

Antony Cairns

Exhibited in prestigious collections such as the Victoria & Albert Museum and La MEP, Antony Cairns offers a singular vision of the city, his true muse. Born in London in 1980, Cairns has developed an experimental approach influenced by '80s futurism. His nocturnal works capture the artificial light of major metropolises such as London, Tokyo and Los Angeles, revealing an urban landscape in transformation.

Between the late 1990s and early 2000s, when London was undergoing a phase of rapid urban development, Cairns was committed to documenting this mutation. 'These huge complexes were changing the aesthetics of the city,' he explains. However, spaces that had previously been accessible to the public were gradually becoming private areas, fenced off and guarded by security guards. As a photography student with a passion for urban architecture, he regularly faced restrictions when trying to photograph with his tripod. Faced with these obstacles, Cairns radically rethought his method. He turned to a small, discreet and effective 35mm camera, which he could use surreptitiously at night. Like Eugène Atget, who photographed the changing face of Paris at the turn of the twentieth century, Antony Cairns captures the modern metropolis at night, revealing its disturbing emptiness. A nocturnal vagabond, he explores the urban texture by inverting his black and white negatives into positives, then printing his images using obsolete digital technologies. Far from high definition, his photographs radiate a blurred light, evoking Russian film-maker Andrei Moskvin's 'darkness of the foggy night'.

Cairns combines silver film and darkroom processes with innovative media. His works take shape on gelatin silver film applied to aluminium, played via modified e-ink players or even on old computer punch cards, fusing a retro-technical aesthetic with contemporary technologies.

In 2015, he won the Hariban Prize, a recognition that opened the doors to the Benrido studio in Kyoto. There, he deepened his research into photographic reproducibility, exploring the traditional collotype process, a further testament to his exploration of the intersections between past, present and future.

Selection of solo exhibitions

- 2024 PXL CTY, Sous Les Etoiles Gallery (New York USA)
- 2023 The City and the City: Antony Cairns and Frank Horvats, Frank Horvats Studio (Paris, France)
- 2023 New Punch Cards, Offscreen Paris (Paris, France)
- 2023 PXL CTY, Akio Nagasawa Gallery (Tokyo, Japan)
- 2022 PXL CTY, MeP Studio space (Paris, France)
- 2022 CTY 5081, Encounter contemporary (Lisbon, Portugal)
- 2021 CTY_TYO3-TYO4, Webber Gallery, (London, England)
- 2021 TYO3-TYO4, Akio Nagasawa Gallery (Tokyo, Japan)
- 2021 CTY / Computer Punch Cards & E.Ink Screens, Approche exhibition with Intervalle Gallery (Paris, France)
- 2020 CTY-TYO3, Stieglitz 19, (Antwerp, Belgium)
- 2019 Touchstone, The Photographers' Gallery (London, England)
- 2019 CTY, Akio Nagasawa Gallery (Tokyo, Japan)
- 2018 Independent Brussels (represented by Roman Road), Bâtiment Vanderborcht (Brussels, Belgium)
- 2018 The Tale of Adam Earl Gordons, Théâtre de Verdure (as part of the Festival Images Vevey), (Vevey, Switzerland)
- 2018 NADA New York (represented by Roman Road), Skylight Clarkson Sq (New York, USA)
- 2017 TYO2-LDN4, Roman Road, London, England Antony Cairns, Stieglitz 19 (Antwerp, Belgium)
- 2016 Process II, daikanyama photo fair (represented by Roman Road), (Tokyo, Japan)
- 2016 OSC - Osaka Station City, Roman Road (London, England)
- 2016 LA-LV / LDN Process, SferaExhibition (as part of KYOTOGRAPHIE), (Kyoto, Japan)
- 2015 E.I. / Transition, Roman Road (London, England)
- 2014 LDN, Roman Road (London, England)
- 2014 LDN, Stieglitz 19 (Antwerp, Belgium)

Selection of group exhibitions

- 2024 PARIS PHOTO with galerie Intervalle (Paris, France)
- 2023 Highlights, Encounter Contemporary (London, United Kingdom)
- 2023 High Season, Encounter Contemporary (Lisbon, Portugal)
- 2023 Photography now, Victoria & Albert Museum, Photography Center (London, England)
- 2023 Civilisation: The way we live today. Saatchi Gallery (London, England)
- 2023 CTY / Unknown Places, galerie Intervalle (Paris, France)
- 2022 Deconstructive Narrative, Sous les Etoiles Gallery (New York, USA)
- 2021 What Remains, Encounter Contemporary (London, England)
- 2021 salon ART PARIS with galerie Intervalle (Paris, France)
- 2019 Expired, Sara Kay Gallery, New York, USA. Curated by Maya Benton
- 2018 Through the Looking Glass, Cob Gallery (London, England)
- 2018 Artificial Impressions, Stedelijk Museum Breda (Breda, Netherlands)
- 2018 My London, Copeland Gallery (as part of Peckham24), London, England. Curated by Emma Bowkett
- 20&8 London Nights, Museum of London (London, England)
- 2018 Shape of Light: 100 Years of Photography and Abstract Art, Tate Modern (London, England)
- 2016 A Question of Memory: Photography as Object in the Digital Age, George Eastman Museum (New York, USA)
- 2016 TOUCHED - Craftsmanship in Contemporary Photography, Museum Het Schip (as part of the Unseen Photo Festival), Amsterdam, Netherlands. Under the direction of Anton Corbijn
- 2015 Abstracts, HONORÉ at Galerie RueVisconti (Paris, France)
- 2015 Abstracts, Copperfield, London, England. Curated by Inès de Bordas and Alix Janta-Polczynski, Memory Lab: La photographie défie l'histoire, Mudam, (Luxembourg City, Luxembourg)
- 2014 AM projects, Photobastei, (Zurich, Switzerland)

Awards

2019 Hyundai Card GapadoAir Residency

2017 Images Vevey Special Jury Prize

2015 Grand Prize Winner of the Hariban Prize

2015 Paris Photo - Aperture Foundation Photo Book of the Year (shortlisted)

2014 Hariban Award Special Prize

2013 Kassel Best Photobook (shortlisted)