

Sacred Dust

Photographs by Henry Leutwyler

September 10 – September 26, 2021

Opening Reception: Friday, September 10, 6 – 8 pm



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Foley Gallery is proud to present, *Sacred Dust*: Photographs by Henry Leutwyler. The evening reception will feature a performance by the award-winning concert pianist Elaine Kwon.

Where were you when The Towers fell? A question that still lingers on lips as we approach the 20th anniversary of the events of September 11, 2001. To call it an anniversary belies the positive connotations that usually surround this word. It's a marking of time, of years without friends and loved ones, of imagined history and dashed dreams. "Never Forget" is the phrase we use.

What more can we see that hasn't been seen before, playing, again and again, reliving that day? With the cooperation of the 9/11 Memorial & Museum in downtown Manhattan, Photographer Henry Leutwyler was commissioned by National Geographic, for their September issue, to explore the museum's archive of over 70,000 objects, remnants, and remembrances recovered from that day. Some are identifiable, and others remain fragments of their former selves. Many have never been seen by the general public.

Leutwyler's approach follows his long obsession with objectivity in photography, allowing objects of significance to speak for themselves in neutral environments, free from flourish and aesthetic trappings. In his Monograph, *Document* (STEIDL, 2016), he approached objects that produced smiles like Charlie Chaplin's Cane to ones that created darker emotions, including the revolver used to murder John Lennon.

The gallery will exhibit over 30 photographs from this project. Let these artifacts photographed for *Sacred Dust* speak to our memories and feelings that continue to surround this day. Some will need little explanation as their clarity is still intact. Others will resemble nothing we know in real life.

As viewers, we will experience these photographs of things and respond, one step removed from the objects themselves. For Leutwyler, having contact with remnants collected from that day released sharply profound emotions:

Having had the privilege to discover and spend weeks and months in various archives and private collections around the world, I have to admit that this assignment for National Geographic left me immensely humbled. I would never have thought that these objects would haunt me since I had the rare privilege to discover them for the first time. While photographing, I often thought what Mr. Penn, one of the most famous photographers of the 20th century, said: "Still life is a representation of people. They are in the background. The camera is simply not focused on them."

In her essay that accompanies the National Geographic portfolio, Patricia Edmonds begins: *Memorials have replaced some scars left by the attackers, but items pulled from the rubble reveal intimate accounts of bravery, loss, and perseverance.*

Held in reverence, these artifacts continue to remind us of those we have lost and the day that changed all of our lives forever.

All prints from the exhibition will be donated to the permanent collection of the 9/11 Memorial & Museum and will not be available for purchase.

You can find more of these powerful images in the September issue of *National Geographic* magazine, available online at [NatGeo.com](https://www.natgeo.com) beginning mid-August.

Henry Leutwyler was born in Switzerland in 1961. He lived and worked in Paris for a decade before finding his way to New York City in 1995, where he establishes his reputation as a portrait and still life photographer. Steidl published Leutwyler's first book *Neverland Lost: A Portrait of Michael Jackson*, in 2010. The first edition of *Ballet* was published in 2012, the second edition in 2015. With the publication of *Document* in 2016, *Hi There!* in 2020, and fall publication of books on Misty Copeland, Philippe Halsman, and the Red Cross, bringing his STEIDL titles to nine and counting. His photographs have been exhibited in solo shows in Los Angeles, New York City, Paris, Moscow, Madrid, Tokyo, and Zurich. His work has graced the pages of numerous magazines worldwide and has earned him countless honors and awards.