

Pressemitteilung

ARTISAN
pr & communications

Kristina Thomas
+49 176 8198 3594
kristina@artisanpr.de
www.artisanpr.de

STEVE McCURRY in Berlin

A *retrospective* exhibiting 130 selected works of a remarkable photographer

Special Invitee Berlin Foto Biennale 2016

4th Biennial of Fine Art & Documentary Photography

6 – 30 October 2016



The Steve McCurry retrospective *Asia - A Life in Pictures* presents 130 sublime portraits, landscapes and street photography of the people and cultures of Asia

On October 6, 2016 the first Berlin Foto Biennale - and *4th Biennial of Fine Art and Documentary Photography* - opens its doors at the elegant Palazzo Italia. Alongside the comprehensive exhibition *Emotions and Commotions Across Cultures* the Biennial also contains a retrospective with 130 selected works by Steve McCurry. With his first solo exhibition in Berlin titled *Asia - A Life in Pictures* ('Asien - Ein Leben in Bildern') McCurry forms part of the Biennial as special invitee.



© Steve McCurry, Magnum Photos
"Girl with Green Shawl", Peshawar, 2002

Rich, vibrant colours, arresting portraits and fascinating daily scenes are his trademark. Magnum photographer Steve McCurry has travelled the world for more than 30 years, documenting conflicts, poverty, and disappearing cultures, as well as joy and contemporary culture - yet always retains a human element. His subjective compositions are of painterly beauty, his portraits full of dignity and grace. His most famous work is the portrait 'Afghan Girl', which he took in 1984 during the Afghan War.

Starting on 6th October, 130 of his most remarkable works, which were shot between 1979 and 2013 in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Cambodia, Kashmir, Myanmar, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Tibet and Vietnam as well as the Philippines and Yemen, will be exhibited in the atrium of Berlin's Palazzo Italia.

Curated by Magnum Photos and Steve McCurry himself, this retrospective invites visitors to discover the very best of the extensive and diverse body of work of one of the most important visual storytellers of the Far East and Asian cultures. Titled "Asia - A Life in Pictures", the exhibition presents 130 of Steve McCurry's emotive and

beautiful photographs taken in Asia between 1979 and 2013. The iconic Magnum photographer takes visitors along a supremely colourful journey to some of the poorest and most crisis-torn countries in the world. Starting with the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, where he took one of the most famous colour photos in history - 'Afghan Girl' - in 1984, we follow the photographer to discover the lives of the nomads of Tibet, the stilt fisherman of Sri Lanka and the Buddhist monks he encountered during his most recent trip to India - a country he has visited countless times.

For McCurry, who says that the vibrant colours of Asia “had taught him to see and write in light”, his work was always about creating timeless documents of poverty and suffering but also of hope, joy and beauty, and about depicting the flow of time. Playing with the palettes of different cultures, McCurry evokes a wide range of emotions in the viewer. In Cambodia luminous orange monk robes light up the dawn. In Afghanistan oranges radiate in flourishing colours out of the desolate ruins of a decades-long war.

“McCurry’s images take the viewer by the hand and touch his soul at the same time”, said the American arts critic Anthony Bannon so accurately about the excellently composed, colour-indulgent photographs that have the power to transcend boundaries of language and culture and to blur the line between the strange and the familiar.

Some of his photographs depict the wounds of a war, others disappearing cultures and traditions or the consequences of globalization. Fathoming the facets of the human condition, he does so by putting the dignity of his subjects first. McCurry is searching and finding encounters at eye-level and so the visitor’s eyes meet a gaze that is open, sometimes intense and other times curiously inquisitive.

With a single photograph McCurry captures, it seems, the story of a whole life: There is the young Buddhist monk with a Coca-Cola in his hand, the bright red brand name flaunted above him. There is the young boy posing with father’s AK-47, still taller than him, and the child soldier posing armed to his teeth with a mixed expression of pride and doubt. There are the stilt fishermen of Sri Lanka, floating seated in the air and the Indian tailor caught up to his neck in the monsoon floodwater, smiling as he is carries his vintage Pfaff sewing machine.

And thus Steve McCurry’s photographs are never mere portraits or reportage pictures, but epitomize archetypes that are strange and familiar at the same time. From behind his lens he brings the icons of humanity and of everyday life from the collective subconscious into the light. This retrospective therefore not only gives a comprehensive overview of Steve McCurry’s powerfully colourful compositions but is also an ode to the universal depth of human emotions.

