

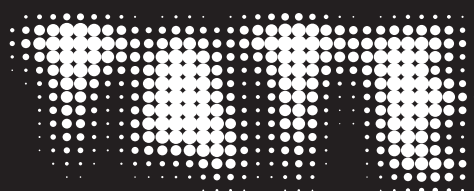
LIGHT AND MAGIC THE BIRTH OF ART PHOTOGRAPHY

14 OCTOBER 2026 – 21 FEBRUARY 2027

LARGE PRINT GUIDE



Please return after use

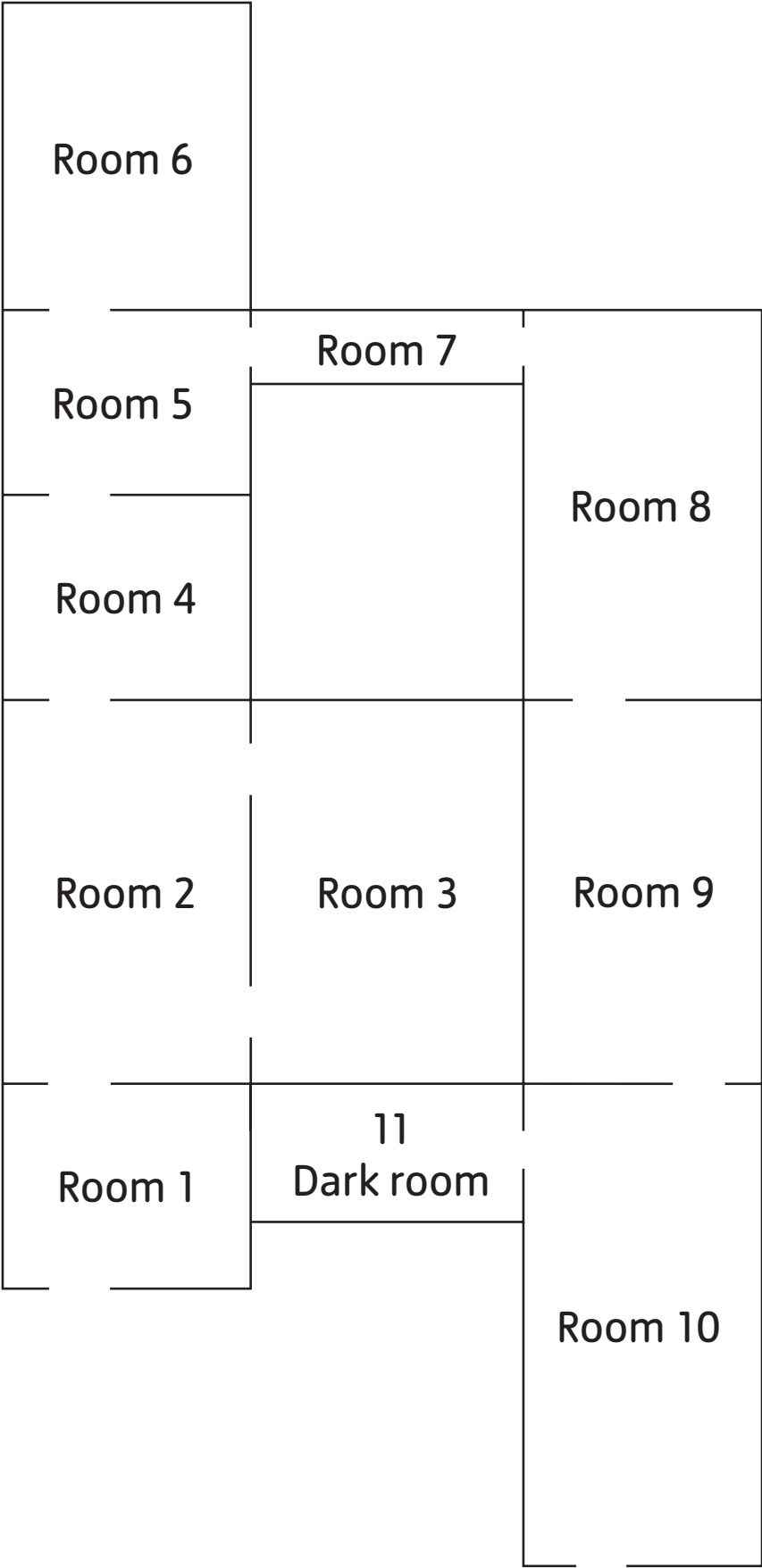


CONTENTS

Exhibition map	1
Concourse	3
Room 1	5
Room 2	12
Room 3	29
Room 4	48
Room 5	64
Room 6	79
Room 7	94
Room 8	105
Room 9	136
Room 10	158
Room 11	177

All information is correct at the time of publicaton.

EXHIBITION MAP



CONCOURSE

LIGHT AND MAGIC
THE BIRTH OF ART PHOTOGRAPHY
14 OCT – 21 FEB 20267

Light and Magic: The Birth of Art Photography
is presented in The Eyal Ofer Gallerie

Supported by

YUKIKO ITO

With additional support from the
Light and Magic Exhibition Supporters Circle:

Korea Foundation

The Bern Schwartz Family Foundation

The Japan Foundation.

And Tate Americas Foundation.

On behalf of Tate, the curatorial team
of Light and Magic offer special thanks
to Family Office For Art (Singapore);
David Knaus; and Fusion Arts Oxford
for their commitment to this exhibition.

Curated by Charmaine Toh, Acting Head of Curatorial, Tate Modern, and Genevieve Barton, Assistant Curator, International Art.

This exhibition has been made possible by the provision of insurance through the Government Indemnity Scheme. Tate would like to thank HM Government for providing Government Indemnity and the Department of Culture, Media and Sport and Arts Council England for arranging the indemnity.

With generous loans from the V&A



1. INTRODUCTION TO PICTORALISM

ANTICLOCKWISE FROM THE WALL TEXT

[WALL TEXT]

1. Introduction

This exhibition explores pictorialism – the first international art photography movement. At its heart, pictorialism was a declaration: photography is not simply a mechanical record of the world, but a genuine art form. Emerging in the 1880s, pictorialists believed the photograph could be as imaginative, expressive and technically considered as any painting or drawing.

They manipulated negatives, experimented with printing processes, and staged compositions, while borrowing freely from art movements such as impressionism and symbolism. Their images moved beyond documentation into beauty, mood and meaning.

Light & Magic tells this story on a global scale. Though pictorialism is often treated as a chapter in Europe and the US that closed in the 1920s, photographers across the world explored its possibilities for decades after. Brought together through an international network of photo clubs and salons, their work expanded and transformed the movement. Over time, pictorialism became one of the 20th century's most

far-reaching conversations about what a photograph can be.

Take a look through the window on your left to view the darkroom, where light, chemistry and time come together to create photographs. You can learn more about the darkroom at the end of the exhibition.



Hear stories about the art from curators and other experts on our self-led audio guide, available on your smartphone. Scan to buy and start listening



Lang, Jingshan 1892–1995

Born China, worked China and Taiwan

Lion Roaring

c.1941

Photograph, bromide print on paper

Lang Jingshan (romanised as Long Chin San) was by far the most influential Chinese photographer in the 20th century. He was committed to developing a uniquely 'Chinese' aesthetic of photography which drew on the centuries-long tradition of ink painting. **Lion Roaring** not only showcases his signature style and technique, but also highlights pictorialism's engagement with contemporary affairs. Here, the lion evokes revolution and China's arduous fight during the Japanese invasion in the Second World War.

Victoria and Albert Museum, London. The Royal Photographic Society Collection. Purchased with the assistance of the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Art Fund
X99579



Lang, Jingshan 1892–1995

Born China, worked China and Taiwan

Left to right:

Pavilion Fairyland

mid-20th century

Contemplation of Nature

c.1937

2 photographs, bromide print on pape

Victoria and Albert Museum, London. The Royal Photographic Society Collection. Purchased with the assistance of the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Art Fund
X99580, X99581

Helen Campbell 1885–1974

Born US, worked UK

Madonnas

1935

Photograph, bromoil transfer print on paper s

Victoria and Albert Museum, London. The Royal Photographic Society Collection. Purchased with the assistance of the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Art Fund
X99577

Clarence Hudson White 1871–1925

Born and worked US

The Watcher

1906

Photograph, platinum print on paper

Victoria and Albert Museum, London. The Royal Photographic Society Collection. Purchased with the assistance of the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Art Fund
X99571

Gertrude Käsebier 1869–1933

Born and worked US

The Magic Crystal

1904

Photograph, platinum print on paper

Victoria and Albert Museum, London. The Royal Photographic Society Collection. Purchased with the assistance of the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Art Fund
X99573

2. PAINTING AND PHOTOGRAPHY

CLOCKWISE FROM THE WALL TEXT

[WALL TEXT]

2. Painting and Photography

When photography emerged in the 19th century, painting set the terms. To be taken seriously as art, photographers knew they had to engage with its legacy. They borrowed painting's compositions, moods, subjects and sometimes even the texture of its surfaces.

The pictorialists did this with ambition and ingenuity. Emma Barton's tender portraits recall the soft, idealised figures of the mid-19th century Pre-Raphaelite painters. Eveleen Myers gave her studies of children the hushed, interior quality found in Victorian paintings of everyday life. Heinrich Kühn manipulated his prints until the tone felt almost painterly. Peter Henry Emerson looked to French and British landscape artists who painted outside. He believed that photography could capture the fleeting truth of nature and light just as they had done with a brush. In China, Luo Bonian drew on the composition and style of classical ink painting.

The pictorialists did not simply imitate painters. They paved new ground, insisting that the photograph, made with care and intention, could produce its own distinct beauty.

In London, the key advocates for pictorialism were photographic groups such as The Linked Ring and The Royal Photographic Society. Several artists displayed here were members of these groups.

Limb, Eung Sik 1912–2001
Born and worked South Korea

Homeward Route

1935

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Limb Eung Sik began his photographic career during the 35-year period in which Korea was under Japanese colonial rule (1910–45). As colonial powers attempted to erase Korean identity and culture, Limb photographed recognisably Korean subjects to express a distinct sense of locality. In **Homeward Route**, he highlights the figures using the soft-focus techniques seen in pictorialism. After liberation, he embraced a realist approach. He coined the term 'saenghwal juui realism', or 'realism focused on daily life'. This later shift to realism was Limb's post-colonial assertion of artistic autonomy.

