

Sony World Photography Awards winners produce outstanding new work with their Sony Grants

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- Full series of images available end of January 2019

Tuesday November 6, 2018:

The World Photography Organisation today releases preview images of four new bodies of work by outstanding photographers, developed as a result of a Sony Grant.

Chosen from the Professional category winners of the 2018 Sony World Photography Awards, the newest Sony Grant recipients are **Alys Tomlinson** (UK), **Luca Locatelli** (Italy), **Tom Oldham** (UK) and **Balazs Gardi** (Hungary).

Each photographer was given \$7,000 (USD) and the latest Sony digital imaging equipment in April 2018, along with the freedom to create entirely new works or to use the grant to develop a long-term project. Taken with Sony cameras, the resulting artworks address global and personal concerns and were shot across Belarus, Italy, France, the United States and the United Kingdom. All works will be available for press use from end of January 2018, and a selection of works will be displayed at the Sony World Photography Awards Exhibition at Somerset House, London in April 2019.

Furthering Sony's commitment to supporting contemporary photographers and contributing to the further development of photographic culture worldwide, the Sony Grants program was introduced in 2016 and is organised by the World Photography Organisation. It provides winning and shortlisted photographers of the Sony World Photography Awards with further opportunities to develop and establish an ongoing relationship with Sony after the Awards. The recipients are chosen by Sony from the Awards' Professional and Student competitions.

Four Professional Sony Grant Recipients:

Alys Tomlinson (2018 Photographer of the Year and 1st Place, Professional Discovery category) has used the Sony Grant to create a series called *Vera*, which was developed from her award-winning series, *Ex-Voto*. In this further body of work, she uses film and photography to focus on the fascinating story of a Belarusian nun. Living in a rural convent, Vera has an intense and spiritual connection with the wild horses she looks after on the convent's farm. Other duties include teaching vulnerable men and women (including drug addicts, ex-convicts, domestic abuse survivors and the homeless) new skills, to help them recuperate and find purpose in life. Influenced by Polish and Russian filmmakers, Tomlinson intimately explores Vera's story using personal accounts and drawing on history, tradition and the power of faith.

Describing her work, Tomlinson says *"The Sony Grant enabled me to travel to Belarus to document life inside a convent with Sr. Vera (featured in my series 'Ex-Voto'). It was a fascinating experience and I was given access to a world often hidden from view. The Grant has given me freedom to experiment with digital and moving image, allowing me to develop my practice and challenge myself creatively"*

Luca Locatelli (1st Place, Professional Landscape category) has created a new body of work as part of his ongoing five-year project *MATERIA: How we live on this planet*, which explores humanity's reactions to the growing environmental and population strains on earth. He has focused on capturing images of two major European cities that he feels combine tradition and modernity - London (UK) and Milan (Italy). He uses these contemporary cityscapes to imaginatively suggest possible views of the future.

Locatelli comments *"As we know, today most of humanity is living in a city and the struggle to improve the quality of our lives in cities is one of the most pressing targets on the planet's agenda. The fabric and appearance of European cities often combines history and modernity. For the Sony Grant, I have focused on this quality and used it to offer a visual projection of our urban future."*

Tom Oldham (1st Place, Professional Portraiture category) has explored 'Ball Culture', LGBTQ+ community events which originated in 1970s Harlem. Centred around competitions between 'Houses', the balls involve dancers performing in battles and 'walks' on a catwalk before a panel of judges. In his series titled *Shoot An Arrow and Go Real High*, Oldham travelled to Paris, New York and London to photograph portraits of the incredibly diverse range of characters and costumes participating in these events.

Oldham says *"The Sony Grant has enabled me to expand my project from local to global. It has truly broadened my perspective on the scene I'm shooting and I'm very grateful for the far more rounded shape the work now enjoys. The Grant believes in helping photographers hit their next goals, helping them reach beyond the point at which they may have settled without it - which is a wonderful thing."*

Balazs Gardi (1st Place, Professional Sport category) has focused his series *Can I Play?* on the healing and uniting power of soccer in the local immigrant community in his hometown of Oakland, California. He focuses particularly on a group of young people who have moved to the States from places of unrest across the world, and explores how the sport has helped them find an identity in their circumstances.

Commenting on his series, Gardi says *"Not long after I moved to Oakland, California, it was named the most diverse city in the United States. As Americans were becoming more and more polarized in their attitudes towards immigrants I was looking out for ways to meet them. Soccer Without Borders started to work with immigrant and refugee youth over a decade ago and I feel very fortunate to be able to photograph their extraordinary effort to build a lasting community and help these kids navigate their newly found home. The Sony Grant has not only helped me to continue working with this vibrant community but also provides the much needed platform for the work to be seen around the world."*

Organised by The World Photography Organisation, the Sony World Photography Awards is the world's most diverse photography competition and the 2019 edition is currently open for entries.

Now in its 12th year, the Awards celebrate the finest contemporary photography from the past 12 months across all genres of the medium. All entries are free at www.worldphoto.org/swpa. The Student competition closes for submissions November 30, 2018, Open and Youth competitions close January 4, 2019 and the Professional competition on January 11, 2019.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

About World Photography Organisation

The World Photography Organisation is a global platform for photography initiatives. Working across up to 180 countries, our aim is to raise the level of conversation around photography by celebrating the best imagery and photographers on the planet. We pride ourselves on building lasting relationships with both individual photographers as well as our industry-leading partners around the world. The World Photography Organisation hosts a year-round portfolio of events including the **Sony World Photography Awards**, the world's most diverse photography competition, and **PHOTOFAIRS**, international art fairs dedicated to photography with destinations in Shanghai and San Francisco For more details see www.worldphoto.org

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