

THE ERNA AND VICTOR HASSELBLAD FOUNDATION

PRESS RELEASE

WILLIAM EGGLESTON IS AWARDED THE HASSELBLAD FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL AWARD IN PHOTOGRAPHY FOR 1998

THE ERNA AND VICTOR HASSELBLAD FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY PRIZE FOR 1998 HAS BEEN AWARDED WILLIAM EGGLESTON, MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE, USA. THE PRIZE WILL BE PRESENTED TO WILLIAM EGGLESTON AT A CEREMONY IN GÖTEBORG, SWEDEN, ON MARCH 6 1999, COINCIDING WITH THE OPENING OF AN EXHIBITION OF HIS WORKS AT THE HASSELBLAD CENTER, ADJOINING THE GÖTEBORG MUSEUM OF ART.

THE FOUNDATION MOTIVATES ITS CHOICE AS FOLLOWS: "WILLIAM EGGLESTON HAS BEEN ONE OF THE LEADING PIONEERS IN THE FIELD OF COLOR PHOTOGRAPHY SINCE THE 1970S. WITH HIS SPECIFIC VISION OF THE REAL WORLD, PARTICULARLY THE AMERICAN SOUTH, HE HAS DEVELOPED THE COLOR PHOTOGRAPH AS AN INDEPENDENT MEDIUM. HE HAS ALSO COME TO UTILIZE THE POTENTIAL OF COLOR TO THE FULL, SEEING IT AS A FUNDAMENTAL FEATURE OF PERCEPTION. TO EGGLESTON, COLOR BECAME A VITAL ASPECT OF CAPTURING DAILY LIFE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS. HE HAS INTRODUCED A NEW AESTHETIC, A NEW "DEMOCRATIC" WAY OF SEEING - MORE INFLUENCED BY HIS PERSONAL VISION THAN BY PREVIOUS STYLISTIC MODELS. JUST AS ROBERT FRANK ESTABLISHED AN INFORMAL "BEAT" AESTHETIC IN HIS WORK IN THE 1950S, IN THE 1970S WILLIAM EGGLESTON HAS TRANSFORMED THE POTENTIAL OF WHAT CAN BE EXPRESSED WITH COLOR."

WILLIAM EGGLESTON WAS BORN IN MEMPHIS, USA, IN 1939. AT THE AGE OF EIGHTEEN HE ACQUIRED HIS FIRST CAMERA, A CANON RANGE FINDER FOLLOWED, THE YEAR AFTER, BY HIS FIRST LEICA, THE CAMERA WHICH WOULD BE WITH HIM THROUGHOUT HIS CAREER. DURING HIS STUDIES AT UNIVERSITIES IN NASHVILLE, CLEVELAND AND OXFORD, HE FOUND HIMSELF AS AN ARTIST. IN 1959 HE DISCOVERED TWO BOOKS WHICH WOULD BE OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO HIM AND WHICH BROUGHT HIM INTO PHOTOGRAPHY; HENRI CARTIER-BRESSON'S *THE DECISIVE MOMENT* AND WALKER EVANS'S *AMERICAN PHOTOGRAPHS*. IN CARTIER-BRESSON'S WORK HE PARTICULARLY RECOGNIZED THE POSSIBILITIES IN CAPTURING A MOMENT AS WELL AS THE RICH TONALITY WHICH COULD BE PERCEIVED IN BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOGRAPHY.

WILLIAM EGGLESTON'S EARLY BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOGRAPHS SHOW STRONG INFLUENCES FROM ROBERT FRANK, GARRY WINOGRAND, LEE FRIEDLANDER, AND DIANE ARBUS. FURTHERMORE, HE HAS BEEN INFLUENCED BY OLD PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE 1800'S, AS WELL AS BY PHOTOGRAPHERS LIKE EUGÈNE ATGET. IN CONTRAST TO HIS PREDECESSORS, EGGLESTON'S SMALL FORMAT PHOTOGRAPHS CONTAIN EVERYTHING, SMALL AND LARGE, CLOSE AND FAR AWAY, CONSCIOUS AND UNCONSCIOUS, LIGHT AND DARK AS WELL AS MIXTURES OF DIFFERENT LIGHT SOURCES.

SINCE 1965 WILLIAM EGGLESTON HAS BEEN EXPERIMENTING WITH COLOR, FIRST WITH SLIDES AND LATER ON NEGATIVE MATERIAL. IN 1967 HE MET JOHN SZARKOWSKI AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART IN NEW YORK AND SHOWED HIM HIS PICTURES, ALTHOUGH HE WAS NOT INVITED TO HAVE AN EXHIBITION AT MOMA UNTIL 1976. THAT EXHIBITION WAS EXTREMELY CONTROVERSIAL BUT IT VALIDATED COLOR PHOTOGRAPHY AS A LEGITIMATE MEDIUM OF ART. IN 1974 HE RECEIVED A GUGGENHEIM FELLOWSHIP, AND HE WAS APPOINTED LECTURER IN VISUAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES AT THE CARPENTER

CENTER, HARVARD UNIVERSITY. THE FOLLOWING YEAR HE RECEIVED A NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS PHOTOGRAPHER'S FELLOWSHIP. IN CONNECTION WITH THE EXHIBITION AT MOMA, HIS FIRST BOOK, *WILLIAM EGGLESTON'S GUIDE* WAS PUBLISHED. TWO YEARS LATER, WILLIAM EGGLESTON WAS APPOINTED RESEARCHER IN COLOR VIDEO AT MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY. SINCE 1980 HE HAS BEEN TRAVELING FOR DIFFERENT PROJECTS, BOTH ON COMMISSION AND FOR PROJECTS OF HIS OWN. HIS PROJECTS DURING THESE YEARS INCLUDE: "THE LOUISIANA PROJECT"; ELVIS PRESLEY'S "GRACELAND"; "THE ENGLISH ROSE"; "THE DEMOCRATIC FOREST" AND "FAULKNER'S MISSISSIPPI".

