

Through a Mother's and Father's Eyes

International Photography Festival

Photography as a way of building connections between people, places and generations.

Anna Ajtner — Founder & Festival Director



It All Started With My Mother

This festival was not born from a business plan or a marketing strategy. It was born from **longing**.

When my daughter Sandra was little, my mother lived abroad and could not witness her everyday childhood. I began photographing our life and sending images to my family — at first as a simple visual diary of walks, games and ordinary moments. Over time, photography became much more than documentation.

It became a way of **maintaining family bonds**, telling stories and staying together despite distance. What began as a private act of love slowly grew into something larger — a shared language that transcended miles and silences.



Jania Góra

A Small Village in Poland

I was raising my daughter alone in a small village surrounded by forests, fields and changing seasons. Together we walked, searched for light, discovered hidden places and photographed the quiet rhythms of everyday life.

Photography became part of our relationship — not a tool, but a thread woven into our days. It was here, in the stillness of this place, that my long-term project **Portrait of My Daughter** began.



Photography Created a Community

The photographs I shared online began attracting other mothers documenting the lives of their children. We were connected not only through photography but through the shared experience of parenthood — the tenderness, the exhaustion, the fleeting beauty of ordinary days.



Cross-Cultural Sharing

Mothers from different countries sharing their lives through photography, building bridges across language and cultural barriers.



Universal Stories

Visual stories that transcended borders — images of childhood that anyone, anywhere, could recognize and feel.



A Network Built on Trust

A growing international network grounded in empathy, friendship and a shared belief in the power of personal photography.



The First Exhibition

I invited women photographers whom I knew only through the internet. The first exhibition took place in the **Teutonic Castle in Świecie, Poland** — a historic setting that gave weight to the intimate stories on display.

Something extraordinary happened. Children who had only known each other through photographs finally met in person. Their mothers met as artists, friends and storytellers. There was no competition. There was **community**.

📄 This was the moment a private act of sharing became a living, breathing festival.

From Mothers to Parents

At first, the festival was dedicated exclusively to mothers. Then fathers started asking:

"Why can't we participate too?"

Their involvement was sincere, passionate and deeply inspiring. The festival naturally evolved — because fatherhood, too, is a story worth telling.

The Festival Today

A festival dedicated to **parents documenting childhood, memory, family and human relationships** through photography — seen through both a mother's and a father's eyes.

My Artistic Journey

Alongside the development of the festival, my own artistic practice continued to grow — earning recognition at international exhibitions, art fairs and photography competitions across Europe.

Silver Medal

Lens op de Mens, Belgium — international recognition for long-term documentary photography.

Solo Exhibition

Galerie Vevais, Berlin — presenting the *Portrait of My Daughter* project to European audiences.

Paris Photo & Fotofever

Exhibited at two of the world's most prestigious photography fairs in Paris.

Grand Prix

1st Photography Biennale of Bydgoszcz — awarded the top prize at a major Polish photography event.

From a Local Exhibition to an International Festival

What started as a small, intimate gathering of women photographers gradually became a cross-border photography platform — carried from castle halls to museum galleries, from Poland to Western Europe.



An International Community

The festival brought together photographers from across the world — each documenting their own families, their own childhoods, their own versions of love and time. What matters most is not the number of countries involved. It is **the relationships that have lasted for more than a decade.**

 Poland

 Netherlands

 Belgium

 Lithuania

 Czech Republic

 Slovakia

 Spain

 United Kingdom

What Makes This Festival Different?

We do not present ideal families. We do not create advertising images of parenthood. We present **life as it is** — tender, messy, fleeting and real.

This is not a festival about perfect moments. It is a festival about *human* moments — the ones we are afraid to forget.

→ Family relationships

→ Childhood memories

→ Love and loss


→ Growing up

→ Intergenerational bonds

The Pandemic and a New Beginning

The pandemic paused many cultural activities around the world. At the same time, my family faced a series of profound personal losses — my son's illness, the death of my father, and the death of my mother. The festival slowed down. Life took precedence over art.

Today it returns — not as a competition, not as a single event, but as an **international platform for collaboration, exhibition exchange and cultural dialogue**. Renewed, and more intentional than ever.



