

Kaunas Photo – a festival of premieres

The festival of Kaunas Photo, based in Kaunas, second largest Lithuanian town in 2004 was the first festival of its type in Lithuania and the Baltic states. Kaunas Photo is a founding member of Photo Festival Union and member of Festival of Light organization. From its beginning in 2004 it remains the only annual photographic event in the Baltic states, maintaining a highly international dimension. The main focus of the festival is contemporary photography. It could be described as the festival of premieres, a photographic scene, which seeks to bring spotlight to the stars and future stars of contemporary photography, both Lithuanian and international. The annual festival was founded and until present is directed by photographer and art historian Mindaugas Kavaliauskas.

When we say „Lithuania“ or „Lithuanian photography“, it is most probable that we remember classic imagery of the 1960s and 1970s of country people. Lots of black tones, high contrast, concentration of faces and looks, large series on existential matters are but a few features describing the Lithuanian school of photography, which was an influential trend in the Eastern Europe since early sixties until 1990s.

A former student of the Ecole Nationale de la Photographie of Arles, Mindaugas Kavaliauskas was committed to bring colour into photographic life of Lithuania, having found himself at home in his native city of Kaunas after several years of international experience of photography management. His major project became founding of a new photographic festival and bringing more versatility into the photographic culture of the country of Macijauskas, Sutkus, Požerskis and other classical photographers..

Kaunas Photo Days 2004

In September 2004, began Kaunas Photo Days, marking the beginning of photography festival era in Lithuania and the Baltic states, bringing new ways of seeing, considering, discussing art of photography. Since 2004, the only annual photographic festivity in the Baltic States Kaunas Photo festival has become a significant not only enriching the cultural climate of Kaunas – a town with a rich artistic scene - but also became the largest annual photographic event in the Baltic states. The first edition of Kaunas Photo Days was focusing on the theme of Market, presenting 30 personal exhibitions, highlighted by the premiere public exhibition of Ben Shahn's (born in Kaunas, Lithuania 1897-died 1969, USA) photographs of the Great Depression. Thirty exhibitions in total, distributed in the galleries, museums, business areas, educational institutions of the centre of Kaunas was a new formula of presenting photographic art.

Kaunas Photo Days 2004 made a spotlight on the unknown photography from the across-the-sea neighbours Nordic countries – Finland, Sweden and Denmark. Exhibitions of classic works of Ismo Hölttö (Finland), Emil Heilborn (Sweden), Lennart Olson (Sweden) produced small-town photography rush, with crowds of art lovers gathering at the museum doors. Wide menu of exhibitions and events was topped by presence in Kaunas of numerous respectable figures of photography: critic Allan D. Coleman (USA), Alain Desveignes (photographer, founder of the School of Arles, France), Marek Grygiel (curator, Poland), Marjatta Tikkanen (curator of Hippolyte Gallery, Helsinki, Finland), Ulrich Haas-Pursianen and Harri Laakso (organisers of Backlight Triennial in Tampere, Finland).

Guest Region – Nordic Photography, personal exhibitions:

Henrik DUNCKER (Finland), Sade KAHRA (Finland), Jukka MALE (Finland), Lisa SELIN (Sweden), Lennart OLSON (Sweden), Emil HEILBORN (Sweden), Ismo HÖLTÖ (Finland), Kristina Elisabeth STEINBOCK (Denmark), Trine SONDERGAARD (Denmark), Nicolai HOWALT (Denmark), Kent KLICH (Sweden-Denmark)

Personal exhibitions:

Alain Desveignes (France), Ben Shahn (Lithuania-USA, 1897-1969), Denes Farkas (Estonia – Hungary), Gintaras Česonis (Lithuania), Liina SIIB (Estonia), Marc Paygnard (France), Mirjam Wirz (Switzerland-Lithuania), Tadeusz Rolke (Poland), Tomas Pospesch (Czech Republic), Vilnis Vitolins (Latvia), Vytautas Stanionis, Jr. (Lithuania), Wojciech Zawadzki (Poland).

