

RITA LEISTNER

(b. 1964, Scarborough, Canada)

EDUCATION

1999-2000 International Center of Photography, New York
1988-1990 M.A. (Comparative Literature in French and English) University of Toronto
1983-1988 B.A. University of Toronto

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2022 *The Tree Planters*, Two Rivers Gallery, Prince George, BC, Canada
2018 *The Edward Curtis Project*, Instituto de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades, Puebla, Mexico
2017 *The Tree Planters*, Stephen Bulger Gallery, Toronto, Canada
2016 *Buscando a Marshall McLuhan en Afganistán: del teléfono inteligente al paladio*, Centro de Fotografía de Montevideo, Parque Rodó Uruguay
Levant Trilogy: Lebanon, Israel, Palestine, 2006 - 2015, Fotofestiwal Łódź, Poland
2015 *Looking for Marshall McLuhan in Afghanistan: From Smartphone to Palladium*, Photoville Photography Festival 2015, Brooklyn, NY, USA
Looking for Marshall McLuhan in Afghanistan: From Smartphone to Palladium, The Dylan Ellis Gallery, CONTACT Photography Festival Feature Exhibition, Toronto, Canada
Miklat, The Galleries of the Ben Gurion University of the Negev, Beer Sheva, Israel
2014 *Portraits-paysages de guerre: Liban*, Festival Allers-Retours, Musée Albert Kahn, Paris, France
Le Projet Edward Curtis, Le Musée du Nouveau Monde, La Rochelle, France
À la recherche de Marshall McLuhan en Afghanistan, Carré Amelot Ville de La Rochelle, France
2013 *The Edward Curtis Project*, The National Arts Centre of Canada, Ottawa, Canada
The Edward Curtis Project, Ecocentrix: Indigenous Arts, Sustainable Acts, presented by the European Research Council, The Bargehouse, London, England
2010 *The Edward Curtis Project*, North Vancouver Museum, Canada
2009 *The Last Lumberjacks*, Pierre Léon Gallery, Toronto, Canada
2007 *Portraitscapes of War (1): Lebanon, 2006*, The Photo Passage at Harbourfront, Toronto, Canada
2006 *The Women of al Rashad*, Gallery Gachet, World Mad Pride Festival, Vancouver, Canada

DIGITAL STORYTELLING

- 2017 *From Janet with Love* (“Legacies 150” Interactive). Produced by The National Film Board of Canada, photography by Rita Leistner, written by Helene Klodawsky. 2018 World Press Photo Digital Storytelling Award Nominee.

BOOKS

- 2021 Leistner, Rita, *Forest for the Trees: The Tree Planters*. Interview by Don McKellar. Manchester, UK: Dewi Lewis Publishing
2014 Leistner, Rita, *Looking for Marshall McLuhan in Afghanistan*. London: Intellect Books, 2014.

- 2010 Clements, Marie and Rita Leistner, *The Edward Curtis Project: A Modern Picture Story*. Vancouver: Talon Books, 2010.
- 2005 Abdul-Ahad, Ghaith, Kael Alford, Thorne Anderson and Rita Leistner, *Unembedded: Four Independent Photojournalists on the War in Iraq*. Vermont: Chelsea Green, 2005.

FILMOGRAPHY

- Forest for the Trees* (Feature Documentary Film) (2021) Run time: 91 minutes. Producer, Director, Director of Photography.
- Enchanted Forests Time-lapse Animation Video Works* (2019) 6 individual works. Durations vary depending on exhibition design, from 30 seconds to two minutes.
- One Tree at a Time* (2017) Video. Run Time 18 minutes
- The 21st Chromosome* (Documentary Short) (2014) Director of Photography.
- Miklat* (Documentary Short) (2013) Director, Producer and Cinematographer.

