



The world's leading imaging show is now history

Thank you, photokina!

Thomas Blömer, Publisher

It had a certain symbolic meaning that Koelnmesse announced its decision to "suspend the implementation of photokina in Cologne for the time being" on a "Black Friday" – marking the end of an era of seven decades during which this unique world fair has given our photo and imaging industry the most important impulses and inspiration.

Even though the end of photokina was announced in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, the trade show did not die of the corona virus, but of various previous illnesses. "Unfortunately, at present the framework conditions in the industry do not provide a viable basis for the leading international trade fair for photography, video and imaging," said Koelnmesse's CEO, Gerald Böse, mercilessly. Kai Hillebrandt, the Chairman of the German Photo Industry Association (PIV), put it somewhat more mildly when he even complimented Koelnmesse on its efforts to safeguard photokina: "Our partners in Cologne have done everything in their power to maintain photokina as the leading global trade fair. Nonetheless, an event held in 2022 could not have met the expectations of the entire

imaging community that those efforts were intended to serve. That is why we, on behalf of our association, are joining them in taking this regrettably unavoidable step. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the team in Cologne for a tremendous 70 years together!"

Since 1950, photokina has always been the result of a trustful partnership between the Photo Industry Association and Koelnmesse. In the last six years, the organizers have tried hard to compensate for the foreseeable shrinkage of the consumer market for photo and imaging products by opening up other market segments with new concepts. We have reported about this frequently in our media, and now, it is pointless to argue why this and that did not work. The bitter truth is photokina is now history and, as a result, the photo industry no longer has a leading global trade show to inspire itself as well as its commercial customers and the consumers. While it would be great if a new industry event could take over photokina's role, nobody knows today whether the new projects in Berlin and Hamburg may ever achieve such a broad impact as the Cologne legend.

Under the impact of the pandemic, there is a lot of discussion about the sense and

nonsense of large trade fairs. That's a good thing, because we should always reevaluate traditional business models. With all the question marks, however, one thing is certain: So far, nobody has brought up realistic concepts of something that can bring as much publicity and interaction for an industry as a major trade show where the key global players of an industry meet, exchange ideas and address the public.

Saying goodbye to photokina is a very emotional moment for the writer of this editorial: I first attended this trade show in the mid-1960s with my father and thus have been associated with this wonderful event for over 50 years. That's why I would like to express my Farewell to photokina with all my heart and two simple words: Thank You!

Thank you, photokina, for all the inspiration, the exciting products and technologies I discovered in the exhibition halls, the wonderful people I met and the many friends I made, and, last but not least, Thank You for the great business I was able to do at the shows.

All I want for Christmas is that our industry will soon find a new global platform where we can do all of this. Please stay healthy!

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Am Potekamp 20, 40885 Ratingen, Germany
Telephone: +49-1012102-20 27-31, Telefax: +49-1012102-20 27-49

Internet: <http://www.worldofphoto.com>

Publisher and Editor: Thomas Blömer

Advertising Manager: Barbara Klomps

Contributing Editors:

Don Franz, Ian Wareham, Tor Weatherstone

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