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Press Release

For Immediate Release

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Announcing Josef Koudelka: Diaries

A rare glimpse into the mind and artistic process of one of the world's greatest photographers

New York, April 14, 2026—Over the course of fifty-plus years, Josef Koudelka (born in Moravia, Czech Republic, 1938) has kept sixty-nine journals. Distilled now into one richly illustrated volume, *Josef Koudelka: Diaries* offers a look inside the mind of the iconoclastic Czech photographer renowned for his life in exile and a career that has included legendary projects on the Roma, the 1968 Soviet-led invasion of Prague, and the devastating impact humans have had on the landscape.

Facsimile pages from the diaries, along with images by the photographer, including self portraits, lend the volume an immediacy and authenticity. As curator Tomáš Pospech writes, “Koudelka’s diaries are a ‘cookbook’ of classic photography. He associated with the most renowned photographers. His notes sum up his rich experience, including work created with the now vanishing technology of analog black and white photography. His remarks, quips, and stories reappear, just as he repeatedly made resolutions, affirmed the rules he had adopted, and recalled earlier events and dreams.” Revealed throughout the book are Koudelka’s thoughts on photographers, such as Henri Cartier-Bresson, and editors, curators, and friends, including Robert Delpire and Anna Fárová, along with notes on some of his most widely circulated images.

Josef Koudelka: Diaries is developed in collaboration with the Josef Koudelka Foundation. The publication has been supported by the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic. Aperture also wishes to thank Elizabeth and Mark Levine for their contribution to this project. *Josef Koudelka: Diaries* is published by Aperture and available at aperture.org.

Josef Koudelka (born in Moravia, Czechoslovakia, 1938; naturalized French, 1987) began his career as an aeronautical engineer before turning fulltime to photography in the late 1960s. In 1968 he photographed the Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia. In 1969, he was anonymously awarded the Overseas Press Club’s Robert Capa Gold Medal for the photographs that were published with the initials P.P. (Prague photographer). Koudelka left Czechoslovakia seeking political asylum, in 1970, and shortly thereafter joined Magnum Photos. His awards include the Prix Nadar, Grand Prix National de la Photographie, HCB Award, Hasselblad Foundation International Award in Photography, Medal of Merit from the Czech Republic, and being named Commandeur de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French Ministry of Culture. Significant exhibitions of his work have been held at the Museum of Modern Art and International Center of Photography, New York; Hayward Gallery, London; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; and Palais de Tokyo, Paris. Koudelka’s books include *Gypsies* (1975), *Exiles* (1988), *Black Triangle* (1994), *Chaos* (1999), *Invasion 68: Prague* (2008), *Wall* (2013), *Ruins* (2020), and *Next* (by Melissa Harris, 2023). He is based in Paris and Prague.

Tomáš Pospěch (selection and postscript) is curator of photography at the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague where he oversees the Josef Koudelka Collection. Since 1997 he has taught at the Institute of Creative Photography, Silesian University, Opava. He is the author of more than sixty books, including *Fotografie 1938–2000 v recenzích, textech, dokumentech* (Czech photography, 1938–2000, in reviews, articles, and documents, 2010). He has written about Koudelka's work for publications such as *Returning* (2017), *Theatre* (2020), *Deníky* (2021), and *Ruins* (2024). He has organized numerous exhibitions, including *Czech Documentary Photography* (with Vladimír Birgus, 2009), *Photographs of Czech Society* (2009), and *Ruins* (2024).

Derek Paton (translator) was born in Canada. He holds a BA in international relations from the University of Toronto and an MA in East European area studies from the University of London. He first visited Czechoslovakia in 1985, returning in 1989 as a fellow of the Institute of Current World Affairs, Washington, DC, with the good fortune to witness the Velvet Revolution, and since that time has served as a translator from Czech to English.

Marzia Paton (née Ferrari) (translator) was born in Prague to a Russian mother and an Italian father. She holds an MA in Russian studies and education from Charles University, Prague. Much of her translation work has been from Russian to Czech and Czech to Russian, but also Italian, and Czech to English. Among works on art, architecture, and music, most of the Patons' translations relate to photography, including the Fototorst and Josef Sudek series for Torst as well as annual catalogs of the Institute of Creative Photography at Silesian University and works for the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague; Prague Spring Festival; National Gallery of Canada; Art Gallery of Ontario; and Leica Gallery Prague. The Patons have provided translations for *Josef Koudelka* (2002), *Invasion 68: Prague* (2008), *Returning* (2018), *Koudelka: Theatre* (2021), *Josef Koudelka: Next* (2023), and *Ruins* (2024).

Aleš Najbrt (designer) studied typography and book design with Jan Solpera at the Academy of Arts, Architecture, and Design, Prague. He was an art director of the influential Czech weekly *Reflex* and founder of his own magazine, *Raut*. With Pavel Lev, he cofounded Studio Najbrt. For his film and theater posters, books, and other works, he received the Grand Prix at the 17th Biennial of Graphic Design in Brno in 1996, a Bronze Prize from the Tokyo Type Directors Club, five Czech Lion Awards, and the Czech Grand Design 2007 award. He designed *Josef Koudelka: Next*, a visual biography by Melissa Harris (2023), *Invasion 68: Prague* (2008), *Theatre* (2022), *Returning* (2018), *Deníky* (2021), the Czech edition of Diaries and several others.

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Melissa Harris (editor) is editor at large of Aperture. She served as editor in chief of *Aperture* magazine from 2000 to 2012, edited dozens of Aperture books, and authored *A Wild Life: A Visual Biography of Photographer Michael Nichols* (2017) and *Josef Koudelka: Next* (2023). Harris teaches at New York University's Photography and Imaging Department at Tisch, and occasionally at Yale University, and is a trustee of the John Cage Trust. She has curated photography exhibitions throughout the United States and Europe at venues that include Visa Pour l'Image, Perpignan, France; Philadelphia Museum of Art and Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia; Villa Pignatelli, Naples; Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice; and Milano Triennale.

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Aperture is a nonprofit publisher that leads conversations around photography worldwide. From its base in New York, Aperture connects global audiences and supports artists through its acclaimed quarterly magazine, books, exhibitions, digital platforms, public programs, limited-edition prints, and awards. Established in 1952 to advance “creative thinking, significantly expressed in words and photographs,” Aperture champions photography’s vital role in nurturing curiosity and encouraging a more just, tolerant society.

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