Collective exhibitions:

Country Market. Super Market. Lithuanian photography. (Curator: Mindaugas Kavaliauskas)

Diploma and Final Portfolios 1998-2003. Institute of Creative Photography, Opava, Czech Republic.

(Curator: Vladimir BIRGUS, Czech Republic)

Tomorrow began Yesterday (Curator: Wendy Rowe, UK)

Photographers: Aleksandras Ostašenkovas, Regina Šulskytė, Juozas Bindokas, Rolandas Parafinavičius, Claire Parr, Andy Ford, people of Communities

Country Market. Super Market by students of Kaunas Art Institute. (Curator: Gintaras Česonis, Lithuania)

Night Show

Document for History, based on photographs from series *Lithuania. Farewell views* by Vytautas Stanionis, music composed and performed by Eugenijus Kanevičius.

Kaunas Photo Days 2005

The 2005 edition of Kaunas Photo festival, launched in late October 2005 was a quiet and far from crowded event with several exhibitions, conferences and other satellite events. The exhibitions were dedicated to European photography, based on Kaunas Photo festival membership within the Photo Festival Union. It was followed by the tribute to a late Lithuanian artist Diana Cikanavičienė, whose works were for the first time compiled in a catalog, published by Kaunas Photo festival and revealing the development of her photographic work.

A lot of energy has been put to promote Lithuanian photography in partner festivals. Kaunas Photo festival presented the unique combination of Father and Son photographers' Vytautas Stanionis Sr. and Vytautas Stanionis Jr. in the founding exhibition of Photofestival Union in Lodz. Same artists were several weeks later presented within the program of BACKLIGHT 05, triennale of photography in Tampere, Finland, along with an exhibition of Diana Cikanavičienė's works.

Personal exhibitions:

Adrienne van Ekelen (The Netherlands), Machiel BOTMAN (The Netherlands), Bogdan KONOPKA (Poland-France), Marija PIRILÄ (Finland), Andre CEPEDA (Portugal), Sonya STANKOVA (Bulgaria), Olivo BARBIERI (Italy), Marco Citron (Italy), Vytautas Stanionis, Sr. (Lithuania)

Personal exhibition:

Diana CIKANAVIČIENĖ (1974-2004, Lithuania)

Kaunas Photo Days 2006

The spring of 2006 confirmed the curatorial success of Kaunas Photo participation in other European festivals of photography. Foto Grafia (Rome, Italy) showed an exhibition "Lithuanian Photography, road to the 21st Century: A.Sutkus, A.Macijauskas. R.Požerskis" (curated by Mindaugas Kavaliauskas) at H.C.Andersen Museum and festival of Sea Photography in Vannes, (Brittany, France) generously offered a guest country status to Lithuanian photography by hosting an exhibition curated by Kaunas Photo director Mindaugas Kavaliauskas "Lithuanian Sea Photography: between the 9th heaven and 99 km of seashore". The latter exhibition in the central Musée de la Cohue attracted more than 20 thousand visitors.

In September – October 2006, Kaunas Photo Days 06 celebrated the third festival edition, marked by numerous premiere shows of more than 30 photographers from Lithuania, Ireland and Turkey, Brazil, Canada, Australia, Malaysia and many other countries, counting 40 exhibitions in total. The 2006 program was focusing on TIME. The highlights were first-time exhibition of Frank Rothe (Germany) "China Naked" at Olympic Casino, Andre Siegfried Wagner's (Germany) "Body and Soul", Lisa M.Robinson's "Snowbound" at the Museum of Sports, Xavier Zimbaro's "Lost Beauties" (France) at F Galerija, the first Slovak show in Lithuania by Lubo Stacho at Fujifilm gallery of photography, Adriana Groisman's (Argentina) „Tango never before midnight“, „Rubikon“ by Kevin Kwan (USA), „Maze“ - a depiction of a polar Swedish village by Celine Clanet (France) at the Jesuit Gymnasium Gallery, Steve Hart's (USA) „Bronx family album“ at Museum of Medicine history, „Standing stones“ by Barbara Yoshida (USA) and New „Orleans Sundays“ of Judith Cooper (USA), fresh series of Lithuanian Rolandas Cikanavičius (Lithuania) „Alone“ at the Kaunas County public Library.

