

**MEP** MAISON  
EUROPÉENNE  
DE LA  
PHOTOGRAPHIE

**Press Kit**



**Edward Weston**  
Becoming Modern



**Tyler Mitchell**  
Wish This Was Real

**15.10.2025–25.01.2026**

# The Season

In Autumn 2025, the MEP will dedicate its Season to two major figures in American photography: Edward Weston and Tyler Mitchell. Two visions separated by a century, yet both remind us how photography remains a language of modernity and reinvention. Edward Weston — *Becoming Modern* sheds light on the photographer's transition from Pictorialism—a key movement in the defence of photography as an art form—to Modernism and its aesthetic radicalism. This shift represents a break from earlier artistic conventions and a move toward a new, distinctly photographic form of expression. Edward Weston (1886–1958) advocated for a precise and pure representation of the world, elevating photography to an art of seeing. With the same rigour, he photographed bodies, landscapes, and plants. Nothing is anecdotal through his lens: the line of a face or the curve of a shell becomes an expression of life's very essence. He quickly established himself as one of the pioneers of West Coast photography and was exhibited in modernist shows across Europe. Because Weston's life and work were deeply intertwined, the exhibition also presents numerous portraits of those close to him. Among them are photographer and activist Tina Modotti—a pivotal figure who encouraged him to leave California for Mexico in 1923—and Margrethe Mather, an important photographer, associate, and collaborator, featured in the Redondo Beach portraits that reflect Weston's early formal experiments.

This exceptional exhibition, which brings together more than 100 vintage prints—many of which have never been shown in France—offers valuable insight into the evolution of Edward Weston's vision and the emergence of photographic modernism. It has been made possible through the support of the Wilson Centre for Photography in London, which holds one of the world's most important private photography collections.

On the third floor of the MEP, Tyler Mitchell (born 1995) presents his first solo exhibition in France. *Wish This Was Real* reflects on a decade of practice by an artist who has introduced new visual narratives of Black life, centering beauty, intimacy, and empowerment as everyday realities. Immersed in both popular culture (he first took up video and photography through skateboarding) and artistic traditions ranging from classical landscape and portraiture to contemporary art, Mitchell has developed a multifaceted body of work that includes photography, installation video, sculpture, and textiles. He moves fluidly between commissioned and personal projects, treating each image as a site of expression that envisions alternative and desirable ways of being. "I try to depict Black people in a real and pure way. I hope there is an honest gaze to my photos," Mitchell explains. Where Edward Weston used modernist photography as a language to reveal the world, Tyler Mitchell employs it to poetically and politically expand our shared imagination, offering scenes of leisure and tenderness that gesture toward possible futures.

The MEP continues its commitment to emerging creation with two young artists in the Studio, reminding us that photography is not only a way of seeing reality, but also of thinking about it, inhabiting it, and transforming it. In *Dialect*, Felipe Romero Beltrán follows the lives of nine young Moroccan men in a migrant centre in Seville, exploring the experience of waiting through their gestures and gazes. In the second half of the Season, Sarah van Rij will unveil works in which collage and photography blend in a sensitive interpretation that reinvents the everyday.

