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Egyptian Photographer Mohamed Ali Eddin Receives Fourth Annual MRO Foundation Grant

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Visuals on request

Arles, FRANCE, 9 JULY 2014 — Following a spirited and inspiring selection process, The Manuel Rivera-Ortiz Foundation announced today that Egyptian photographer Mohamed Ali Eddin has been awarded its fourth annual documentary photography grant. Selected from among twelve outstanding finalists representing nine countries, Mr. Ali Eddin's portfolio, *Life of Quarry Workers*, was awarded the top honor by a respected jury.

Life of Quarry Workers will document the plight of the 20,000 workers in the Minya governorate of Upper Egypt who endure long hours, deplorable conditions and serious injuries in the limestone quarries to earn a meager living. Against a stunning backdrop of the white rock, his winning portfolio shows spirited workers with no masks breathing quarry dust, heavy cutting machines with insufficient safety gear and tragic portraits of amputees. Focusing on their lives in village homes, over treacherous roads and in the dangerous quarries, Mr. Ali Eddin's aim is to not only expose the lack of health and safety standards in the quarries, but also to highlight the strong will and spirit of these people.

"I'm honored to be selected from among so many talented photographers and worthy projects," said Mr. Ali Eddin. "The MRO Foundation grant will allow me to bring a more in-depth view of these harsh and dangerous work conditions and the impact on the lives of the workers and their society."

Mohamed Ali Eddin is a freelance photojournalist based in Cairo. Born and raised in Cairo, he became interested in human rights and workers' issues as an investigative reporter working at a local newspaper. As a photojournalist, he began covering the Egyptian governorates in 2009 which are mostly ignored by

the local media. He has a Bachelor of Arts degree from Ain Shams University in Cairo. He is the 2013 winner of the World Press Photo Grant.

Deliberating until the early morning hours at Galerie Huit, this year's esteemed jury led by MRO Foundation Director Didier de Faÿs included:

- Michael Benson – Director of the Prix Pictet and Founder of Photo London
- Anne Biroleau – Curator of the photographic department, National Library of France, BnF
- Claude Hudelot – Sinologist, curator and collector
- William M. Hunt – Renowned curator and consultant
- Azu Nwagbogu – Director of the Lagos festival
- Laura Sérani – Former artistic director of Les Rencontres de Bamako
- Marco Zappone – Director Éditions PhotoSynthèse

“The jury was moved by the work of this young photographer covering his own emerging country,” explained jurist Laura Sérani. “Awarding this prize to Mohamed gives him the opportunity and floor to further advocate for these workers in these crucial lands.”

Struck by the common theme of exploited workers in submissions from the same country, the jury gave special mention to the work of three photographers from Bangladesh – G.M.B. Akash, K.M. Asad and Mahfuzul Hasan Bhuiyan. The Foundation will organize an exhibition of their three portfolios.

“The work of these documentary photographers serves as warning to other migrants and to the world of the intolerable conditions in which our everyday goods are manufactured,” said Didier de Faÿs. “This is in the same spirit of Mohamed’s winning portfolio and within the spirit of this foundation.”

The Manuel Rivera-Ortiz Foundation for Documentary Photography & Film is a non-profit organization committed to positive social discourse in underrepresented communities throughout the world. For additional information on the Foundation, please visit www.mrofoundation.org.

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