**Open call for photographers and visual storytellers in collaboration with communities**

**PHOTOGRAPHY EMPOWERS: A Masterclass in Meaningful Visual Storytelling for Community Empowerment with Susan Meiselas, Lydia Matthews and Luciana Pinchiero**

At the occasion of the exhibition *Susan Meiselas: Mediations*, Jakopič Gallery, Ljubljana, 20 June – 22 October 2023

**Important dates:**

**For the applications:**

* **5 April 2023 at 5 p.m.**: online presentation of the Masterclass for potential participants
* **14 April 2023**: deadline for participants to apply
* **19 April 2023**: selected participants for the free of charge masterclass will be announced

**For the Masterclass (binding for all 12 selected participants):**

* **25 April 2023, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.:** online session with mentors
* **17 and 18 June 2023, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.:** 2-day live workshop

**Introduction:**

The Jakopič Gallery is pleased to announce an open call for a Masterclass featuring three distinguished photography professionals: **Susan Meiselas**, one of the most socially conscious living photographers today, **Lydia Matthews**, an established American curator, writer, researcher and lecturer, and **Luciana Pinchiero**, a dedicated Argentinian contemporary visual artist based in New York.

We are looking for passionate photographers and visual storytellers of all levels who are socially aware and committed to promoting inclusivity in contemporary society. We welcome project proposals that aim to significantly enhance the visibility, inclusivity, engagement and empowerment of diverse communities in Slovenia. Projects should be grounded in an established, engaged relationship and ongoing dialogue between the photographer and the community, and should involve several weeks of photographic work leading up to a live workshop for photographers. It is important to consider the impact of the project on the community and how it will benefit them. This includes increasing their participation, presence, and visibility, as well as how the project will positively impact their future activities.

This open call is extended to both photographers and communities. Photographers have the opportunity to choose the communities they wish to work with, while communities can also propose their own ideas for participation and share meaningful stories. A community can choose a preferred photographer, they can express their choice and come to an agreement with him/her to apply for the Masterclass. Their selected photographer may also be a member of the community itself.

**The masterclass will include:**

* one online meeting with the three mentors to present individual projects
* independent fieldwork to document the chosen community (along with the collection of existing material)
* individual preparation for the creation of a visual narrative
* a two-day live workshop where ideas will be developed to finalize produced work
* presentation of projects in distinct communities

**How do we understand communities?**

Communities are groups, organizations, or initiatives of individuals that share common interests, values, challenges and experiences. These may include local environmental, economic, or political factors, as well as shared cultural backgrounds such as ethnicity, heritage, religion, or language. Communities often come together to celebrate cultural events, preserve traditions, or provide support to those facing similar challenges or issues, such as health conditions, displacement, addiction, social deprivation, or bereavement. They aim to protect and assist individuals and groups, as well as animals and other natural phenomena, that are vulnerable to discrimination, marginalization, exploitation or other forms of injustice. Communities are vital in promoting social, environmental, and cultural sustainability, and in supporting the well-being of their members and their respective causes. With their vivid and active citizenship and continuous striving for a better future, they are important pillars of our society.

These communities deserve to be given a voice, to be seen and heard, acknowledged by other members of society. Photography holds the key to their empowerment through the collaboration in telling meaningful visual stories about their activities and endeavours.

**Eligibility:**

* This opportunity is available to photographers and storytellers who are at least 18 years of age and are based in Slovenia and the surrounding region. Alternatively, applicants who are willing to travel for the purpose of the Masterclass and their project and cover their own expenses are also welcome to apply.
* Projects must focus on empowering communities through photographic storytelling to have a positive impact on them, and present a clear idea of what form this impact will have.
* All proposals must be submitted in English, which is the language of the Masterclass, no translations are possible.

**Submission Guidelines and Content:**

1. ***About the applicant photographer:***

* A written project proposal (maximum 500 words) outlining the concept, content, goals, and intended impact of the photographic project.
* A portfolio of 10 to 15 images (in jpg format with 1200 pixels on the longest side, single images should not exceed 500 kB) which can be:
  + already existing/to-be-developed photographic work on a story that responds the above mentioned content
  + similar referential photographic work that shows the approach that the applicant wants to use in a new project
* A biography (maximum 300 words).