Limb Sang Chul by Limb Eung Sik Photo Archive
X99948

Luo, Bonian 1911–2002
Born and worked China

Left to right:

Drawing Water from a Well

1932

Whistling

1933

Untitled-57

1930–40

Untitled-89

1930–40

4 photographs, gelatin silver print on paper

Tate. Purchased with funds provided by the Photography
Acquisitions Committee 2026

X101894, X101895

Luo Bonian Art Foundation and Three Shadows Photography
Art Centre

X99823, X99824

Heinrich Kühn 1866–1944

Born Germany, worked Austria

Left to right:

Still Life

1911

Photograph, gum print on paper

Jack Kirkland Collection

X99826

Adolph de Meyer 1868–1946

Born France, worked France, UK and US

Left to right:

Hydrangea

c.1908

Photograph, platinum print on paper

Victoria and Albert Museum, London. The Royal Photographic Society Collection. Purchased with the assistance of the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Art Fund

X99827

Heinrich Kühn and Adolph de Meyer used still life compositions to experiment with light, shadow and the surface quality of the print. After taking the initial photograph, each artist rearranged the objects, took another photograph and repeated the process over several months. Kühn remarked: 'It does not matter at all whether we construct the still life from a tea service or from flowers or books and a box of matches. As long as pictorialism is achieved!' Here, we see the delicate subtleties of light reflected through glass and liquid.

Nohira, T 1888–1964

Born Japan, worked Japan and US

Japanese Jar

1931

Photograph, bromide print on paper

Victoria and Albert Museum, London. The Royal Photographic Society Collection. Purchased with the assistance of the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Art Fund
X99582

Frank Sato (active late 1920s
to mid-1930s)

Born Japan, worked Japan and US

The Nagashi

1932

Photograph, bromide print on paper

Collection David Knaus, Palm Springs
X100357

František Drtikol 1883–1961

Born and worked Czech Republic

Nude

1923

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Tate. Accepted by HM Government in lieu of inheritance tax from the Estate of Barbara Lloyd and allocated to Tate 2009
P13127

Cecil W Bostock 1884–1939, associated
with George Wilkins 1888–1958

Born UK, worked Australia

Born Australia, worked Australia and US

**Day Breaks: Cold, Shrieking
and Bloody**

1918–9

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Private collection

X100443

Peter Henry Emerson 1856–1936, associated
with Thomas Frederick Goodall 1856–1944
Born Cuba, worked UK
Born and worked UK

Left to right, top to bottom:

Poling the Marsh Hay

The Haunt of the Pike

Rowing Home the Schoof-Stuff

Coming Home from the Marshes

A Rushy Shore

Gathering Water-Lilies

1885

6 photographs, platinum print on paper

Wilson Centre for Photography

X92233, X92238, X92237, X92234, X92220, X92239



Peter Henry Emerson established himself as an authoritative voice in photography in the late 19th century. In 1885, he set out to create **Life and Landscape on the Norfolk Broads** in collaboration with painter Thomas Goodall. The book consisted of a collection of subtly rendered platinum prints, accompanied by essays on disappearing rural life in Britain. The pair focussed their attention on Norfolk's local people and landscape, more in the manner of sociological representation than poetic evocation. Each photograph was carefully composed. Emerson was inspired by French naturalist painters such as Jean-François Millet. He felt that nature should be captured as straightforwardly as possible.

Emma Rayson Barton 1872–1938

Born and worked UK

Left to right:

St Catherine

1906

The Awakening

1903

St Margaret

c.1903

3 photographs, carbon print on paper

Victoria and Albert Museum, London. The Royal Photographic Society Collection. Purchased with the assistance of the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Art Fund X99574, X99575, X99576



Emma Barton was inspired by Pre-Raphaelite painting and made many photographs referencing religious themes. **The Awakening** was exhibited at the 48th Annual Exhibition of The Royal Photographic Society in 1903. The work was part of her series dedicated to the Madonna and Child, a prominent subject throughout art history. She viewed this picture, with its velvet midtones and atmospheric quality, as her best. Early in her career she became a member of the Birmingham Photographic Society and in 1901 joined The Royal Photographic Society.

Eveleen Myers 1856–1937

Born and worked UK

Left to right:

'The Summer Garden'
(Leopold Hamilton Myers;
Silvia Constance Myers)

c.1890

Harold Hawthorn Myers; Georgina

1889

2 photographs, platinum print on paper

Lent by the National Portrait Gallery, London. Purchased, 1991
X100529, X100530

Eveleen Myers was born in London to a prominent family active in literary and political circles. She took up photography in 1888 and used the medium as a tool to document her children's lives. **The Summer Garden** features her children Leo and Silvia at their family home. Myers posed them so she could create the image she wanted. Over the next decade, Myers took portraits of well-known Victorian politicians, scholars, writers, artists and scientists, alongside photographing her friends and family. She exhibited regularly, including with The Linked Ring in 1899.

[VITRINE BY THE WALL]

Shapoor N Bhedwar

1858–1916

Born and worked India

Art Studies Album

1890s

Photograph, carbon print on paper, bound

Shapoor Nusserwanjee Bhedwar was known for his elaborate Pre-Raphaelite tableau photographs. In this style of image, the subjects are arranged for dramatic effect. Part of a group of 31 works called **Art Studies**, this photograph is titled **Mystic Sign**. Bhedwar creates an allegorical narrative that draws on traditional Indian painting. Using carefully crafted poses and props, he shows a group of women transfixed by a man making a gesture. Bhedwar was a member of The Royal Photographic Society and later The Linked Ring.

The Alkazi Collection of Photography

X99820

3. THE ART OF THE PRINT

CLOCKWISE FROM THE ROOM ENTRANCE

[WALL TEXT]

3. The Art of the Print

For pictorialist photographers, the camera was only the beginning. What transformed a photograph into a work of art was what happened next – in the darkroom, on the printing table, in every deliberate choice of paper, chemistry and touch.

In this room, you can see how some photographers have manipulated their prints. Robert Demachy worked the surface of his oil transfer prints until they resembled charcoal drawings. Fred Holland Day combined multiple negatives and cut up his prints. Others, like Frederick Evans and Alvin Langdon Coburn, insisted on the purity of the lens, refusing to interfere with the photographic process. Instead, they found their artistry in the luminous and rich tones of platinum prints and photogravures.

Whether manipulated or restrained, the photographers conceived each print as a unique, authored object. This insistence that photography demanded skill, vision and intention was the pictorialists' most powerful argument for its place among the arts.

Fred Holland Day 1864–1933

Born and worked US

Left to right:

The Prodigal

1911

Torso

1908

The Vision (Orpheus Series)

1907

The Storm God

1905

4 photographs, platinum print on paper

Victoria and Albert Museum, London. The Royal Photographic Society Collection. Purchased with the assistance of the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Art Fund
X99586, X99585, X99587, X99588

One of the strongest proponents of pictorialism in the US, Fred Holland Day was also one of the most controversial for his photographs of male nudes and religious subjects. Day was influenced by symbolism and often referenced classical mythology. **The Vision (Orpheus Series)** features model Nicola Giancola as the titular subject, nude and standing with his arms raised, in a celebration of male beauty. A second exposure of Giancola's profile is in the centre. The delicate tones of the platinum process enhance the translucency of the layered images and deepens the meditative mood, suggesting a harmonious connection between beauty and spirituality.

Elly Sougioultzoglou-Seraidaris 1899–1998

Born Turkey (then Asia Minor), worked Greece
and US

Refugees in Attica

1925

5 photographs, bromoil print on paper

Benaki Museum/Photographic Archives, Athens

X92079, X92082, X92084, X92085, X92086

Elly Sougioultzoglou-Seraidaris 1899–1998
Born Turkey (then Asia Minor), worked Greece
and US

Left to right:

**The Athlete Dimitris Karabatis
at the Acropolis**

1925

Nude Study at the Acropolis

1925–6

2 photographs, bromoil print on paper

Benaki Museum/Photographic Archives, Athens
X99994, X99995

[INTERMEDIATE WALL TEXT]

Elly Sougioultzoglou-Seraidaris

Elly Sougioultzoglou-Seraidaris, known professionally as Nelly's during her lifetime, studied in Germany then settled in Athens, Greece in 1924.

Sougioultzoglou-Seraidaris's range of photographs reveal her interest in socio-political subjects. In **Refugees in Attica**, she photographed displaced people following the Greek invasion of present-day Turkey during the Greco-Turkish war (1919–22). Over 1 million people resettled in Greece after being expelled from their homes. Pictorialism is often seen as an apolitical movement, but these photographs suggest a different story.

Nude Study at the Acropolis is one of many images where she staged partially nude models or dancers at the ancient Greek monuments, between 1924 and 1939. Her bold strategy of image making formed the basis for interwar Greek photography, while also later sparking debate about how she represented Greek identity. Between 1927 and 1939, she produced a significant amount of work for the Greek Press and Tourism Office, which coincided with the rise of the far-right Metaxas regime. This led some scholars to interpret her aesthetic as the visual language of state authority.

Alvin Langdon Coburn 1882–1966

Born US, worked UK and US

Left to right:

From **Portfolio: London 1909**

St Paul's from the River

Trafalgar Square

Wapping

Regents Canal

From Westminster Bridge

Kensington Gardens, November

1909

6 photographs, photogravure print on paper

Wilson Centre for Photography

X99381, X99382, X99384, X99386, X99387, X99388



In this series, Alvin Langdon Coburn depicts the landscape of London in deliberately compressed tones, creating the foggy atmosphere of an industrialised city. Coburn settled in London in 1909 and set up two hand-operated printing presses in his home. These hand-pulled prints are photogravures. They were made by etching metal plates with light-sensitive chemicals and acid, coating the plates with ink, and hand-printing them onto paper. The prints were then compiled into a photo album. Coburn was a member of The Linked Ring, an honorary fellow of The Royal Photographic Society and a founding member of The Pictorial Photographers of America.