Clothilde Morette  
Artistic Director, MEP

#expweston  
#expomitchell  
#mepparis  
@mep.paris



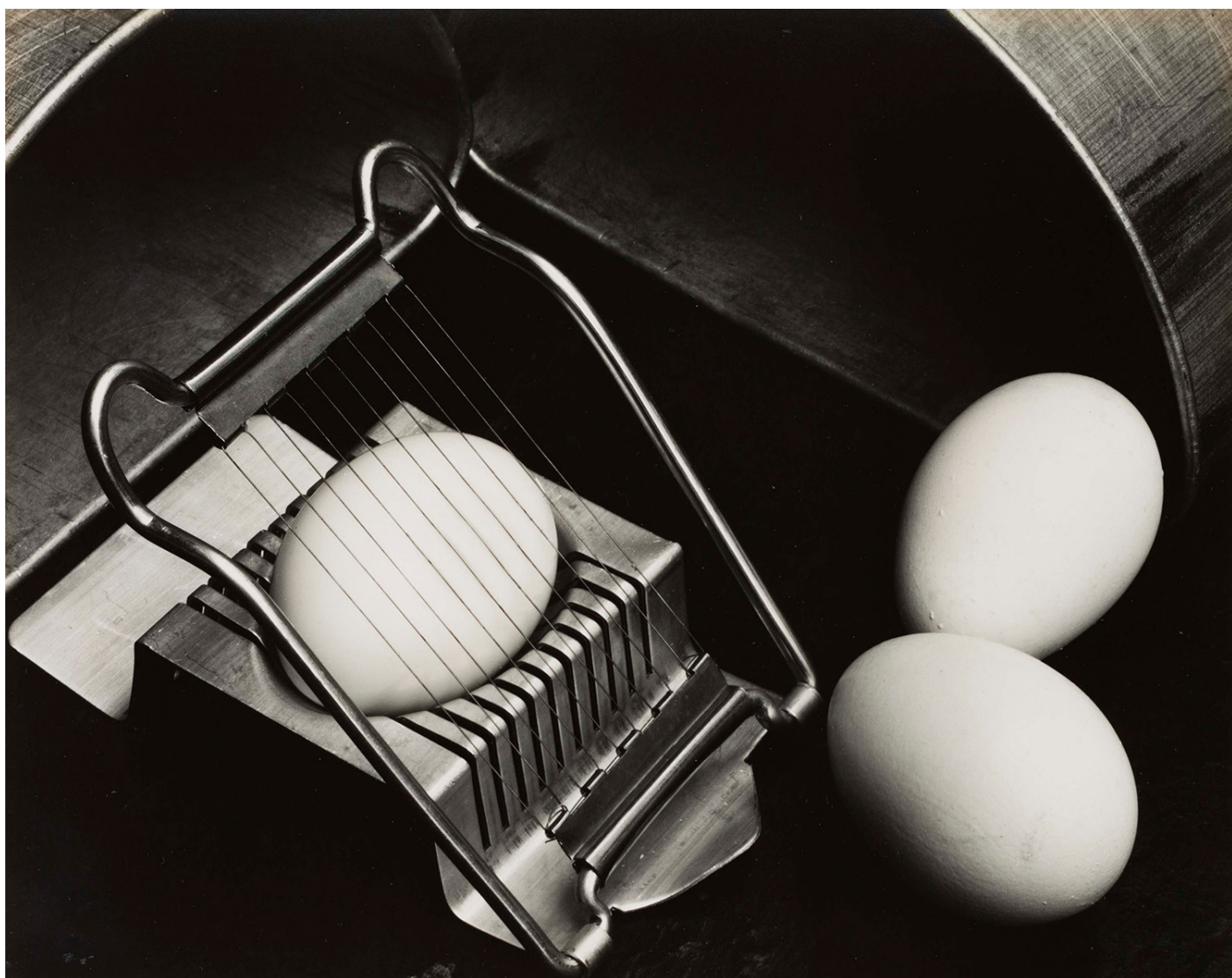
Cover image:  
Edward Weston, *Charis, Santa Monica*  
(*Nude in doorway*), 1936

© Center for Creative Photography, Arizona Board of Regents / Edward Weston, Adagp, Paris, 2025  
Courtesy Wilson Centre for Photography

Tyler Mitchell, *Curtain Call*, 2018

© Tyler Mitchell  
Courtesy of the artist and Gagosian

 **Galleries +2**



# **Edward Weston** **Becoming modern**

15.10.2025–25.01.2026

# The exhibition | Edward Weston

**The MEP presents *Becoming Modern*, the most significant exhibition dedicated to Edward Weston in Paris in nearly thirty years. A pioneering figure of photographic modernism, Weston helped forge a new visual language—marked by clarity, formal rigor, and a profound engagement with the essential qualities of the photographic medium.**

Originating from an idea by Michael Wilson—founder of the Wilson Centre for Photography in London and one of the world's foremost collectors—*Becoming Modern* brings together a rare selection of vintage prints from his collection, many of which have never been exhibited in France. These works offer an exceptional insight into Weston's evolving practice and the emergence of a distinctly photographic modernism.

