



EMERGING PHOTOGRAPHER

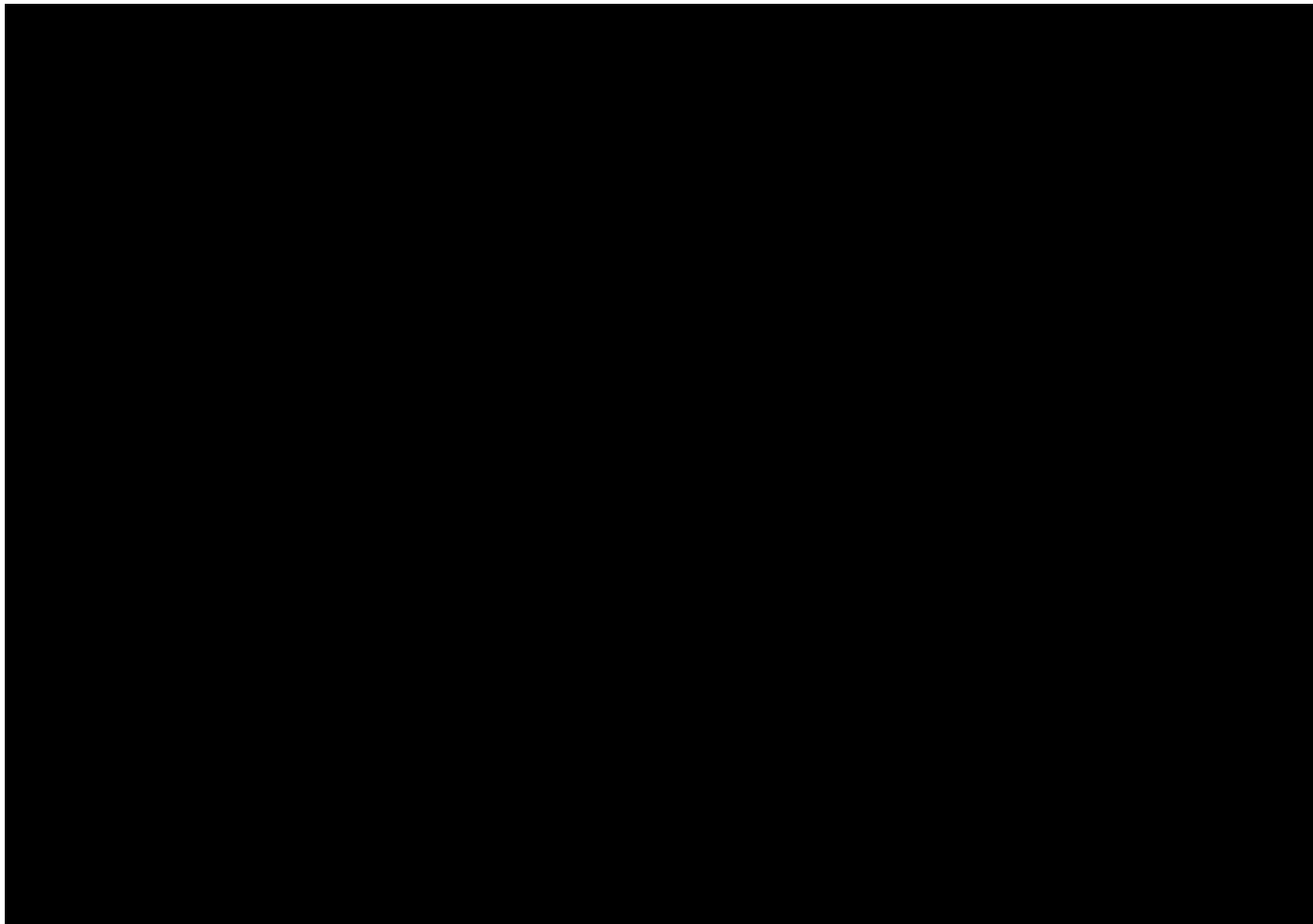
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AWARDS & COMPETITIONS

ROMAIN MADER WINS 2017 FOAM PAUL HUF AWARD OF \$21K

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By Conor Risch





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 Comments



“Demande en mariage (Mariage proposal),”
from the series Ekaterina, 2012 © Romain
Mader / ECAL

Swiss photographer Romain Mader has won the 2017 Foam Paul Huf Award recognizing young photographic talent, the Foam Fotografiemuseum Amsterdam announced last week. Mader won the award, which includes a 20,000 Euro (approx. \$21,603 US) cash prize and a solo exhibition at Foam, for his series “Ekaterina,” a fictional account of the photographer seeking a bride in an imaginary Ukrainian town.

“Romain Mader’s “Ekatarina” is notable for the humor and irony with which he addresses serious issues: solitude, love, exploitation and the female body,” said the jury in a statement about the project. “We strongly believe that he is an artist of remarkable sensibility and subtlety, and that he is destined to be a notable voice in contemporary photography.”

Not everyone agrees. Mader’s award has met with protest. A petition initially signed by 35 artists, writers, curators, students and critics, most of them from Eastern Europe, calls for the jury to reconsider the award, arguing that Mader’s series uses “senseless humor and disrespectful naivety as its main artistic tool which appears only to reproduce and spread offensive stereotypes, and, as a matter of fact, to promote sex tourism, sexism, and misogyny.”

According to Foam, the jury chose Mader from a pool of 100 nominated photographers from 25 different countries. The jurors were Lucy Conticello, director of photography, *M, Le Magazine du Monde*; Gregory Barker, publisher, STANLEY/BARKER; Teju Cole, writer, photographer and photo critic, *The New York Times Magazine*; Shi Hantao, research director, Shanghai Project; and Maddalena Scarzella, gallery manager, Galleria Carla Sozzani.

This is the 11th year Foam has given the award, named for Dutch photographer Paul Huf (1924–2002), who had a hand in establishing Foam Fotografiemuseum Amsterdam in 2001. Previous winners include Raphaël Dallaporta, Daniel Gordon, Alexander Gronsky, Leonie Hampton, Pieter Hugo, Momo Okabe, Alex Prager, Taryn Simon, Mikhael Subotzky, Daisuke Yakota, and the duo Taiyo Onorato & Nico Krebs.

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