ESSAYS AND VISUAL FEATURES IN PERIODICALS AND BOOKS

- 2021 Leistner, Rita, "Levant Trilogy," *Exile: Engaging and Eclectic Words and Art*, No. 43.3 January 2021.
- 2019 Leistner, Rita, "Ils plantent jusqu'à 6000 arbres par jour," *Geo France*, mai, 2019.
Leistner, Rita, "The Tree Planters," (visual feature) in Hutton, Jane, Daniel Ibañez and Kiel Moe eds. *Wood Urbanism*. New York: Actar, 2018.
Leistner, Rita, "Heroes of the North: What Rita Leistner's photographs of tree planters tell us about Canada," *The Globe and Mail*, May 2018.
- 2018 Leistner, Rita, "Photography Goes to War," (essay) in Neumüller, Moritz, ed. *The Routledge Companion to Photography and Visual Culture*, London: Routledge, 2018.
Leistner, Rita, "The Tree Planters," (visual feature) in Hutton, Jane, Daniel Ibañez and Kiel Moe eds. *Wood Urbanism*. New York: Actar, 2018.
- 2014 Leistner, Rita, "Embedded with Murders," (essay + photos) in Stallabrass, Julian, ed. *Memories of Fire: Images of War and the War of Images*. London: Photoworks, 2013.
Leistner, Rita, "Television Wars, Review of Michael Maclear's *Guerrilla Nation: My Wars In and Out of Vietnam*," (essay) in the *Literary Review of Canada*, Spring 2014.
- 2012 Leistner, Rita, "Looking for Marshall McLuhan in Afghanistan," 12-part series (essay + photos), in the *Literary Review of Canada On-Line*, Winter 2012.
- 2007 Leistner, Rita and Timothy Dylan Wood, "Hanging the Past — Exploring the relationship between photography and state narratives at Cambodia's Tuol Sleng Museum of Genocidal Crime," (essay + photos) in *Idea&s — The Arts and Science Review*, University of Toronto
- 2006 Leistner, Rita, "The Women of Al Rashad," (text + photos) in *The Walrus*, Winner of Gold Medal, Words and Pictures category, Canadian National Magazine Awards.
- 2005 Leistner, Rita, "The Burning Tip of the Spear: Embedded with Crazy Horse in Iraq," (article + photos) Cover Feature in *The Walrus*, February 2004. Nominated for 6 Canadian National Magazine Awards including Portrait Photography, Investigative Journalism, Personal Journalism, and Photojournalism.

ESSAYS IN EXHIBITION CATALOGS

- 2016 Leistner, Rita, "La sensación en los ojos de Elsa Medina," in *Elsa Medina*, Mraz, John, ed., Instituto de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades, Puebla, Mexico.

- 2015 Leistner, Rita, "Miklat," in *Shelters*, The University of Beer Sheva, Israel, 2015.
- 2014 Leistner, Rita, "Portraits-paysages de guerre," in *Les âmes grises: récits photographiques d'après-guerre* (French). Festival allers-retours, Musée Albert Kahn, 2014.

REVIEWS, INTERVIEWS AND PROFILES

- 2024 "Rita Leistner and Don McKellar: Searching For Light in Dark Times," in conversation with Craig D'Arville, PhotoEd Magazine, Toronto, ON
- 2023 "Desire and Seduction with the Impossibility of Connection," Khosla, Sabeena, *Cultbytes*
- "Spatenstitch Für Neues Leben," Zollner, Manfred, *Fotomagazine*, Summer Issue
- 2021 "Infinite distance: Rita Leistner and Don McKellar's night journeys in locked-down Toronto", by Rita Leistner and Don McKellar, *The Globe and Mail*, October 2021
- "Photography is Where I Live," Rita Leistner in *Exile: Engaging and Eclectic Words and Art*, No. 43.3 January 2021.
- 2018 "Where We Are Now: Stories from an Accelerated Culture: A Conversation with Rita Leistner," by Bill Kouwenhoven, *Afterimage*, January 2018
- 2017 "An Acclaimed War Photographer Turns Her Lens on Canada's Tree Planters," VICE Canada, October 2017
- "Seven amazing portraits of tree planters working in Canada's remote backcountry," by Jessica Bloom, Toronto Life, October 2017
- "Everyone Cries in the Cut Block," by Kerry Manders, DROOL, October 2017
- "Restaging Indigenous-Settler Relations: Intercultural Theatre as redress rehearsal in Marie Clements' and Rita Leistner's *The Edward Curtis Project*," by Brenda Vellino, *Theatre Research in Canada*, 38.1.
- "Rita Leistner's *Looking for Marshall McLuhan in Afghanistan*," *Kultura Wspolczesna* (Contemporary Culture) journal (Poland), by Kalina Kukiłko-Rogozińska
- 2016 *One Picture at a Time* (Documentary Short Film, 8 min) about the making of *Looking for Marshall McLuhan in Afghanistan*, Directed by Sarah Martin.
- 2015 "Rita Leistner's Quest for Marshall McLuhan," *ARTORONTO*
- 2014 "Rita Leistner and Smartphone Photography," *Chinese Photography*
- "Confessions of a Digital Naïve," *Media and Culture Reviews*, by Jill Don
- "A New War a New Medium," *Source: The Photographic Review*, by David Bate, London
- 2013 "Rita Leistner," Interview with and photographs by Rita Leistner in Kamber, Michael, ed. *The Untold Stories from Iraq: Photojournalists on War*. Austin: University of Texas Press
- 2012 "ReFramed: In Conversation with Rita Leistner, *The Edward Curtis Project*," by Barbara Davidson, in *The Los Angeles Times*, July 18, 2012
- 2011 "The Frozen Bodies of Edward S. Curtis," *The Literary Review of Canada*, by Wanda Nanabush, April 2011
- "Photography and Activism," *Canadian Art*, Web Features video, Fall 2011
- 2010 "Look Closely: Award-winning photojournalist Rita Leistner shines a light on North American native communities," by Jason McBride, in *U of T Magazine*, Winter 2010
- 2009 "Shadows and Light—The piercing perspectives of photojournalist Rita Leistner," by Chantal Braganza, in *The Ryerson Review of Journalism*, Summer 2009