Spanning more than three decades, from 1908 to 1945, the exhibition traces Weston's artistic trajectory. His early pictorialist photographs, created in California during the 1910s and early 1920s, draw upon 19th-century artistic traditions, employing soft focus, carefully staged settings, and symbolic imagery. Over time, his vision transformed: his images became sharper, compositions more austere, with an increasing emphasis on form, surface, and structure. By the 1920s, many of his photographs approached geometric abstraction—though Weston was never confined to a single style. This transformation unfolded gradually, as motifs intertwined and techniques evolved in a subtle, ongoing dialogue, revealing an artist continuously refining and deepening his vision.

Highlights include works from Weston's time in Mexico, where, in close collaboration with Tina Modotti—an artist, political activist, and his lover—he created portraits and nudes imbued with a newfound freedom and radicalism. These are complemented by evocative landscapes of the dramatic California coastline near Point Lobos and Carmel. At the heart of the exhibition are his most iconic series: sensuous close-up studies of natural forms—peppers, shells, fruits, and vegetables—captured with an almost obsessive intensity; dune and rock landscapes from Point Lobos and Death Valley; and luminous nudes of his muse, Charis Wilson. Throughout, Weston reveals the universal beauty of everyday subjects, transforming them into pure, sculptural forms. Recurring themes—portraiture, the nude, still life, and nature—are placed in dialogue, uncovering deeper connections across his oeuvre. His work displays remarkable strength and variety, with many natural forms taking on subtle anthropomorphic qualities.

*Becoming Modern* invites audiences to rediscover a bold innovator whose visionary approach helped shape the course of photographic history. The exhibition also includes a selection of rare works by leading pictorialist photographers, offering a broader context for Weston's early influences and the artistic milieu from which his modernism emerged.

**Curators :**

Simon Baker & Laurie Hurwitz, MEP  
Polly Fleury & Hope Kingsley, Wilson Centre for Photography

**Production manager :**

Elisa Monteillet, MEP.

This exhibition has been made possible with the support of the Wilson Centre of Photography.

The MEP extends its warmest thanks to Michael & Jane Wilson for their generosity.

A richly illustrated catalogue, published by Morel Books and edited by Elisa Monteillet, will accompany this landmark exhibition.

**Previous page:**

Edward Weston, *Eggs and Slicer*, 1930

© Center for Creative Photography, Arizona Board of Regents / Edward Weston, Adagp, Paris, 2025  
Courtesy Wilson Centre for Photography



# Biography | Edward Weston

Widely regarded as one of the masters of 20th-century photography, Edward Henry Weston (March 24, 1886 – January 1, 1958) reshaped the medium through a vision rooted in clarity, form, and a profound sensitivity to the physical world. Over a career spanning more than forty years, he forged a style that was both radically modern and deeply grounded in the landscapes and materials of the American West.

Born in Highland Park, Illinois, Weston spent his early years in the Chicago area, where his fascination with photography first took hold. By 1903, as a teenager, he was already exhibiting his early works. At sixteen, he received his first camera—a gift from his father that marked the beginning of a lifelong creative journey. He studied at the Illinois College of Photography from 1908 to 1911 before relocating to California, where, at age 25, he opened a portrait studio in Tropic, operating from 1911 to 1922.

In his early career, Weston worked within the pictorialist tradition—a popular style of the early 20th century characterized by soft focus and romantic, painterly effects. His portraits from this period brought him recognition from the art community. Yet by the early 1920s, he began to move away from this approach, embracing a sharper, more precise, and abstract visual language that emphasized form and detail.

A turning point in Weston's artistic journey occurred in 1922 on a trip to New York, where he met influential modernist photographers such as Alfred Stieglitz, Paul Strand, and Charles Sheeler. They recognized the originality of his work and encouraged him to fully embrace this new direction, which soon included close studies of fruits, vegetables, shells, and stones, rendered with astonishing clarity and sculptural intensity. Through close observation and meticulous composition, he revealed the inherent beauty of form, transforming the ordinary into the iconic.

