

THE ERNA AND VICTOR HASSELBLAD FOUNDATION

PRESS RELEASE

CHRISTER STRÖMHOLM IS AWARDED THE HASSELBLAD FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY PRIZE FOR 1997

THE ERNA AND VICTOR HASSELBLAD FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY PRIZE FOR 1997 HAS BEEN AWARDED CHRISTER STRÖMHOLM, SWEDEN. THE PRIZE WILL BE PRESENTED TO CHRISTER STRÖMHOLM AT A CEREMONY IN GÖTEBORG, SWEDEN, ON MARCH 7 1998, COINCIDING WITH THE OPENING OF AN EXHIBITION OF HIS WORKS AT THE HASSELBLAD CENTER, ADJOINING THE GÖTEBORG MUSEUM OF ART.

THE FOUNDATION MOTIVATES ITS CHOICE OF PRIZE-WINNER AS FOLLOWS: "SINCE THE 1950S CHRISTER STRÖMHOLM HAS BEEN ONE OF THE LEADING PHOTOGRAPHERS IN SCANDINAVIA AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR AND HE WAS THE FIRST ONE TO ESTABLISH HIMSELF INTERNATIONALLY. HE JOINED THE GERMAN GROUP FOTOFORM EARLY IN THE FIFTIES AND DURING TIME SPENT IN PARIS AT THE CLOSE OF THE DECADE HE DEVELOPED A PHOTOGRAPHIC LANGUAGE ANALOGOUS TO EXISTENTIALISM. STRÖMHOLM'S PICTURES HAVE SINCE THAT TIME CONTRIBUTED STRONGLY TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF PHOTOGRAPHY AS AN INDEPENDENT ART FORM IN EUROPE. MOREOVER, IN HIS CAPACITY AS A LEADING INSTRUCTOR IN PHOTOGRAPHY HE HAS INFLUENCED SEVERAL GENERATIONS OF PHOTOGRAPHERS IN SCANDINAVIA."

CHRISTER STRÖMHOLM WAS BORN IN STOCKHOLM IN 1918. AT THE AGE OF SEVENTEEN HE STUDIED IN DRESDEN, WHERE HE ALSO BEGAN HIS ART STUDIES. HE BECAME A STUDENT OF PROFESSOR WALDEMAR WINKLER'S AT THE DRESDEN SCHOOL OF ART IN 1937. CHRISTER STRÖMHOLM'S INTEREST IN THE INTERNATIONAL MODERNIST ART FORM LED TO A SCHISM WITH HIS PROFESSOR AND RESULTED IN HIS LEAVING DRESDEN, MOVING TO PRAGUE AND LATER ON TO PARIS. THERE HE GOT IN TOUCH WITH THE ARTIST DICK BEER, WHO BECAME HIS TEACHER. TOGETHER THEY TRAVELLED IN THE SOUTH OF FRANCE - A TIME OF PEACE AND QUIET FOR CHRISTER STRÖMHOLM AND HIS WORK. UNDER BEER'S GUIDANCE STRÖMHOLM WAS INSTRUCTED IN ASPECTS SUCH AS ARTISTIC STYLES, ART HISTORY, OIL PAINTS, AND DIFFERENT GRAPHIC TECHNIQUES. AT THE OUTBREAK OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR CHRISTER STRÖMHOLM RETURNED TO SWEDEN AND BEGAN STUDIES AT THE OTTE SKÖLD SCHOOL OF PAINTING.

AGED TWENTY-ONE STRÖMHOLM ENROLLED AS A VOLUNTEER TO FIGHT IN THE FINNISH WINTER WAR AND CONTINUED AFTER THAT IN THE VOLUNTEER SWEDISH FORCE FIGHTING THE GERMANS IN NORWAY. BACK IN STOCKHOLM HE SERVED AS COURIER AND CONTACT PERSON FOR THE NORWEGIAN RESISTANCE MOVEMENT.

AFTER THE WAR CHRISTER STRÖMHOLM WENT TO PARIS AND ENROLLED AT THE ACADEMIE DES BEAUX ARTS. HIS INTEREST IN PHOTOGRAPHY AROSE WHEN HE FOUND A LARGE-FORMAT CAMERA AND APPRECIATED ITS POSSIBILITIES. HE ALSO CARRIED OUT PHOTOGRAPHIC COMMISSIONS, WHICH INCLUDED PORTRAYING LEADING FIGURES OF THE FRENCH CULTURAL SCENE, LIKE FERNAND LÉGER, LE CORBUSIER, AND MARCEL DUCHAMP.