Gertrude Käsebier 1869–1933

Born and worked US

The Bride

c.1900

Photograph, fresson print on paper

Victoria and Albert Museum, London. The Royal Photographic Society Collection. Purchased with the assistance of the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Art Fund
X99589



Robert Demachy 1859–1936

Born and worked France

Left to right:

Notre Dame

c.1920s

Photograph, oil transfer print on paper

Calfatage

c.1906–14

Photograph, oil transfer print on paper

Nu, No. 1

c.1906

Photograph, crayon tinted oil transfer print
on paper

Victoria and Albert Museum, London. The Royal Photographic Society Collection. Purchased with the assistance of the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Art Fund
X99592, X99593, X99591

Violet K Blaiklock 1879–1961

Born and worked UK

Left to right:

In a London Garden (2)

c.1920–30s

In a London Garden

1929

2 photographs, three-colour carbro print on paper

Victoria and Albert Museum, London. The Royal Photographic Society Collection. Purchased with the assistance of the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Art Fund X99599, X99600

Violet Blaiklock was an early experimenter in colour photography. She co-founded The Society of Colour Photographers in the early 20th century. Although photographers often favoured black and white image making, she used the three-colour carbro technique to create vivid prints like the ones you see here. This laborious printing process involved photographing three separate negatives through red, green and blue filters. These were then printed onto gelatin-coated tissues before being mechanically transferred onto paper. Blaiklock exhibited regularly at the annual Royal Photographic Society exhibitions throughout the 1920s and 1930s.

Robert Demachy 1859–1936

Born and worked France

Left to right:

Fatigue No. 1

Fatigue No. 2

c.1906–1914

2 photographs, oil transfer print on paper

Original prints made by Demachy

Victoria and Albert Museum, London. The Royal Photographic Society Collection. Purchased with the assistance of the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Art Fund
X99607, X99608

Kate Smith 1861–1953

Born and worked UK

The Listener

c.1925

2 photographs, bromide print on paper

Original prints made by Smith

Victoria and Albert Museum, London. The Royal Photographic Society Collection. Purchased with the assistance of the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Art Fund

X99605, X99606

Frederick Evans 1853–1943

Born and worked UK

Left to right:

Wells Cathedral. A Sea of Steps

1903

Photograph, platinum print on paper

Original print made by Evans in 1903

The Sea of Steps. The Stairway to the Chapter House and Vicar's Close Wells Cathedral

1903, printed 1998

Photograph, platinum print on paper

Modern print made by 31 Studio in 1998
from Evans' original glass negative

Victoria and Albert Museum, London. The Royal Photographic
Society Collection. Purchased with the assistance
of the National Heritage Fund and Art Fund
X99603, X99604



Peter Henry Emerson 1856–1936, associated
with Thomas Frederick Goodall 1856–1944
Born Cuba, worked UK
Born and worked UK

Left to right:

A Norfolk Boat-Yard

1885

A Norfolk Boat-Yard

1886

2 photographs, platinum print on paper
Original prints from **Life and Landscape on
the Norfolk Broads**, published by Valentine
& Sons of Dundee, 1885-1886

Wilson Centre for Photography
X111105, X111104

Edward J Steichen 1879–1973
Born Luxembourg, worked US

Left to right:

Moonrise, Mamaroneck, New York

1904

Photograph, photogravure print on paper
Modern print from the portfolio 'Edward Steichen:
The Early Years 1900-1927' published by Aperture in 1981

Moonlight: The Pond

1906

Photograph, photogravure print on paper
Original print from a copy of *Camera Work*,
number 14, April 1906

Victoria and Albert Museum, London

X100068

Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Given by Dorothy Bohm

X100069

[INTERMEDIATE WALL TEXT]

Comparison Prints

Which do you prefer?

On this wall are five pairs of prints comparing the distinct visual and textural variations possible in photographs made from the same negative. The pairs demonstrate the unique quality of a darkroom print and the many variables that can affect the final result.

One example is PH Emerson's **A Norfolk Boat-Yard**, which was a combination print made using two separate negatives, one of the landscape and one of the sky. In the two prints on display, the sky is exposed differently, causing one print to show more detail of the clouds than the other.

Another pair compares a vintage and a modern posthumous platinum print of **A Sea of Steps** by English photographer Frederick Evans. While both have the trademark 'glow' of Evans's work, their tones are different.

Kate Smith's two versions of **The Listener** feature the same image of a girl facing a small bird, but with different crops. The wider shot was accepted into the RPS Annual Exhibition in 1928.

4. PORTRAITS

CLOCKWISE FROM THE WALL TEXT

[WALL TEXT]

4. Portraits

From its earliest days, the face offered the camera's most obvious subject. The pictorialists' challenge was to transform it into something more: an image that revealed character, conjured atmosphere and rose above mere resemblance.

The photographers in this room each found their own answer. Yvonne Gregory and Bertram Park brought elegance and sensitivity to their London studio portraits. Their sitters, drawn from the worlds of theatre and society, are rendered with a glamour that is never only flattering. Adolph de Meyer and George Seeley suffused their portraits with a quiet, meditative light. Their figures inhabit a hushed, dreamlike space where identity gives way to atmosphere. Yevonde worked in vivid colour, pushing the portrait in an entirely different direction, one that is theatrical, mythological and alive with wit.

Together, these works show how far the pictorialist portrait can travel from the straightforward likeness of a subject. Through ambience and psychological insight, they highlight how much meaning it can carry.

Yevonde 1893–1975

Born and worked UK

Yevonde as Harlequin

1923

Photograph, chlorobromide print on paper

Lent by the National Portrait Gallery, London. Given by the artist, 1971

X100531

Left to right:

Yvonne Gregory 1889–1970

Born and worked UK

William Heath Robinson

1938

Photograph, chlorobromide print on paper

Lent by the National Portrait Gallery, London. Purchased,
1993.

X100537

Yvonne Gregory 1889–1970

Bertram Park 1883–1972

Born and worked UK

Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother

1922

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Bertram Park 1883–1972

Born and worked UK

Madame Wellington Koo

(née Hui-lan Oei)

1921

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Lent by the National Portrait Gallery, London. Purchased,
2015

X100535, X100538

Yvonne Gregory and Bertram Park worked together at their studio in Mayfair, London. They each produced portraits of notable figures including cartoonist and illustrator William Heath Robinson and actresses Pamela Carme and Fay Compton, which you can see on this wall. By carefully posing their sitters using soft lighting and theatrical props, they create highly styled, dramatic photographs. The pair married in 1916 and collaborated often. Park was a founding member of The London Salon of Photography and Gregory became a Fellow of The Royal Photographic Society in 1928.

Left to right:

Bertram Park 1883–1972

Born and worked UK

Yvonne Gregory

1919

Photograph, bromide print on paper

Lent by the National Portrait Gallery, London. Given by (Hilary) June Mardall (née Park, later Bosanquet), 1977

X100534

Yvonne Gregory 1889–1970

Born and worked UK

Pamela Carme

1928

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Lent by the National Portrait Gallery, London. Purchased, 2015

X100536

Bertram Park 1883–1972

Born and worked UK

Fay Compton as Mary Rose

1920

Photograph, bromide print on paper

Lent by the National Portrait Gallery, London. Purchased
2008

X101094



Cavendish Morton 1874–1939

Born and worked UK

Left to right:

Lizzie Avery in 'In Dahomey'

1903

Mattie Edwards in 'In Dahomey'

1903

2 photographs, platinum print on paper

Cavendish Morton specialised in portraits of stage actors and society's elite. The photographs here depict actors Mattie Edwards and Lizzie Avery. Both played characters in **In Dahomey**, the first musical comedy written and performed by an entirely Black cast and crew. They made significant contributions to the performing arts throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries in the US and UK. Morton often produced platinum prints like these. Through the absorption of the platinum on the paper surface, he achieves a completely matt finish.

Lent by the National Portrait Gallery, London. Given by the photographer's son, Cavendish Morton, 1991
X100539, X100540

Adolph de Meyer 1868–1946

Born France, worked France, UK and US

The Cup

1912

Photograph, photogravure print on paper

Wilson Centre for Photography

X99311

Adolph de Meyer 1868–1946

Born France, worked France, UK and US

Maid of Tangiers

c.1908

Photograph, platinum print on paper

Maid of Tangiers reflects Adolph de Meyer's attention to craftsmanship. He uses platinum printing to soften detail, appreciating mood over precision. The sitter's gaze and richly textured costume are rendered in delicate tones. De Meyer uses light and composition to create a painterly image. The title, however, frames the sitter not as an individual but as a type, reflecting reductive Orientalist trends that present North Africa through a romanticised European lens. This photograph invites us to appreciate de Meyer's pictorialist skills, but also question the cultural assumptions that shaped its creation.

Wilson Centre for Photography. X99313

George Seeley 1880–1955

Born and worked US

The Glow Worm

1907

Photograph, platinum print on paper

Victoria and Albert Museum, London. The Royal Photographic Society Collection. Purchased with the assistance of the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Art Fund
X99829

Yevonde 1893–1975

Born and worked UK

**Violet, Baroness von Gagern
as Europa**

1935

Photograph, Vivex colour print on paper

This work forms part of Yevonde's famous series, *Goddesses*. She photographed well-known people as figures from Greek and Roman mythology. Here, the god Zeus disguises himself as a bull to win the affection of Europa, a Phoenician princess. She lays flowers on Zeus's horns before he carries her to the island of Crete. Yevonde was known for her innovative work with the Vivex colour process, where three colour negatives are exposed simultaneously.

Lent by the National Portrait Gallery, London.

Given by the artist, 1971

X100532

Yevonde 1893–1975

Born and worked UK

**Edith Hart-Davis (Wallace), later Lady Brougham and Vaux
(‘Mrs Richard Hart-Davis as Ariel’)**

1935

Photograph, Vivex colour print on paper

Lent by the National Portrait Gallery, London.

Given by the artist, 1971

X100533



Alvin Langdon Coburn 1882–1966

Born US, worked UK and US

Clarence H White

Portfolio: Men of Mark 1913

1913

Photograph, photogravure print on paper

Wilson Centre for Photography

X99392

Edward J Steichen 1879–1973
Born Luxembourg, worked US

Portrait of Stieglitz

1915

Photograph, multi-coat gum platinum print on paper

In this photograph, Edward Steichen captures fellow photographer Alfred Stieglitz in a moment of quiet intensity. Light sculpts Stieglitz's face, while soft shadows evoke a sense of depth beyond the frame. Stieglitz was an artist, collector and gallerist who advocated for photography as an integral part of modern art in the US. Steichen and Stieglitz had a close relationship, working together on Stieglitz's progressive publication **Camera Work** 1903–17, which championed the art of photography.

Victoria and Albert Museum, London. The Royal Photographic Society Collection. Purchased with the assistance of the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Art Fund
X99949

5. DANCE

CLOCKWISE FROM THE WALL TEXT

[WALL TEXT]

5. Dance

Dance offered photographers an irresistible subject – a living art form concerned with beauty, the body and the transformation of the everyday into the extraordinary.