In the mid-1920s, Weston travelled to Mexico with the photographer and political activist Tina Modotti, with whom he shared a studio and a deep creative partnership. Immersed in the vibrant cultural life of Mexico City, he engaged with a dynamic community of artists and thinkers whose ideas further catalysed his break from tradition.

Returning to California in 1928, Weston found new inspiration in the rugged coastal terrain of Point Lobos. The region's intricate rock formations, windswept trees, and tide pools became a central focus of his work, offering endless opportunities for visual exploration and formal innovation.

In 1932, Weston co-founded Group *f/64*—a collective of West Coast photographers dedicated to "straight" photography, emphasizing sharp focus, rich tonality, and the use of large-format cameras. The group championed an unmanipulated approach to the medium. Weston's contributions during this period, especially his landscapes, remain among the most enduring images in American photography.

Previous page:  
Edward Weston, *Pepper*, 1930

© Center for Creative Photography, Arizona Board of Regents / Edward Weston, Adagp, Paris, 2025  
Courtesy Gregg Wilson

In 1937, Weston became the first photographer to receive the prestigious Guggenheim Fellowship—a milestone that affirmed his influence and solidified his place in the canon of modern art. Over the next two years, he produced nearly 1,400 negatives using his 8 × 10 view camera, an extraordinary body of work that includes some of his most celebrated images. His work was celebrated in major retrospectives, most notably at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, including a landmark exhibition in 1946 and a posthumous tribute in 1975. His *Daybooks*—intimate journals kept during the 1920s—were published in the 1960s, offering rare insight into his evolving philosophy and inner life.

Willard Van Dyke, *Edward Weston with his camera*, 1937

Courtesy Wilson Centre for Photography

Diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in 1947, Weston stopped photographing soon afterward but devoted his final years to supervising the printing of more than a thousand of his most iconic negatives—an act of stewardship that preserved the integrity of his vision for future generations. Edward Weston passed away in 1958 in Carmel Highlands, California, at the age of 71.





# Exhibition overview | Edward Weston

*Becoming Modern* traces Edward Weston's evolution from the soft pictorialism of his early years to the clarity and precision that came to define modern photography. Spanning nearly three decades, the exhibition presents more than 100 rare vintage prints from the Wilson Centre for Photography. It invites viewers to rediscover one of photography's most visionary pioneers through an extraordinary body of work.

The exhibition opens with two emblematic photographs that frame its central theme, reflecting a curatorial concept developed by Michael Wilson to highlight Weston's extraordinary range and experimentation. On one side hangs *M on the Black Horsehair Sofa* (1921), a quintessential example of the Pictorialist style: a languid pose, softly diffused light, and a painterly atmosphere enriched by symbolic elements—a floral bouquet, a circular mirror. Opposite it, *Tina Modotti (Nude in Studio)* (1922) marks a striking departure. The figure sits upright, smoking, in a bare studio—captured with crisp focus and a stark, modern sensibility. Though created just a year apart, these works embody the transformative arc at the heart of Weston's career: a restless search for new ways of seeing. From these beginnings, Weston's exploratory approach soon dissolved strict categories, embracing a practice defined by an ongoing dialogue between subjects and forms.

From here, the exhibition situates Weston's early work within the broader context of the Pictorialist movement. His prints are shown alongside key images by photographers who shaped or anticipated his early style—Edward Steichen, George Seeley, Anne Brigman, Dorothea Lange, Margrethe Mather, and Alfred Stieglitz. A tireless advocate for photography as a fine art, Stieglitz helped define the medium's possibilities through his publications *Camera Work* and *291*, and through his influential New York gallery of the same name. Weston's own early prints—including a striking self-portrait—are exhibited alongside these historic works. These are placed in conversation with later photographs that capture Weston and his creative circle in 1920s California, evoking a distinct artistic atmosphere. Rooted in the landscape and rhythms of the West Coast, Weston's early vision subtly diverged from that of his East Coast contemporaries.

