

**Press release**

September 2015

**Josef Koudelka receives the Dr. Erich Salomon Prize 2015 from the German Photographic Association (DGPh)**

**The German Photographic Association is awarding Czech photographer Josef Koudelka the Dr. Erich Salomon Prize, to be presented on November 7, 2015 at Museum Folkwang in Essen. Born in Boskovice (in the Czech Republic today) in 1939, Josef Koudelka has been one of the most prominent and influential photographers over the past decades.**

The Prize has been awarded since 1971 to honour "exemplary use of photography in journalism" and bears the name of Dr Erich Salomon, the great photographer of the Weimar Republic and originator of influential impulses in modern photojournalism.

Joseph Koudelka is held in high esteem among colleagues and the art world in equal measure. Beyond a doubt, he is one of the few outstanding photographers whose imagery decisively shaped the second half of the 20th Century. Josef Koudelka first started working as a photojournalist while studying to be an aerospace engineer at the University of Prague, later joining a theatre magazine as a theatre photographer. In his early days of journalism, he observed the lives of Roma families in provincial Czechoslovakia, taking pictures that would become timeless. Some of his black & white photos featuring stark visual contrasts were created with compassionate distance, enabling observers to experience emotional empathy when viewing what are frequently crucial situations, while also making it possible to concentrate on the photo's excellent aesthetic structure. The linking of these two aspects continued to be reflected in Koudelka's photography work in the years to follow, constituting the foundation for his important oeuvres of sleek, yet meaningful and highly influential pictures. While his images are always based on humanistic perspective, they can indeed feature humorous aspects as well.

When the Prague Spring was brutally crushed in 1968 by the troops of the Warsaw Pact, Koudelka photographed scenes of the downfall with magnificent memorableness. These images show the conflict between desperate people looking to defend their civil rights and armed government forces in a manner retaining its validity still today. The images were smuggled to Elliot Erwitt, who was President of the photo agency Magnum at the time, and were published in the *Sunday Times* and the magazine *Look* in 1969 on the anniversary of the invasion, signed as "P.P." (Photographer Prague). Even though the invasion had

taken place one year prior, the report became a media sensation, and its author was "anonymously" awarded the *Robert Capa Gold Medal*.

During a reporting assignment to France in 1970, Koudelka made the move to stay in the West. He was granted asylum as a political refugee and settled in London before ultimately moving to Paris in 1970. Now a French citizen, he continues to reside in Paris and Prague.

In the decades following his move to the West, Josef Koudelka's work focused on the fragile existence between ethnic and social groups in Europe threatened by extinction or expulsion, yet also reflecting upon the artist's own nomadic lifestyle in exile in a subtle manner. "Exiles" was also the name of the publication and exhibition yielded from this period.

In recent years, Koudelka has used panorama photographs to illuminate his perspective on the injuries being inflicted upon the Earth; this can be industrial landscapes, archaeological sites, or even the border zone between Israel and Palestine.

Press release and press photos: [http://www.dgph.de/presse\\_news](http://www.dgph.de/presse_news)

Informations about Josef Koudelka: [www.magnumphotos.com](http://www.magnumphotos.com).

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### **Awards:**

- 1967 – Award by Union of Czechoslovakian Artists, Czechoslovakia
- 1969 – Robert Capa Gold Medal Award, [National Press Photographers Association](#), US
- 1978 – [Prix Nadar](#), France
- 1980 – [National Endowment for the Arts](#) Council, US
- 1987 – Grand Prix National de la Photographie, [French Ministry of Culture](#), France
- 1989 – Grand Prix National de la Photographie.
- 1991 – Grand Prix Henri Cartier-Bresson, France
- 1992 – Erna and Victor Hasselblad Foundation Photography Prize, Sweden
- 1998 – The [Royal Photographic Society](#)'s Centenary Medal and Honorary Fellowship (HonFRPS) in recognition of a sustained, significant contribution to the art of photography.
- 2004 – Cornell Capa Infinity Award, [International Center of Photography](#), New York

### **Exhibitions:**

- 1961 – Divadlo Semafor, Prague
- 1967 – *Josef Koudela: Cikáni – 1961–1966*, Divadlo za branou, Prague
- 1968 – *Josef Koudela: Divadelni fotografie – 1965–1968*, Divadlo za branou, Prague
- 1975 – *Josef Koudelka*, [Museum of Modern Art](#), New York
- 1977 – *Gitans: la fin du voyage*, Galerie Delpire, Paris; [Kunsthaus Zürich](#), Zürich, Switzerland; The Tel-Aviv Museum, Israel; [Victoria and Albert Museum](#), London.

- 1984 – *Josef Koudelka*, Hayward Gallery, London
- 1988/89 – *Josef Koudelka*, Centre National de la Photographie, [Palais de Tokyo](#), Paris; [International Center of Photography](#), New York; Akademie der Künste, Berlin; Museum Folkwang, Essen, Germany; IVAM, Valencia, Spain.
- 1989 – *Josef Koudelka*, Mission Transmanche, galerie de l'ancienne poste, Calais, France
- 1990 – *Josef Koudelka z Fotografického díla 1958–1990*, Umeleckoprumyslové museum, Prague
- 1994 – *Cerný trojúhelník – Podkrusnohorský: Photographie 1990–1994 = The Black Triangle : the foothills of the Ore mountains*, Salmovský Palác, Prague
- 1995/97 – *Periplanissis: following Ulysses' Gaze*, Mylos, Thessaloniki, Greece; [Zappeion](#), Athens; Centre culturel Una Volta, Bastia, France; ville de Rodez, France; [Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography](#), Tokyo; Museo di Storia della Fotografia, Fratelli Alinari, Firenze, Italy.
- 1998 – *Reconnaissance: Wales*, [National Museum and Gallery of Wales](#), Cardiff, UK
- 1999/2001 – *Chaos*, [Palazzo delle Esposizioni](#), Rome; Cantieri Culturali della Zisa, Palermo, Italy; Palazzo Marino alla Scala, Milan; The Snellman Hall, Helsinki; sala de exposiciones de [Plaza de España](#), Madrid.
- 2002 – *Josef Koudelka: Photograph*, [National Gallery, Prague](#)
- 2002/03 – *Rétrospective*, [Rencontres d'Arles](#), Arles, France; [Museo del Palacio de Bellas Artes](#), Mexico City; [Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Monterrey](#), Monterrey, Mexico.
- 2003 – Teatro del Tempo, [Mercati di Traiano](#), Rome
- 2006 – Rencontres d'Arles, Arles, France: exhibition and laureate of the Discovery Award
- 2008
  - Screening at [Théâtre antique d'Orange](#), Rencontres d'Arles, Arles, France
  - *Prague 1968*, Aperture Gallery, New York
  - *Koudelka*, [Benaki Museum](#), Athens
  - *Josef Koudelka*, Pera Museum, İstanbul
  - *Invaze = Invasion*, Old Town Hall, Prague
- 2010 – *Invasion Prague 68*, Photo Cube Market Square, Guernsey<sup>1</sup>
- 2012 – Zingari, Fondazione Forma, Milan
- 2013 – *Vestiges 1991–2012*, Centre de la Vieille Charité, Marseilles, France
- 2013/2014 – *Josef Koudelka Retrospective*, The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo
- 2014/2015 – *Josef Koudelka: Nationality Doubtful*, Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois; Getty Center, Los Angeles.