For pictorialists, the dancing figure was a vehicle for expression. A raised arm, an arc of a leg, or a sweep of fabric became means of conveying emotion, elevating the possibilities of the photographic portrait. This was also a collaborative endeavour. Dancers saw that pictorialist photographers like Sunami Soichi could capture movement's vitality with both sensitivity and technical skill.

This relationship proved to be mutually rewarding. Modern dance intended to liberate the body and claim its own place among the arts. Pictorialist photographers provided the images through which new ways of moving – and of seeing the body move – were circulated and understood.

Nickolas Muray 1892–1965
Born Hungary, worked US

Vera Fokina

1921

2 photographs, possibly bromide print on paper

Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Given
by the London Archives
of the Dance
X100055, X100056

Henry B Goodwin 1878–1931
Born Germany, worked Sweden

Jenny Hasselquist, Backarnad

1916

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Moderna Museet, Stockholm. Purchased 1982
X102388

Anna Riwkin 1908–1970
Born Belarus, worked Sweden

Dancer Lalla Cassel and Anna Riwkin

c.1930

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Moderna Museet, Stockholm. Donation 1999 from
Erik Brandius
X102389

Uno Falkengren 1889–1965

Born and worked Sweden

Famine

1917

Photograph, platinum print on cardboard

Moderna Museet, Stockholm. Donation 1965
from private donor

X102387

Henry B Goodwin 1878–1931

Born Germany, worked Sweden

Fokin and Fokina

1918

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Moderna Museet, Stockholm. Purchased 1982

X102386

Zenta Dzividzinska 1944–2011

Born and worked Latvia

Left to right:

'Untitled' from the cycle Riga Pantomime

1964–5

'Untitled' from the cycle Riga Pantomime

1964–7

2 photographs, inkjet print on paper

Exhibition prints made in 2026

Collection of the Latvian National Museum of Art, Courtesy
of Alise Tifentale and The Archive and Estate of Zenta

Dzividzinska

X102390, X102391

Zenta Dzividzinska drew on her experiments with abstraction and composition to create these works. She used photomontage, a technique combining multiple photographs to create one image. **Riga Pantomime** cycle captures the rehearsals and backstage interactions of an amateur ensemble. At the time, pantomime was a popular form of performance art within youth counterculture under the Soviet regime in Latvia. Here, Dzividzinska embraces the drama of the movement and expression often seen in pantomime. In 1965, Dzividzinska joined the Riga Photo Club, one of the most influential institutions in Latvia promoting the art of photography.

Robert Demachy 1859–1936

Born and worked France

Clockwise, from top:

Behind the Scenes

c.1900

Photograph, oil transfer print on paper

Behind the Scenes

1897–1901

Photograph, gum bichromate print on paper

Dans les Coulisses

1897

Photograph, crayon tinted oil transfer print
on paper

Victoria and Albert Museum, London. The Royal Photographic Society Collection. Purchased with the assistance of the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Art Fund X99636, X99638, X99637

Robert Demachy approached the camera not as a mechanical witness but as a brush for shaping personal expression. His dance photographs are among the most celebrated of his career. In these photographs, you can see his delicate control over the textures he created on the surface of each print. He was an expert in the gum bichromate and oil transfer processes, which required painstaking handwork in the darkroom. Many pictorialists criticised Demachy for making photographs that looked like drawings. He replied that photography needed to reveal the artist's hand to fully express its artistic potential.



Limb, Eung Sik 1912–2001

Born and worked South Korea

Left to right:

A Buddhist Dance

Feet 2 (Youngsook Han)

1968

2 photographs, gelatin silver print on paper

Limb Sang Chul by Limb Eung Sik Photo Archive

X99800, X99807

Rudolf Koppitz 1884–1936

Born Czech Republic, worked Austria

Left:

Bewegungsstudie (Movement Study)

1925

Photograph, carbon print on paper

The Collection of Sir Elton John and David Furnish
X99639

Ilse Bing 1899–1998

Born Germany, worked France, Germany and US

Top right:

Willem, Dancer

1932

Bottom right:

Laban Dance School

1929

2 photographs, gelatin silver print on paper

The Collection of Sir Elton John and David Furnish

X99799

Tate. Purchased with funds provided by the Photography
Acquisitions Committee 2025

P82854

Here, Ilse Bing and Rudolf Koppitz focus on the dynamism of the body in movement, creating sensual and expressive images. Skilled in darkroom processes, Koppitz experimented with pigment, carbon, gum and bromoil.

Movement Study depicts four dancers from the Vienna State Opera Ballet. Bing's **Laban Dance School** drew inspiration from the Austro-Hungarian choreographer Rudolf von Laban's innovative approach to movement. Laban created geometric patterns by using strings and ribbons around his dancers. Bing also evokes geometric forms and angles here, through the dancer's lifted legs and the crop of the composition, creating an almost abstract image.

Top to bottom:

Sunami, Soichi 1885–1971

Born Japan, worked US

Helen Tamiris

[dancing as a Bacchante to the music of Louis Gruenberg]

c.1930

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Private collection

X100366



Sunami, Soichi 1885–1971

Born Japan, worked US

Evelyn Gates

[performing 'Dances without Music']

c.1928

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Private collection

X100365

Top to bottom:

Sunami, Soichi 1885–1971

Born Japan, worked US

Helen Tamiris

[with arms outstretched]

c.1930

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Private collection

X100364

Sunami, Soichi 1885–1971

Born Japan, worked US

Untitled

[dancer with upraised arms]

c.1930s

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Private collection

X99819

Sunami, Soichi 1885–1971

Born Japan, worked US

Untitled

[dancer, with arms held over head]

c.1930

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Private collection

X100363

6. LONDON AND THE ROYAL PHOTOGRAPHY SOCIETY

CLOCKWISE FROM THE WALL TEXT

[WALL TEXT]

6. London and the Royal Photographic Society

In the story of pictorialism, London occupies a unique position. It was here that many of the movement's most important discussions took place, at The Royal Photographic Society (RPS) and the breakaway group, The Linked Ring. Members debated key questions about the nature of photography. What could it be, and who had the authority to decide?

Founded in 1853, the RPS ranked among the most influential photographic organisations in the world. Its Annual Exhibition drew submissions from across Europe, the Americas, Asia and Australia. Through its affiliation scheme, the RPS also connected hundreds of photo clubs and societies across the UK and beyond. It distributed ideas, set standards and shaped taste on a global scale.

Yet London continued to be a site for disagreement. The Linked Ring broke away from the RPS in 1892. For two decades, the organisations offered rival visions of what photographic excellence meant. When The Linked Ring dissolved in 1909, its commitment to photography as a

fine art form did not disappear with it. The London Salon of Photography was established the following year, continuing to champion pictorial work while providing an important alternative platform to the RPS.

[INTERMEDIATE WALL TEXT]

Showing in a Salon

The most important photography exhibitions were the annual photographic salons. A jury selects prints from a pool of submissions sent in by post, responding to an open call. Participation in salons built a sense of a global community and was empowering for photographers who lived far from cultural metropolises. Salons connected photographers with their international peers who may have only viewed each other's work reproduced in catalogues.

The two major annual exhibitions in London were The Photographic Salon (1893–1909), which transitioned to the London Salon in 1910, and The Royal Photographic Society Annual Exhibition (1854 to present). The latter included sections on Scientific and Technical Photography, Natural History, and Pictorial Photography. Each salon had a jury of senior photographers who debated which photographs were among the best work made that year.

The photographs in this room were all selected and shown in London, many at the RPS Annual Exhibition. They were then collected by the RPS, an additional mark of recognition that proved it met the highest standards of the medium. Today, the RPS collection sits at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London.

Minna Keene 1861–1943

Born Germany, worked Canada, South Africa and UK

Left to right:

Sunshine and Shadow

1904

Photograph, carbon print on paper

Basuto Girl

1907

Photograph, carbon print on paper

Exhibited in The Photographic Salon in 1909

Victoria and Albert Museum, London. The Royal Photographic Society Collection. Purchased with the assistance of the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Art Fund
X99626, X99625

Minna Keene started working as a photographer in the late 1890s. She was one of the few women photographers working out of a studio in South Africa between 1903 and 1913. Her work, including these two prints, was exhibited in international photography salons.

In **Basuto Girl**, Keene presents a portrait of an unnamed woman and baby. Despite its intimacy, the image draws on the colonial practice of racial stereotyping in photography that was common in South African visual culture at the time. It was reproduced as a postcard among others that were mostly bought by white audiences, during a period when institutionalised segregation was becoming more established in the Cape Colony.

George Chance 1885–1963

Born UK, worked New Zealand

Beech Trees, Wakatipu, NZ

1917

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Private collection

X102717

Olive Cotton 1911–2003
Born and worked Australia

Teacup Ballet

1935, printed c.1994

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Exhibited at the London Salon of Photography
in 1935

The Collection of Sir Elton John and David Furnish
X99432

Kálmán Szöllősy 1887–1976

Born and worked Hungary

Spring Allegory

1936

Photograph, bromide print on paper

Exhibited in the RPS Annual Exhibition in 1935

Victoria and Albert Museum, London. The Royal Photographic Society Collection. Purchased with the assistance of the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Art Fund
X100060

[WALL GRAPHICS]

[INTERMEDIATE WALL TEXT]

Stickers

Photography salons often designed stickers which were fixed to the back of submitted photographs. These stickers featured the name of the salon as well as the year. This made them important resources for identifying where a print had travelled to, and in which salons it was accepted. They functioned like medals or rosettes in the absence of trophies. Some photographers made it a hobby to collect these stickers, putting them in scrapbooks as mementos.

