

BRUNO BARBEY PASSAGES

Exhibition period: **September 9th, 2017 – January 14th, 2018**

Opening: **Friday, September 8th, 2017, 7 pm**

Press Preview: **Thursday, September 7th, 2017, 11 am**

For the last 55 years the photojournalist and master of colour has been chronicling a vulnerable world: with BRUNO BARBEY »PASSAGES« the Fotografie Forum Frankfurt presents a retrospective of the French Magnum photographer. The exhibition is part of this year's Guest of Honour Programme "Frankfurt In French" of the Frankfurt Book Fair.

Frankfurt/Main, September 7th, 2017 – Moments of a carefree childhood, the respectful gaze into foreign cultures or aspects of the humane during political conflict and war: the diversity of his topics and his insightful image vocabulary have shaped the career of Bruno Barbey (*1941) as one of the most successful photojournalists of our time. With **BRUNO BARBEY »PASSAGES«** the Fotografie Forum Frankfurt presents the oeuvre of the French photographer. On display are 100 photographs in black-and-white and colour, from the early 1960s until today. Additionally, films by Caroline Thiénot-Barbey, the wife of the photographer are on view, giving unique insight to Barbey's work and approach.

The exhibition presents images and photo reportages of Bruno Barbey from all over the world. The earliest examples presented include the black-and-white images from the series "Les Italiens", Barbey's first photo essay (1961–1964). As a student Barbey travelled to Italy numerous times, absorbed by the spirited atmosphere of the cities and the people that seemed to instantly feel relaxed in front of the camera and stage their lives on the streets much like a theatre. To capture the spirit of this nation became his goal. Fascinated by neorealist film, by encounters with the author Alberto Moravia or the painter Carlo Levi and led by the audacity of youth Barbey made more than 10,000 images across Italy. The series "Les Italiens" earned him his first publication in the major magazines Du and Camera as well as his membership with Magnum Photos at the age of 25.

The French artist became a pioneer of colour photography in 1966 with a photo assignment for Vogue in Brazil. Captivated by the intense hues and contrasts of the country, he worked with colour film for the first time "even though the quality of reproduction was poor in magazines." Barbey travelled through the Amazon, photographed people and the day-to-day life along the river banks. He received worldwide recognition for his images of cheerfully bathing children in Belém or the iconic image of the boys jumping into the river near Leticia.

Later the wonderfully vibrant impressions of Morocco, the home of his childhood, reveal his virtuosity in the use of colours. Again, and again, he is drawn back to the country where he spent the first twelve years of his life. The call of the mu'addhin, the waves breaking on the shores of the ocean and the scents of spices have deeply inscribed themselves into his memory, the blue of the ceramics, the ochre of the walls, the interaction of light and shadow, have had a great impact on his perception. And yet working with the camera would have been difficult in the traditional culture of Morocco, the artist described in conversation with the author Carole Naggar in his book

BRUNO BARBEY PASSAGES

»**Passages**« (Edition La Martinière, 2015). Images had to be either created very quickly – or could only be made after a long period of waiting: “Morocco has really meant years of patience,” says Barbey.

Years in which the photojournalist Barbey travelled across all five continents. His intuitive curiosity, openness and a fine sense of historical developments often brought him to the global trouble spots before other colleagues. Another focus of the exhibition are Barbey’s documentations of large world events – the Six-Day War in the Middle East, the Vietnam War, the 1968s student demonstrations, Poland during the era of Solidarność, or the Iraq war at the beginning of the 1990s.

Burning oil fields, pillars of smoke after air raids: despite many images depicting war, Barbey does not conceive of himself as a war photographer: “I refuse the aesthetics of madness and horror,” he writes in one of his books. Instead, he was ever interested in the consequences of conflict on civilians; especially women, children and refugees. He sees and presents these as the true victims of war – as well as the child soldiers whom he photographed in many parts of Africa, Cambodia and Palestine. He has been described as a “chronicler of change and a vulnerable world”.

The exhibition »**PASSAGES**« illustrates Bruno Barbey’s unique position in the history of recent photography, his precise methodology and poetic vision with images that keep the balance between distance, proximity and empathy for the beauty and fragility of existence. “Barbey’s compositional approach orchestrates intuitive and poetic timelessness, be it historical world events or contemporary observations – and this ongoing since the beginning of his career as a photographer”, says Celina Lunsford, Artistic Director of the Fotografie Forum Frankfurt. A “rendezvous with history”, as he once said. As well as rendezvous with life.

The Fotografie Forum Frankfurt presents **BRUNO BARBEY »PASSAGES«** in collaboration with Bruno Barbey (www.brunobarbey.com) and Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris. The exhibition is part of the Guest of Honour Programme “Frankfurt in French” of this year’s Frankfurt Book Fair.