*“The camera should be used for a recording of life, for rendering the very substance and quintessence of the thing itself”*

Edward Weston, *The Daybooks of Edward Weston*, from *Edward Weston: The Flame of Recognition*, Aperture, 1965

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Previous page:

Top: Edward Weston, *'M' on the Black Horsehair Sofa*, 1921

© Center for Creative Photography, Arizona Board of Regents / Edward Weston, Adagp, Paris, 2025  
Courtesy Gregg Wilson

Bottom: Edward Weston, *Tina Modotti (Nude in Studio)*, 1922

© Center for Creative Photography, Arizona Board of Regents / Edward Weston, Adagp, Paris, 2025  
Courtesy Gregg Wilson

Edward Weston, *Chicago River Harbor*, 1908

© Center for Creative Photography, Arizona Board of Regents / Edward Weston, Adagp, Paris, 2025  
Courtesy Wilson Centre for Photography





The exhibition then turns to the pivotal decade of the 1920s, a period of remarkable transformation and experimentation in Weston's practice. Rather than unfolding in a linear progression, this section reveals how Weston moved fluidly between subjects and styles—returning repeatedly to certain motifs while continually refining his formal vocabulary.

This section opens with works from Weston's extended stays in Mexico from 1923 to 1926 with photographer and political activist Tina Modotti—his muse, lover, and collaborator—where he encountered a vibrant avant-garde community. Immersed in the artistic and political ferment of 1920s Mexico, Weston developed a bold new visual language focused on form, contrast, and a sense of immediate presence. A striking portrait of Modotti, presented in both gelatin silver and palladium prints, showcases Weston's ongoing technical experimentation alongside his deepening sensitivity to tonal nuance. Modotti encouraged Weston toward an even more radical vision, challenging him to see the world anew through his camera.

Previous page: Edward Weston, *Daughter of John Cotton No. II*, 1920

© Center for Creative Photography, Arizona Board of Regents / Edward Weston, Adagp, Paris, 2025

Courtesy Wilson Centre for Photography

Edward Weston, *Tina Reciting (Tina Modotti)*, 1924

© Center for Creative Photography, Arizona Board of Regents / Edward Weston, Adagp, Paris, 2025

Courtesy Gregg Wilson



His Mexican experience deepened Weston's experimental impulse, introducing sharper contrasts and new formal rigor that reverberated through his portraits and nudes. His obsession with natural forms intensified. He photographed them repeatedly, seeking the perfect composition and meticulously refining his prints to reveal the interplay of light, shadow, and volume.

These subjects interact and reflect one another through Weston's lens. The sinuous curves of a shell echo the lines of a nude; the gleaming porcelain of *Excusado* (Toilet) (1926) takes on the quiet sensuality of the human body. *Shell* (1927), one of Weston's most iconic images, exemplifies his singular ability to elevate everyday objects into studies of luminous purity, rendering form, texture, and light with a precision so distilled that they verge on abstraction—not simply photographs of things, but meditations on form itself. During this period, his treatment of the nude also evolved dramatically: the body becomes fragmented and abstracted, its anatomy transformed into sculptural rhythm. This exploration reaches its pinnacle in *Charis, Santa Monica (Nude in Doorway)* (1936), one of Weston's most celebrated images.

*“To see the Thing  
Itself is essential: the  
Quintessence revealed  
direct without the fog of  
impressionism.”*

Edward Weston, *The Daybooks of  
Edward Weston*, from *Edward Weston:  
The Flame of Recognition*, Aperture,  
1965

Edward Weston, *Charis, Santa Monica  
(Nude in Doorway)* 1936

© Center for Creative Photography, Arizona Board of  
Regents / Edward Weston, Adagp, Paris, 2025  
Courtesy Wilson Centre for Photography



At the heart of the exhibition are many of Weston's most exceptional works from the late 1920s and 1930s, in which he famously transformed the ordinary into something sensuous and unexpected. In his iconic studies of vegetables—particularly peppers—their curves and folds evoke the flesh and contours of the human torso, recalling both modernist sculpture and the body. Using the camera to express, in his words, “the very substance and the quintessence of the thing itself,” Weston also photographed in close-up what he saw around him: an egg-slicer, the plank from a barley sifter, a gnarled tree.

