

PRESS RELEASE

## **SUSAN MEISELAS, OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO PHOTOGRAPHY 2025**

- Acclaimed documentary photographer Susan Meiselas is the recipient of the prestigious *Outstanding Contribution to Photography* title for the Sony World Photography Awards 2025;
- Meiselas to be recognised at the Awards' annual gala ceremony in London on 16 April 2025;
- A special presentation of Meiselas's work to be shown at Somerset House, London from 17 April – 5 May 2025.

LONDON, 12 NOVEMBER 2024 – Susan Meiselas is announced as the recipient of the prestigious *Outstanding Contribution to Photography* of the Sony World Photography Awards 2025, in recognition of her impact on the medium over the past five decades. Celebrated for her deeply engaged approach, Meiselas has created a powerful corpus of work, expanding perceptions of documentary photography through her insightful portrayals of people in their communities. Meiselas is well known for depicting the stories of women: from girls growing up in Little Italy, New York; to strippers performing in state fairs; to women escaping domestic violence in the UK, and for her work documenting human rights issues in Latin America, as well as compiling a photographic history of Kurdistan. Her photographic essays, rooted in place, share the lives and experiences of those in front of her lens. Taken over extended periods—often accompanied by field notes and participant testimonies—Meiselas's projects invite collaboration

Excerpts of five projects by Meiselas will be on view at London's Somerset House (17 April – 5 May 2025), including projects never exhibited before in the UK. Drawing from her earliest bodies of work, *44 Irving Street*, *Prince Street Girls* and *Carnival Strippers*, to her later projects *Pandora's Box* and *A Room of their Own*, the exhibition traces recurring thematic elements Meiselas has cultivated in her practice, focussing on what is often hidden from public view.

The series presented at Somerset House chronicle the interpersonal relationships and her exchanges over time. In *44 Irving Street* (1971), Meiselas invited neighbours in her boarding house to write about the differences they found between how they saw themselves and what was revealed in the portraits that she made of them. *Prince Street Girls*, (1975 – 1990), records the dynamics of a group of young girls growing up in Little Italy, tracing their evolution to adulthood.

*Carnival Strippers* (1972–75) documents the onstage and offstage experiences of women doing striptease at small-town carnivals across New England, capturing both their performative and private lives, counter-balanced with a collage of voices of all the participants, from the girl show manager to the women on stage and the men in the audience. The immersive projection, *Pandora's Box* (1995), focuses on a New York City S&M club known as 'a Disneyland of Domination.' In *A Room of Their Own* (2015–2017), Meiselas turns her lens towards a women's refuge in the Black Country, UK. She combines photographs of resident's rooms with testimonies and original artworks generated by survivors that both express and protect their identities.

Born in Baltimore, USA, in 1948, Susan Meiselas completed her MA in visual education at Harvard University before working as a teacher. She began photographing during school summer breaks, creating her first project *Carnival Strippers* in the summers of 1972–75. She joined Magnum Photos in 1976 and has gone on to produce several significant bodies of work. Her photographs of the revolution in Nicaragua in the late 1970s still remain vivid in the public imagination years later.

Commenting on her acceptance of the award, Susan Meiselas says: *'I am honoured to receive this Award for my contribution to the ever-expanding world of photography. Over the past 50 years, I have had the privilege of witnessing history being made, sharing the often unseen lives of those engaged in its making. The work on display invites reflection not only on the photographs themselves but also on the relationships that shaped and inspired them.'*

The *Outstanding Contribution to Photography* honours the voices behind the most groundbreaking photographic work of our time. As its 18th recipient, Susan Meiselas joins a distinguished list of names including Mary Ellen Mark (2014), Martin Parr (2017), Graciela Iturbide (2021), Edward Burtynsky (2022) and Sebastião Salgado (2024).

Meiselas will be presented with her Award at the annual gala ceremony in London on 16 April 2025, during an evening of celebrations for the overall winners of the Sony World Photography Awards 2025. For more information about upcoming announcements and winners please visit [www.worldphoto.org](http://www.worldphoto.org).

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## NOTES TO EDITORS

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A selection of images is available to download on [press.creoarts.com](http://press.creoarts.com).

### SUSAN MEISELAS

Susan Meiselas is a documentary photographer based in New York. She is the author of *Carnival Strippers* (1976), *Nicaragua* (1981), *Kurdistan: In the Shadow of History* (1997), *Pandora's Box* (2001), *Encounters with the Dani* (2003), *Prince Street Girls* (2016), *A Room of Their Own* (2017), *Tar Beach* (2020) and *Carnival Strippers Revisited* (2022). Meiselas is well known for her documentation of human rights issues in Latin America. Her photographs are included in North American and international collections. In 1992 she was made a MacArthur Fellow and received a Guggenheim Fellowship (2015). Most recently, she received the first Women in Motion Award from Kering and the Rencontres d'Arles (2019), the Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation Prize (2019), and the Erich Salomon Award of the German Society for Photography (2022). *Mediations*, a survey exhibition of her work from the 1970s to present was initiated by the Jeu de Paume in Paris and travelled to Fundació Antoni Tàpies, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the Instituto Moreira Salles in São Paulo, among others. Meiselas has been the President of the Magnum Foundation since 2007, with a mission to expand diversity and creativity in documentary photography.

### SONY WORLD PHOTOGRAPHY AWARDS

Produced by the World Photography Organisation, the internationally acclaimed Sony World Photography Awards is one of the most important fixtures in the global photographic calendar. Now in its 18th year, the free-to-enter Awards are a global voice for photography and provide a vital insight into contemporary photography today. For both established and emerging artists, the Awards offer world-class opportunities for exposure of their work. The Awards additionally recognise the world's most influential artists working in the medium through the *Outstanding Contribution to Photography* award; previous recipients include William Eggleston (2013), Mary Ellen Mark (2014), Martin Parr (2017), Gerhard Steidl (2020), Graciela Iturbide (2021), Edward Burtynsky (2022), Rinko Kawauchi (2023) and Sebastião Salgado (2024). The Awards showcase the works of winning and shortlisted photographers at a prestigious annual exhibition at Somerset House, London. [worldphoto.org/exhibition](http://worldphoto.org/exhibition)

### WORLD PHOTOGRAPHY ORGANISATION

World Photography Organisation is a leading global platform dedicated to the development and advancement of photographic culture. Its programming and competition initiatives provide valuable opportunities for artists working in photography and help broaden the conversation around their work. The Sony World Photography Awards is World Photography Organisation's principal programme. Established in 2007, it is one of the world's biggest and most prestigious photography competitions, celebrating the work of leading and emerging practitioners and attracting tens of thousands of visitors annually to its exhibitions worldwide. World Photography Organisation is the photography strand of Creo, which initiates events and programming across three sectors: photography, film and contemporary art. [worldphoto.org](http://worldphoto.org)

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### CREO

Creo initiates and organises events and programming across three key strands: photography, film and contemporary art. Established in 2007 as World Photography Organisation, Creo has since grown in scope, furthering its mission of developing meaningful opportunities for creatives and expanding the reach of its cultural activities. Today, its flagship projects include the Sony World Photography Awards, Sony Future Filmmaker Awards, PHOTOFAIRS and Photo London. Working in partnership with Angus Montgomery Arts, Creo helps deliver the group's ventures, comprising some of the world's leading art fairs. Taking its name from the Latin for 'I create', it is in this spirit that Creo sets out to empower and give agency to creative voices. [creoarts.com](http://creoarts.com)



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\*Kando is a Japanese word that roughly translates to the sense of awe and emotion you feel when experiencing something beautiful and amazing for the first time.

