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Photographers show What Makes a circus a Circus

For Immediate Release

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Photographers have spoken through the lenses of their cameras on what makes a circus a Circus: human and animal artists. By far the largest category, more than half of all of the photos entered in the contest focused on individual artists and/or acts. Most commonly presented human acts were trapeze, clowning, juggling, and silk or rope acts. Horses, followed by elephants, then big cats, were the most often featured animal acts.

One-quarter of the photos featured circus artists posing before or after shows, preparations for performance (mostly focused on application of make-up), or caught circus people in various aspects of their daily lives outside of the performances. The role of the audience as part of Circus also was shown through its inclusion in many photos and several photos focusing predominantly on the audience. A number of photos also featured children, either participating in circus activities or as part of the audience.

Interestingly, the photographs also demonstrated the importance of the Big Top tent in defining Circus. While the Federation recognises and celebrates circuses of all forms and in all possible venues, it is clear that the moveable canvas tent is closely associated with fundamental concepts of circus. In contrast to various surveys concerning circuses carried out in the last two years, no photograph focused on circus foods – such as cotton candy, popcorn – which are commonly associated with the circus.

Of the 174 photographs that qualified for the contest, 44 included animals. The photos of animals were divided evenly between pictures of animals performing and those of animals outside the circus ring, interacting with visitors, receiving care, or enjoying their freetime. Of the photos with animals, elephants were featured most often, followed by horses, big cats (primarily tigers) and sealions.

A significant portion of the submissions appeared to purposefully present multiple elements of circus in a single photograph. These photos most often featured combinations of members of the audience, circus rigging, the circus tent, artists, lights and musicians with human and/or animal artists.

Photographs selected by the panel of judges for the final round of judging include submissions by Elena Frolova-Trufanova (Russian Federation), Danielle Lennon (Australia), Richard Verdoni (Mexico), Roberto Ermanis (Italy), Andrea Giachi (Italy), Jessica Hentoff (United States), Vincenzo Pellino (Italy), Stefan Nolte (Germany), Jean-Claude Péclard (Switzerland), Ryan Easley (United States), Danka Dear (Australia), Patrick Prévost (France), Ron Mikkinie (The Netherlands), David Burton (Australia), Tobias Erber (Germany), Christoph Enzinger (Austria), and Justin Senft (United States). The panel will now select 13 photographs from which Federation Honorary President H.S.H. Princess Stephanie of Monaco will choose the overall winner.

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Photographs were received from 55 participants in 16 countries: Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, India, Italy, Mexico, the Netherlands, Russian Federation, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States. The overall winner of the contest, who will enjoy two nights' accommodation and tickets for two to Competition Show A and B of the 35th Festival International du Cirque de Monte-Carlo in January 2011, will be announced in August. Calendars featuring the top 13 photos will be available on the Federation website in early September.

The Fédération Mondiale du Cirque was founded in 2008 under the patronage of H.S.H. Princess Stephanie of Monaco and is headquartered in Monte-Carlo. The Federation is a non-profit organization created to promote Circus arts and culture worldwide, to serve as a voice for the Circus community, and to represent Circus interests at the international level. Its six founding members are the Festival International du Cirque de Monte-Carlo, the European Circus Association, the Outdoor Amusement Business Association in the United States, the Circus Federation of Australia, the Animal Interest Alliance of South Africa, and the Canadian organization En Piste.

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For further information:

Laura van der Meer, Federation Executive Director, at laura@circusfederation.org, tel +32.2.633.1503
Rodney Huey, North American Press Representative, at fmnews@gmail.com, tel +1.703.627.1080
Dirk Kuik, European Press Representative, at dirk@circus-verlag.de, tel. +49.172.424.1843
John Le Mare, Oceania Press Representative, at johnlemare@gmail.com, tel. +61.75.474.4453