His portraits from this period grew sharper in focus and more daring in composition, echoing the dynamic perspectives emerging in European Modernist photography. By the late 1920s, after returning to California, his work had begun to appear in major exhibitions linked to the New Objectivity movement, which championed photographic clarity and rejected painterly effects. This evolution is also evident in his treatment of the nude: the body is fragmented and abstracted, its forms studied as sculptural elements.

Weston's practice moved fluidly between subjects, embracing both the human body and the natural world, constantly refining his vision through intense study and formal innovation. Close-up studies of nature—sand patterns, rocks, and wood—verge on abstraction, including *Rock Erosion and Sandstone Erosion (Point Lobos)*—photographs made along the dramatic California coastline that Weston returned to repeatedly. Jagged rock formations, knotted seaweed, wind-twisted cypress trees, and bleached driftwood became recurring motifs, offering endless opportunities for formal exploration. These works also include a group of powerful portraits, from images of his future wife, Charis Wilson, and her brother Leon, to Weston's son Brett and daughter-in-law Elinore Stone.

*“only rhythm, form and perfect detail to consider—first conceptions coming straight through unadulterated”*

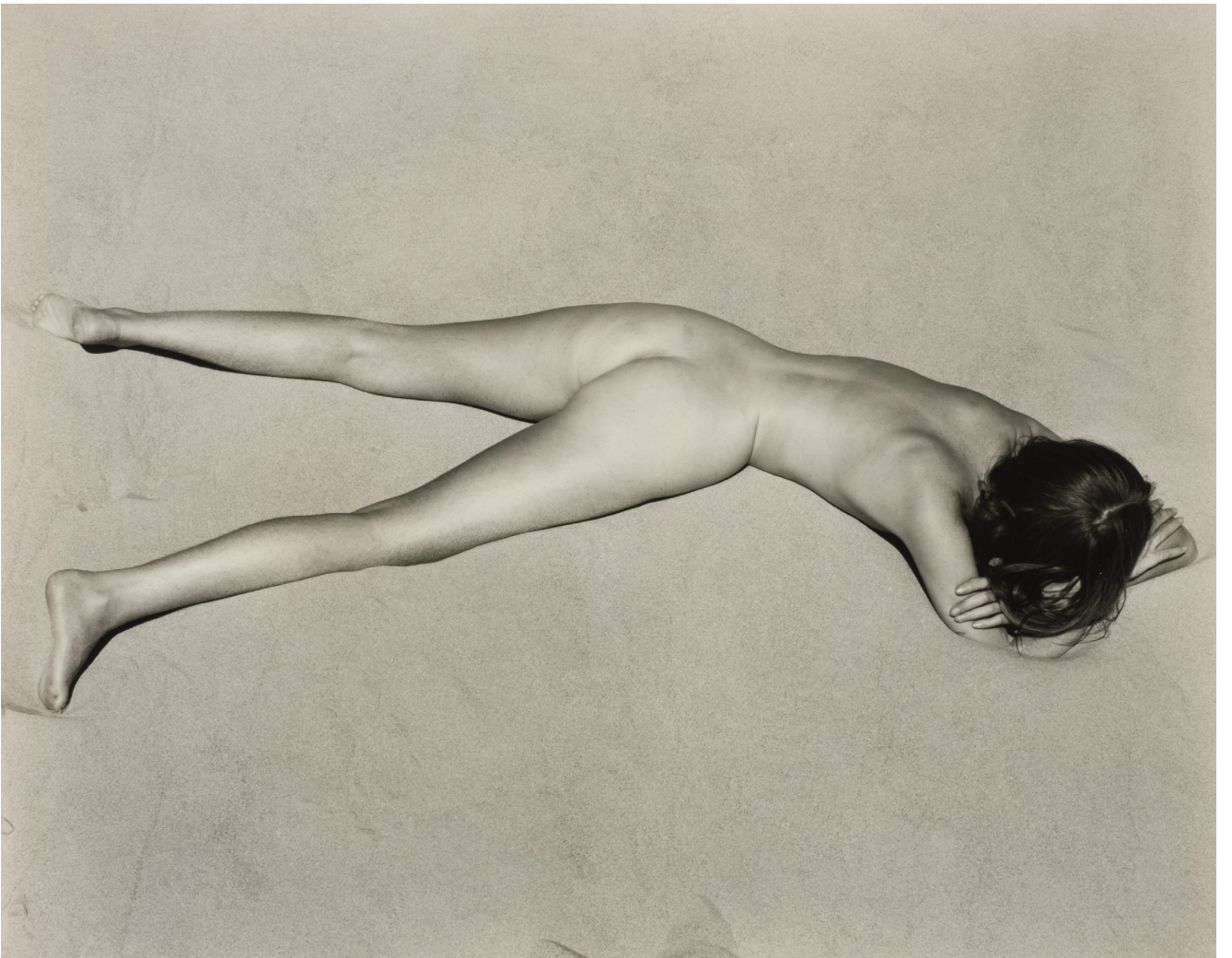
Edward Weston, *Daybooks II: California (1930–1945)*, Aperture, 1961