IN THE EARLY FIFTIES CHRISTER STRÖMHOLM WAS ENGAGED IN THE "SUBJECTIVE PHOTOGRAPHY" PRACTISED BY THE FOTOFORM GROUP INFLUENCED BY THE GERMAN DR. OTTO STEINERT, ONLY TO LEAVE THE GROUP IN 1953 WHEN IT BECAME SOLELY INTERESTED IN FORM. STRÖMHOLM WAS LATER, WHEN TEACHING AT THE SCHOOL OF PHOTOGRAPHY IN STOCKHOLM, TO MAKE GOOD USE OF MANY EXPERIENCES FROM THIS PERIOD OF HIS LIFE.

TOWARDS THE END OF THE FIFTIES CHRISTER STRÖMHOLM CAME IN CONTACT WITH THE TRANSSEXUALS. HE STARTED TAKING PHOTOGRAPHS OF THEM IN BARS AND HOTEL ROOMS IN

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF PLACE BLANCHE IN PARIS. HE MADE GOOD FRIENDS WITH MANY OF THEM, A FACT RECALLED BY THE TITLE OF HIS BOOK, "VÄNNERNA FRÅN PLACE BLANCHE" ("FRIENDS FROM PLACE BLANCHE") WHICH WAS PUBLISHED IN 1983. HIS DOCUMENTATION OF THE TRANSSEXUALS' LIFESTYLE HAS BEEN MET BY RECOGNITION AND RESPECT. CHRISTER STRÖMHOLM WORKED WITH THIS PROJECT FOR SIX YEARS. DURING THIS PERIOD HE FORMULATED HIS VISION OF THE TECHNIQUE USED IN THE REPORTAGE AND FOREMOST, HIS VISION CONCERNING THE CONTENT AND FUNCTION OF THE PICTURES. HE ALSO FORMULATED HIS CONCEPTS "THE AVAILABLE LIGHT" AT THE MOMENT OF EXPOSURE AND "THE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY" OF THE CONTENT AND USE OF THE PICTURES.

THROUGH THE COLLABORATION AND FRIENDSHIP WITH PETER WEISS, CHRISTER STRÖMHOLM TOOK OVER AN EVENING COURSE RUN BY THE STOCKHOLM UNIVERSITY EXTRAMURAL BOARD. THE COURSE THAT WAS MEANT TO COVER THE DESIGN OF PHOTOGRAPHY AND FILM, WAS CONVERTED INTO A COMPLETE THREE YEAR TRAINING COURSE (FOTOSKOLAN) BY CHRISTER STRÖMHOLM AND TOR-IVAN ODULF IN 1962. STRÖMHOLM WAS PRINCIPAL OF THE SCHOOL, AND BY THE TIME HE LEFT IN 1974 HE HAD TRAINED A LARGE NUMBER OF THE NEXT GENERATION OF SCANDINAVIAN PHOTOGRAPHERS, SUCH AS GUNNAR SMOLIANSKY, WALTER HIRSCH, ANDERS PETERSEN, BJÖRN DAWIDSSON, AGNETA EKMAN, LASSE SVANBERG, BILLE AUGUST, AND ULLA LEMBERG.

