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Kamin Mohammadi pays a visit Photo London as it makes a triumphant return to London this May. Here's what to expect from the fair, plus how to get your hands on tickets before the weekend is up.

Review: Photo London At Somerset House



Ali Tahayori's Archive of Longing

London's Somerset House once again plays host to the world's premier photo fair: Photo London is on now until Sunday 19 May. Bringing photographers and galleries for all over the world – over 40 cities are represented – the fair is now in its ninth year, and brings a plethora of photographers from the newest discoveries, such as Kennedi Carter and Satchel Lee brought by the Cierra Britton Gallery from New York, to established superstars such as David Bailey represented by Camera Eye, iconic fashion from Steven Meisel and Patrick Demarchelier, and posthumous celebrations such as the Lee Miller Archives.

This enormous fair present a chance to see some classic images printed and displayed in their full glory: Terry O'Neill's iconic 1977 photo of Faye Dunaway *The Morning After* which sees the actress lounging by a pool with her Oscar on the table in front takes pride

of place against one wall, while Eva Sereny's evocative 1978 photo of Anthony Quinn dancing on the quayside of a Greek island in character for film *The Greek Tycoon* captures all eyes placed between two windows, reflecting the skyline of the photo. But Photo London is also the place to discover new talent from all over the world. Janet Rady Fine Art brings to her booth the extraordinary work of Bahraini artist Ghada Khunji, whose *FaRIDA* series (2015-2022) pays tribute to Frida Kahlo's work merging Kahlo's own symbolism with her own references, thus combining the Catholic iconography of the Mexican artist with her own Bahraini aesthetic, juxtaposing a kestrel with the Catholic bleeding heart. Bold and colourful, these images speak of both the suffering and strength of women across cultures.

In another solo show, British-Iranian Cyrus Mahboubian presents jewel-like black and white polaroids that, within their tiny frames, draw the viewer in to mysterious naturescapes into which he sometimes intervenes with acrylic paint, slowing down the rushing of time.



Ali Tahayori's Archive of Longing

More Iranian photographers are featured in booth W11 occupied by Roya Khadjavi Projects and Namazee Fine Art. Featuring six contemporary Iranian artists, the dazzling and diverse work ranges from the complex abstract Manhattan cityscapes of Tooraj Khamenehzadeh's *Disruption* series to the startling black and white *Mokhber al-Dowleh* series of Tehran-based Tahmineh Monzavi whose photos of elaborate wedding gowns contrasting sharply with the crumbling buildings in one of Tehran's oldest and untouched neighbourhoods. Ali Tahayori's *Archive of Longing* takes old family photographs from Iran, each piece zooming into a detail in an image which Ali then prints on glass, then cutting into repetitive geometric shapes and lozenges recalling the traditional Iranian craft of mirror and glass work, producing a detailed image which transitions from 2D to 3D and recalls Persian architectural details, a deep and layered comment on the ambiguous feelings of nostalgia for homeland and family, with hints at different forms of love and desire. Australia-based Tahayori is one of the photographers shortlisted for the prestigious Nikon Emerging Photographer Award, a tribute to his nuanced and profound artistic practice.

Photo London brings to the capital an invaluable intervention into the now every-day act of photography, inviting visitors to revisit iconic images as well as to discover the gaze and artistic practice of photographers from every corner of the world, reminding us that a picture really can tell a thousand stories.

BOOK

Photo London is open at Somerset House from 16 to 19 May 2024. You can book tickets at photolondon.org.

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