

**Winner of the 2021 Women in Motion Award for photography,
Liz Johnson Artur, tells her life story in words and pictures
at the Théâtre Antique in Arles**

At the 52nd edition of the Rencontres d'Arles, on July 5, 2021, Kering and the Rencontres d'Arles presented the 2021 *Women In Motion* Award for photography to Russian-Ghanaian photographer, Liz Johnson Artur. At an evening reception attended by nearly 1,000 guests, she discussed her career, her work as a photographer and women's place in her work.



Christoph Wiesner, director of Les Rencontres d'Arles, Valérie Duport, Kering's Chief Communication and Image Officer and Jean-François Palus, Group Managing Director, handing Liz Johnson Artur her Prize in front of the public in a standing ovation

The 2021 winner presented her work through a commentary of a selection of a few of her most striking photos. *"I never thought I would come to a place like this and receive an award, but I'm very grateful. Most of all, I'm grateful because as a woman I've never questioned photography. I did what I wanted to do, and photography is my eyes, so why can't I do this? (...) What I do, I take everywhere. When I look at people, and there is no difference where I look, I'm interested in people. Because I'm a human being and I have questions, and I've found out that through photography I can ask questions on a high level."*

Liz Johnson Artur began by talking about her first steps as a photographer, notably after arriving in the United States at the start of the 1990s. *"One day in Central Park, I saw a man asleep and I decided that this was my picture. By the time I got my camera, the man woke up, and sat up, and I felt guilty. I'm making a big point about this feeling of guilt because I carried it a long time -- the guilt of looking at someone and taking something from them. We didn't exchange any words, but I think he did see me. And I took out from this, that this is how I wanted to take pictures: I want people to see me when I'm doing what I'm doing. I've mentioned guilt, because guilt is such a bad thing to carry when you want to approach someone."* Returning to the theme later in her talk, she said: *"Photography is a good thing, you meet people in a way... When you don't carry guilt, you can never know what will happen!"*

Liz Johnson Artur also discussed the issue of women in photography, both in front of and behind the camera. *"I'm a stranger most of the time, and strangers can get familiar too... This is a prize for women and I'm very, very proud to represent women. Sometimes I bump into a group of women and it's like coming home. I work a lot on the streets, and on the street, women have to protect themselves. So, it's a very different way of approaching and photographing women. But from my experience as a woman, and I can't speak for a male photographer, it is one of the most amazing things to be allowed in the company of women. And I think women here know what I'm talking about!"*

Other topics were the young generation and questions of gender, which are also recurring themes in her work. *"There is a change in the new generation: they don't go asking, they go doing, and I think that's a good place to be. (...) I have some pictures in an exhibition here [Masculinities at the Mécanique Générale], and I called it "the girls", and "the girls" is simply just to come to this masculinities thing -- girls, boys, they are not that different to me, for me they are "the girls." In my archives, the way I show my archive, how I like to represent it, my trans sisters are in the women's corner, so they will always be represented as part of what I want to talk about."*

The award winner finished by showing the audience "Women in their Sunday best" by German artist Gabriele Münter, who managed to take this picture in Texas in 1899 of three Black women and their magnetism. *"This picture was taken in 1899 by Gabriele Münter, a young german woman artist and photographer, they meet in the street, and you know at the time in Texas to walk like that ...and to come out like this : this is why I take pictures!"*.

The gala evening also provided an occasion to congratulate the 2020 winner of the *Women In Motion* Award, Sabine Weiss. Christoph Wiesner, Valerie Duport and Jean-François Palus were able to officially present her with the award to lengthy applause from an emotional and highly supportive audience.

The final surprise of the evening was the presence of Susan Meiselas, the first winner of the *Women In Motion* Award in 2019. In Arles for the festival, she came to salute her two fellow women photographers before the opening night, an opportunity for these three exceptional women to discuss their art.



Tree Women In Motion : Susan Meiselas, 2019 | Sabine Weiss, 2020 | Liz Johnson Artur, 2021

About Liz Johnson Artur

Born in Bulgaria in 1964, Liz Johnson Artur lives and works in London. Her work incorporates photography, film, and installations, and centers on the strong connections she has forged with people for more than 30 years. In recent years, Liz Johnson Artur has exhibited selections of *Black Balloon Archive* in several countries, in solo exhibitions at the Brooklyn Museum in New York and at the South London Gallery in London (2019), and via group exhibitions, including at the Serpentine Galleries in London alongside Grace Wales Bonner's *A Time for New Dreams* (2019); at the 10th Berlin Biennale (2018); and at the Photographers' Gallery (2016). She received the Turner Bursary in 2020, was shortlisted for the Aimia AGO Photography Prize in 2017 and became a Jane Lambard Fellow at the Vera List in 2018. Her work is held in public and private collections in the United States and the United Kingdom, and her monograph published by Bierke Verlag was listed in the New York Times' *Best Photo Books of 2016* section. A new solo exhibition will be held at FOAM in Amsterdam in the fall of 2021.

About Women In Motion

Kering's commitment to women is at the heart of the Group's priorities, and through *Women In Motion* extends to the field of art and culture, where gender inequalities are still flagrant even though creation is one of the most powerful vectors for change.

In 2015, Kering launched *Women In Motion* at the Festival de Cannes with the aim of shining a light on women in cinema, both in front of and behind the camera. Since then, the program has been expanded to include the fields of photography, art and literature. Through its awards, the program recognizes both inspirational figures and talented young women, while its *Talks* provide an opportunity for leading personalities to share their views on the representation of women in their profession.

For the past seven years, *Women In Motion* has been a platform of choice for helping to change mindsets and reflect on women's place and recognition across artistic fields.

About the Rencontres d'Arles

Through exhibitions held in various exceptional heritage sites around the city, the Rencontres d'Arles has contributed to supporting worldwide photographic heritage every summer since 1970, and in so doing has become a melting pot for contemporary creation. A true cultural incubator for artists, the Rencontres d'Arles is an annual hub for photographic creation. Echoing and promoting artistic reflections and practices at a crossroads of disciplines, the Rencontres d'Arles each year presents the work of more than 200 artists and curators, through 35 exhibitions in venues with specially designed scenographies. For an ever more discerning public, the festival reveals trends, forges new paths, explores and questions the status of the changing image, creating content that reflects the sociological and geographical diversity of our world.

About Kering

A global Luxury group, Kering manages the development of a series of renowned Houses in Fashion, Leather Goods, Jewelry and Watches: Gucci, Saint Laurent, Bottega Veneta, Balenciaga, Alexander McQueen, Brioni, Boucheron, Pomellato, Dodo, Qeelin, Ulysse Nardin, Girard-Perregaux, as well as Kering Eyewear. By placing creativity at the heart of its strategy, Kering enables its Houses to set new limits in terms of their creative expression while crafting tomorrow's Luxury in a sustainable and responsible way. We capture these beliefs in our signature: "Empowering Imagination".

For more information

Please visit the *Women In Motion* press section on kering.com

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