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Edward Weston, *Shell and Rock Arrangement*, 1931

© Center for Creative Photography, Arizona Board of Regents / Edward Weston, Adapp, Paris, 2025  
Courtesy Wilson Centre for Photography





The final part of the exhibition presents a group of iconic late works from the 1930s, including Weston's dazzling nudes photographed on the dunes of Oceano, California, celebrated for their powerful luminosity. Featuring his future wife Charis Wilson, these images are among the most emblematic of his career. With a purely formal focus on silhouette and surface, Weston emphasized her curves while creating a striking contrast with the surrounding sand—demonstrating his extraordinary technical command of the gelatin silver medium. These works reflect not only a radical reimagining of the nude, but also his enduring commitment to form, precision, and clarity. These landscapes are joined by sweeping vistas captured in the dunes, along the Big Sur coast, and in Death Valley—works that further underscore Weston's singular place in the history of modern photography.

The exhibition concludes with photographs from the final chapter of Weston's life, taken in and around his home in Carmel, California, when illness had begun to limit his ability to work. Though his condition constrained his output, Weston's vision remained keen, capturing intimate, sometimes playful moments that echoed the bold experimentation of his earlier years. These images include tender portraits of Charis and close friends, sometimes tinged with humour—as in *Charis in a Gas Mask* or *Exposition of Dynamic Symmetry*, where loved ones are framed within the windows of his rustic wooden cabin. It was in this house, perched near the edge of Point Lobos, that Weston lived until his death in 1958, surrounded by the landscapes that had shaped his vision and to which he gave some of his most enduring images.

*“What I seek now is simplicity — the form reduced to its essence.”*

Edward Weston, *Daybooks II: California (1930–1945)*, Aperture, 1961

Previous page: Edward Weston, *Nude on Sand, Oceano, 1936*

© Center for Creative Photography, Arizona Board of Regents / Edward Weston, Adagp, Paris, 2025  
Courtesy Wilson Centre for Photography

Edward Weston, *Exposition of Dynamic Symmetry*, 1943

© Center for Creative Photography, Arizona Board of Regents / Edward Weston, Adagp, Paris, 2025  
Courtesy Wilson Centre for Photography



# Press images

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[Download visuals here.](#)



Edward Weston, *Chicago River Harbor*, 1908  
© Center for Creative Photography, Arizona Board of Regents / Edward Weston, Adagp, Paris, 2025. Courtesy Wilson Centre for Photography



Edward Weston, *Portrait of Enrique (Enrica, Wearing a Black Cross, Looking Sideways)*, 1916-1919  
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Edward Weston, *Daughter of John Cotton No. II*, 1920  
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Edward Weston, *'M' on the Black Horsehair Sofa*, 1921  
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Edward Weston, Adagp, Paris, 2025. Courtesy Gregg Wilson



Edward Weston, *Tina Modotti (Nude in Studio)*, 1922  
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Edward Weston, Adagp, Paris, 2025. Courtesy Gregg Wilson



Edward Weston, *Tina Reciting (Tina Modotti)*, 1924  
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Edward Weston, Adagp, Paris, 2025. Courtesy Gregg Wilson



Edward Weston, *Heaped Black Ollas*, 1926  
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Edward Weston, Adagp, Paris, 2025. Courtesy Wilson Centre  
for Photography



