

THE ANNENBERG SPACE FOR PHOTOGRAPHY PRESENTS *REFUGEE*  
GROUNDBREAKING EXHIBITION OF WORK  
BY FIVE CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS  
ILLUMINATES THE GLOBAL PLIGHT OF DISPLACED PEOPLE

# REFUGEE

April 23 – August 21, 2016



**Los Angeles** (March 22, 2016)—**Wallis Annenberg and the Annenberg Foundation** today announced the **Annenberg Space for Photography** exhibition *REFUGEE*, featuring new photographic artworks that illuminate the global refugee crisis. In images created solely for the exhibition by five internationally acclaimed artists—**Lynsey Addario, Omar Victor Diop, Graciela Iturbide, Martin Schoeller, and Tom Stoddart**—*REFUGEE* will represent the lives of refugees from a host of diverse populations dispersed and displaced throughout the world, through photographs taken in Bangladesh, Cameroon, Colombia, Croatia, Germany, Greece, Mexico, Myanmar, Serbia, Slovenia, and the United States.

With the number of displaced people having reached some 60 million globally, according to **UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency**, this timely exhibition will allow audiences to engage with aspects of the plight of refugees not previously encountered, and to reflect on a full range of current global refugee experiences through singular and compelling images. These images humanize the refugees' struggles to build new homes and peaceful lives while in flight from dehumanizing and life-threatening persecution and deprivation. A core principle of *REFUGEE* is to present these diverse populations with both dignity and respect, even as they have endured often unwelcoming conditions and hostile environments in order to find their new beginnings.

Of the exhibition and its related collaborative initiatives, **Annenberg Foundation Chairman of the Board, President and CEO Wallis Annenberg** states:

"I'm proud that the Annenberg Foundation has built a strong tradition of exploring our most pressing and complex public issues, of promoting meaningful dialogue even where there is contention and controversy. I can't think of an issue more important and vital than the global refugee crisis. Now more than ever, we need to go beyond superficial readings of this worldwide concern in order to understand its deeply human ramifications. In this powerful exhibit, I believe we do. I believe we go to a place that only great and stirring art can truly go—deep into the humanity of the refugee crisis, as seen through the eyes of some of the greatest photographers alive. These extraordinary and visionary artists don't advocate, they illuminate; they don't argue a position, they enlighten. I believe it's essential viewing, so we don't just see what's happening in our world, we feel it."

"This remarkable initiative is very timely, coming as violence and human rights abuses uproot people around the world at an unprecedented pace," said UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi. "The photographs in this exhibit portray their courage, resilience and strength. They show that this is not an anonymous movement; these are ordinary people, who have been forced to flee."

### **REFUGEE: The Exhibition**

The presentation of *REFUGEE* is coordinated by exhibit co-curators **Patricia Lanza**, Director of Talent and Content of the Annenberg Space for Photography, and **Elisabeth Biondi**. It will be on view at the Annenberg Space for Photography from April 23–August 21, 2016.

### **The Artists**

Pulitzer Prize and MacArthur Fellowship-winning photographer **Lynsey Addario** documented the Rohingya people—a disenfranchised Muslim population in the predominantly Buddhist nation of Myanmar. Known for her captivating imagery in such publications as the *New York Times*, *National Geographic*, and *TIME Magazine*, Addario was recently named one of *American Photo Magazine's* top-5 most influential photographers of the past 25 years. Her recently released *New York Times* best-selling memoir, *It's What I Do*, chronicles her personal and professional life coming of age in the post-9/11 world.

**Omar Victor Diop** will present photographs of refugees from the Central African Republic who were forced to flee to Cameroon. Known for his work in fashion photography, Diop's oeuvre comprises conceptual projects, including staged and self-portraiture with visual references ranging from classical European paintings to postcolonial African studio photography. His creative practice also involves costume design, textile research, and creative writing. His work has been shown at venues including Paris Photo and FIAC (Paris), the Arles photography festival, and 1:54 Contemporary African Art Fair (New York and London).

Fine Art photographer **Graciela Iturbide** photographed settlements of Central American refugees in Mexico and displaced communities in Colombia. One of the most prolific Mexican

photographers of any generation, Iturbide has participated in group exhibitions throughout the globe. Her solo exhibitions include the Casa de la Cultura in Juchitan, Oaxaca, Mexico; Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco; the Museum of Photographic Arts, San Diego; the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles; the Philadelphia Museum of Art; Museo de Arte Moderno, Buenos Aires; and the Museum of Modern Art in Mexico City, among others.