SINCE THE SEVENTIES CHRISTER STRÖMHOLM HAS CONTINUED TO RE-EXAMINE THE VISUAL IDEAS FROM HIS FOTOFORM PERIOD. HE HAS HAD MORE THAN 150 INDIVIDUAL EXHIBITIONS OF HIS WORKS, AND HAS TAKEN PART IN A GREAT NUMBER OF COLLECTIVE EXHIBITIONS. HE HAS BEEN HONOURED BY A NUMBER OF ACCLAIMED EXHIBITIONS, INCLUDING CAMERA OBSCURA (1978 AND 1982) AND THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART (1986) IN STOCKHOLM, SHOWN AS WELL AT THE MUSEUM FOLKWANG IN GERMANY. HE HAS PUBLISHED NUMEROUS PHOTOGRAPHIC BOOKS, INCLUDING "TILL MINNET AV MIG SJÄLV" ("TO THE MEMORY OF MYSELF") (1965), "POSTE RESTANTE" (1967), "VÄNNERNA FRÅN PLACE BLANCHE" ("FRIENDS FROM PLACE BLANCHE") (1983), AND "KONSTEN ATT VARA DÄR" ("THE ART OF BEING THERE") (1991). HIS WORKS ARE COLLECTED IN INTERNATIONAL MUSEUMS SUCH AS THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK, MUSEUM FOLKWANG, GERMANY, AND KIYOSATO MUSEUM OF PHOTOGRAPHIC ARTS, JAPAN. IN 1993 HE WAS ACCORDED THE TITLE OF PROFESSOR BY THE SWEDISH DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE.

CHRISTER STRÖMHOLM'S PICTURE WORLD NARRATES ABOUT ARTISTS AND AUTHORS, PROSTITUTES AND TRANSSEXUALS, REJECTED AND IMPRISONED CHILDREN, ADULTS THAT HAVE BEEN EITHER EXPELLED FROM SOCIETY OR HAVE ELECTED TO DROP OUT VOLUNTARILY. THESE STORIES OFTEN APPEAR IN THE PICTURES OF DISCARDED THINGS, EVEN FROM THE FLEA MARKETS IN THE SURROUNDINGS OF PARIS. IN THE PICTURES OF THIS EXPRESSIVE GARBAGE FROM POOR NEIGHBOURHOODS, CHRISTER STRÖMHOLM SHOWS THAT HE IS CONFIDENT WITH THE TRADITION OF SURREALISM.

CHRISTER STRÖMHOLM'S WORK PROVES HIS COMMITMENT AND HIS FASCINATION OF THE CONTRASTS IN SOCIETY. HOWEVER, HIS MOST IMPORTANT MOTIVES ARE ABOUT THE HUMAN BEINGS IDENTITY CONFLICTS. CHRISTER STRÖMHOLM'S PHOTOGRAPHS ADDRESS THE OBSERVER'S EXPERIENCE, FANTASY AND MIND. HIS PICTURES OFTEN POSE MORE QUESTIONS THAN ANSWERS; THE VIEWER BECOMES A SHARER IN THE EXPERIENCE.

THE ERNA AND VICTOR HASSELBLAD FOUNDATION

THE ERNA AND VICTOR HASSELBLAD FOUNDATION WAS INSTITUTED BY ERNA AND VICTOR HASSELBLAD BY TESTAMENTARY DONATIONS. IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE STATUTES OF THE FOUNDATION, A PHOTOGRAPHY PRIZE AND THE ERNA AND VICTOR HASSELBLAD MEDAL ARE TO BE AWARDED, NORMALLY YEARLY, TO A PERSON WITH OUTSTANDING MERITS.

THE PURPOSE OF THE FOUNDATION IS TO PROMOTE SCIENTIFIC EDUCATION AND RESEARCH IN THE NATURAL SCIENCES AND PHOTOGRAPHY. A NUMBER OF PROJECTS ARE GRANTED FUNDS ANNUALLY TO A TOTAL OF APPROXIMATELY 12 MILLION SWEDISH CROWNS.

IN 1989 THE FOUNDATION OPENED THE ERNA AND VICTOR HASSELBLAD PHOTOGRAPHIC CENTER IN GÖTEBORG, SWEDEN. THE CENTER MAINTAINS A CONTINUOUS EXHIBITION AND LECTURE PROGRAM. IN JANUARY 1996 THE HASSELBLAD CENTER MOVED TO NEW PREMISES AT THE GÖTEBORG MUSEUM OF ART WHERE PERMANENT EXHIBITION SPACE IS AVAILABLE FOR THE CENTER'S PURPOSE. A PHOTOGRAPHIC SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND REFERENCE LIBRARY IS IN THE PROCESS OF BEING ESTABLISHED AND IS ALREADY OPEN TO RESEARCHERS AND STUDENTS.

GÖTEBORG SEPTEMBER 30, 1997

ERNA AND VICTOR HASSELBLAD FOUNDATION

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT GUNILLA KNAPE, HASSELBLAD CENTER.
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