Author: Kristina Thomas

This retrospective is a collection of sublime portraits, landscapes, and street photography taken by Steve McCurry over 34 years. Children and shepherds, warriors and labourers are presented alongside striking views of sandstone cities, mountainous landscapes, and ancient temples. Included in the exhibition are several unpublished images as well as images taken during his most recent trips to India and Tibet that have never before been seen. Evocative and timeless, these lyrical images capture the enduring spirit, grandeur, and beauty of the land and people.
(Magnum Photos)

Steve McCurry was born in 1950 in Philadelphia, USA. In 1974 he graduated from the Pennsylvania State University. In 1979, 29-year-old McCurry was one of the first photographers to report from the Afghan conflict. He is a member of Magnum Photos since 1986. McCurry has been awarded numerous times. His photo reportages have appeared in TIME Magazine, the New York Times and the National Geographic. He has been selected as Photographer of the Year several times and since 2006 he has been an honorary member of the Royal Photographic Society of Great Britain.



BERLIN FOTO BIENNALE 2016 - Associated Partner of EMOP Berlin

As Associated Partner of EMOP Berlin the first edition of the Berlin Foto Biennale - which is also the 4th edition of the Biennial for Fine Art and Documentary Photography - will take place at elegant Palazzo Italia, situated in the historic heart of Berlin. *Emotions and Commotions Across Cultures* will present 1230 photos by 446 contemporary artists from 41 countries of five continents.

Recognizing a wide array of artistic expression across diverse cultures, the Berlin Foto Biennale 2016 presents an overview of the different schools of thought emerging from the United States to China, from Australia to Turkey and from Senegal to Mexico. Its spectrum of styles ranges from documentary and wild life, to portrait and experimental photography. Part of the revenue from artwork sales will be donated to the Save the Children Fund. A catalogue published by Kehrer Verlag accompanies the Biennial.

Magnum Photos

Magnum Photos is an international photographic cooperative owned by its photographer-members, with offices in New York City, Paris, London and Tokyo. It was founded in Paris on April 27th, 1947 by legendary photographers such as Robert Capa, Henri Cartier-Bresson, David Seymour („Chim“) and George Rodger. Steve McCurry has been a member since 1986. Magnum Photos has co-curated the retrospective and produced all the prints.

Palazzo Italia

The Palazzo Italia is surely one of the most attractive exhibition venues in the heart of Berlin. The architecture of this artfully renovated historical building is of unique grace and elegance. Once home to the luxurious Hotel de Rome, it now boasts an atrium and light-flooded exhibition spaces with a chic and sophisticated flair. Visitors will appreciate the excellent location amidst Berlin's most attractive sights such as Museum Island, Berlin State Opera, historical Friedrichstrasse and Berlin's famous Brandenburg Gate.

European Month of Photography Berlin

The European Month of Photography Berlin is the largest German festival for photography. The EMOP Berlin is a member of the European Month of Photography (EMOP), a European joint project that includes the photography festivals in Athens, Bratislava, Budapest, Ljubljana, Luxembourg, Paris, and Vienna.



© Steve McCurry, Magnum Photos. Mujahideen Watch a Russian Convoy. Nuristan, Afghanistan, 1979.



© Steve McCurry, Magnum Photos. Bakery run by Afghan widows. Kabul, AFGHANISTAN, 2002.



© Steve McCurry, Magnum Photos. BOY IN MID FLIGHT, JODPHUR, INDIA, 2007.



© Steve McCurry, Magnum Photos. HOLI MAN, INDIA, 1996.



© Steve McCurry, Magnum Photos. Stilt fishermen, Weligama, South coast, Sri Lanka, 1995.



Save the Children

The Save the Children Fund, commonly known as Save the Children, is an international non-governmental organization that promotes children's rights, provides relief and helps support children in developing countries. It was established in the United Kingdom in 1919 in order to improve the lives of children through better education, health care, and economic opportunities, as well as providing emergency aid in natural disasters, war, and other conflicts. Today there are 30 national Save the Children organisations (including Germany), which are members of Save the Children International, a global network of non-profit organisations supporting local partners in over 120 countries around the world!