



FONDATION
D'ENTREPRISE
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SFMOMA

PRESS RELEASE

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Immersion

A French-American Photography Commission
by the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès

Vasantha Yoganathan is the fifth laureate of **Immersion, a French-American Photography Commission** by the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès. This new edition of the Foundation's program dedicated to contemporary photography has been organized in partnership with the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) and the Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson in Paris.

Founded in 2014 in partnership with the Aperture Foundation, **Immersion, a French-American Photography Commission** by the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès is an annual program featuring residencies, exhibitions, and publications. On a yearly alternating basis, Immersion is open to either photographers based in France, who will be mentored by a French professional as they create a new photographic work in the United States, or to photographers based in the United States, who will be mentored by an anglophone professional as they create a new photographic work in France.

In 2018, the Foundation partnered for three editions with the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) and the Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson in Paris. Thanks to this partnership, the Immersion programme offers each laureate the chance to benefit from a solo exhibition at the end of their residency, hosted consecutively by these two prestigious institutions, along with an accompanying bilingual publication.



This year, the portfolios of eight candidates were presented by their respective mentors to a jury made up of professionals from the partner institutions. Following an initial selection round, four photographers each received a grant of €1,000 to develop a specific project to present to the jury.

The jury met in Paris on November 6th, 2019, during the Paris Photo event, to select this year's laureate on the strength of their project. The Fondation d'entreprise Hermès will attribute a €40,000 grant to the laureate for the development of their residency project and will also fund solo exhibitions at SFMOMA and the Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson, as well as the accompanying publication.

This fifth edition was overseen by **Agnès Sire**, the artistic director of the Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson. This year's laureate, **Vasanthan Yoganathan**, born in Grenoble, France, in 1985, will undertake his residency in the United States in 2020, prior to a solo exhibition at SFMOMA in 2021 and at the Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson in Paris in fall 2021. A bilingual publication featuring his work will be jointly published by the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès and a publisher to be chosen in consultation with the laureate and the partner institutions.

The past laureates of Immersion are, in chronological order: **Sylvain Couzinet-Jacques** (France) in 2016, **Alessandra Sanguinetti** (United States) in 2017, **Taysir Batniji** (France/Palestine) in 2018, and **Gregory Halpern** (United States) in 2019.

Immersion Calendar 2019-2021

Gregory Halpern (2018 laureate)

2019

Production in Guadeloupe

2020

June → **August** Exhibition at SFMOMA (San Francisco)

September → **October** Exhibition at the Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson (Paris)

Vasanthan Yoganathan (2019 laureate)

2020

Production in New Orleans (Louisiana, USA)

2021

Summer Exhibition at SFMOMA

Fall Exhibition at the Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson



Biographies

Vasantha Yoganathan (b. Grenoble, 1985)

Laureate of the fifth edition of **Immersion, a French-American Photography Commission** by the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès



Vasantha Yoganathan
Courtesy of the artist
© Cécile Poimboeuf-Koizumi

Since 2009, French photographer Vasantha Yoganathan has produced a critically acclaimed body of work and developed a singular photographic style that sensitively responds to the subject or site in question. He is deeply attached to film photography for its aesthetic qualities and the almost philosophical slowness of its processes. Following his first publication, *Piémanson*, the photobook became a central preoccupation in his work, an interest which in 2014 led him to cofound the publishing house Chose Commune. Yoganathan is the recipient of a number of awards including the Magnum Photos prize for international photography (2015), the Scam Prix Roger Pic (2015), the Prix Levallois (2016) and an ICP Infinity Award for “Emerging Photographer” (2017). In 2018 and 2019, he received the Camera Clara Award and the Photo-Text Award at the Rencontres d'Arles. He is represented by The Photographers' Gallery Print Sales (London, United Kingdom), Espace Jörg Brockmann (Geneva, Switzerland), Jhaveri Contemporary (Mumbai, India), and Polka Galerie (Paris, France).

Agnès Sire

Artistic Director of the Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson

With a background in philosophy, Agnès Sire turned towards aesthetics early in her career. After working at the Galerie Alexandre Iolas alongside Bénédicte Pesle, she spent the next twenty years at Magnum Photos, during which time she worked as the organization's artistic director as well as co-authoring numerous publications and curating group exhibitions. A particular focus during this period was Chilean photographer Sergio Larrain, to whose work she dedicated five exhibitions and publications. From 2002, she joined Martine Franck to organize the creation of the Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson in Paris. She would go on to become the foundation's director, as well as curating most of its exhibitions until 2018, when it moved to a new location and she passed the reins to François Hébel, staying on as artistic director. She has published and edited over fifty books on photography and curated just as many exhibitions over the course of her career.



The Fondation d'entreprise Hermès

The Fondation d'entreprise Hermès continues to develop nine major programmes that bring together artistic creation, skills, and transmission. **New Settings** and **Artists in the Community** focus on the performing arts, the Foundation's **Exhibitions** and **Artists' Residencies** address visual artists, **Immersion** is dedicated to photography, and **Manufacto, the Skills Factory** and the **Skills Academy** support the promotion and development of craft métiers. Through **H³** the Foundation supports organizations working towards similar ends across five continents. Finally, the Foundation's environmental engagement is embodied by its **Biodiversity & Ecosystems** program. The wealth of different initiatives undertaken by the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès are all animated by a single conviction: *our gestures define us*.

The Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson

The Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson was founded in 2003 in Montparnasse thanks to the generosity of photographers Henri Cartier-Bresson and Martine Franck, and their daughter, Mélanie Cartier-Bresson. A private foundation of recognised public interest, it is dedicated to the conservation, diffusion, exhibition, and continued exploration of the oeuvre of its founding photographers around the world. It features a center for research on Cartier-Bresson and Franck's archives, exhibition spaces open to other artists, and a public education centre. The Prix Henri Cartier-Bresson is awarded every two years – with the support of the Fondation d'entreprise Hermès – and enables the selected contemporary photographer to produce an ambitious new body of work, followed by a solo exhibition and a book.

SFMOMA

Founded in 1935 as the first West Coast museum devoted to modern and contemporary art, SFMOMA is dedicated to making the art for our time a vital and meaningful part of public life. A thoroughly transformed SFMOMA, with triple the gallery space, an enhanced education center and new free public galleries, opened to the public on May 14th, 2016. Since its inaugural year, the expanded museum has welcomed more than one million visitors annually.



Press Images

High-definition visuals available at:
www.fondationentreprisehermes.org/en/press-room
(password upon request)

Press Contacts

Fondation d'entreprise Hermès

Press contact

Philippe Boulet
+33 6 82 28 00 47
boulet@tgcdn.com

Hermès International

Sophie Seibel-Traonouil
International Press Service

Press contact

Caroline Schwartz-Mailhé
+33 1 40 17 48 23
cschwartz@hermes.com

Claire Lépine
+33 1 40 17 47 79
claire.lepine@hermes.com

Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson

Cécilia Enault
+33 1 40 61 50 60
cecilia.enault@henricartierbresson.org

SFMOMA

Jill Lynch
+1 415.357.4172
jilynch@sfmoma.org

Clara Hatcher Baruth
+1 415.357.4177
chatcher@sfmoma.org

www.fondationentreprisehermes.org/en

