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Media Release Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation

Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation Prize 2018 shortlist announced

Finalists are Mathieu Asselin, Rafal Milach, Batia Suter and Luke Willis Thompson

The four artists shortlisted for the **Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation Prize 2018** are **Mathieu Asselin**, **Rafal Milach**, **Batia Suter** and **Luke Willis Thompson**.

Typically wide-ranging in style and approach, all of this year's shortlisted projects nevertheless reflect a concern with the production and manipulation of knowledge and systems of representation through visual formats. The projects encompass a searing photographic interrogation of global biotech giant, Monsanto (Asselin); an exploration of the seemingly innocent tactics of government control and propaganda (Milach); an encyclopaedic collection of visual taxonomies that expose the shifting and relative meanings of printed images depending on their context (Suter); and a deeply affecting filmic study of grief that reflects the personal cost of visual representation and media exploitation (Willis Thompson). Collectively and individually, the four projects drive forward an artistic enquiry into the mechanics of visibility and concealment and interrogate the status and position of the image in contemporary culture.

Works by the shortlisted photographers will be exhibited at The Photographers' Gallery in London (23 February - 3 June 2018) and subsequently presented at the MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst Frankfurt as part of the photo triennial RAY 2018. The winner will be announced at a special award ceremony on 17 May in London.

2018 marks the twenty-first year of the Prize and reaffirms its position as a barometer of talent, excellence and innovation. The Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation Prize is an annual award which has been established in 1997 by The Photographers' Gallery, London and is awarded together with the Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation. The £30,000 prize rewards a living photographer, of any nationality, for a specific body of work in an exhibition or publication format in Europe, which is felt to have significantly contributed to the medium of photography between 1 September 2016 and 30 September 2017. The award remains committed to showcasing photographers and works of all genres and approaches, which exemplify exceptional viewpoints and bold practice.

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Mathieu Asselin (b. 1973, France) has been nominated for his publication *Monsanto A Photographic Investigation* (Actes Sud, 2017). Mathieu Asselin's meticulous investigation into the long history of the global biotechnology corporation Monsanto brings together hundreds of documents and photographs depicting the devastating human, ecological and economical impact of the company's long and reckless story of growth, and their cynical efforts to change their negative public image.

Over five years Asselin conducted extensive research and travelled through Vietnam and the United States of America to find the people and places dramatically affected by Monsanto's past and current practices. His determined approach resulted in an overwhelming depiction that also aims to portray what Monsanto's near future might look like.

Rafal Milach (b. 1978, Poland) is nominated for his exhibition *Refusal* (12 May – 18 June 2017, Atlas Sztuki Gallery, Lodz, Poland). Rafal Milach's ongoing artistic practice focuses on applied sociotechnical systems of governmental control and ideological manipulations of belief and consciousness. Focusing on post-Soviet countries such as Belarus, Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Poland, Milach traces the mechanisms of propaganda and their visual representation in architecture, urban projects and objects.

Refusal brings together different material and visual layers that ultimately represent these systems of control.

Among other things, *Refusal* showcases photographs of handmade objects found in governmental centres and chess schools that produce optical illusions whose innocent disposition is fundamentally changed here as they exemplify how the human mind can be influenced and controlled. Furthermore Soviet television programmes about social experiments and actual official laboratories testing social behaviour exemplify the process of formatting and shifting meanings to serve a concrete vision of government.

Batia Suter (1967, Switzerland) is nominated her publication *Parallel Encyclopedia #2* (Roma, 2016). Batia Suters' substantial compendium is an image-led sequence of subjective associations offering visual dialogues and new categorisations that demonstrate how our understanding of the physical world and its history, as well as different cultures and places are affected by their context of representation. The found images are sourced from roughly 1000 diverse publications collected by the artist. They form various themes and narratives that collectively investigate the nature of images and the process of their consumption.

