Rare photographs of daily life in North Korea go on show right in the heart of Washington D.C.

Exhibition opens at the American University Museum

By ABIGAIL WRIGHT  |  16 July 2017

Rare images of daily life in the secretive state of North Korea are on show in the heart of Washington D.C., just four miles from the White House. The new exhibition celebrates 15 years of photographs taken by Don McCullin, a veteran war photographer and winner of the World Press Peace Prize who has encountered first-hand the situations in which this unique photographic reportage sometimes placed him.

The American University Museum at the Katzen Arts Center is exhibiting photos taken by McCullin during a four-week journey that he undertook in 2011, the year before his 80th birthday. The exhibition, titled "Don McCullin: North Korea," runs through 1 October 2017.

The exhibition is part of the museum's series of shows that celebrate the work of artists who have played important roles in the history of photography. The series, which includes shows dedicated to Stanley Kubrick, Gordon Parks, and Dorothea Lange, among others, aims to highlight the power of photography as a medium for social commentary.

McCullin is best known for his work covering major conflicts, such as the Vietnam War, the Biafran War, and the Troubles in Northern Ireland. His photographs have been widely published in newspapers and magazines, and he has won several awards for his work, including the World Press Photo of the Year in 1968. His work has also been the subject of numerous retrospectives and exhibitions around the world.

"North Korea is a place of great mystery and intrigue," McCullin said in a statement. "It's a place where the past and present coexist, and where the impact of history is still very much felt today."

The exhibition includes a selection of photographs from McCullin's trip to North Korea in 2011, as well as a series of new images taken during his most recent visit to the country, in 2016. The photographs, which capture everyday life in the country, range from portraits of ordinary North Koreans to images of the country's unique culture and landscape.

"I was touched by the warmth and hospitality of the people of North Korea," McCullin said. "They were friendly and welcoming, and I was impressed by the way they go about their daily lives, despite the challenges they face."

The exhibition is open to the public and is free of charge. It will be accompanied by a series of lectures and events that explore the historical and cultural context of North Korea and its place in the world today.

Photo: Courtesy of American University Museum at the Katzen Arts Center.