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## Russian Chapiteau Captures Top Prize in Photo Contest

For Immediate Release

Monte-Carlo, Monaco (31 August 2010) The overall winner of the Fédération Mondiale du Cirque's 2010 photography contest selected by Federation Honorary President H.S.H. Princess Stephanie of Monaco is an extraordinary photograph of a circus chapiteau, or "Big Top", taken by Ms. Elena Frolova-Trufanova, a professional photographer from the Russian Federation. A total of 55 amateur and professional photographers from 16 countries competed in the contest, responding to the question: "What makes a circus a Circus?" Ms. Frolova-Trufanova's photograph, featuring Rosgoscirk's chapiteau at Victory Park in Moscow, captures the tent and the rays of the sun in a way that emphasizes the magic of circus.

"This year's 'best of show' is perfect because it is not only great photography but also highlights the importance of the travelling tent in the popular conception of 'Circus'" said Federation Executive Director Laura van der Meer. "Ms. Frolova-Trufanova's photo also is perfect for the cover of the Federation's 2011 wall calendar because, like the chapiteau, one must look inside to discover the mystery and delights of Circus." The overall winner and twelve other photographs selected by an international jury of historians comprising Greg Parkinson (USA), Antonio Giarola (Italy), Pascal Jacob (France), Arthur Hofmeester (The Netherlands), Mark St Leon (Australia), Julio Revollo Cárdenas (Mexico), and Charles Ricketts (South Africa) will be exhibited in January 2011 during the 35<sup>th</sup> *Festival International du Cirque de Monte-Carlo*. Together, the winning photos provide an interesting perspective on what makes a circus a Circus.

A long-time circus enthusiast, Ron Mikkenie (The Netherlands) believes that what makes Circus is the ongoing love of learning circus arts seen in young people everywhere. His winning photo, taken at Staatscircus van Moskou-Holiday in Delft, The Netherlands, features 14 year old Nigel Voets, a juggler working with balls, sombreros, rings and sometimes torches at high speed. Mr. Mikkenie's photograph of a circus tiger mid-jump won the 2009 photo contest in the category of color photography. Consistent with these sentiments, Jessica Hentoff's (United States) photograph captures Circus Harmony's youth performance troupe, the St. Louis Arches, defying gravity during a performance at Circus Flora. Ms. Hentoff says that "humans flying" is part of what makes a circus a Circus.

Richard Verdoni (Mexico), the great-great-grandson of the founder of the Mexican Circo Atayde Hnos., caught second and third generations of the Flying Millas (Chile) mid-air during an Atayde show in Mexico City. Mr. Verdoni believes that the Trapeze Artist is a unique and inspirational ambassador of Circus – a living, flying, fantastic character that gives us surprise, anticipation, action, danger and triumph. As Mr. Verdoni says: "the wonder of Circus never wears off."

For Andrea Giachi (Italy), what makes a circus a Circus is the relationship between animals and artists. Mr. Giachi's beautiful photograph of Ingrid Casartelli and her stallion at a performance of Circus Medrano demonstrates the strong bond between performing animals and their trainers. Fellow Italian Roberto Ermanis also photographed an artist performing at Circus Medrano, but Mr. Ermanis' subject of choice is a clown, which he describes as the "soul" of Circus. The clown featured in the photo is Vladi Rossi. Mr. Ermanis was also among the winners of the 2009 photography contest.

Next to animals and clowns, Stefan Nolte (Germany) asserts that acrobats are the third pillar of traditional circus. His photograph of the Trio Laruss, taken at Cirque Arlette Gruss in Strasbourg, France presents an elegant equilibrium act involving tremendous strength and balance but appearing nearly effortless to the audience. Ryan Easley (United

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States), an assistant tiger trainer with the American Kelly Miller Circus, captured the essence of circus with his photograph of Kelly Miller's Big Top caught in a rare snowstorm in Texas: the show must go on! Circus staff were roused from their sleep to save the tent, their personal lives, once again, coming second to the never-ending demands that create the magic of sawdust and spangles.

Another winning photo was submitted jointly by Jason and Justin Senft (United States), American artists and identical twins. These multi-dimensional creative individuals work collaboratively in many disciplines including sculpture, painting, printmaking, drawing, photography, video/animation, computer graphics, theatre arts, and the art of magic and illusion. Their photograph features a clown and a child artist peeking into Circus Vidbel's tent in West Milford, New Jersey, thus capturing several fundamental components of circus. As Messrs. Senft explain, the sights, sounds, and spectacle under the canvas big top are so amazing that even circus performers, young and old, are enticed to peek through a slit in the curtain to be part of the excitement happening within.

Tobias Erber's (Germany) talents as an amateur photographer continue to impress. In both the 2009 and 2010 contests, two of his photographs were selected as winners. This year's photograph of the heads of three perfectly grouped tigers was taken at Circus Crocofant in Kempten, Germany and features the tigers of Christian Walliser. The photo demonstrates how closely the public may observe the individual characteristics of exotic animals featured in the classical circus, providing an opportunity to learn about and appreciate animals. Mr. Erber's other winning photograph shows the finale of a Circus Roncalli performance in Cologne. Mr. Erber believes that this photograph catches the nearly overwhelming atmosphere of Circus, with all of its colours, lights, music, and the joy of artists – both world-famous and aspiring to be world-famous – just before the enthusiastic standing ovation of the audience.

Christoph Enzinger (Austria) points out that the modern circus began with horses and so, for him, horses are an essential element of Circus. A postman by day, Mr. Enzinger also is a collector of circus memorabilia and posters, works with Austria's famous Clown Museum, and writes for circus magazines in his free time. Mr. Enzinger's photograph is a stunning snapshot of a classical liberty act performed by Louis Knie Jr. at Circus Louis Knie Jr. in Austria. Danka Dear's (Australia) photograph of Sascha Williams springing from scattering components of a rolla bolla at Circus Sunrise in Queenscliff, Victoria shows the incredible skill, determination and daring involved in most circus acts. According to Ms. Dear, "it's the wonder, joy and amazement of it all, together with extraordinary skills, that makes a circus a Circus."

Calendars featuring the winning photographs may be purchased at [www.oaba.org](http://www.oaba.org) for residents of North America and in the Federation's Boutique at [www.circusfederation.org](http://www.circusfederation.org) for other world regions.

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