

PREFACE

What is a photograph today – especially in these times, when self-learning processes for image generation and the rapid spread of new images are causing significant unrest in all areas of the photography scene? Rather than using words, we communicate more than ever with image formats such as pictograms, GIFs and, for quite some time now, AI-generated images. The belief in the authenticity of a picture, which is based on trust, is eroding. There is no doubt that photography will continue to evolve, and maybe the fact that painting is still alive, despite the frequent announcement of its imminent demise, is reassuring: photography will not disappear, but it will continue to be transformed, making it all the more important that the general public question both the context and circumstances of origin of an image.

As witnesses of our times, committed, photojournalist photographers continue to produce exciting stories, which, when presented as series, become emotional experiences. Consequently, the significance of the LOBA grows steadily, not least in view of AI. Once again this year, the nominated series represent powerful and impressive reflections of today's world. The outcome is a LOBA edition including twelve very strong, diverse and moving series. We would like to congratulate the winners, Ismail Ferdous and Ziyi Le, whose picture series reveal very personal experiences. The website, catalogue and exhibition also offer the viewer the chance to discover the other ten, wonderful short-listed series.

My gratitude goes to all those who have contributed towards the large LOBA package: both those within the extended branches of the Leica family, as well as the many international nominators, the jury, and the LFI production team responsible for the website, catalogue and exhibition. Above all, however, I thank the photographers whose works reveal important stories from hotspots around the world, touching crisis and war, but also hope and confidence. We are happy that LOBA can offer them a powerful forum for all their stories – and for the 43rd time already.

Karin Rehn-Kaufmann
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