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## Media Release Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation

Frankfurt, 21 June 2017

### **Exhibition “Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation Prize 2018” opens at the MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst Frankfurt am Main** Works of four finalists will be on display from 22 June - 9 September 2018

For the third time the MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst is presenting the **Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation Prize** at MMK 3. The exhibition shows works of the four finalists Mathieu Asselin, Rafal Milach, Batia Suter and Luke Willis Thompson. The winner of the £30,000 prize is the New Zealand artist Luke Willis Thompson. He was received the prize for his film installation „autoportrait“ on 17 May 2018 at the Photographers' Gallery in London.

The Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation Prize is awarded annually to a contemporary photo artist. One of the world's most prestigious photography prizes, it calls attention to pioneering tendencies in contemporary photography and to the artists whose work help shape the current international photography scene. The 2018 shortlist showcases diverse and innovative photographic practices, which recognise and celebrate the many developments within the medium, while also challenging its boundaries. All of the projects share a deep concern with the representation of knowledge through images, where facts can be manipulated and meanings can shift.

**Rafal Milach** (b. 1978, Poland) was shortlisted for the exhibition “Refusal” at Atlas Sztuki Gallery, Lodz Poland. Milach's photographic projects are concerned with systems of governmental control and the ideological manipulation of belief and consciousness. Focusing on post-Soviet countries such as Belarus, Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Poland, Milach traces the intangible mechanisms of propaganda as well as their visual manifestation through architecture, urban planning and objects. His projects expose both the strength and fragility beneath political and social systems. “Refusal” (2011 – 2017) includes photographs of handmade objects found in chess schools set in a governmental building in Azerbaijan. Designed as optical illusions to help develop young Azerbaijanis' spatial imagination and abstract thinking skills, these objects also allude how the human mind can be manipulated and controlled. Alongside, photographs of landscapes and urban developments demonstrate the failed political ambitions of new governments.

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**Mathieu Asselin** (b. 1973, France) was shortlisted for the publication “Monsanto: A Photographic Investigation”. Asselin’s scrupulous investigation into the history of the global biotechnology corporation Monsanto brings together documents and photographs that take a look at the devastating human, ecological and economic impact of the company’s reckless growth as well as the cynical efforts employed to change its negative public image. Starting with the company’s activities in the United States of America, Asselin charts the production of agrochemicals and the harmful ecological impact these products have had on towns and entire landscapes in the Midwest.

His reportage continues with Monsanto’s role during the Vietnam War as one of the major producers of the highly toxic defoliant Agent Orange as well as the company’s more recent diversification into genetically modified seeds. Bringing together text and document, ephemera and photography, Asselin reveals the dark sides of Monsanto’s history as well as the complexities and interests at play in contemporary corporate activity.

**Batia Suter** (b. 1967, Switzerland) was shortlisted for the publication “Parallel Encyclopedia #2”. The ongoing themes of Suter’s artistic practice are the transformation of images and the conditions by which they become charged with associative values. Her work situates printed figures in new contexts to exercise the many potentials of the image. Featuring hundreds of photographs, her work is a sequence of visual dialogues that reappropriates images of the natural world, objects and scientific analysis, as well as different periods and cultures. Suter presents a composition of large reproductions sourced from numerous publications spanning from non-fiction, textbooks, historical volumes to advertisements and magazines.

**Luke Willis Thompson** (b. 1988, New Zealand) was shortlisted and awarded with the Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation Prize 2018 for the exhibition “autoportrait” at Chisenhale Gallery in London. 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 June 2017, Reynolds’ original video was played to a jury as evidence alongside other forms of state surveillance and police recorded footage in a state trial. The officer who killed Castile was acquitted of all charges. Thompson produced a portrait of Diamond Reynolds in collaboration with her and her lawyer, during the period of indeterminacy between the officer’s charging and the subsequent trial. Thompson proposed to make a response that could act as a ‘sister-image’ to her 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.

This year's panel of judges: Duncan Forbes, researcher, curator and writer; Gordon MacDonald, curator and editor; Penelope Umbrico, artist; and Anne-Marie Beckmann, Director of Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation. Brett Rogers, Director of The Photographers' Gallery, is non-voting Chair.

**Publication:**

A catalogue of the exhibition is available for 24 Euro at MMK1.

**Press photos:** Press photos are available for downloading on the following website at

<http://mmk-frankfurt.de/de/presse/pressedownload/>

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**Notes for Editors**

**About the Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation**

The Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation is a Frankfurt-based non-profit foundation. The foundation activities are focused on collecting, exhibiting and promoting contemporary photography. Deutsche Börse Group started collecting 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. Promotion of young artists is important to the foundation, whose activities include awards, scholarships and exhibitions, e.g. cooperation with the Foam Talent programme and the Frankfurt artist support association *Frankfurter Künstlerhilfe*. Other focal areas include 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](http://www.deutscheboersephotographyfoundation.org).

### **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.