GH MOTHER'S AND FATHER'S
O T O G R A P
NATIONAL FESTIVA

Our Mission Today

Photography that speaks about what is most human.

Family & Childhood

Documenting the fleeting years of childhood and the bonds that shape who we become.

Memory & Time

Photography as an act of preservation — holding onto moments before they dissolve into forgetting.

Intergenerational Stories

The relationships between parents and children, grandparents and grandchildren — stories that span generations.

Personal & Autobiographical

Work that comes from the inside — intimate, vulnerable, and universally resonant.

Because every culture has families. Every family has memories. And photography helps preserve them.

Available Exhibitions

Three exhibitions are currently available for international touring and collaborative programming — each exploring a different facet of family, memory and presence.



Relics of Presence

An exhibition about memory, absence and the physical traces that families leave behind — objects, shadows, and the spaces between.



Halftones of Time — Portrait of My Daughter

A long-term project documenting my daughter's journey from early childhood into adulthood — one of the most personal and acclaimed works of the festival.



Marta Kowalewicz „Tajemniczy Ogród”

Through a Mother's & Father's Eyes Archive

A collective exhibition featuring photographers from across different countries, each offering their own intimate vision of family life.

We Are Looking for Partners

We are interested in long-term collaboration based on **shared values and mutual exchange** — not one-off transactions, but lasting relationships between cultural institutions, galleries and creative communities.



Exhibition Exchange

Touring exhibitions traveling between venues internationally.



Joint Open Calls

Co-curated calls for submissions reaching photographers worldwide.



Artist Residencies

Providing space and time for photographers to create new work within host communities.



Education & Workshops

Photography programs, publications and catalogues connecting institutions with audiences.



Thierry Vermeire - Niebula



THROUGH MOTHER'S AND FATHER'S EYES
P O T O G R A F I A
INTERNATIONAL 101 FESTIVAL 2021
BYDGOSZCZ, POLAND
II MIĘDZYNARODOWY FESTIWAL FOTOGRAFICZNY 2021
SCHMIK & NISZKI

