

Welcome address

Lloret de Mar, October 2026

Good evening, everyone.

Authorities, members of the jury, nominated photographers, volunteers, members of the association and friends: welcome to Lloret. Welcome to MontPhoto.

Thirty years ago, we decided that nature photography had to be something more than a well-made picture. This year, the Generalitat de Catalunya has declared us an organisation of public benefit. It is an honour. But public benefit is not a medal to hang on the wall: it is a responsibility. The obligation to say out loud what is hardest to say.

Even on a night of celebration like this one. Especially on a night of celebration.

We nature photographers have a virtue that takes years to learn: knowing how to keep still, be patient and wait. Hours inside a hide, camouflaged, without making a sound, waiting for life to pass in front of us without seeing us. One false step, and the animal flees.

In front of a wild animal, stillness is ethical. In the face of the social injustice that threatens us, stillness and silence are not the right attitude.

Perhaps, without pointing at anyone, speaking in general terms and beyond our own work, we are still not very active: we are still not making any noise.

What is tonight's group photo? Let's not retouch it with pretty, empty words, or to look like something we are not, and let's not say things just to please the audience.

The institutions congratulate us a great deal. And we are truly grateful! But applause alone will not move us forward: we need a budget, a space of our own, more resources.

The public follows us, shares our work, sometimes gives us a like.

And we like giving them too; sadly, that is our greatest form of activism today. The like has become the most comfortable way of doing nothing.

And we photographers—including those of us here tonight—have learned to photograph loss with admirable sharpness: the last ice, the last forest, the last gaze of a species that is leaving. Photography documents what we lose. That is why we are not just witnesses: we are notaries.

There is a law of physics we apply in photography that explains everything. In a long exposure, everything that moves disappears from the image; only what stays still remains sharp. Whoever does not move comes out perfect in the photo.

But standing still changes nothing.

Meanwhile, outside the frame, things are happening.

Wars are happening. They reach us in vertical format, between a recipe and a holiday ad. We look at them for a second and swipe on. But looking and moving on cannot be our way of taking part.

Discrimination is happening. We admire migratory birds, we photograph them, we give awards to their images. Every autumn we celebrate them crossing borders without a passport. We are far less generous with people who do exactly the same.

And denialism is happening. Those of us who have worked with film know this: the latent image exists before it is developed. Denying the climate crisis is believing that if we do not develop the roll, the photograph does not exist. But it does. And we must develop it, because our future is at stake.

That is why, on this thirtieth anniversary, MontPhoto does not want to be neutral. In photography, neutrality does not exist: every image is a decision about what we leave out of the frame. And so is every silence.

We are asking you to take a step forward. To come out of the hide and out of our comfort zone. Not to frighten anyone, but so that we are seen: nature photography takes sides too. For peace, for science, for equality, and for a planet with room for all of us.

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And now, on to what we are here for: the figures, the celebration and the party.

Thirty years. Thirty editions.

Thousands of photographs received this year, from dozens of countries.

11 categories, 64 finalists, 5 jury members.

An archive of thousands upon thousands of images: the memory of three decades of nature.

A team of volunteers who make it all possible without being paid a single euro.

And a home: Lloret de Mar.

Nobody achieved these figures alone. Nor are they the work only of those who will speak about them today. Behind them are thousands of photographers who gave us their way of seeing and understanding nature. A legacy for the present and for the future.

Thirty is a good age: old enough to know where we stand, young enough not to want to stand still.

So tonight, let's make some noise. Clap loudly: in here, we won't scare off any animals. Let's celebrate the award winners, celebrate the images and celebrate these thirty years. Let's enjoy this weekend together.

Let the party begin. Here's to many more years, MontPhoto!

Thank you very much.