

PRESENTATION OF 1981 PHOTOGRAPHY PRIZE

The Erna and Victor Hasselblad Foundation has decided to award its 1981 photography prize to Ansel Adams of the United States.

The prize amounts to \$26,000 and is accompanied by a gold medal.

The award will be presented by the Swedish sovereign, His Majesty King Carl XVI Gustaf, in the presence of Her Majesty Queen Silvia at the Museum of Modern Art in New York on November 18, 1981.

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/By direction/

PRESS RELEASE

ANSEL ADAMS

A few years ago, TIME, the American news magazine with an international circulation in the millions, featured a portrait of Ansel Adams on its cover. As a rule, this spot is reserved for major political figures. So a picture of a "civilian" was unique. But Ansel Adams is unique too. Time's cover caption was: "The Master Eye." The 8-page article on him carried the following heading: "Master of the Yosemite-Photographer Ansel Adams is the grand old man of a still young art." Yosemite, California, is one of the most famous U.S. national parks. Last year, it was visited by 2.7 million people.

New stars are constantly appearing on the American photography horizon, but the veteran Ansel Adams remains arguably the most luminous of them all. He was born in San Francisco in 1902. His childhood home was a house overlooking the Golden Gate. He got started in photography at the age of 14. Someone had given him a box camera as a present. He used it during a family trip to Yosemite. But the resulting photographs failed to capture the beauty he had experienced in that national park. So the 14-year old made a vow to succeed in doing so one day, a vow he was ultimately to fulfil and surpass. He had actually intended to become a musician. At the age of 26, he made his choice. Of his two major interests, music and photography, he opted for the latter. That decision proved to be of inestimable value to the world of photography. He later became the unsurpassed master of one of the many fields to be found within the wide-ranging field of photography.

Here are some of the significant dates in his life: In 1927, his first collection of photographs was published. In 1931, he, Edward Weston, and Willard van Dyke formed the F 64 Group. In 1936, he had his first one-man show at Alfred Stieglitz's famous gallery "An American Place" on Fifth Avenue in New York. To date, Ansel Adams has published more than 20 books illustrated with his own photographs. "My Camera in the Yosemite Valley," "This American Earth", and "Fiat Lux - the University of California" are among his most famous works. More than 1 million of these books have been sold. When he has time, Adams also teaches and holds workshops in Yosemite Valley, his second home. In an interview with him, in December 1980 (published in the Swedish photography magazine FOTO), he was asked by the reporter: "What's next? Do you plan on retiring?" He replied: "The word 'retire' is banned in this house right now. I'm busy on my memoirs due to be published by the New York Graphic Society. I'm also working on two technical books

and a couple of monographs." "How far have you got with your autobiography?" the reporter asked. "As far as the cover! No cradle to the grave stuff for me. I'll be talking about my personal involvement in things like the Museum of Modern Art, the California School of Fine Arts, Big Sur, and Yosemite." "Are you pleased with your latest book 'Yosemite and the Range of Lights'?" "Yes, indeed. It's the first time the repro work in one of my books has been carried out solely with a laser scanner. The laser beam, which translates the picture into a screened image on film, passes right through the emulsion and picks up every detail in the original."

Ansel Adams views photography as an art form. This is the way he once described it: "Photography is an analytic medium. Painting is a synthetic medium (in the best sense of the term). Photography is primarily an act of discovery and recognition (based on intention, experience, function, and ego). The photographer cannot escape the world around him. The image of the lens is a dominant factor. His viewpoint, his visualization of the final image (print or transparency) and the particular technical procedures necessary to make this visualization valid and effective - these are the essential elements of photography." Ansel Adams is extremely demanding about darkroom technique. He is regarded not only as the world's preeminent landscape photographer but even by many as the world's best maker of black & white prints. He constantly reminds his students of the importance of learning basic techniques. "Technique is the thing most often lacking in contemporary photography, especially in the work of young photographers," he is reported as saying.

Collecting photographs, the way paintings and engravings are collected, is currently all the rage. Adams photographs, i.e. signed original prints, command the highest prices. He made 900 prints of his most famous photograph "Moonrise, Hernandez, New Mexico 1941." The price for one of these prints is now about \$15,000. Ansel Adams does not believe that most photographic subjects gain anything from color. But he is impressed by innovations in video and electronic imagery.

He is sparing in his praise of many other photographers. For example, he does not view fashion photography as an art at all. But he does regard W. Eugene Smith as the greatest photojournalist. He also describes the Frenchman Henri Cartier-Bresson as "unique" and Brett Weston as "dynamic." The 1981 photography prize and gold medal from the Erna and Victor Hasselblad Foundation have thus been deservedly awarded to the undisputed grand old man of both American and international photography.

Information on the Foundation

Erna and Victor Hasselblad Foundation
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S-401 20 Göteborg
Sweden

Board of Directors: Einar Josefson, Chief Magistrate, Chairman
 Mrs. Erna Hasselblad
 Sten Johannesson, Treasurer
 Kurt Mark, Attorney at Law, Secretary
 Alf Åkerman, Banker

Fund capital

The capital of the Foundation Award Fund currently amounts to about 23 million Swedish kronor. The yield on principal is about 10%. 80% of this return is used for grants. Grants shall be made for activities promoting teaching and research in the field of natural science and for photography; both Swedes and non-Swedes are eligible.

The funds available in each year for grants shall be awarded to large projects of major importance to the designated fields; with exception of the medical field.

Moreover, the Foundation shall annually or biennially, as the circumstances dictate, also award a photography prize of 50,000 to 100,000 Swedish kronor plus the 'Erna and Victor Hasselblad Gold Medal' to an especially meritorious person in the field of photography.

The funds are currently invested in property, shares, debentures, and Swedish corporate bonds. Changes are to be made in this investment profile.