



CIVILIZATION – PRESS RELEASE

Civilization: The Way We Live Now is a large-scale international photography exhibition featuring the work of more than 135 photographers from Asia, Australia, Europe, Africa and the Americas. Some 350 original prints are exhibited, some displayed as stand-alone works, others displayed as series.

Today, few major photography exhibitions in the world attempt a view of our world as wide-ranging as *Civilization: The Way We Live Now*, on view from October 18, 2018 through Feb 17, 2019. Not since Edward Steichen's *The Family of Man* more than 60 years ago has a single exhibition tackled such a broad spectrum of human activity: habitation, transport, society, culture, art, science and technology; order and disorder.... these are only some of the vital themes dealt with in different and original ways in *Civilization*.

Civilization has been produced by the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul, and the Foundation for the Exhibition of Photography., Minneapolis and Lausanne. After its showing at the NMMCA in Seoul it will travel on to China, Australia, Europe and the Americas. Among the first venues are the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia; Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, China; and the National Museum of Civilization, Marseille, France.

Civilization, the book, is published in English by Thames & Hudson/FEP Editions, and in Korean by Youlhwadang.

The concept in detail

Civilization: the Way We Live Now focuses generally on our emerging planetary-wide civilization, as it has taken shape over the past 25 years, and focuses more specifically on *collective* behavior and achievement, so often disguised in our time by the celebration of individuality. *Civilization* neither denies individualism, nor the reality of distinct cultures, rich in their own right and which may even oppose homogenizing global forces. However, our focus remains on what is shared collectively by large numbers of people, either directly as participants, or indirectly as consumers or observers.

This emerging planetary civilization has made use of and absorbed the discoveries and inventions of many previous civilizations, while adding a profusion of its own. Our burgeoning sciences and new technologies have given us the capacity to extend human life (and destroy countless other forms), engineer new life forms (and create huge risks, even to the destruction of our own species). It has the capacity to create utopias and dystopias—even, paradoxically, doing so simultaneously. It is now projecting itself into deep space with the idea of eventually finding another home, which it may indeed need to do for survival.

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A Portrait through Photography

Photography may also be seen in the light of a collective civilizational endeavor. Together, photographers are creating a multifaceted portrait of our time. They are busy everywhere on the surface of the globe, in every country and in every city, observing, recording, interpreting—not to mention fixing for posterity—*the way we live now*: where we live and how we live; how we work and how we play; how we move our bodies, our goods, and our ideas; how we collaborate and how we compete; how we make love and how we make war. We find photographers at work in banks, chambers of government, prisons, schools, and places of work of every description, each capturing some thread which goes to weave the rich texture of our civilization. The exhibition can therefore be seen as a show about civilization—or about photography—and ideally through these two lenses simultaneously.

The curators of the exhibition have worked closely with the photographers to determine which of their works fit best the concept of the exhibition. In addition to the many renowned photographers included in *Civilization* are younger talents at early stages of their careers. In addition to their work, many of the photographers also contributed valuable Artist Statements.

Structure of the exhibition

The exhibition is conceived as a journey through key aspects of civilization, via eight parts: HIVE, which features photographs having to do with the places we live; ALONETOGETHER which looks at social relationships; FLOW, which take as its subject the movement of peoples, good and ideas; PERSUASION, which looks at the mechanisms which we use to persuade others; CONTROL, which has to do with authority and power; RUPTURE, which looks at societal breakdown and conflict; ESCAPE, which shows people at leisure; and NEXT, which looks at the new world taking shape in the 21st Century.

The curators of *Civilization*

The curators are William A. Ewing, Holly Roussel and Bartomeu Marí. They were aided in their work by Assistant Curator Juliette Hug, and supported by her colleagues on the FEP team: Laura Gomez-Schaer, and Cynthia Gonzalez-Bréart and MMCA team: Seungwan Kang, Soojung Kang, Sunkang Chang, Suhyun Bae, Jungmin Lee, Song Sujong.