**LEO MATIZ**

(1917, Aracataca – 1998, Bogotà)

Leo Matiz was born in Aracataca, García Márquez’s Macondo, in 1917. After attending the Fine Arts Academy in Bogotà and editing *TVO* and *Lauros* magazines in Santa Marta, he exhibits and publishes his caricatures in *El Tiempo* newspaper in Bogotà. The Education Ministry puts him in charge of the Cine Educativo section. *El Tiempo*’s editor-in-chief, Enrique Santos Montejo, “Calibán”, invites Matiz to work with photography and gives him a camera. In 1939 he obtained his first assignment as photographer: to create a general archive documenting different social categories for *El Tiempo* and *El Espectador* newspapers and *Estampa* magazine. After creating the Arcom advertising agency with sculptor Julio Abril, a passionate student of advertising, Matiz sets off for Mexico to work in film. He settles in Mexico City and dedicates all his efforts to photography. He participates in the Painting, Sculpture and Engraving exhibition inaugurated by Pablo Neruda with Colombian artists living in Mexico: Porfirio Barba-Jacob, Rómulo Rozo, Julio Abril, Luis Alberto Acuña and Juan Sanz de Santamaria. In 1943 he manages to get himself taken prisoner in Mazatlán special prison, in Mexico, where he produces an extraordinary photo feature that is published in prestigious international magazines and earns him his fame as a photographer. He works as a graphic artist for *Asi* magazine in Mexico and the United States and meets German photographer Fritz Henle: he joins the *Unión Cinematografica de Méjico* as “fixed camera”. For 4 years he works with photographer Manuel Alvarez Bravo under the direction of Gabriel Figueroa. Leo Matiz takes his first colour photographs for *Reader’s Digest*, published on the covers of the most important magazines in Central and South America and Cuba. In 1949 Leo Matiz is called one of the world’s top 10 photographers and wins the award for best photographer in the Mexican press. A follower year he opens the first art gallery in Colombia, after studying painting with Clemente Orozco and working with Diego Rivera, Frida Kahlo and David A. Siqueiros.

In 1998 he was awarded the highest honour of the Colombian government in the arts: considered the most important photographer of the century in Colombia. The catalogue “The metaphor of the eye” and a CD-rom are published to mark the occasion. Dies in Bogotá on October 24 of cirrhosis of the liver.