WILLIAM EGGLESTON CLAIMS THAT ANY PLACE IS GOOD FOR TAKING PICTURES. HE OFTEN CHOOSES UNIMPORTANT PLACES AND PEOPLE, A LOT OF HIS PHOTOGRAPHS ARE FROM HIS NEIGHBORHOOD IN MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE AND THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI. HIS GOAL SEEMS TO BE TO CAPTURE THE NORMAL MOMENT WHICH IS ALWAYS QUIETLY PRESENT, IN A WAY RELATED TO THE CASUALNESS OF SNAPSHOTS. HIS PROJECTS CONTAIN THOUSANDS OF PRINTS DISPLAYING HIS CURIOSITY AND ENTHUSIASM FOR UNEXPECTED VISUAL EXPERIENCES. WILLIAM EGGLESTON'S DISREGARD FOR CONVENTIONS OF SUBJECT MATTER AND STYLE HAS GIVEN HIM A PROMINENT PLACE IN BOTH AMERICAN AND INTERNATIONAL ART.

WILLIAM EGGLESTON HAD A PIONEERING ROLE IN COLOR PHOTOGRAPHY, BUT HIS ART SHOULD NOT ONLY BE SEEN AS A FORMAL GESTURE. HIS PICTURES ARE ABOUT COLOR BUT THEY DEFINITELY ALSO DEPICT THE "FACTUAL" WORLD IN THE TRADITION OF THE MOST IMPORTANT DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHY, FOLLOWING THE CLASSICAL MASTERS AND HIS OWN SPECIAL VIEW. HE HAS HAD MORE THAN 50 INDIVIDUAL EXHIBITIONS IN WELL KNOWN INSTITUTIONS SUCH AS: MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK, PHOTOGRAPHER'S GALLERY, MELBOURNE, VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON, MUSEUM FOLKWANG, ESSEN, AND SHIRAIISHI CONTEMPORARY ART, YOKOHAMA. HE HAS ALSO TAKEN PART IN A LARGE NUMBER OF GROUP EXHIBITIONS. HE HAS PUBLISHED NUMEROUS BOOKS, CATALOGUES, AND PORTFOLIOS INCLUDING *14 PICTURES* (1974), *WILLIAM EGGLESTON'S GUIDE* (1976), *ELECTION EVE* (1977), *TROUBLED WATERS* (1980), *THE DEMOCRATIC FOREST* (1989), *FAULKNER'S MISSISSIPPI* (1991), AND *ANCIENT AND MODERN* (1992). HIS WORKS ARE COLLECTED IN INTERNATIONAL MUSEUMS SUCH AS THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK; MUSEUM OF FINE ART, HOUSTON; CORCORAN GALLERY OF ART, AND NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART, WASHINGTON D.C; VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON; MUSEUM FOLKWANG, ESSEN. IN 1991 HE WAS APPOINTED HONORARY PROFESSOR IN FINE ARTS AT THE RHODES COLLEGE IN MEMPHIS AND IN 1995 HE WAS AWARDED THE UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS DISTINGUISHED ACHIEVEMENT AWARD.

WILLIAM EGGLESTON ALSO SPENDS TIME DRAWING AND PAINTING, LISTENING TO AND PLAYING MUSIC AND DEVELOPING LOUDSPEAKER TECHNOLOGY.

THE ERNA AND VICTOR HASSELBLAD FOUNDATION

THE ERNA AND VICTOR HASSELBLAD FOUNDATION WAS INSTITUTED BY ERNA AND VICTOR HASSELBLAD BY TESTAMENTARY DONATIONS. THE PURPOSE OF THE FOUNDATION IS TO PROMOTE SCIENTIFIC EDUCATION AND RESEARCH IN THE NATURAL SCIENCES AND PHOTOGRAPHY. A NUMBER OF PROJECTS ARE GRANTED FUNDS ANNUALLY FOR A TOTAL OF APPROXIMATELY 14 MILLION SWEDISH CROWNS. IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE STATUTES OF THE FOUNDATION, AN INTERNATIONAL AWARD IN PHOTOGRAPHY IS GRANTED, NORMALLY ANNUALLY, TO A PHOTOGRAPHER OF OUTSTANDING MERIT.

IN 1989 THE FOUNDATION OPENED THE ERNA AND VICTOR HASSELBLAD PHOTOGRAPHIC CENTER IN GÖTEBORG, SWEDEN. THE CENTER MAINTAINS A CONTINUOUS EXHIBITION AND LECTURE PROGRAM. IN JANUARY 1996 THE HASSELBLAD CENTER MOVED TO NEW PREMISES AT THE GÖTEBORG MUSEUM OF ART WHERE PERMANENT EXHIBITION SPACE IS AVAILABLE FOR THE CENTER'S PURPOSES. A PHOTOGRAPHIC SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND REFERENCE LIBRARY, OPEN TO RESEARCHERS AND STUDENTS, IS IN THE PROCESS OF BEING ESTABLISHED, AS IS A COLLECTION OF PHOTOGRAPHS BY HASSELBLAD AWARD WINNERS, ETC.

GÖTEBORG OCTOBER 20, 1998

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