

PRESS RELEASE

Istanbul Modern Photography Gallery presents unforgettable photographs from Magnum Photos

Magnum – Contact Sheets

The forthcoming exhibition at Istanbul Modern's Photography Gallery, "**Magnum – Contact Sheets**" explores the creation processes of photographs from Magnum Photos, one of the world's most prestigious photography agencies. Through the contact sheets of legendary photographs, the exhibition demonstrates the great influence of these works on visual culture from the past century through to our contemporary age. Co-curated by **Lorenza Bravetta** and **Gabriele Accornero**, "**Magnum – Contact Sheets**" brings together select works by world-renowned photographers, including **Henri Cartier-Bresson**, **Robert Capa**, **Elliot Erwitt**, **Eve Arnold**, **Josef Koudelka**, **René Burri**.

Sponsored by **BASF Türk** as part of their 150th anniversary celebrations, the exhibition includes 133 works by 58 artists. Organized in cooperation with **Magnum Photos**, **Forté di Bard** and **Thames & Hudson**, "**Magnum – Contact Sheets**" focuses on the analogue age of photography with works comprising the visual history of more than eighty years.

The exhibition gives visitors remarkable access and insight into the decision-making processes of many of Magnum's famous members through the inclusion of first-person accounts. The texts accompanying the contact sheets, gleaned from the book "**Magnum – Contact Sheets**", published by **Thames & Hudson**, tell the stories behind the artists work.

Henri Cartier-Bresson stated that contact sheets are somewhat similar to the case histories of psychoanalysts, a kind of seismograph that records movements: "Everything is written down – whatever has surprised us, what we've caught in flight, what we've missed, what has disappeared, or an event that develops until it becomes an image that is sheer jubilation." **David Hurn**, on the other hand, noted, "Usually the clearest pictures only become obvious from the contact sheet after the event."

With the development of digital technologies and their huge impact on photographic production, this exploration of photography's analogue age sets out to both investigate and celebrate a technique that is becoming increasingly historical; to provide an "epitaph", in the words of Martin Parr. In the exhibition, contact sheets and photographs are accompanied by close-up details, articles, books and magazine spreads.

Including 60 contact sheets and a video installation, the exhibition presents a total of 133 works by the following artists: **Henri Cartier-Bresson**, **Chim (David Seymour)**, **Herbert List**, **George Rodger**, **Robert Capa**, **Philippe Halsman (1930-49)**, **Werner Bischof**, **Marc Riboud**, **Eric Lessing**, **Inge Morath**, **Elliott Erwitt**, **Burt Glinn (1950-59)**, **Eve Arnold**, **Cornell Capa**, **Bruce Davidson**, **Constantine Manos**, **René Burri**, **Leonard Freed**, **David Hurn**, **Philip Jones Griffiths**, **Bruno Barbey**, **Paul Fusco**, **Josef Koudelka**, **Dennis Stock**, **Guy Le Querrec (1960-69)**, **Susan Meiselas**, **Micha Bar-Am**, **Hiroji Kubota**, **Alex Webb**, **Abbas (1970-79)**, **Peter Marlow**, **Steve McCurry**, **Ian Berry**, **Martin Parr**, **John Vink**, **Jean Gaumy**, **Ferdinando Scianna**, **Stuart Franklin**, **Gueorgui Pinkhassov (1980-89)**, **Patrick Zachmann**, **Nikos Economopoulos**, **Larry Towell**, **Eli Reed**, **Martine Franck**, **Chris Steele-Perkins**, **Chien-Chi Chang**, **Bruce Gilden**, **Alessandra Sanguinetti (1990-99)**, **Jacob Aue Sobol**, **Jonas Bendiksen**,

Trent Parke, Paolo Pellegrin, Thomas Hoepker, Cristina Garcia Rodero, Alec Soth, Mikhael Subotzky, Jim Goldberg (2000-10) and Alex Majoli (2013).

A contact print is obtained by exposing an image or a set of images against a single sheet of photographic paper of the same size as the negative. Often compared to an artist's sketchbook, contact sheets are the photographer's first look at what he or she has captured on the film roll. Because contact sheets provide raw images of the photographs, without any intervention in the process, they offer the artist an opportunity for self-criticism and choice. In this sense, looking at contact sheets is like entering the photographer's secret thoughts. By showing the "before" and "after" of the scene selected by the photographer, the viewer is allowed to see how that moment came to be, as if walking alongside and seeing through the photographer's eyes as they capture the scene. Contact sheets give clues on the artist's working process, the way they approach the subject matter and the extent to which the selected snapshot reflects reality.

The exhibition brings together works of art encompassing the visual history of over 80 years: **Robert Capa's** photographs of US troops assaulting Omaha Beach during the D-Day landings in Normandy in 1944; **Eric Lessing's** photographs of the insurrection in Budapest in 1956; **Elliot Erwin's** photograph of Richard Nixon glowering at Nikita Khrushchev in Moscow in 1959; **Burt Glinn's** photograph of the crowds waiting for Fidel Castro in Havana in 1959; **Philip Jones Griffith's** photographs of civilian casualties photographed in Vietnam in 1968 and that influenced the politics of the time; **Bruno Barbey's** photographs of turmoil in Paris in May 1968; **Josef Koudelka's** photographs of the invasion of Czechoslovakia during Prague Spring in 1968; **Stuart Franklin's** photograph of the solitary protestor who stood in front of tanks in Tiananmen Square in Peking on the morning of July 5, 1989; **Nicos Economopoulos'** photograph shot in the Central Train Station of Tirana in 1991 denoting the concept of immigration in the Balkans in late 20th century, and a group of young people photographed by **Thomas Hoepker** in East River, New York, on the morning of September 11, 2001...

