

LUCIE IN THE SKY



In just five years, the Lucie Awards have achieved great renown in the world of photography. A jubilee gala in New York, honored famous photographers such as Ralph Gibson and Elliott Erwitt – along with young talent like Larry Louie.

The small, shiny statuette stands on the tips of its toes, stretching upwards, chest forward, arms folded behind its head. In contrast to Lucie's great idol – the Oscar – it is plated in silver rather than gold. But the figure's posture defines the organizer's intention: the Lucie Awards should strive towards the heavens, turning Lucie into the most significant international photographic award.

The October presentation gala was a glamorous event, as could be expected for the fifth jubilee of the annual Lucie Awards. The ceremony took place for the first time at the prestigious Avery Fisher Hall in New York's Lincoln Center where 1600 guests from 24 countries walked the red carpet to the venue. The two-hour gala evening, featuring a large number of prizes in various categories, was moderated by actress Lili Taylor.

Hossein Farmani succeeded in pulling off this great event focused on photographers and their work. This was one of his goals when he founded the International Photography Awards (IPA) and the Lucie Awards in May 2003. "Photographers are often relegated to a small mention on the side of a picture. That makes my soul weep. I wanted to put them in the spotlight," Farmani explains. With time, he also hopes to create a Hall of Fame for photographers. In 2007, nine new photographers joined their ranks in recognition of their performance in different photographic areas. Next to fine arts photographer Ralph Gibson and fashion photographer Deborah Turbeville, Lord Snowdon was honored for his portraits, Kenro Izu for his visionary work and Elliot Erwitt for his life's work. "The Lucie Awards have become an established institution incredible quickly, and I think it's very good that so many differ-



ent categories exist," Kenro Izu said after the celebration. "I consider it a great honor to be awarded the Lucie, especially considering the other recipients, not least Ralph Gibson. Now, the awards only needed to achieve a bit more internationality."

The number of contenders for the IPAs – for which the nomination process is different to the Lucie Awards recipients – shows that the event has grown considerably in

international importance. While in 2003, there were around 3000 contenders from 15 countries, in 2007 there were nearly 20,000 photographers from over 65 countries. It is true that many of the recipients and nominees for one of the IPA awards in 2007 came from the United States, but there were entries also from Canada, Germany, France, Great Britain, Italy and Japan. "It was always my dream to honor the greatest photo-

graphic talents from every corner of the world," Farmani explains, "it is only due to logistics that the award ceremony takes place in the US".

This year a European, Massimo Mastrorillo from Italy, received the International Photographer of the Year award. The Discovery of the Year award, sponsored by Pilsner Urquell, went to Hong Kong-born Larry Louie, who grew up in Canada. This year saw the introduction of a new category: International Photographer of the Year – Deeper Perspective. The prize went to the English photographer, Charlie Crane.

Another novelty was the introduction of the Spotlight Awards. This prize is sponsored by Hasselblad and is granted to a person, company or organization, in recognition of special efforts made towards the evolution of the photographic scene. Christian Poulsen, Hasselblad CEO, presented the award to Magnum Photos, a company that has been an important component in the field for the past 60 years. It is no coincidence that Hasselblad presented the Spotlight Award within the framework of the Lucie Awards. "In only five years the Lucie Awards have attained prominent status as one of the highlights of the photography business. We were thrilled to be associated, both as a sponsor and as an attendee, with this great event. It truly is the Academy Awards of the photography industry, where great work is duly celebrated", Jack Showalter, Hasselblad's US president explains.

Farmani is equally delighted by the resonance the awards are causing in the industry. It strengthens his belief in his plans. "In the future, I hope the event will be televised live to millions of people, so that they can join in the celebration of the world's best photographers and their work."

Elliott Erwitt, famous, amongst others, for his New York pictures (left), was honored for his life's work. Oleg Duryagin reached the Discovery of the Year finals with this picture (above)



Outstanding images of this year's Lucie Awards honorees: Ralph Gibson ('Fine Art' category, above), Deborah Turbeville (Fashion category, middle), and Kenro Izu (Visionary category, below)



With images of Pyongyang Charlie Crane won in the Deeper Perspective category (above). Larry Louie was honored as Discovery (below left), Massimo Matorillo as Photographer of the Year (below right)

