO Summicron was - is strictly limited to 100 units worldwide. Top- and bottomplate cut from solid aluminium, red anodized. Exclusively with us.