These stickers are courtesy of:

Collection of the Museum of the Kharkiv School of
Photography, Kharkiv, Ukraine

Collection of the National Museum of Singapore,
National Heritage Board, Gift of Mr Lee Sow Lim

The Royal Photographic Society

The Photographic Society of Singapore
and the individual clubs who designed them

Edward Weston 1886–1958

Born and worked US

Portrait of W A Alcock

1922

Photograph, palladium platinum print on paper

Exhibited in the RPS Annual Exhibition in 1926

Victoria and Albert Museum, London. The Royal Photographic Society Collection. Purchased with the assistance of the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Art Fund. X99629

Habib I Rahimtoola 1912–1991

Born India, worked India and Pakistan

Hart Point

1941

Photograph, bromide print on paper

Exhibited in the RPS Annual Exhibition in 1941

Victoria and Albert Museum, London. The Royal Photographic Society Collection. Purchased with the assistance of the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Art Fund X99633



Harold P Cazneaux 1878–1953
Born New Zealand, worked Australia

The Rock Pool

1941

Photograph, bromoil print on paper

Exhibited in the RPS Annual Exhibition in 1942

Victoria and Albert Museum, London. The Royal Photographic Society Collection. Purchased with the assistance of the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Art Fund
X99631

Lang, Jingshan 1892–1995

Born China, worked China and Taiwan

Riverside Spring

1942

Photograph, bromide print on paper

Exhibited in the RPS Annual Exhibition in 1942

Victoria and Albert Museum, London. The Royal Photographic Society Collection. Purchased with the assistance of the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Art Fund
X99634

[INTERMEDIATE WALL TEXT]

Left to right:

Installation photograph, The Photographic Salon, 1905.
Reproduced in **The Amateur Photographer**, Vol. 42,
no. 1095, September 26, 1905

The Royal, 1907
Reproduced in **Photograms of the Year 1907**, Vol. 13

RPS Lecture Room, 1932
Reproduced in *Royal Photographic Society Journal*, Vol. 72

Lancelot Vining, **The Salon Selection Committee at Work**
(including Bertram Park, Gilbert Adams, Angus Basil,
Marcus Adams, Archie Handford and Francis James
Mortimer), early 1940s. © reserved; collection National
Portrait Gallery, London

Another view, after the opening (91st RPS Annual Exhibition),
1946. Reproduced in **Royal Photographic Society Journal**,
Vol. 86, November 1946

CLOCKWISE FROM THE ROOM ENTRANCE

[WALL TEXT]

7. Pictorialists' Processes

Many photographers in this exhibition experimented with different ways to capture an image on a negative and then transfer that image permanently onto paper. Over time, processes became faster, easier and more stable. The size of cameras shrunk from large boxes mounted on legs, to small objects that can be carried anywhere.

7. PICTORIALISTS' PROCESSES

CLOCKWISE FROM THE ROOM ENTRANCE

[WALL TEXT]

7. Pictorialists' Processes

Many photographers in this exhibition experimented with different ways to capture an image on a negative and then transfer that image permanently onto paper. Over time, processes became faster, easier and more stable. The size of cameras shrunk from large boxes mounted on legs, to small objects that can be carried anywhere.

After the invention of the daguerreotype in 1839, further photographic innovations quickly followed. In this room, you can find out more about the pictorialists' laborious and experimental processes. There are also handling prints of some of their key printing techniques. At the end of the exhibition, don't miss the darkroom where you can learn more about the processes used by pictorialists.

[WALL GRAPHICS]

1852

Photographic Engraving

In the 1830s, English scientist and inventor William Henry Fox Talbot wanted to create stable paper prints that would not fade. He experimented with photomechanical methods to 'fix a shadow'. After years of experimentation, in 1852 he develops his photographic engraving technique, which would later become the popular photogravure process, the plates are attached to flatbed graphic presses, then printed onto paper.

© Royal Photographic Society Collection / Victoria and Albert Museum, London

1855

Carbon Print

In France, chemist Alphonse Louis Poitevin discovers and patents the carbon printing process, later refined by British scientist Joseph Swan in 1864. Carbon prints are durable and resistant to fading as they don't contain silver impurities that deteriorate over time. The process coats carbon tissue paper with pigmented gelatin emulsion, sensitised by potassium

bichromate and light. After exposure to a negative, the unexposed gelatin is melted using hot water and the remaining hardened emulsion forms a print with a unique texture.

1873

Platinum Print

William Willis invents the platinum printing process, or platinotype. The print is made with paper that contains a solution of light-sensitive iron salts and platinum. This saturates the paper to create a matt finish. It becomes a popular choice for pictorialists due to its ability to render an atmospheric image using a broad spectrum of midtones.

1874

Gelatin Silver Print

Gelatin silver prints become commercially available and one of the most frequently used processes, revolutionising photography. Its popularity continued into the 20th century. The fibre-based paper contains silver halide crystals fixed in a gelatin coating. The smooth gelatin surface allows for greater clarity in the image.

1879

Photogravure Print

In Vienna, Czech artist Karel Klíč develops the photogravure technique by combining Talbot's earlier work with the use of sensitised carbon tissue. The process etches an image onto a resin grain-coated copper plate using chemicals. After removing the carbon tissue, the plates are printed using flatbed graphic presses. The prints become popular with pictorialists.

1881

Dry Plate

George Eastman establishes the Eastman Dry Plate Company with Henry A Strong in New York. A dry plate is a film material that can be prepared in advance, rather than just before exposure. This means someone else can develop the print later. With this new technology, the size of cameras is vastly reduced and there is a distinct growth in amateur photography.

Advertisement, The Kodak camera from The Eastman Dry Plate and Film Co. Old Paper Studios / Alamy

1896

Gum Bichromate Print

In Germany, Heinrich Kühn exhibits some of the first ever gum bichromate prints, a technique similar to carbon printing . He produces a hybrid gum-gravure process and later develops a custom soft-focus lens. For gum bichromate prints, Kühn coats paper with pigmented gum arabic, exposes it, then washes away the unexposed gum. Multiple pigment layers can be applied, allowing versatile colour manipulation.

1899

Fresson Print

Théodore-Henri Fresson invents the fresson print in France. The textural, hand-crafted print takes over six hours to make. American photographer Gertrude Käsebier experiments early on with the technique, producing *The Bride* the following year, seen in Room 3.

Francis Benjamin Johnson, **Gertrude Käsebier** 1905.

Francis Benjamin Johnston Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division

1905

Carbro Print

Thomas Manly produces the carbro print from a combination of carbon and bromide printing. The process enables photographers to produce colour images. English photographer Violet K Blaiklock later uses this technique in her **In a London Garden** series, seen in Room 3.

1907

Bromoil Print

The bromoil transfer process is introduced, where a standard gelatin silver or chlorobromide print is bleached and 'tanned' as the gelatin hardens in proportion to the shadows and highlights. This forms a matrix – a 'master' surface used to transfer the ink onto paper. The dried matrix is inked with an oil-based ink, either brushed or rolled on which creates control over the texture and tone of the print.

1911

Oil Transfer Print

Robert Demachy improves the oil transfer process. By wiping instead of rinsing the surface it allows greater artistic freedom. He combines oil-based ink to further influence the print. A sheet of paper is hand-coated with light-sensitive gelatin, then exposed in contact with a negative. The gelatin hardens where it is exposed to light, and washes away where it isn't. A brush is then used to apply oil pigment, which is absorbed only in the exposed areas.

1928

Vivex Colour Print

Colour Photographs Limited of London introduces the Vivex colour process, after its invention by Dr Douglas A Spencer. A continuation of the carbro technique, it uses three separate negatives – taken through red, green and blue filters – to create pigment images in cyan, magenta and yellow. These pigment layers are carefully aligned and transferred onto paper. This produces vivid and highly stable prints with rich tonal depth.

Yevonde Yevonde with Vivex One-Shot Camera 1937 ©
National Portrait Gallery, London

[VITRINE]

Left to right:

Taking a photograph

When taking a photograph, first it is necessary to create a negative, which can be made from glass, paper or film. The film is placed inside the camera. When the shutter is pressed, the film is exposed to light. The lights and darks of the picture are inverted, leaving a 'negative' image. Before film was invented in the 20th century, early photographers often used glass.

Exposure

The amount of light that reaches the light-sensitive film over a given period will affect the final image. Film must be exposed to light for an appropriate amount of time to 'fix' the image. Too little exposure leads to dark images with details lost in the shadows. Too much light erases detail in the highlights. At extreme levels, overexposure can even degrade the light-sensitive compounds, causing the photograph to fade away.

Developing the film

Film needs to be processed in a darkroom, using chemical solutions. Developer is used to remove the first outer layer of emulsion from the film, allowing the images to be seen and a negative to be created. The negative is often considered the master image of a photograph. The negative is then immersed in stop bath, then fixer, to remove any unexposed silver, making it no longer sensitive to light.

Creating a print

A positive is the opposite of a negative, where the tones and colours of an image appear exactly as they do in real life. Most photographs are paper positives created from negatives. When a negative is projected or printed onto light-sensitive paper, the tonal values are flipped back, producing a true-to-life picture.

You can pick up the prints on this shelf. Look closely at the different surfaces, textures and tones of each one.

Dr Katayoun Dowlathshahi **Untitled** 2026

Carbon transfer print on paper

Printed using a 19th century double transfer technique

Constanza Isaza Martínez **Hortus IV** 2026

Platinum-palladium print on paper

Constanza Isaza Martínez **Untitled**, from the series

Metamorphosis 2026

Photogravure print with chine collé on paper

Hannah Fletcher and Matthew Beach

Tethered to the Belly of Deep Time 2026

Bromoil print on paper

8. COSMOPOLITAN NETWORKS

CLOCKWISE FROM THE WALL TEXT

[WALL TEXT]

8. Cosmopolitan Networks

Pictorialism spread through an intricate web of photo clubs, salons and societies. These networks connected photographers across continents, from London to Sydney, Shanghai to Singapore. They were far more than simple social gatherings – they provided the infrastructure of an art movement, generating the exhibitions, publications and international juries that gave pictorialism its credibility and reach.

In the absence of museums and academies willing to exhibit photographs, clubs created their own institutions. Annual salons, modelled on painting exhibitions, allowed photographers to submit work to international juries. They earned medals and saw their images reproduced in magazines that circulated worldwide. The portability of the print made this possible – a photograph made in Hong Kong could hang in London the following month.

The works gathered here reveal the energy of these global networks and the cosmopolitan ambitions of those who built them.

[INTERMEDIATE WALL TEXT]

Japan

The pictorialist movement flourished in Japan, establishing itself through clubs, exhibitions and publications. In 1893, the Foreign Photographic Art Exhibition was held in Tokyo. It showed 296 works from the London Camera Club, including some by PH Emerson. Japanese photographers also regularly exhibited overseas, with a particularly vibrant diasporic community in San Francisco.

Pictorialism was called 'geijutsu shashin' in Japan, which translates to 'art photography'. Like in Europe and the US, there was a diversity of approaches held together by a conviction that photography could be a distinctive art form.

In Japan, pictorial conventions also connected with themes typical of ink painting and woodblock prints, like elegance and discipline. Many of these ideas came together in the 1920s into what was loosely translated as 'photographic impressionism' – a school of thought led by the Japanese Photographic Art Society. Photographers moved away from manipulating the print, using light and shadow to create different effects instead. You can see examples of this in the four photographs by Yagaki Shikanosuke.