The unforgettable review of Nordic photography "Nordic TIME" in Communication development Museum focused on the growth and life of a woman: four sisters-to-become women in Wilma Hurskainen's „Growth“ (Finland), mature 4 Sinko sisters in Hungary, photographed year by year by a Swedish Maria Arnell, sisters of honorable age in Pernille Koldbeck Fich's work (Denmark) and considerations about "How much/many per year..." by legendary Swedish magazine "Expressen" photographers, where woman is exposed to the amount of dishes she has to do per year... The most modern business centre of Kaunas „Business Leaders' Center“ hosted Nordic works of the beginning of the 20th century Swedish photographer Borg Mesch depicting the conquest of the Wild North, the stunning poolscapes of Iceland – "Hypernatural" by Astrid Kruse Jensen (Denmark). Here the symbol of the festival – Petri Anttonen's (Finland) inventive series of scanner-type long pose pictures "The Enigma of Time", created in early nineties, were exhibited.

Given that many works submitted to the festival's open program dealt with waiting, it was decided to bring a part of exhibition to the „waiting“ and transport areas of the town. The longest exhibition of the festival – „Lithuanian Press photography 2006“ was exhibited all along the cafes and boutiques of Laisves aleja – the stylish pedestrian street of Kaunas. The key pictures of the festival were exposed in trolley -buses, circulating in Kaunas, Dillon Tangappan Daniel's (Malaysia) series „I missed the bus“ was exposed at Kaunas Bus station waiting hall. The 70 year old Aleksotas funicular hosted only world premieres - Brazilian Ludmila Steckelberg de Santana's „Absence of Colours“, Don Mc Neill Healy's (Ireland) „One travelling family“ and „Ferry“ by Edis Jurcys, which was elected by the audience the best exhibition of the festival.

Opening visits of exhibitions, a master class given by Xavier Zimbaro to local photography enthusiasts, public discussion on "Photography and Time" at Vytautas Magnus University, animated by famous professor in culture studies Leonidas Donskis, and the traditional "Night of Photography" on October 12 held at Los Patrankos club with a big screen were among the most intense events in celebrating photography in Kaunas in 2006. As the director

Mindaugas Kavaliauskas of the festival joked from the stage of Los Patrankos, "when Kaunas Photo Days approaches to the end, summer becomes winter and Kaunas Photo Days becomes the Night of Photography", the time when Arles-style video clips made of photography meet enthusiastic applause from the public.

Collective exhibitions:

Lithuanian press photography (curator: Jonas Staselis)

Funikuli funikulia by Mindaugas Kavaliauskas, Aurelijus Madzeliauskas, Jonas Palys

Personal exhibitions:

Frank Rothe (Germany), Lubo STACHO (Slovakia), Barbara YOSHIDA (USA), Dagmar Schwelle (Germany), Judith COOPER (USA), Adriana GROISMAN (Argentina), Céline CLANET (France), Kevin KWAN (USA), Gina Glover (UK), Annet van der VOORT (Holland-Germany), Steve HART (USA), André Siegfried WAGNER (Germany), Lisa M. ROBINSON (USA), Xavier ZIMBARDO (France), Ozgun Serif SADGIC (Turkey), Miki ALCALDE (Spain), Edis JURČYS (USA – Lithuania), Don Mc NEAL HEALY (Ireland), Ludmila STECKELBERG DE SANTANA (Brasil), Nathalie MOHADJER (Germany), Fern HELFAND (Canada), Michail SAVOSIV – Sholk (Russia), Aleksandr ANTIPIN (Russia), Peter RIESETT (USA), Christoph BURTSCHER (Germany), Barbara DONAUBAUER (Germany), Richard PAK (France), Sanna MIERICKE (Germany), Rolandas CIKANAVIČIUS (Lithuania), Rita GODLEVSKIS (Canada-Australia), Dillon TANGGAPAN DANIEL (Maysia)

Nordic artists on the theme TIME, personal exhibitions:

Wilma HURSKAINEN (Finland), Petri ANTTONEN (Finland), Maria ARNELL (Sweden), Pernille KOLDBECH FICH (Sweden), Expressen magazine photographers (Sweden), Borg MESCH (Sweden, 1869-1956), Astrid KRUSE JENSEN (Denmark)

Kaunas Photo 07

The festival of 2007 got its shorter version of the name - Kaunas Photo'07, enjoying the secure support of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania and suggesting largest artistic program ever - over 100 photographers from around the world in private and group exhibitions, workshops and presentations and slide-shows. Another novelty - a competition for Kaunas Photo Grand Prix. Thirdly, Kaunas Photo produced a spring edition by placing there photo exhibitions of the Guest county – Georgia, with seven distinctive photographers of the new emerging Post-Soviet country. The Fourth important step in Kaunas Photo development is its membership in the organization of Festivals of Light. Moreover, Kaunas Photo ended up in late autumn with a big self-produced exhibition *Mysteries-Secrets-Illusions*, summarizing the theme of the Kaunas Photo 07 at the National M.K.Čiurlionis Museum, Kaunas Picture Gallery. The exhibition included 70 artist from numerous countries.

The opening of the main edition of Kaunas Photo 07 in September featured presentations of three laureates of Kaunas Photo'07 – Austrian Grand Prix winner Reiner Riedler with his 'Fake Holidays', Italian Marco Ambrosi & Monica Dengo and Australian Graham Miller with his 'Suburban Melancholy'. Simultaneous presence of Kaunas Photo 07 award winners from Austria and Australia produced an Austro-Australian Night of Photography at Vytautas Magnus University night club. The Introductory series of exhibitions complemented by works of artists to have received special mentions of Kaunas Photo Jury: Serbian Katarina Radovic, Canadian Jean-François Bérubé and a rising star of Lithuanian photography Vidas Biveinis.

Kaunas Photo 07 also honoured celebrities of the international photographic scene. Pawel Zak (Poland), presented his famous series 'My Close Acquaintance'. Alnis Stakle (Latvia) exhibited his new work – 'Living Space Daugavpils at F Galerija and Toshiki Ozawa (Japan) disclosed his long-term project about Lithuania at Fujifilm gallery. Aside from the exhibitions there are workshops held by visiting guests. The traditional highlight events – Nights of Photography – reminded viewers that photography was alive not only in daylight, but also in trendy city pubs, illuminated by music and the colours of the night. There will also be portfolio reviews and an exhibition of the students and graduates from the visiting schools of photography – Ostkreuzschule (Berlin, Germany) and Studio Marangoni (Florence, Italy)."

Another initiative for this event is the 'SBA Ideas For Home', where over 300 photos will be exhibited. Every year Kaunas Photo has been introducing a new means of dialogue between photography and the audience. This time the festival places photographic pictures as main accents of interior. Art photographs will become not only as an essential interior elements, but objects to purchase for collectioneers and those willing to top their home interiors by adding a point of originality.

The decisive Kaunas Photo 07 exhibition 'Secrets, Mysteries and Illusions' will open on 18 October in Kaunas Picture Gallery, National M. K. Čiurlionis Museum. The works of over 70 artists will give viewers the chance to discover the mysterious, colourful, decorative and social world of the 21st century.

Spring edition

Guest country – Georgian Photography, collective exhibition:

Levan Kherkheulidze, Sophio Medoidze, Natela Grigalashvili, Ira Kurmaeva, Guram Tsbikhashvili, Irina Abjandadze, Yuri Mechitov (Curators: Natia Tsulukidze, Mindaugas Kavaliauskas)

Personal exhibition:

André Siegfried Wagner (Germany)

Autumn edition

Personal exhibitions

Reiner RIEDLER (Kaunas Photo 07 Grand Prix Winner, Austria), Graham MILLER (KP 07 Grand Prix Special Award, Australia), Marco AMBROSI ir Monica DENGÓ (KP 07 Grand Prix Special Award, Italy), Vidas BIVEINIS (KP 07 Grand Prix Special Mention, Lithuania), Katarina RADOVIĆ (KP 07 Grand Prix Special Mention, Serbia), Jean-François BÉRUBÉ (Canada), Pawel ŻAK (Poland), Andrei Liankevič (Belarus), Toshiki OZAWA (Japan), Alnis STAKLE (Latvia), Laimonas JAZUKEVIČIUS (Lithuania).