1. ***About the community:***

* a description (maximum 500 words) explaining why the community would like to participate in the program, a brief history and overview of the community
* a written agreement of a community representative that the community is willing to participate in the project and work with the photographer

**Send your proposal in a zipped folder on Wetransfer link to** [**galerija.jakopic@mgml.si**](mailto:galerija.jakopic@mgml.si) **(no email with attachment bigger than 8 MB will be delivered to our address) by the end of 14th April 2023.**

**Tips:**

* ensure that you focus on the positive aspects of the community's activities, even if they face challenges and their members may struggle. Utilize an approach such as Appreciative Inquiry or a similar methodology to emphasize strengths and opportunities for growth, rather than solely focusing on weaknesses and obstacles.
* Think of a long-term impact of your photographic work and find ways to express how photography can represent an empowering tool.
* Rather than experience and reputation of the photographer, the main criteria for selection will be a meaningful concept and proposal that will anticipate the most impactful outcome.

**Selection process and Masterclass flow:**

All proposals will undergo a review by a panel consisting of three mentors and a representative from Jakopič Gallery. The panel will then **choose the top 12 photographers**, with the announcement of the selection to be **made by 19 April** at the latest. The selected projects will then undergo a development process prior to the live Masterclass workshop. During the workshop, the mentors will review the projects and provide feedback, assistance with editing and sequencing, and guidance on developing the presentation form.

**Participants will receive the following benefits:**

* A fully-funded Masterclass workshop with industry-leading professionals, **FREE of charge** (the workshop fees are covered by extra funds provided by Jakopič Gallery)
* The opportunity to enhance their skills in photography, storytelling, and editing through a structured process, with guidance, support, and feedback from experienced practitioners in the field. This will add value and significance to their photographic work.
* Increased visibility and recognition of their work through public presentation.

**Participants are expected to meet the following requirements:**

* Submit a well-prepared and planned application that demonstrates the potential for meaningful photographic storytelling.
* Be fully available on all dates of the Masterclass.
* Devote time to working on photographic projects with communities in between sessions.
* Display a positive, committed, and engaged attitude, as well as an empathetic willingness to empower the communities they work with.

**About the mentors:**

[Susan Meiselas](https://www.susanmeiselas.com/) (USA, 1948), one of the world's most socially engaged and conscious photographers, is a member of the Magnum Agency and a president of Magnum Foundation. She has been using her camera to witness and connect for the past five decades. In her early career, she has worked as a teacher in New York City and organized photography workshops for rural schools in the American South. She travelled to Nicaragua and later to El Salvador during the worst civil wars in those countries. In the following decades, she continued to get involved in various communities and conflicts around the world. Meiselas has travelled the world covering topics ranging from the sex industry to war and human rights violations. She draws attention to minorities and conflicts that are often overlooked. She always seeks direct contact and dialogue with the people she portrays. Her approach is collaborative and includes the perspective of the people she photographs. That is why she has proposed to hold the workshop described above on the occasion of her exhibition at the Jakopič Gallery in Ljubljana.

[Lydia Matthews](https://www.lydiamatthews.com/) is a curator, writer, researcher and lecturer focusing on collaborative, socially engaged art and design projects in the US and abroad. She works closely with visual artists, designers, traditional craftspeople, musicians, dancers, multidisciplinary scholars, students, and local residents to conceive and implement cultural projects that address challenging aspects of people's everyday lives. By combining poetics and polemics with humour and criticality, it fosters deeper social relations between project participants, while experimenting with new ways of sharing disciplinary knowledge and practical creative skills.

[Luciana Pinchiero](http://www.lucianapinchiero.com/about) was born in Argentina and moved to the USA to study art in New York and Los Angeles. Her work has been exhibited in museums, art spaces and galleries in New York, Brooklyn, Los Angeles, Argentina, France and Iceland. Her work seeks to re-examine disruptive and institutionalized colonial pedagogies. She is proud to be part of a generation of Latin Americans who can potentially transform an imposed worldview into an awareness of a sense of displaced identity. Efforts to demolish and/or relocate emblematic monuments that celebrate colonialism and white male supremacy around the world are events that have motivated her to create collages, photographs, moving images and art objects over the past few years.

**More info:**

<https://mgml.si/en/jakopic-gallery/>

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