Otono, Sutezo 1905–1988

Born and worked Japan

Illusion

c.1935–40

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Tate. Purchased with funds provided by the Photography
Acquisitions Committee 2025

P82853

Yagaki, Shikanosuke 1897–1966

Born and worked Japan

Left to right:

Untitled (Foliage with Fence)

c.1950

Under the Water Faucet

1930

Sudden Wind

1930–9

Untitled (Interior)

1930–9

4 photographs, gelatin silver print on paper

Jack Kirkland Collection

X100049, X100048

Tate. Purchased with funds provided by the Asia-Pacific
Acquisitions Committee 2010

P79906

Tate. Presented by Jacqui Brantjes and Daniel Pittack 2010
P13146

Nakayama, Iwata 1895–1949

Born Japan, worked France, Japan and US

Left:

Composition (Lights)

1935–45

Middle top:

Composition (Eggs and Net)

1935–45

Middle bottom:

Composition (Butterflies)

1930

Right:

Composition

c.1941

4 photographs, gelatin silver print on paper

Tate. Purchased with funds provided by the Photography Acquisitions Committee 2025

P82857, P82856

Tate. Presented by the Estate of Iwata Nakayama 2026

P21068

Tate. Purchased with funds provided by Jack Kirkland in honour of Yasufumi Nakamori 2025

P82858

Nakayama Iwata was a central figure in the Japanese New Photography movement, which mixed abstraction with a commitment to 'pure art photography', a term Nakayama coined in 1928. Here, he captures the poetic beauty typical of pictorialism by combining film negatives and magazine cut outs through an experimental photomontage technique. He wrote: 'I have a deep appreciation for beauty. But in moments where beauty may seem elusive, I am driven to create it... For me, a photograph is not a part of nature, nor is it a slice of reality... It is merely just a single photograph.'



[INTERMEDIATE WALL TEXT]

Hong Kong

Photo clubs were instrumental in forming international connections. They opened the door to the sharing of ideas across different cities, producing complex networks around the world. Hong Kong photographers often exchanged prints with Singapore photo clubs.

Both Ho Fan and Tchan Fou-Li were members of amateur photo clubs in Hong Kong. Here, Ho evokes a cinematic theatricality in *Misty World* and *Smoky World* by exploring light and shadow within the confines of the urban landscape. He invites viewers to look beyond the bustle and towards the emotional undercurrents of the city. Ho later became a filmmaker. Tchan, however, remained committed to depictions of nostalgic mountain scenes reminiscent of ink painting. He stated 'landscape photography should honour the tradition established by Chinese painting'. Well-versed in darkroom techniques such as film development, colour temperature and gradation control, Tchan created photographs with similar aesthetic sentiments to his predecessor Lang Jingshan.

Ho, Fan 1931–2016

Born China, worked Hong Kong

Left:

On the Stage of Life

c.1954

Middle:

School is Over

c.1963

Top right:

Smoky World

1959

Bottom right:

Misty World

1961

4 photographs, gelatin silver print on paper

M+, Hong Kong

X92208, X92209, X92210, X92211



Tchan, Fou-li 1916–2018

Born China, worked Hong Kong

Left:

Mountain View

c.1962

Middle top:

[no title]

c.1962

Middle bottom:

Snow Peaks

1962

Right:

[no title]

c.1959

4 photographs, gelatin silver print on paper

M+, Hong Kong

X92214, X92215, X100292, X100293

Yip, Cheong Fun 1903–1989

Born Hong Kong, worked Singapore

Top left:

Father's Care

c.1940

Top right:

The Call of the Bell

1960

Bottom left:

Seven Sisters

1940s

Bottom right:

The Days of Innocence

1959

4 photographs, gelatin silver print on paper

Collection of National Gallery Singapore

X99694, X99699, X99701, X99695

Wu, Peng Seng 1915–2006
Born China, worked Singapore

Clockwise from left:

At Rest

1964

Untitled

c.1950

Construction

1958

3 photographs, gelatin silver print on paper

Collection of National Gallery Singapore

X99691

Gift of the artist and family. Collection of National Gallery
Singapore

X99693

Collection of National Gallery Singapore

X99692

Lee, Sow Lim born 1930
Born Malaysia, worked Singapore

Left to right:

Moving Mountains

1957

Silver Tree

1955

2 photographs, gelatin silver print on paper

Collection of the National Museum of Singapore, National
Heritage Board

X99703

Collection of National Gallery Singapore

X99704

[PROJECTOR]

[INTERMEDIATE WALL TEXT]

Singapore

Pictorial photography first appeared in Singapore in the 1920s. It gained momentum in the postwar decades of the 1950s and 60s, driven by a vibrant photo club culture. The most prominent was the Photographic Society of Singapore, founded in 1950 with close ties to The Royal Photographic Society in London.

Photographers in Singapore were less concerned with stylistic labels than with ideals of beauty, harmony and a distinct sense of place. Their work reflected the particular textures of life on the island – its harbours, kampongs (villages), coastlines and rapidly changing urban landscape. This was filtered through an aesthetic sensibility shaped by exposure to international photographic trends. Yip Cheong Fun and Lee Sow Lim brought a humanistic warmth to depictions of everyday life. Wu Peng Seng worked with bold silhouettes, finding poetry in both rural and urban scenes.

Olive Cotton 1911–2003
Born and worked Australia

Clockwise from left:

Leaf Skeleton

c.1964

Max in Shadows

1945

Girl with Cicada on Her Hand, from the 'Sturt School' series

c.1935

3 photographs, gelatin silver print on paper

The Collection of Sir Elton John and David Furnish
X99420, X99431, X99425

Max Dupain 1911–1992
Born and worked Australia

Left to right:

Mother and Child

1952

Hobart Siesta

1947, printed 1970

At Newport

1952

3 photographs, gelatin silver print on paper

The Collection of Sir Elton John and David Furnish
X99436, X99434, X99433



The Sydney Camera Circle was founded in 1916 by Australian photographers Harold Cazneaux and Cecil Bostock. It advocated for pictorialist photography, with members taking an interest in the artistic quality of their prints and favouring the outdoors as a site for photographic exploration. Among its most celebrated members were Olive Cotton and her then husband Max Dupain, whose images here balance darkroom experimentation with familial intimacy. Cotton's lyrical studies of light and form complement Dupain's bold urban compositions. They reveal two distinct yet interconnected visions that helped shape the development of Australian art photography in the 20th century.

Clockwise from left:

Liu, Bannong 1891–1934

Born and worked China

The Suburb

1927

Lao, Yanruo 1883–1966

Born and worked China

Aesop's Fables

c.1925

Sun, Zhongkuan (life dates not known)

Born and worked China

Peony's Radiant Show

c.1927

3 photographs, inkjet print on paper

Exhibition print made in 2026

Courtesy of Chen Shen

X100132, X99732, X99735

Pictorial photography in China emerged in the early 1920s, driven by a generation of amateur photographers who were also scholars, writers and painters. The Light Society, founded at Peking University in 1923, is credited as the first Chinese photographic group to champion photography as a fine art. Theoretical debates about photography's artistic potential were as important as practice, most notably through Liu Bannong's influential monograph **Bannong on Photography**. The photographers displayed here were all members of the Light Society.

[VITRINE 1]

USSR in Construction, no. 6

1931

USSR in Construction, no. 7–8

1930

USSR in Construction was the most widely distributed propaganda magazine of its day in Soviet Russia. Published between 1930 and 1941 in Russian, French, English, German and Spanish, it aimed to promote the achievements of the young Soviet state internationally, focusing on its efforts in industrialisation and modernisation. Pictorialist photographers, including Max Alpert, Max Penson and Georgy Petrusov, were some of the first artists to contribute to it, soon followed by Aleksandr Rodchenko. The publication used and circulated pictorialist styles as well as constructivist art as a tool for propaganda.

Tate. Library and Archive
Z92105, Z92106

Camera Work (January 1913 volume), ed. Alfred Stieglitz

1913

Camera Work (cover)

1903-17

Wilson Centre of Photography

Z92122

Private collection

Z92084

Alfred Stieglitz's quarterly photographic journal **Camera Work** features reviews and essays that elevated the discourse on art photography and pictorialism. The publication featured high quality photogravure reproductions by leading photographers, which Stieglitz sometimes hand-mounted into the journal. Stieglitz's inclusion of British photographer Julia Margaret Cameron's photographs connected pictorialism to an earlier generation of experimental image making. Cameron's expressive portraits and use of soft focus with dramatic lighting demonstrated photography could convey psychological depth and poetic feeling. By placing her work alongside practitioners working at the turn of the 20th century, Stieglitz positions Cameron as an important precursor.

Cameragraphs of the Year, ed. Cecil W Bostock

1924

Photograms of the Year 1910

1910

Private collection

Z92089, Z92087

[VITRINE 2]

Left to right:

Shashinkai: The Monthly Photographic Journal, Vol. 8 & 10

1921

Dai ikkai Kokusai Shashin Saron

(The First International Photographic Salon of Japan), Vol. 1

1927

**Dai nikai Kokusai Shashin Saron (The Second International
Photographic Salon of Japan), Vol. 2**

1928

Open book

British Museum

Z90011–3

Left to right:

**Dai sankai Kokusai Shashin Saron (The Third International
Photographic Salon of Japan), Vol. 3**

1929

Open book

Nihon shashin nenkan

(The Japan Photography Annual) , 1925-42. Showa 13

1938

British Museum

Z90014–5

[VITRINE 3]

16th Singapore International Salon of Photography

1965

Despite being small cities, Singapore and Hong Kong had many active photo clubs. The clubs organised prominent international salons with large numbers of global entries. The catalogue for the 16th Singapore International Salon has a large fold out featuring reproductions of every photograph in the exhibition, arranged by country and numbered for easy reference. In contrast, the catalogue for the London Salon only included photographers' names and artwork titles. These catalogues aimed to cement the status of the clubs and exhibitions that allowed the formation of overseas networks.

Collection of National Gallery Singapore Library & Archive,
gift of The Photographic Society of Singapore
Z92094

Left to right:

5th Pan-Malayan Photographic Exhibition and Foto News

1931

9th Singapore International Salon of Photography

1958

1st International Salon of Pictorial Photography, Saigon

1960

Collection of National Gallery Singapore Library & Archive,
gift of The Photographic Society of Singapore

Z92093, Z92095

Collection of Han Youngsoo Foundation, South Korea

Z92098

Left to right:

**Mysore Photographic Society,
Bangalore, India International Salon**

1953

**5th Exhibition of Photography
by the members of the Chinese
Photographic Association
of Hong Kong**

1964

**20th H.K. International Salon
of Pictorial Photography**

1965

**Michael Pritchard Collection
Z92440, Z92357, Z92356**

9. LOCAL VISIONS, GLOBAL CONVERSATIONS

CLOCKWISE FROM THE ROOM ENTRANCE

[WALL TEXT]

9. Local Voices, Global Conversations

Being a member of the same international photo club or salon did not mean photographers made similar work. The photographs in this room demonstrate how photo club culture fostered distinctly local artistic identities, even as it connected practitioners across the world.