The exhibition also includes some of the most iconic portrait photographs of political figures, actors, artists and musicians of the 20th century: **Philippe Halsman's** 1948 photograph of his close friend Salvador Dali inspired by Dali's painting titled *Leda Atomica*; **René Burri's** photograph of Cuba's number two man Ernesto "Che" Guevara, taken during an interview in 1963; **Leonard Freed's** photograph of Martin Luther King after receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964 and depicted with civilian hands extended towards him in protection; **Eve Arnold's** extraordinary photographs of Malcolm X in Chicago in 1961; **Peter Marlow's** photograph of Margaret Thatcher, a.k.a the *Iron Lady*, the first woman Prime Minister of the U.K., and **David Hurn's** photograph of The Beatles shot in Abbey Road Studios in London.

PRESS CONFERENCE

The press conference of the exhibition was attended by **Oya Eczacıbaşı**, Chair of the Board of Istanbul Modern; **Volker Hammes**, the Head of Business Center Turkey, Middle East & North Africa and CEO of BASF Turk; **Lorenza Bravetta**, Advisor for Magnum Photos, and **Sena Çakırkaya**, Head of the Photography Department at Istanbul Modern.

Oya Eczacıbaşı, Chair of the Board of Istanbul Modern, explained that the exhibition "**Magnum – Contact Sheets**" encompassed visuals documenting cultural, political and social

history from across the world by Magnum photographers from the 1930s to the present-day. **“Those Magnum members whose works are displayed in the exhibition convey the stories of their photographic processes, how they reach the ‘decisive moment’ after films are developed, and how they carefully select the final images from several contact sheets. By seeing the contact sheets, which are in a sense the ‘logbooks’ of the photographer, the viewer witnesses how these unforgettable photographs created the visual history of an 80-year epoch.”**

Oya Eczacıbaşı added that the exhibition served as an homage to the analogue age, a method of photography now lost to the development of digital technology, and provided an opportunity to see the unique photographs taken by those who experienced serendipity during photographic processes: “who were at the right place at the right time” and who captured the zeitgeist.

Oya Eczacıbaşı also noted that this was the second exhibition of Magnum Photos at Istanbul Modern and recalled that **“Turkey by Magnum”**, which Istanbul Modern hosted between February 17 and May 20, 2007, brought together Magnum Photos photographs on Turkey for the very first time. That exhibition presented numerous works by 16 professional photographers with distinctive perspectives of Turkey, accompanied by a wide array of works and publications from the collection of Magnum Photos, which was celebrating its 60th anniversary at the time.

Volker Hammes, the Head of Business Center Turkey, Middle East & North Africa and CEO of BASF Turk, stated that BASF would participate in the organization of numerous culture and art events in 2015 on the occasion of BASF’s 150th anniversary. **“In this context,” he said, “we are proud to be the main sponsor of ‘Magnum – Contact Sheets’, due to commence at Istanbul Modern, Turkey’s first modern and contemporary art museum and with which we have had a long business partnership. I have no doubt that all visitors will enjoy this exhibition, which includes some of the most iconic photographs by Magnum photographers.”**

Lorenza Bravetta, Advisor for Magnum Photos, emphasized that the exhibition spanning over 80 years of international social and political history provided a unique opportunity to see the processes that led photographers to the choice of their final, best-known images. She continued: **“The collection of photographic icons presented in the exhibition ‘Magnum - Contact Sheets’ would not have been possible without a primary process of careful selection by their authors. An intimate journey into a working method that has always been crucial to the Magnum experience, the contact sheets and proofs, an integral part of any photographic practice since the 30s, have always been conceived as a fundamental work tool for the selection and cataloguing of photographic negatives, but also as a source of inspiration. Since the 2000s, with the advent of digital imaging, the contact sheet has been excluded from the photographic process, taking on the role of a historical document. This transition has brought a radical change in the way new generations of photojournalists think, shoot and choose their final images – often sacrificing the great gift of rediscovery in favor of rash removals – as well described in the most recent experiences closing the exhibition.”**

Lorenza Bravetta added that Magnum Photos was delighted to present the exhibition at Istanbul Modern after a two-year successful tour around Europe, thus continuing its fruitful relationship with the museum, which started in 2007 with the **“Turkey by Magnum”** project.

Sena Çakırkaya, Head of Istanbul Modern’s Photography Department, indicated that the works in the exhibition were historical documents and added: **“Through contact sheets and narratives by photographers, we enter the personal archives of these artists and have the opportunity to look at important historical events through their lenses. The contact sheets give us hints as to what was experienced beyond the shot, to what extent the selected snapshot reflected reality as well as the work processes of the photographer. While some photographers use an entire roll of film to capture the ‘decisive moment’, others use a single shot to seize an entire scene. Contact sheets show the unrefined version of the final photographs and clearly manifest mistakes, lost moments, randomness, as well as interventions by the photographer during the printing process. Thus, Magnum photographers’ conveyance of the stories behind each and every one of these iconic photographs has documentary value both in terms of the history of photography and our political and social history.”**