Guest Schools of Photography - collective exhibitions:

Ostkreuzschule (Berlin, Germany, curator: Ute Mahler)

Fondazione Studio Marangoni (Florence, Italy, curator: Alessandra Capodacqua)

Late autumn edition - Collective exhibition:

Alfредas SIMONAVIČIUS, Algis GRIŠKEVIČIUS, Alnis STAKLE, André WAGNER, Andrei LIANKEVICH, Ane LAN, Angela SVORONOU, Anja BOHNHOF, Anke VAN IERSEL, Astrid Elisabeth BANG, Beverley CARRUTHERS, Bjorn STERRI, Brad TEMKIN, Brigitte TAST, Charlotte LYBEER, Christoph BURTSCHER, Claudio GOBBI, Daniel CHALLE, Dara MC'GRATH, Darius JUREVIČIUS, Darius KUZMICKAS, Dave ANDERSON, Ekaterina BUBNOVA, Eva MAYER, Filippo DEL VITA, Francesco GNÓT, Fred LEBAIN, Gerlinde MIESENBOCK, Graham MILLER, Greg DAVILLE, Harri PÄLVIRANTA, Ines D'OREY, Irena TAMULYNIENĖ, Isabel TALLOS, István VIRÁGVÖLGYI, Iveta VAIVODE, Jan Drik VAN DER BURG, Jean-François BÉRUBÉ, Joaquin PEDRERO, Katarina RADOVIĆ, Katerina KALOUDI, Laimonas JAZUKEVIČIUS, Laura BERG, Leonora BISAGNO, Marc BERGHAUS, Marcp AMBROSI, Maria ARNELL & Marianna MOERKOERE, Maria LAURA GARCIA SERVENTI, Marla SWEENEY, Matthew SLEETH, Nina FINNERUD, Olga BERSAN, OLIVER, Paula MUHR, Pawel ŻAK, Regina ŠULSKYTĖ, Reiner RIEDLER, Riccardo MAZZONI, Rita SOROMENHO SIMOES, Rokas PRALGAUSKAS, SCHÜLER, Sungpil HAN, Stéphane FUGIER, Thomas ZIKA, Vidas BIVEINIS, Vytautas STANIONIS

Kaunas Photo 08

It started out on May 20, 2008 with an unexpected large spotlight on Australian Photography, an exhibition of fifteen outstanding Australian Photographers' works, exposed in three venues: Fujifilm Gallery, F Galerija and Communication development museum. Max Pam's works, along with those of Rennie Ellis, Graham Miller, Brad Rimmer, Mike Gray were subject of discovery for Lithuanian public. Since only several Australian photographers were able to travel to Kaunas, festival director Mindaugas Kavaliauskas produced an exhibition of portraits of Australian photographers, that he had created in Fotofreo festival in Fremantle (Western Australia) just a month before the grand opening of Australian photography overview in Kaunas Photo 07, inaugurated by the Ambassador of Australia H.E.Howard Brown.

Theme of Kaunas Photo 08 is Humour in Photography. The main edition of Kaunas Photo 08 starts on September 10 with one-man shows of award winners of Kaunas Photo 08 Grand Prix competition and a resume of humour in Lithuanian contemporary photography in Fujifilm gallery.

Traditional Nights of Photography will be celebrated in cafes and restaurants of the central pedestrian street, Laisves Aleja, a formerly prosperous street, which commerce is now shadowed by neighborhood of huge supermarkets.

Laisves aleja – The Alley of Freedom will become a “model” for a documentary action “Freedom for Photography”.

The alley will be photographed on September 11 by numerous photographers from Lithuania and from and from different countries of the world, which will depict life on this unique pedestrian street.

The final exhibition in Kaunas Picture Gallery, National M. K. Čiurlionis Museum on the theme of Humour, produced by our partner festival BACKLIGHT 08 (Tapmere, Finland) will be opened on December 18, 2008.