OTHER PUBLICATIONS (PHOTOJOURNALISM, TEXT BY OTHER WRITERS)

Rolling Stone, Vanity Fair, The Walrus, GEO France, Libération, Time, Newsweek, The Los Angeles Times, The Australian Journal of Photojournalism, The Globe and Mail, Maclean's, The Washington Post, The Boston Globe, The Cambodia Daily, The Phnom Penh Post, Up Here (the magazine of

Canada's arctic), *Mother Jones*, *ZUM: Revista de Fotografia* (Brazil), *Colors*, *Chinese Photography Magazine*, and many more.

TEACHING

2010 – 2016 The University of Toronto. As a Sessional Instructor, created original course, "The Art and Purpose of Photojournalism and Documentary Photography"

PUBLIC LECTURES AND PANELS

- 2018 "Le monde des arbres," In conversation with Booker Prize shortlisted author of *The Overstory*, Richard Powers, Festival America, Paris (Vincennes), France (Sept)
"Visions de l'Amérique," Festival America, Paris (Vincennes), France (Sept)
- 2017 "From the Field to the Gallery Wall," Phase One Stand Out Photo Forum, Toronto
"From the Battlefield to the Cut Block," The University of Toronto
"The Art and Science behind The Tree Planters exhibition," Stephen Bulger Gallery
- 2016 Centro de Fotografía de Montevideo, Uruguay
Roberto Mata Taller de Fotografía, Caracas, Venezuela
Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico D.F.
- 2015 Photoville Festival, Brooklyn, NY, USA
Scotiabank CONTACT Photography Festival, Toronto, ON
The School of Visual Arts, New York, NY
The Bronx Documentary Center, New York
Ryerson University, Converge Lecture Series, Toronto, ON
- 2014 The International Centre of Photography, book launch, New York, NY
The Northrop Frye Centre, The University of Toronto, book launch, Toronto, ON
Spur Festival of Arts and Letters, "Art & War," Toronto, ON
L'université de La Rochelle, France
The Agenda with Steve Paikin, "War through the Lens"
- 2013 The Agenda with Steve Paikin, "A Picture's Worth"
Keynote Speaker, Canadian Conference of College Photography Educators, Charlottetown, PEI
"Iraq War—Ten Years Later," Public Radio International Lecture Series, (with Sebastian Junger, Bob Woodruff and U.S. Army Col. Ross Coffman), Boston, MA.

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Imago Mundi Luciano Benetton Collection, Italy
The Canadian War Museum, Ottawa, Canada
The Comanche National Museum, Oklahoma, USA
The George Eastman House International Museum of Photography, Rochester, USA
The Image Centre, Toronto Metropolitan University, Toronto, ON
Le Musée du Nouveau Monde, La Rochelle, France
The National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Canada
The North Vancouver Museum, North Vancouver, Canada
The Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Canada

GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS, AWARDS

2023 Finalist, Kuala Lumpur International Photographic Portrait Prize; 2019 Nominated, Chosen for Catalogue, The Prix Pictet, HOPE, “The Tree Planters”, 2018 World Press Photo Digital Storytelling Award Nominee, Finalist for the 2017 Robert Gardner Photography Fellowship at Harvard University; Finalist for three Media Ecology Association Awards for *Looking for Marshall McLuhan in Afghanistan* (2015); Winner of three Canadian National Magazine Awards Gold Medals; Shortlisted for Carter Centre Fellowship for Mental Health Journalism (2007); Shortlisted for Massey Journalism Fellowship (2012); Nominated for an International Women's Media Foundation Courage in Journalism Award (2005); Awarded Canada Council for the Arts Project Grant (2010); Awarded Arts Partners in Creative Development Grant (2007); Awarded Ben and Jerry's Foundation Grant for *Unembedded: Four Independent Photojournalists on the War in Iraq* (2005).

LANGUAGES

English: Mother tongue

French: Full proficiency

Spanish: Working proficiency