



V&A to present major exhibition of photography from the collection of Sir Elton John and David Furnish

Fragile Beauty: Photographs from the Sir Elton John and David Furnish Collection

In partnership with Gucci

18 May 2024 – 5 January 2025

The Sainsbury Gallery, V&A South Kensington

The V&A is to present a major exhibition of modern and contemporary photography, on loan from the private collection of Sir Elton John and David Furnish. Showcasing over 300 rare prints from over 140 photographers - the majority of which will be on display to the public for the first time - *Fragile Beauty: Photographs from the Sir Elton John and David Furnish Collection* will be the V&A's largest temporary exhibition of photography to date.

Following on from the 2016 exhibition *The Radical Eye: Modernist Photography from the Sir Elton John Collection* at the Tate Modern, this exhibition will cover the period from the 1950s to the present day. It will bring together an unrivalled selection of the world's leading photographers to tell the story of modern and contemporary photography, and will include works by **Robert Mapplethorpe, Cindy Sherman, William Eggleston, Diane Arbus, Sally Mann, Zanele Muholi, Ai Weiwei, Carrie Mae Weems** and others.

Marking 30 years of collecting, the exhibition will celebrate John and Furnish's passion for the medium and will reflect their personal taste and unique eye as collectors. Across eight thematic sections, it will explore subjects such as fashion, reportage, celebrity, the male body, and American photography. Portraits of stars from stage and screen will feature, including photography of Marilyn Monroe, Miles Davis, and Chet Baker, as well as iconic images from key moments of history from the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, AIDS activism of the 1980s and the events of 11 September 2001. Also on display will be the very first acquisitions made by John, fashion photographs by **Horst P. Horst, Irving Penn** and **Herb Ritts**, as well as some of the newest additions to their collection including **Tyler Mitchell, Trevor Paglen** and **An-My Lê**.

Fragile Beauty: Photographs from the Sir Elton John and David Furnish Collection is curated by Duncan Forbes, Head of Photography at the V&A, Newell Harbin, Director of The Sir Elton John Photography Collection, and Lydia Caston, Exhibition Project Curator. The exhibition is part of the ongoing partnership between Sir Elton John and David Furnish with the V&A, which began with their generous support for the V&A's Photography Centre in 2019.

Sir Elton John and David Furnish, said: “Since we first loaned a selection of Horst photographs to the V&A in 2014, our relationship with the museum has grown significantly. *Fragile Beauty* takes our collaboration to really exciting new heights, showcasing some of the most beloved photographers and iconic images from within our collection. Working alongside the V&A again has been a truly memorable experience, and we look forward to sharing this exhibition with the public.”

Duncan Forbes, curator of *Fragile Beauty*, said: “We are delighted to be working with Sir Elton John and David Furnish to present highlights from their unparalleled collection: from the playful and surprising, to the contemplative and thoughtful. Whether through the elegance of fashion photography, the creativity of musicians and performers, the exploration of desire, or the passage of history as captured by photojournalism, photography reveals something important about the world. *Fragile Beauty* will be a truly epic journey across the recent history of photography, and a celebration of Sir Elton John and David Furnish's passion for the medium.”

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For further PRESS information about *Fragile Beauty: Photographs from the Sir Elton John and David Furnish Collection* please contact Shannon Nash on s.nash@vam.ac.uk.

A selection of press images is available to download free of charge from pressimages.vam.ac.uk.

Support for the V&A is more vital than ever. Please help us by acknowledging the exhibition partner Gucci, with further support from Foundation Socindec.

About the V&A

The V&A is a family of museums dedicated to the power of creativity. Our mission is to champion design and creativity in all its forms, advance cultural knowledge, and inspire makers, creators and innovators everywhere.

V&A South Kensington is a world of extraordinary global creativity, with unmissable exhibitions, experiences and educational programmes for all. One of London's most iconic buildings, it is home to national collections of art, design, fashion, photography and furniture to theatre, performance, architecture, and ceramics, as well as the UK's National Art Library. It is a place where everyone can experience a story of creativity that spans 5,000 years and every creative discipline, which brings that story to life through programmes and activities for all ages and specialisms, and world-leading research and conservation. Vam.ac.uk

About The Sir Elton John and David Furnish Photography Collection

Sir Elton John began collecting photographs in 1991 and his collection is now regarded as one of the leading private photography collections in the world, distinguished by its

exceptional quality and remarkable range and depth. From major vintage 20th century modernist works to cutting-edge contemporary images, the collection now holds over 7,000 fine art photographs. To make this collaboration possible, the V&A has worked closely with Rocket Entertainment along with Newell Harbin, Director of the Sir Elton John and David Furnish Photography Collection.

About Gucci

Founded in Florence, Italy, in 1921, Gucci is one of the world's leading luxury brands. Following the House's centenary, Gucci forges ahead continuing to redefine luxury while celebrating creativity, Italian craftsmanship, and innovation.

Gucci is part of the global luxury group Kering, which manages renowned Houses in fashion, leather goods, jewelry, and eyewear.

Discover more about Gucci at www.gucci.com.

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