FOTO ARSENAL WIEN

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Encounter Photography Award

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Encounter Photography Award

In October 2027, FOTO ARSENAL WIEN will present the **Encounter Photography Award** for the first time, a new prize for contemporary photography and lens-based media, and the largest of its kind in Austria. Founded in memory of the Austrian photographer Christine Turnauer (1946–2025), the **Encounter Photography Award** has been conceived to provide long-term support to artists and a platform that encourages visibility, exchange, and international networking. This award sets a new international standard for photography prizes in Austria.

In conjunction with the festival FOTO WIEN, the award will be presented every two years to an individual or a collective whose exhibition and publication practice is advanced. This will make the **Encounter Photography Award** a key component of the program of FOTO ARSENAL WIEN, which is devoted to promoting contemporary photography. The award is aimed primarily at mid-career artists. It includes a grant of 50,000 euros that can be used as the recipient wishes, an exhibition at FOTO ARSENAL WIEN, a monograph developed with an international publisher, and intensive curatorial support. With overall funding amounting to over 200,000 euros, the **Encounter Photography Award** has the highest endowment of any photo prize in Austria and one of the highest in the world.

In addition to the main recipient, three additional awards will go to the runners-up on the short list. Each of the artists or collectives will receive 5,000 euros and be presented to a large audience in an open-air exhibition organized in conjunction with FOTO ARSENAL WIEN.

In a two-step selection process, a group of international experts from the art and culture scene nominates candidates and invites these individuals or collectives to apply. Unsolicited applications are not possible. Following this procedure, an inter-

national jury selects the recipients from among the submitted applications. The recipients work closely in dialogue with the curatorial team of FOTO ARSENAL WIEN to develop an exhibition and a publication together. The award is not limited to completed projects but also deliberately supports artistic processes and current developments.

The primary focus of the **Encounter Photography Award** is to support independent artists who critically challenge and shift existing systems of perception, representation, and interpretation. Works with a distinctive artistic voice will be honored. The aim is to highlight, agitate, or undermine dominant narratives in the medium of photography as well as to establish alternative systems of visual logic and imagery. The prize is conceived as a platform for artists who not only expand photographic methods but also reflect on them as part of power structures. There is no overall stipulation for topics. The artist's quality, independence, and relevance are decisive.

The **Encounter Photography Award** is presented in honor of **Christine Turnauer** (1946–2025). As a photographer, Turnauer engaged with Indigenous peoples and marginalized communities in many countries across the world, and exhibited her work at major international exhibitions and festivals. As a patron, she supported and championed the work of other photographers with energy and conviction for many years. This new award extends those efforts to the benefit of future generations.

The name "Encounter" stands for the exchange that the award deliberately seeks to foster.

For further questions:
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ABOUT FOTO ARSENAL WIEN

FOTO ARSENAL WIEN is Austria's new center for photographic images and lens-based media. Inaugurated by the City of Vienna in March 2025, the institution presents and illuminates contemporary photography in all its forms and uses. FOTO ARSENAL WIEN also organizes the platform FOTO WIEN, Austria's largest biennial photography festival, and, in a collaboration with the Kunsthalle Wien, the annual Festival Vienna Digital Cultures (VDC).

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