Following on from the first *Parallel Encyclopedia*, published in 2007, this new volume further exercises the iconification of images by placing images in new and varying contexts exposing the possibilities of visual editing. Suters' artistic approach is personal

and intuitive, selecting a large number of images, which ultimately present how images affect and manipulate meaning, depending on where and how they are placed.

Luke Willis Thompson's 35mm film *autoportrait* is a silent portrait of Diamond Reynolds. In July 2016, Reynolds broadcast, via Facebook Live, the moments immediately after the fatal shooting of her partner Philando Castile by a police officer during a traffic-stop in Minnesota, United States. Reynolds' video circulated widely online and amassed over six million views. In November 2016, Thompson established a conversation with Reynolds, and her lawyer, and invited her to work with him on the production of an artwork. Thompson proposed to make an aesthetic response that could act as a 'sister-image' to Reynolds' video broadcast, which would break with the well-known image of Reynolds, caught in a moment of violence and distributed within a constant flow of news. In June 2017, Reynolds' original video was played to a jury as evidence. Despite the abundance of visual information, the officer who killed Castile was acquitted of all charges. *autoportrait* continues to reopen a question of the agency of Reynolds' recording within, outside of, and beyond the conditions of predetermined racial power structures.

The members of the Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation Prize 2018 jury are: Gordon MacDonald, Curator and Editor; Penelope Umbrico, Artist; Duncan Forbes, Curator and visiting Lecturer Westminster University; Anne-Marie Beckmann, Director, Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation and Brett Rogers, Director, The Photographers' Gallery as the non-voting chair.

Notes for Editors:

Please find enclosed an image sheet with captions, please contact us directly for high-res press images.

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Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation

The Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation is a Frankfurt-based non-profit organisation. The foundation activities focus on collecting, exhibiting and promoting contemporary photography. Deutsche Börse began to build up its collection of contemporary photography in 1999. Art Collection Deutsche Börse now comprises more than 1,700 works by over 120 international artists. Expanding the Art Collection Deutsche Börse is one of the key aims of the foundation. The collection and a changing exhibition programme are open to the public. Together with The Photographers' Gallery in London, the foundation awards the renowned Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation Prize each year. Other focal points include promoting new talent, supporting exhibition projects of international museums and institutions, and the expansion of platforms for academic discussion about the medium. Further information is available at www.deutscheboersephotographyfoundation.org.

The Photographers' Gallery

The Photographers' Gallery opened in 1971 in Great Newport Street, London, as the UK's first independent gallery devoted to photography. It was the first public gallery in the UK to exhibit many key names in international photography, including Juergen Teller, Robert Capa, Sebastião Salgado and Andreas Gursky. The Gallery has also been instrumental in establishing contemporary British photographers, including Martin Parr and Corinne Day. In 2009, the Gallery moved to 16 – 18 Ramillies Street in Soho, the first stage in its plan to create a 21st century home for photography. Following an eighteen months long redevelopment project, the Gallery reopened to the public in 2012. The success of The Photographers' Gallery over the past four decades has helped to establish photography as a recognised art form, introducing new audiences to photography and championing its place at the heart of visual culture. www.thephotographersgallery.org.uk

The Photography Prize History

Founded in 1997 by The Photographers' Gallery, and now in its twentieth year, the Prize has become one of the most prestigious international arts awards and has launched and established the careers of many photographers over the years. Previously known as the Citigroup Photography Prize, the Gallery has been collaborating with Deutsche Börse Group as title sponsors since 2005. In 2016 the Prize was retitled as the Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation Prize following the establishment of the foundation as a non-profit organisation dedicated to the collection, exhibition and promotion of contemporary photography. Winner of the Deutsche Börse Photography Prize 2017 was Dana Lixenberg for her publication "Imperial Courts 1993-2015" (Roma Publishing). Past winners include Trevor Paglen, Paul Graham, Juergen Teller, Rineke Dijkstra, Richard Billingham, John Stezaker and Adam Broomberg & Oliver Chanarin.