Spring edition

Guest country – Contemporary Photography from Australia, collective exhibition:

Max Pam, Emmanuel ANGELICAS, Rennie ELLIS, Graham MILLER, Brad RIMMER, Mike GRAY, Caitlin HARRISON, Mark MC PHERSON, Julian TENNANT, Cara BOWERMAN, Brendan BEIRNE, Andrew JAMIESON, Mark DUNDAS (1972-2008), Fiona MORRIS, Glenn LOCKITCH

Autumn edition

Personal Exhibitions:

Martin KOLLAR (Kaunas Photo 08 Grand Prix Winner, Slovakia), Dow WASIKSIRI (KP 07 Grand Prix Special Award, Thailand), Vojtech SLAMA (KP 07 Grand Prix Special Award, Czech Republic), Mauro FIORESE (KP 07 Grand Prix Special Award, Italy), Kazimieras LINKEVIČIUS (KP 07 Lithuanian Photography Award winner), Diane DUCRUET (France)

Collective exhibition:

Lithuanian Humour in Photography (Curator: Mindaugas Kavaliauskas). Photographers: Aleksandras MACIJAUSKAS, Romas JUŠKELIS, Stanislovas ŽVIRGŽDAS, Romualdas RAKAUSKAS, Jonas DANIŪNAS, Albertas ŠVENČIONIS, Irena GIEDRAITIENĖ, Algis GRIŠKEVIČIUS, Artūras VALIAUGA, Darius JUREVIČIUS, Ramūnas DANISEVIČIUS, Vytautas MICHELKEVIČIUS, Jonas PETRONIS, Marius AKSIJONAITIS, Rimaldas VIKŠRAITIS, Stasys POVILAITIS, Mindaugas KAVALIAUSKAS and others)

KP 08 Slideshows

Annemie AUGUSTIJNS, Anoek DE GROOT, Arlene GOTTFRIED, Boštjan PUCELJ, Bill MCCULOUGH, Dalia KLEINAITYTĖ, Darius JUREVIČIUS, Dovile CIZAITĖ, Yves Marie QUEMENER, Jan-Dirk van der Burg, Jeff MOORFOOT, Kostia SMOLYNINOV, Lilla SZASZ, Marius AKSIJONAITIS, Martin LANGER, Mike GRAY

Stasys POVILAITIS, Jan Dirk VAN DER BURG, Jean-Christian BOURCART and other artists

December Edition

Social-documentary project "Laisvę fotografijai!" ("Freedom for photography!"), aiming to photographically define the life of the central pedestrian street of Kaunas – Laisvės alėja. Separate catalog published.

Collective exhibition at National M.K.Čiurlionis museum, Kaunas Picture gallery

Alfредas SIMONAVIČIUS (Vilnius, Lithuania), Gintas KAVOLIŪNAS (Vilnius, Lithuania), Feliksas KERPAUSKAS (Kaunas, Lithuania), Donatas STANKEVIČIUS (Kaunas, Lithuania), Mindaugas KAVALIAUSKAS (Kaunas, Lithuania), Jonas PETRONIS (Kaunas, Lithuania), Ramūnas DANISEVIČIUS (Vilnius, Lithuania), Kazimieras LINKEVIČIUS (Marijampolė, Lithuania), Gintaras DYFARTAS (Kaunas, Lithuania), Dow WASIKSIRI (Bankokas, Tailandas / Bangkok, Thailand), Graham MILLER (Frimentlis, Australija / Fremantle, Australia), Romualdas RAKAUSKAS (Kaunas, Lithuania), Darius JUREVIČIUS (Vilnius, Lithuania), LOKEY (Finiksas, JAV / Phoenix, USA), Glenn LOCKITCH (Sidnėjus, Australija / Sydney, Australia), Gintaras ČESONIS (Kaunas, Lithuania), Vojtech SLAMA (Brno, Čekija / Brno, Czech Republic), Mauro FIORESE (Verona, Italija / Verona, Italy), Vytautas STANIONIS (Alytus, Lithuania)

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