In South Korea, photo clubs became sites of intense debate about the relationship between aesthetics and politics. Photographers moved between pictorialism, realism and modernism. They kept experimenting to search for an authentically South Korean photographic identity, shaped by the pressures of colonial history and national division. In Brazil, the São Paulo-based Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante nurtured an open and creative atmosphere, where geometric abstraction sat alongside portraiture and landscape.

The work produced by members of these clubs reveals a diversity that is only now being recognised as part of the pictorialist legacy.

OP Sharma born 1937

Born and works India

Geeta Kapur

1960s

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Dr OP Sharma has been director of photography at the prominent New Delhi arts centre Triveni Kala Sangam since 1980. A member of The Royal Photographic Society, his work has received awards in Norway, Pakistan, Japan and the United States, among other places. Here, Sharma captures art critic Geeta Kapur surrounded by visible signs of the artist's handwork, positioning the picture at the intersection of painting and photography.

Dr OP Sharma

X100289

FR Ratnagar 1989–1994

Born and worked India

Evening on the Hills

c.1930

Photograph, toned bromide print on paper

FR Ratnagar appeared in international exhibitions including Melbourne's Victorian Salon of Photography in the 1930s, revealing the global reach of South Asian pictorialism. Ratnagar was in contact with Australian photographers, especially those involved with the Sydney Camera Circle. Throughout the 20th century, photographers formed photo clubs and salon networks connecting Mumbai (then colonial Bombay), Colombo, Lahore and London. They challenged the idea that artistic innovation flowed only from Europe or the US.

Victoria and Albert Museum, London. The Royal Photographic Society Collection. Purchased with the assistance of the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Art Fund
X99620

[INTERMEDIATE WALL TEXT]

South Korea

Art photography developed in South Korea alongside the Japanese occupation (1910–1945), the Korean War (1950–1953), and the division of the peninsula into North and South Korea. After decades of major social upheaval, photographers were searching for an aesthetic to represent a new South Korean identity. Many of these discussions played out in photo clubs. The new style had to be different to the work produced during the colonial period, yet still situate South Korea in dialogue with the world.

Limb Eung Sik, Lee Hyungrok and Han Youngsoo were all members of the New Line Group founded in 1956. They paved the way towards photographic realism – inspired by images exploring universal humanity they saw in MoMA's **The Family of Man** exhibition that toured to South Korea in 1957. Lee later left the group to form Salon Ars (1960–1) and the Modern Photography Society (1961–7), finding realism a constraint on the aesthetic purity he pursued.

These club photographers actively took part in salon exhibitions around the world, using photography to gain international visibility for South Korea.

Lee, Hyungrok 1917–2011

Born and worked Korea

Left to right:

Riverside, Seoul Hangang River

1957

Dried Fishes, Seoul Namdaemun Market

1957

Floating, Seoul Hangang River

1960

The Square of Living

1957

4 photographs, gelatin silver print on paper

Collection of Seoul Museum of Art

X99956, X103313, X99957, X99955



Lee Hyungrok was a founding member of several important photography clubs in South Korea. He experimented with composition, angles and framing, even within realist depictions of Seoul's streets and markets. The works displayed here were all made between 1957 and 1960, a period where he was transitioning from photographic realism to abstraction. **Floating, Seoul Hangang River** highlights his ambition to foreground photography's formal aesthetic possibilities over its documentary function.

Sung, Dookyung 1915–1986
Born and worked South Korea

Untitled

Date unknown
2 photographs, gelatin silver print on paper

Collection of Seoul Museum of Art
X100381, X100380

Lim, Seok-je 1918–1996
Born and worked South Korea

Left to right:

At the Sangdong Tungsten Mine in Yeongwol

1955

A Net and the Sun

1946

2 photographs, gelatin silver print on paper

Collection of Seoul Museum of Art
X100383, X100382

Han, Youngsoo 1933–1999

Born North Korea (then Kaesung), worked South Korea

Left to right:

Untitled

1950s

Untitled

1950s

Untitled

1955

3 photographs, gelatin silver print on paper

Collection of Han Youngsoo Foundation, South Korea

X100376, X100375, X99953

Van Leo 1921–2002

Born Turkey, worked Egypt

Left to right:

Teddy Lane. South African 'Dancer'

1944

**Teddy Lane. S.A. Big Face,
with Vaseline, Blue eyes, Blonde Hair**

1945

2 photographs, inkjet print on paper

Exhibition prints made in 2026

Van Leo Collection. Courtesy of the Arab Image Foundation.
X103723, X103724

Van Leo (born Levon Boyadjian) developed unusual techniques to create his images. As the title **Teddy Lane. S.A. Big Face, with Vaseline, Blue eyes, Blonde Hair** suggests, he covered the sitter's face in Vaseline to create a textured luminance. Leo considered his portrait of South African dancer, Teddy Lane, his masterpiece. His body of work is an evocative record of mid-20th century Egyptian and international society. Countless actors, dancers and well-known personalities regularly passed through his studio.

Marcel Giró 1913–2011

Born Spain, worked Brazil

Blur

c.1950

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Tate. Purchased with funds provided by the Photography
Acquisitions Committee 2025

P82848

Palmira Puig 1912–1979

Born Spain, worked Brazil

Flower Seller

c.1950

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Tate. Purchased with funds provided by the Photography
Acquisitions Committee 2025

P82852

Marcel Giró 1913–2011
Born Spain, worked Brazil

Morning

c.1950

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Tate. Purchased with funds provided by an anonymous donor
2025

P82849

In these five photographs, you can see the shared visual language of photographers Palmira Puig and Marcel Giró. The couple fled Spain in the late 1930s, settling in Brazil in 1948. They often travelled together and created images of similar subjects. Their photographs only differed in elements like the orientation or angle of the scene. The two prints to the right are examples of their shared aesthetic. Giró joined the Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante in 1950, and Puig shortly followed in January 1957.

Marcel Giró 1913–2011
Born Spain, worked Brazil

Untitled

c.1950
Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Tate. Purchased with funds provided by the Photography
Acquisitions Committee 2025
P82850

Palmira Puig 1912–1979
Born Spain, worked Brazil

Untitled

c.1950
Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Tate. Purchased with funds provided by the Photography
Acquisitions Committee 2025
P82851

Geraldo de Barros 1923–1998

Born and worked Brazil

Left to right:

Granada, Spain

1951

Untitled (São Paulo) Composition II

1949

Untitled (Telegraph Wires)

c.1950s

3 photographs, gelatin silver print on paper

Tate. Presented by the American Fund for the Tate Gallery,
courtesy of the Latin American Acquisitions Committee 2016
P14627, P14601, P14628



Roberto Marconato 1932

Born and works Brazil

Dispute

c.1966

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Tate. Lent by the Tate Americas Foundation, courtesy of Latin American Acquisitions Committee 2017

L03998

Ivo Ferreira da Silva 1911–1986

Born and worked Brazil

Ghost City

c.1960

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Tate. Lent by the Tate Americas Foundation, courtesy of Latin American Acquisitions Committee 2017

L03995

José Yalenti 1895–1967
Born and worked Brazil

Parking

c.1950

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Tate. Lent by the Tate Americas Foundation, courtesy of Latin
American Acquisitions Committee 2017
L03997

José Yalenti 1895–1967
Born and worked Brazil

Left to right:

Iron Tentacles

1950s, later print

Architecture no. 7

1957, later print
2 photographs, inkjet print on paper

Tate. Presented by the American Fund for the Tate Gallery,
courtesy of Ella Fontanals Cisneros 2016
P14401, P14402

Roberto Marconato 1932

Born and works Brazil

B5

c.1965

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Tate. Lent by the Tate Americas Foundation, courtesy of Latin
American Acquisitions Committee 2017

L03999

Gertrudes Altschul 1904–1962

Born Germany, worked Brazil

Behind the Curtain

c.1957

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Botanical motifs were central to Gertrudes Altschul's practice. She was also inspired by urban scenes in São Paulo, the city where she rebuilt her life after fleeing Nazi Germany in 1939. Altschul joined Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante in 1952 and helped shape the experimental language of Brazilian photography. Here, she draws on the technique of photomontage to create multiple exposures of leaf textures and shapes, creating the 'curtain' in its title.

Tate. Purchased with funds provided by the Photography Acquisitions Committee 2024

T16359

[INTERMEDIATE WALL TEXT]

Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante

Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante (1939–82), later known as Escola Paulista, was one of the most prominent amateur photo clubs in Brazil. Although the FCCB was initially inspired by pictorialist techniques, it began to drift away from the movement to define a more modernist Brazilian aesthetic. Renowned members included Geraldo de Barros, José Yalenti, Palmira Puig, Marcel Giró, Gertrudes Altschul, Ivo Ferreira da Silva and Roberto Marconato. Photo clubs were important for the exchange of equipment, experiences, techniques and innovations among artists.

10. MODERN VISIONS

CLOCKWISE FROM THE ROOM ENTRANCE

[WALL TEXT]

10. MODERN VISIONS

Pictorialism did not end with modernism, it gave birth to it. The two movements remained intertwined. There was no clean break. The photographers in this room worked across the gap between them. Their work reveals the pictorialist roots of modernism.

Figures such as Alfred Stieglitz, Paul Strand and Edward Steichen started as pictorialists before embracing the sharper, more direct aesthetic of modernist photography. Yet even in their later work, the pictorialist impulse – an attention to light, tone and compositional harmony – persisted. Others, including Aleksandr Rodchenko and Lionel Wendt, took part in the salons while pursuing progressive ambitions.

What united these photographers was a shared belief, first articulated by the pictorialists, that the camera could be a vehicle for individual vision. That legacy endures in photography to this day.

