



WHAT'S ON AT V&A SOUTH KENSINGTON: Photography

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A year on from the opening of the expanded Photography Centre, today the V&A announces that works by 9 contemporary artists have gone on display at the museum, as part of a gallery rotation of Photography Now (Room 96 and Room 97, The Parasol Foundation Gallery).

Opened for the first time in May 2023 as part of the re-opening of the Photography Centre, Photography Now spans two permanent galleries dedicated to showcasing recent acquisitions of international contemporary photography, including special commissions.

The works now on display - many of which are recent acquisitions - showcase dynamic contemporary practices that investigate land, global histories, and cultural memory. Photographers include **Anton Kusters**, **Poulomi Basu**, **Jo Ratcliffe**, **Roger Palmer Sam Contis**, **Mohamed Bourouissa**, **Edmund Clark**, **Liliana Farber** and **Lebohng Kganye**.

Highlights in the display:

Anton Kusters' *The Blue Skies Project*, comprising *One Thousand and Seventy-Eight Blue Skies*, 2018, by Anton Kusters and *The Tracking of One Thousand and Seventy-Eight Blue Skies*, 2018, by Ruben Samama, is a monumental installation of over 1078 instant photographs accompanied by a generative audiovisual sound piece. The work documents the skies above the location of every known Nazi concentration or extermination camp, most of which are today unmarked. Each photograph is blind stamped with the number of victims at that site and its GPS coordinates, which highlights the vast scale of the genocide conducted by the Nazi regime. The photographs will intentionally fade with time but these numbers will remain, becoming a monument to the conservation of memory. The project is a durational work lasting for 4,432 days, the same length of time that the Nazi concentration camps were active.

A selection of photographs by **Jo Ractliffe**, who uses landscape photography to engage with the legacy of apartheid and regional conflict in South Africa, trace the aftermath of the Border War fought by South Africa in Angola in the 1970s and '80s. Minefields, mass grave sites and devastated agricultural land become ominous parts of the terrain, showing how past trauma is marked in present landscapes.

Finally, **Mohamed Bourouissa's** striking photograph *Le Groupe*, from the series *Péripherique* (2007–08) will be displayed. Bourouissa staged scenes with his friends and acquaintances in the Paris suburbs they lived in. Each is carefully arranged to critique stereotypical representations of their communities in the mainstream media. Informed by the grandeur of history painting, Bourouissa's photographs convey a palpable tension through confronting gazes and frozen gestures.

Also open today in Room 98, The Kusuma Gallery, is *Nature Study: Ecology and the Contemporary Photobook*, a display of contemporary photographic books which explore the natural world and its inhabitants, blending science and art. In the accompanying browsing library 'New Photobooks from Australia' showcases recent publications by Australian women photographers, selected in partnership with PHOTO Australia and the Bowness Family Foundation.

Other photography programming currently on at the V&A South Kensington includes:

Displays:

Sorting Song

On now until Monday, 26 August 2024
Room 99, The Meta Media Gallery

A computer-generated film by Simone C Niquille reveals the absurdities and mistakes of machine vision that emerge from a lack of human context. Taking the format of an educational nursery rhyme, the work seeks to push beyond what appears naïve and unsettle a world of digitally coded assumptions. Niquille's film features photographic 3D models taken from a training dataset originally compiled by Imperial College London to develop machine vision for future domestic robots. The film is presented with an installation of chairs and key objects seen in the work, creating a playful space to encourage visitor engagement and a material dialogue that challenges how we think about digital things.

Energy: Sparks from the Collection

On now until Sunday, 18 May 2025
Room 100, The Bern and Ronny Schwartz Gallery and Room 101, The Sir Elton John and David Furnish Gallery

Energy: Sparks from the Collection explores the diverse kinds of energy in photography – both the hidden processes intrinsic to creating a picture, and the subjects in front of a camera. Featuring works from the 1840s through to the present day, it demonstrates how, from the advent of photography, power in all its diverse forms has sparked the imaginations of photographers.

Exhibition

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

This exhibition showcases over 300 rare prints from 140 photographers on loan from the private collection of Sir Elton John and David Furnish, and once open be the V&A's largest temporary exhibition of photography to date. An unparalleled selection of the world's leading photographers, telling the story of modern and contemporary photography across sections including fashion, celebrity, reportage and the male body.

- ENDS -

For further PRESS information about the Photography Centre at the V&A, please contact the Shannon Nash on s.nash@vam.ac.uk / +44 (0)20 3949 2502 (not for publication).

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

Notes to Editors:

- *The Blue Skies Project* was donated by Dirk Spillebeen & Anne Carlier - IFBD Ltd.
- *Nature Study: Ecology and the Contemporary Photobook* is supported by The Bern Schwartz Family Foundation.
- *Sorting Song* by Simone C Niquille was Acquired with Art Fund support.
- *Fragile Beauty: Photographs from the Sir Elton John and David Furnish Collection* is presented in partnership with Gucci, with further support from Foundation Socindec.
- Other acquisitions were acquired with the support of the V&A Photographs Acquisition Group, The Parasol Foundation Women in Photography Project and the Prix Pictet.

Social Media Twitter: @V_and_A

Instagram: @vamuseum

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About the V&A Photography Collection

The V&A has collected photographs since its foundation in 1852 and continues to collect today, with new acquisitions supported by the V&A Photographs Acquisition Group and other generous donors.

The Royal Photographic Society (RPS) Collection was transferred to the V&A by the Science Museum Group in 2017 and was acquired with the generous assistance of the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Art Fund.

The V&A's collection encompasses the work of leading historic and contemporary photographers as well as publications, cameras and related equipment. When not on display, photographs from the collection can be viewed in the Prints & Drawings Study Room. vam.ac.uk/collections/photographs.