Tytuł tej wystawy pochodzi od nazwy międzynarodowej grup fotograficznych „Fotografie oczami matki” i „Ja”
które utworzyły się, aby wspierać twórczość fotografujących rodziców, dla których behawerem są to
idea publicznej prezentacji fotografii, które głównie zamknięte były w albumach rodziców, waga była twórczością samej
Okazało się, że fotografujących mam, a potem też ojców jest bardzo dużo i że fotografia jest specyficzną i inki
emocji i intymnością, jakie tworzący rodzicostwa i dzieciństwo.
Grupa powstała w 2013 roku i wzięła się za siebie. Powstała idea prezentacji prac na wystawie, która podbiła
Zachęciła i karłowatą wystawę była Anna Aljor, fotografa i szwajcerożka, która również odwiedziła
Od początku grupa była reprezentowana wyłącznie przez fotografującą matki, które rejestrują i interpretują dzieciństwo s
Autorzy są często zdobywcami prestiżowych nagród fotograficznych.
Na grupie „Fotografie oczami matki” jest ponad 4000 aktywnych fotografów z całego świata
Codziennie mogą tam zamieszczać swoje zdjęcia, które najlepiej otrzymują publikację i wyróżnienia członkowie
Odbity się już dwie edycje naszego Festiwalu. Poprzednio były to były wystawy fotograficzne uczestników naszych grup fotograficznych
konkurs przybiera formę międzynarodowego festiwalu i jest to już 3 edycja. W poprzednich edycjach prace wybrał
Alicja Laboń - wybitny fotograf - ojciec rejestrujący swoje dziecko.
Pauline Duzeman, która wywodzi się i zapoczątkowała ze swojej publikacji wicem w naszej grupie, a she
- również było w jury naszego festiwalu w poprzednich edycjach. Autorzy to głównie fotograficy
nadsyłają do nas swoje portfolio i z tych prac staraliśmy się wybrać najlepsze, najczęściej fotograf
Poprzednie edycje miały miejsce w Amsterdamie w Holandii, ale wczoraj odbywały się również w
Wystawa za każdym razem trafia ze swoją ekspozycją w różne miejsce - była już prezentowana między innymi w Warszawie
Wybrani autorzy mieli również szansę prezentacji swoich prac np. w Paryżu na Fotofest - ręk autorów była np. Beata Klich
W tym roku nadszły ponad 600 prac i postanowiliśmy nasz konkurs i wystawę przeprowadzić w Polsce, w Bydgoszczy
Wystawa będzie prezentowana od 26 maja do 9 czerwca w przestrzeni Pałacu Kazimierza Wielkiego, Hall 10
Kuratorium i Humorem wystawy jest Justyna Julga, a projekt zrealizowany został w ramach 100 dni w Warszawie
przez Prezydenta Bydgoszczy i Urzędy Miejskie Bydgoszczy. Pełnieniem jest Muzeum Fotografii w Bydgoszczy i konkurs
który również reprezentuje Bydgoszcz i jej jery
Międzynarodowe jury reprezentuje dołą: Nadia Stone - laureatka pierwszej nagrody II edycji naszego
Miłow Kistemeijer-Dicks - nieznanowie wreszcie i publikuje w swojej pracy fotografika z twój i
realizująca między innymi projekty dla Vogue Italia, Beata Klichowska - prezenterka portfolio z ułobek swoich
w Paryżu na Fotofest, Marek Nowiewicz - kurator Muzeum Fotografii w Bydgoszczy, Willemo Koury - również in
Justyna Julga - artystka, malarka, fotografika, laureatka licznych wyróżnień i nagród min. nagrody Prezydenta
chyba najlepiej znaną artystyczną atmosferą Bydgoszczy i szwajcerożka Anna Aljor - artystka, fotografika i o
oraz inicjatorką międzynarodowego konkursu i wystawy
Razem wybraliśmy najlepsze wg nas prace, które są przeglądem możliwości prezentacji tego tematu - od fotografii do
Autorzy:
Alicja Laboń, Marta Góndek, Pauline Klopot, Anna Wólczyńska, Kate Proszowska, Marta Paluch, Marta
Thierry Vermeire, Anna Wólczyńska, Beata Klichowska, Katarzyna Kępczyńska, Aleksandra Kus-Dick,
Aneta Sadowska, Ewa Burns, Aleksandra Pączka, Marzanna Frątczyk, Justyna Julga, Agnieszka Szwedowska
Z tych prac jury wytypowała zwyciężczynie
I MIEJSCIE - Praca autorki Pauline Klopot - „Biała - Macierzyństwo”.
II MIEJSCIE - to fotografia autorki Thierry Vermeire - Belgij - „Maboul”.
III MIEJSCIE - Marta Kowalczyk i jej „Szumny Ojciec”.



Why Do We Do This?

Because photography preserves what inevitably disappears.

Children grow up.

Faster than we expect. Faster than we are ready for.

Parents grow old.

And one day, they are no longer there to remember alongside us.

Memories fade.

But a photograph holds a moment still – just long enough to pass it on.

Photography allows us to stay together a little longer.

Invitation to Collaborate

If you are a curator, festival director, gallery manager or cultural organizer with an interest in **family, memory and autobiographical photography** — we would love to meet you.

The best projects are created through relationships — through conversations over coffee, shared visions and the willingness to take a chance on something real. That is why we are here in **Barcelona**.

The best stories are never told alone. Let's tell them together.

Let's Connect at IPFA Barcelona 2026

We are open to meetings, conversations and new collaborations. Bring your ideas — we'll bring ours.

Anna Ajtner

Founder & Festival Director

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Discover the Festival

Explore the full story of the festival — its history, exhibitions, participating artists and future collaborations — through our online presence.

Festival Website

Discover the festival's history, international exhibitions, participating artists, archive and publications.

www.ajtner.com/about-2-1

Festival Video

Watch exhibitions, community events, international participants and behind-the-scenes moments from the festival's journey.

facebook.com/share/v/1JLfMA56c2/

Thank You

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Looking for Partners in:

- Exhibition exchange
- Joint open calls
- Artist residencies
- Educational programs
- Family & memory based projects

Let's talk during IPFA Barcelona 2026.



Thierry Vermeire „Nebula”