Alfred Stieglitz 1864–1946

Born and worked US

Left to right:

The Steerage

c.1907

City of Ambition

c.1910

2 photographs, photogravure print on paper

Victoria and Albert Museum, London. The Royal Photographic Society Collection. Purchased with the assistance of the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Art Fund

X100075

Private collection

X99964

August Sander 1876–1964
Born and worked Germany

Im Siebengebirge
(In the Siebengebirge)

c.1941
Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Tate. Presented by Gerd and Christine Sander 2009
P20345

Paul Strand 1890–1976
Born and worked US

Miss Thomson, New Mexico

c.1922
Photograph, platinum print on paper

Wilson Centre for Photography
X99308

Edward Weston 1886–1958

Born and worked US

Left to right:

Shells

1927, printed later

Mojave Desert

1928

2 photographs, gelatin silver print on paper

Tate. Accepted by HM Government in lieu of inheritance tax
from the Estate of Barbara Lloyd and allocated to Tate 2009

P13096

Collection David Knaus, Palm Springs

X100367

Heinrich Kühn 1866–1944

Born Germany, worked Austria

The Rubber Tree

1929

Photograph, bromoil print on paper

Wilson Centre for Photography

X99309

Edward J Steichen 1879–1973
Born Luxembourg, worked US

Left to right:

Heavy Roses, Voulangis, France

1914

Photograph, photogravure print on paper

Primo Carnera

c.1922

Photograph, toned bromide print on paper

Gerhardt Hauptmann

1933

Photograph, bromide print on paper

Lillian Gish as Ophelia

1936

Photograph, bromide print on paper

Victoria and Albert Museum, London. The Royal Photographic Society Collection. Purchased with the assistance of the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Art Fund X100074, X100070, X100071, X100072

Edward Steichen, together with Alfred Stieglitz, championed pictorialism in the early 20th century before moving towards modernism in the form of 'straight' photography – a commitment to sharpness of vision and fine detail. His later portraits **Primo Carnera** and **Gerhardt Hauptmann** retain the expressiveness and drama of pictorialism yet introduce a mechanically sharp focus. The work **Lillian Gish as Ophelia** is reminiscent of the photographs made by 19th century pictorialists inspired by Pre-Raphaelite painters, emulating the same soft and ethereal qualities.



William Mortensen 1897–1965

Born and worked US

Nymph

1920s

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Collection David Knaus, Palm Springs

X100373

Lionel Wendt 1900–1944

Born and worked Sri Lanka (then colonial Ceylon)

Male Youth, Ceylon

1937

Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper

Collection David Knaus, Palm Springs

X100358

Lionel Wendt 1900–1944

Born and worked Sri Lanka (then colonial Ceylon)

[titles not known]

c.1933–8

4 photographs, gelatin silver print on paper

Tate. Purchased with funds provided by the South Asia
Acquisitions Committee 2013

P80193, P80194, P80197, P80213

The works here reveal Lionel Wendt's interest in the human body and tropical landscapes. They highlight his experimental darkroom techniques, including photograms, photomontage and solarisation. Following a brief legal career in London, Wendt returned to Sri Lanka (then colonial Ceylon) in the 1930s to pursue photography, film and the arts. In 1934 he revived the Photographic Society of Ceylon, established by his father in 1906, to promote photography as an art form. During this time, he persistently posted his photographs to exhibitions and salons in London, Brussels and Paris.

Park, Youngsook 1941–2025
Born and worked South Korea

Left to right:

Untitled

1964, printed 2021

New Mask

1963, printed 2021

[title not known]

1963, printed 2021

3 photographs, gelatin silver print on paper

Collection of Seoul Museum of Art
X103310, X103311, X103312

Park Youngsook made these photographs when she was studying for her undergraduate degree in South Korea. **Untitled** depicts a woman sitting on the ground surrounded by tall grass. Park's use of mannequins also suggests her awareness of surrealist aesthetics and offers a progressive feminist perspective. **New Mask** won a prize at The First Dong-a International Photo Salon in 1966, the same year Park held her first solo exhibition.

Tsuda, Yoho 1923–2014
Born and worked Japan

Left to right:

Oil Refinery at Night

1963

Night Comes to the Housing Complex

1960

2 photographs, gelatin silver print on paper

Jack Kirkland Collection
X99974, X99975

Onishi, Shigeru 1928–1994

Born and worked Japan

[titles not known]

1950s

2 photographs, gelatin silver print on paper

Tate. Purchased with funds provided by the Photography
Acquisitions Committee 2022

T15957

Tate. Purchased with funds provided by Michael A.
Chesser (Tate Americas Foundation) and Yukiko Pajot 2022

T15958

While studying at Hokkaido University, Onishi Shigeru joined a local photo club. He wanted to demonstrate mathematical theories through his photography. Onishi's experimental images defy categorisation. His prints reveal several levels of darkroom manipulation, including the use of multiple negatives and hand-brushing emulsion onto photo paper, recalling the methods of early pictorialism. His layering of abstract elements created a unique and inventive body of work, accumulated over a short period of time. Around 1957, Onishi abandoned photography for calligraphy.

Gisela Markham-Szanto

1904–1980

Born and worked UK

Left to right:

Tree Climbing

1942

Garden

1938

2 photographs, gelatin silver print on paper

Victoria and Albert Museum, London. The Royal Photographic Society Collection. Purchased with the assistance of the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Art Fund
X99645, X100059

Aleksandr Rodchenko 1891–1956

Born and worked Russia

Left to right:

Balconies

1925

Pine Trees

1927

Radio Station Tower

1929

3 photographs, gelatin silver print on paper

Wilson Centre for Photography

X99971, X99972

Jack Kirkland Collection

X99973

Aleksandr Rodchenko was a leading figure of constructivism – a movement that united art, design and everyday life through clarity, utility and social purpose. Turning to photography in 1923, his images include striking angles and radical viewpoints. In these photographs, he challenges conventional vision and reveals the geometry of modern life. Although Rodchenko moved away from art photography and classified his works as documentary, his images were widely exhibited in international pictorialist salons from 1928 to 1941. His practice moved between documentary and progressive photography, demonstrating its power as both a social record and an aesthetic experiment.

Josef Sudek 1896–1976

Born and worked Czech Republic (then Bohemia)

Left to right:

The Window of My Studio

1944–54

The Windows of My Studio

1954

The Windows of My Studio

1954

3 photographs, gelatin silver print on paper

Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Purchase funded
by the Photographs Acquisition Group

X99646

Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

X99647, X99649

This series, titled **The Window of My Studio**, comprises hundreds of photographs, of which three are shown here. The window of Josef Sudek's home in Prague opened onto a small garden that overlooked the neighbouring buildings. It became a device for framing his images, but also a literal and metaphorical barrier between his domestic space and an outside world under Nazi occupation and Stalin's rule. Sudek preferred to take photographs on overcast days, using the limited lighting and shadows to enhance image depth. Observing the world from his home through different seasons, he captured the unusual in the everyday.

11. DARKROOM

[WALL TEXT]

11. Darkroom

Immerse yourself in the darkroom – a space where photographs come to life.

Long before digital cameras and editing software existed, the darkroom was at the heart of photography. Through a blend of science, craft and creativity, pictorialists transformed light into lasting images by hand. Bathed in the glow of red safelights, photographers worked in near darkness to prevent light-sensitive paper and film from being accidentally exposed. Red light has the longest wavelength in the visible spectrum and won't trigger any chemicals to react. It allows photographers to still see and handle their prints in the dark.

The darkroom process demands precision, patience and practice. Here, you can find the tools that make it possible. First, photographers project negatives onto photographic paper, using the enlarger displayed to the right of the room. Special timers control exposure periods down to the second. Trays, arranged in the middle of the room, contain chemicals to develop and fix images. Drying lines hold the finished prints, where images are revealed for the first time.

As you look around, imagine the atmosphere of a working darkroom: the quiet focus, the smell of chemicals, and the excitement of seeing an image slowly appear on a blank piece of paper. Which object catches your attention? What part do you think it played in turning light into an image?

Platinum Printing

Running time 3 min, looped

This short film explores the handcrafted process of platinum printing, from a photographic negative to a richly toned and painterly print.

CREDITS

Visit and revisit all Tate
shows for free as a Member

#LightAndMagic

Leave us your comment

@Tate

Tag us in your visit for
a chance to feature



The Art of Sustainable Darkroom

Discover the magic of the darkroom, experiment and develop new skills with process-based short courses, inspired by the history of global pictorialism and alternative photographic practices.

Each course focuses on a different photographic process, from multi-coloured cyanotypes and black-and-white silver gelatin printing to homemade dry plates. Working with low-toxicity and plant-based chemistries, you'll learn how photographs are made, transformed, and experienced as physical objects.

The darkroom workshops organised in collaboration with
The Sustainable Darkroom.

Various dates between
October 2026 – February 2027

£120 / £95 for Members

£100 Concessions

£50 for Tate Collective

Scan here to explore the courses and book your place. The
courses will take place in the darkroom within the exhibition
and include access to the show.

Book your tickets here



ART HANDLING

Bella Beare, Lily Crew, Paul Duncan, Patricia Gregory, Gabriel Harris, Patrick Higgs, Sarah Kingham, David Miles, Stephen Newsome, Simon Rattigan, Jack Severn

ASSOCIATED PROGRAMMES

Annie Bicknell, Ariel Haviland, Iqra Rahman, Jennifer van der Merwe, Vanessa Maria Wilson

COLLECTION REGISTRARS, DISPLAYS

Caroline McCarthy

CURATORIAL TEAM

Genevieve Barton, Anne Kimunguyi, Charmaine Toh

DIGITAL TEAM

Angus Bamford, Freya Hellier, Saskia Mercuri, Jerome Monnot, Scott Morris, Lauren Ostafijczuk, Ben Wells

EXHIBITION MANAGEMENT

Manuela Buttiglione

EXHIBITION REGISTRARS

Sean Crawford, Travis Miles

DESIGN

Alessia Arcuri, Gatti Routh Architects,
Lina Manrique, Tate Design Studio

LIBRARY

Anna Golodnitsky, Hayley Webb

INTERPRETATION

Yulin Huang, Gillian Wilson

PAPER & PHOTOGRAPH CONSERVATION

Stephanie Jamieson, Elsa Money, Cass Power, David
Schroeter, Ioannis Vasallos

PHOTOGRAPHY AND IMAGING

Kathleen Arundell, Larina Fernandes, Lucy Green, Joe
Humphrys

PREVENTIVE CONSERVATION

Kate Perks

PRODUCTION AND INSTALLATION

Hannah Crowley, Emma Hosking, Scott Sowerby, Adam
Wozniak

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Linda Bevan, Russell Bright, Sandra McLean, Deise Rodriguez,
Renata Smialek and Visitor Experience Team

EXHIBITION BUILD

SetWorks

GRAPHICS PRINTING AND INSTALLATION

Albemarle

LIGHTING

Sanford Lighting

