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GALLERY

18 May 2018

PRESS RELEASE

Jakopič Gallery

Marc Riboud: Conscious Traveller. Concerned Photographer.

Overview photographic exhibition

29 May – 14 October 2018

(Opening: 29 May at 8 p.m.)

Curators: Marija Skočir, Lorène Durret



"I wait for the decisive moment. I usually miss it or avoid it, finding more pleasure in lasting moments"
Marc Riboud

Korčula, 1953 © Marc Riboud

Marc Riboud (1923–2016), a French photographer with a worldwide reputation, went down in the history of photography with both his iconic images and pioneering photographic travels to the countries of the Far East, when they were still almost inaccessible to photographers. From Zazou, the playful painter of the Eiffel Tower, to a young American activist who in protest against the Vietnam War stood in front of a row of bayonets with a flower in her hand, and through various portraits of world leaders in the decisive historical moments, to the nameless individuals that Riboud's mindful eye had noticed and recorded on photographic film, with empathy and often with a lucid and humorous note – all of these are photographic images written in our collective memory, exhibited and kept by the most important galleries and museums of the world. Riboud's photojournals have been published in all the important magazines. He was among the early members of Magnum Photos – and

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although in 1979 he decided to take an independent path, he remained faithful to the common ideas of Magnum's founders, who in 1953 accepted the younger photographer in a way that gave him enough space to develop his own authorial expression in his work. *What Riboud took for himself from photojournalism was the ability to catch the moment. And yet, it is his sensitivity in the interpretation of what is decisive in the decisive moment that is one of a kind and truly his own, that today makes his photographs so unique. "...I wait for the decisive moment. I usually miss it or avoid it, finding more pleasure in lasting moments..."*

It is Marc Riboud's authorial approach that our selection of 212 photographs wants to highlight, along with his conscious attitude to and eye for the moment. The selection was specifically made for the Jakopič Gallery, and over one third of it presents vintage photographs coming from the family heritage belonging to two of Riboud's children. While combining his photographic profession and his wish to travel across the boundaries of the known territories, Riboud managed to establish his own slow travelling tempo that enabled him to decide as he went where his path would lead him, and always taking enough time to feel the world around him. This not only sharpened his photographic eye, but also formed his character and the way of seeing the world.

In its introduction, the exhibition places Riboud's work in the Central- and Eastern-European context, with an extended presentation of the work he did in Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia between the 1950's and 1980's – not aiming, however, to establish different interpretations of the photographic medium according to regional contexts, but rather the opposite, to show the author's ability of knowing how to exit from his Western way of seeing things. His path towards the East and South, which this exhibition's selection of photographs follows across Riboud's favourite Asian and African countries, throws new light on the usual reflections on photojournalism, mainly pertaining to the question of the view of the "other" through photography – illuminating the "other's" small joys of life, cultural specificities, and everyday things seen as interesting curiosities by the viewer, which Riboud records, without exoticizing them, as a sensitive individual well aware of the power of his medium. As he used to point out himself, it did not seem sensible to him that he, as a newcomer with an expensive Leica around his neck, should need to become very close at any cost to a way of life into which he was not born and could hardly be admitted to, only so that his photographs would look more convincing. It appears that this wakeful awareness of his existence in the reality of a definite moment, which belongs to him more than to anybody else, allowed Riboud to unpretentiously record that which makes the people in front of his lenses alive, and which can only be recorded by a photographer who has enough respect and empathy for his subjects.

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The exhibition is curated by Marija Skočir in close co-operation with Lorène Durret, the curator of Riboud's archive, and Catherine Riboud, the photographer's wife. The guidebook with twenty of Riboud's photographs was published by the Jakopič Gallery, and the exhibition is connected to the simultaneous selling exhibition in Galerija Fotografija. Moreover, it is accompanied by an additional programme prepared by the Jakopič Gallery in keeping with its mission oriented to photography. Its aim is to promote greater understanding of the main achievements in the history of world photography, not as icons that need to be admired and wondered at, but as something that blurs the borders, hierarchies and differences; something that can, if carrying true expressive power, transcend time and geographical frames; and give photography, as one of the most democratic and heterogeneous media, the opportunity to dictate, through visual readings, different paths in both contemporary creativity and the wider society.

