

PRESS RELEASE

William Klein is awarded the 1990 international Photography Prize of the Hasselblad Foundation

The Erna and Victor Hasselblad Foundation's Photography Prize of 1990 has been awarded William Klein, American photographer, artist and film maker.

The prize consists of a gold medal and 215.000 French Francs. It will be presented to William Klein at a ceremony at the Hasselblad Center in Göteborg, Sweden, on October 3rd, 1990. At the same time, an exhibition of his photographic work will be opened.

The Foundation states its' choice as follows: "William Klein belongs to the innovators of modern photography. His subjective descriptions of the city streets and the mundane world of fashion is characterized by a documentary coarseness and austere sense of form, a post war 'art brut'."

This year, the prize is awarded for the 10th time. Former receivers of the prize are: Lennart Nilsson, Sweden; Ansel Adams, USA; Henri Cartier-Bresson, France; Manuel Alvarez Bravo, Mexico; Irving Penn, USA; Ernst Haas, USA; Hiroshi Hamaya, Japan; Edouard Boubat, France, and Sebastiao Salgado, France.

Artist and street life photographer

William Klein was born in New York in 1928. He studied sociology there, and art with Fernand Léger in Paris. From the end of the 1940s, he has been a resident of Paris, working as an artist.

In photography, William Klein is an autodidact. During the 1950s, he spent a lot of time investigating this new medium. He was attracted to the metropolitan life, and published a number of picture books which gained a great deal of attention. Among them were *New York* (1956), *Rome* (1958), *Tokyo* (1964), *Moscou*(1964). He tried out different techniques and experimented freely with form and tonality in his creative work. He captured the fast pace and the signs of city life in brutal black and white images, partially blurred, and deformed by the wide angle lense. He published a succession of pungent, insisting photographs of modern society. Jean-Claude Lemagny, photo historian and curator for the collections of modern photography in Paris, characterizes Klein as one of the revolutionaries within modern photography. "The deliverance brought by Robert Frank on an *emotional level*, Klein represents *in form*."

For a period of ten years, Klein worked with the exclusive fashion magazine *Vogue*. As once Richard Avedon, he swept into this refined world as a breath of fresh air. He photographed the creations of famous fashion designers in the teeming streets, using the technique of grainy, contrasting reportage pictures.

In 1963, Klein participated in the Photokina exhibition in Cologne, being one of the 30 most important photographers in the history of art. Later, he had large exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, Centre Beaubourg and Palais de Tokyo in Paris, as well as in several institutions all over the US, Japan, Italy, and England. His most recent book *Close Up*, was published in 1989.

From the late 50s Klein also has devoted himself to film as a photographic medium. He has made 24 films, working as a script writer, director, and film photographer. Among the feature films are "Qui êtes-vous, Polly Maggoo?" (1966), and "Mr Freedom" (1967). He also made documentaries like "Cassius le grand" (1974) -- on boxing -- and "Grand soirs et petits matins" (1978) depicting the events of May, 1968.

Research and education

The Photography Prize was created by Erna and Victor Hasselblad, who donated their total assets to a foundation. According to the statutes, a Photography Prize and the Erna and Victor Hasselblad's gold medal will be awarded every year, or every second year, according to means, to a person of great merit.

Also, the Foundation shall promote scientific research and education in natural sciences and photography. A number of projects are yearly granted funds.

In the Fall of 1989, the Foundation opened a Photographic Center in Göteborg, Sweden. It runs a continuous exhibition and lecture program. A research and reference library is being established.

Göteborg, March 9th, 1990

THE ERNA AND VICTOR HASSELBLAD FOUNDATION

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