**Martin Schoeller's** detailed, close-range photographic portraits of everyday people, important and iconic entertainment personalities, political and cultural figures, and his photographic essays and books have all made him a distinctive and singular presence in the field of contemporary photographic portraiture. In his work, familiar faces are treated with the same levels of scrutiny as the un-famous. Among his many endeavors, Schoeller has worked on projects for such publications as *Rolling Stone*, *National Geographic*, *TIME* and *GQ*, among others. Schoeller joined Richard Avedon as a contributing portrait photographer at *The New Yorker* in 1999, where he continues to produce award-winning images. For *REFUGEE*, Schoeller has turned his unique stylistic lens to capture portraits of resettled refugees in the U.S for a section of the exhibit entitled "New Americans."

**Tom Stoddart's** contribution to *REFUGEE* is a photographic narrative of refugees arriving in Greece and traveling through Croatia and Serbia (October 9-23, 2015) to Germany (December 16-21, 2015). Stoddart's awards and achievements are numerous—his 2012 *Perspectives* retrospective exhibition at London's South Bank during the Olympic Games alone attracting 225,000 visitors. Relating his experiences for *REFUGEE*, Stoddart comments: "During my assignment I saw once again the tired faces of desperate fathers trying to find a place of safety and peace for their families, away from the bombs and inhumanity of war. In Berlin, their faces had changed... there was still sadness at having to flee the country of their birth, but also optimism and a determination to prosper and contribute to a democratic society that had opened its doors and given a warm welcome to homeless strangers."

#### **Additional exhibition-related information**

The UNHCR supported *REFUGEE* exhibition photographers throughout their endeavors, providing both valuable background information and facilitating logistical contact with refugees during and after their dangerous journeys to safety in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America.

In addition to the presentation of *REFUGEE*, the **Annenberg Foundation** and Annenberg Space for Photography engaged the nonprofit **VisionWorkshops** to provide a photography camp for displaced youths, empowering them to create and document their realities as internally displaced people (IDPs) through both the mediums of photography and writing. This workshop—held in close collaboration with the UNHCR—took place in Soacha, Colombia, and the resulting work of its participants will be included within the *REFUGEE* exhibition.

An original documentary film, commissioned by the Annenberg Space for Photography and produced by **Tiger Nest Films**, captures *REFUGEE* exhibition photographers at work on location, delving further into the stories behind their images.

The exhibition will also offer a virtual reality (VR) experience. The Photography Space commissioned a short VR film of youth who participated in the VisionWorkshops photography camp. The film crew also spent time with a few siblings from the photography camp at home with their family. Using VR headsets stationed in the workshop area of the Photography Space, guests will be able to transport themselves to Soacha, Colombia, to experience a bit of what life is like there.

Additionally, **Skylight Studios** will continue to host the popular **Iris Nights** lecture series with exhibition-related speakers, with a full schedule of events announced at a later date.

**Images (l to r): Omar Victor Diop**, Mbile Refugee Camp, Cameroon, 2015. © Omar Victor Diop; **Lynsey Addario**, Say Tha Mar Gyi, Myanmar, 2015. ©Lynsey Addario; **Tom Stoddart**, Slovenia, October 2015. © Tom Stoddart. Images courtesy of the artists and Annenberg Space for Photography.

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### **Annenberg Space for Photography**

The Annenberg Space for Photography is a cultural destination dedicated to exhibiting photography. The intimate environment features state-of-the-art, high-definition digital technology as well as traditional prints by both world-renowned and emerging photographers. It is the first solely photographic cultural destination in the Los Angeles area. The Photography Space conveys a range of human experiences and serves as an expression of the philanthropic work of the Annenberg Foundation and its directors.

**2000 Avenue of the Stars, Los Angeles, CA 90067**

**Tel: 213.403.3000**

**Wednesday through Sunday: 11 am – 6 pm**

**Closed Mondays and Tuesdays**

**Admission is free**

[www.annenbergphotospace.org](http://www.annenbergphotospace.org)

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[#RefugeeInPhotos](https://www.instagram.com/annenbergphotospace)



### **Annenberg Foundation**

The [Annenberg Foundation](http://www.annenbergfoundation.org) is a family foundation that provides funding and support to nonprofit organizations in the United States and globally. Since 1989, it has generously funded programs in education and youth development; arts, culture and humanities; civic and community life; health and human services; and animal services and the environment.

In addition, the Foundation and its Board of Directors are directly involved in the community with innovative projects that further its mission of advancing a better tomorrow through visionary leadership today. Among them are [Annenberg Alchemy](#), [Annenberg Learner](#), [Annenberg Space for Photography](#), [Explore](#), [GRoW](#) and the [Metabolic Studio](#). The Foundation encourages the development of effective ways to communicate by sharing ideas and knowledge.

#### **UNHCR**

The UN Refugee Agency UNHCR works worldwide to protect, assist and find solutions for refugees, internally displaced people and stateless populations. It has some 9,700 staff across 126 countries, many working in humanitarian emergencies and in close proximity to regions of conflict.

<http://www.unhcr.org>

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