Catherine Riboud, the photographer's wife, who has been following his work since 1979, in the introduction of the guidebook to the exhibition wrote: *"The selection of more than two hundred photographs demonstrates the coherence of Marc's particular view. His view was filled with empathy for simple and irrelevant people, with a keen sense of humour. He loved to discover beauty in places that you would never expect to find it, in a Chinese cafeteria or Afghan arms manufacturer. He was independent, self-paced and loved wandering around, always on the lookout for visual surprises as if they were gifts.*

One day, Marc discovered a small square book, edited by Robert Morel, titled Celebration de l'oeil (In Praise of the Eye), that absolutely thrilled him. It discussed the prescriptions of an eye doctor who became Pope in the 13th century, an oculist whose ointments and potions healed the eyes of Michelangelo two centuries later. The pope and oculist wrote in conclusion: 'The eye is a noble, round, radiant organ. Seeing is the paradise of the soul.'

Marc immediately took this formula as his own: 'Seeing' was the paradise of his soul, a paradise we are looking forward to sharing with Slovenia."

Catherine Riboud, from the guide to the exhibition

Marc Riboud was born in 1923 in Saint-Genis-Laval near Lyon, France. He took his first images in 1937, at the Exposition Universelle in Paris, using a small Vest Pocket Kodak given to him by his father for his 14th birthday. During World War II, Riboud joined the Resistance in the Vercors, from 1945 to 1948 he studied engineering at the École Centrale in Lyon. Three years later he decided to become a photographer.

His well-known photograph of a painter on the Eiffel Tower appeared in *Life* magazine in 1953, his first publication, which prompted an invitation from Henri Cartier-Bresson and Robert Capa to join Magnum Photos agency.

In 1955, he travelled by road through the Middle East and Afghanistan to India, where he stayed for one year before deciding to continue his travels eastwards, from Calcutta to China making the first of what will be many long stays. Finally, arriving in Japan, where he found the subject for what will become his first book, *Women of Japan*. In 1960, after a three-

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month stay in the USSR, he covered the struggles for independence in Algeria and Sub-Saharan Africa. Between 1968 and 1969, he worked both South and North Vietnam, one of the rare photographers allowed entry. In 1979 he chose an independent career, and became a contributing member of Magnum Photos.

In the 80s and 90s, he returned regularly to the Orient and Far East, especially to Angkor and Huangshan, but he also followed the rapid and considerable changing of China, a country he had been looking at for thirty years.

In 2011, Marc Riboud made a donation of 192 original prints made between 1953 and 1977 to the National Museum of Modern Art (Centre Georges Pompidou), Paris. His work was distinguished by prestigious awards and is exhibited in museums and galleries in Paris, New York, Shanghai, Tokyo, etc.

Marc Riboud passed away in Paris on 30 August 2016, at 93 years old. The core of his archives will be donated to the National Museum of Asian Arts – Guimet, Paris.

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PROGRAMME ACCOMPANYING THE EXHIBITION

Guided tours in English: on Saturdays at 4.30 p.m.

Guided tours in Slovenian: on Sundays at 4.30 p.m.

Guided tour at the Museum Summer Night

16 June 2018 at 9 p.m.

Guided tour by the curator of the exhibition, Marija Skočir

7 June 2018 at 5 p.m.

To be followed by a guided tour of the exhibition Marc Riboud: A Wanderer's Choice in Galerija Fotografija at 6.30 p.m. with art historian Hana Čeferin.

Analogue Magic, darkroom printing

12 June 2018 at 6 p.m.

/ Photography on a Sofa, a discussion on the role and position, as well as representation, of women in photography

14 June 2018 at 5 p.m.

Up Close: Photography as a Way of Seeing

1 and 2 June 2018

The Magic Photogram, a photographic workshop for kindergartens, primary schools and secondary schools

Camera Obscura, a photographic workshop for primary schools (Years 4 to 9) and secondary schools

The exhibition is included in the programme of the **Photonic Week** taking place from 29 May to 2 June 2018 at different locations in Ljubljana.

The exhibition is connected to the **Marc Riboud: A Wanderer's Choice** selling exhibition, which is on view until 31 August in Galerija Fotografija.

Production: Museum and Galleries of Ljubljana // **Photographer:** Marc Riboud // **Curators:** Marija Skočir, Lorène Durret // **Graphic and exhibition design:** Bojan Lazarevič (Agora Proars) // **Realisation of the exhibition:** Technical Service MGML, O.K.vir // **Expert assistance:** Catherine Riboud, Julija Hoda // **Programmes for youth:** Petra Peunik Okorn, Matevž Paternoster, Mateja Pušnik // **Programmes for adults:** Janja Rebolj // **Public relations:** Janja Buzečan // **The project was made possible by:** City of Ljubljana, French Institute in Slovenia, Galerija Fotografija // **Media sponsor:** TAM-TAM

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