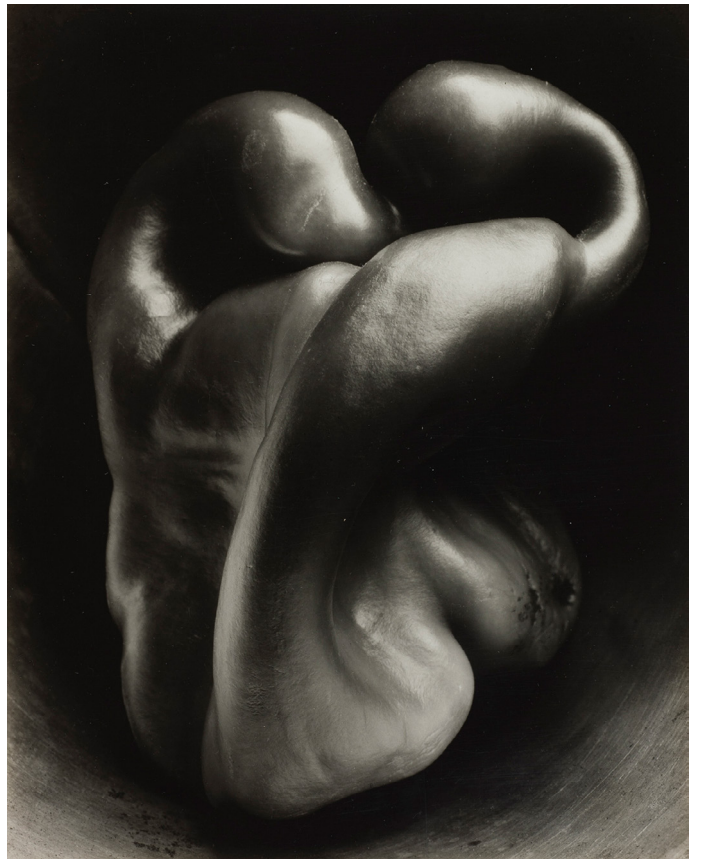
Edward Weston, *Excusado (Toilet)*, 1926  
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Edward Weston, Adagp, Paris, 2025. Courtesy Wilson Centre  
for Photography



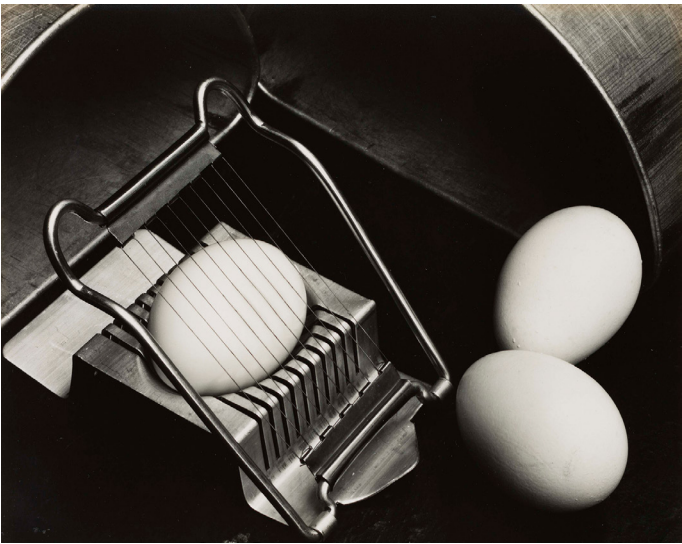
Edward Weston, *Shell*, 1927  
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Edward Weston, Adagp, Paris, 2025. Courtesy Gregg Wilson



Edward Weston, *Peppers*, 1929  
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Edward Weston, Adagp, Paris, 2025. Courtesy Wilson Centre  
for Photography



Edward Weston, *Pepper*, 1930  
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Edward Weston, Adagp, Paris, 2025. Courtesy Gregg Wilson



Edward Weston, *Eggs and Slicer*, 1930  
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Edward Weston, Adagp, Paris, 2025. Courtesy Wilson Centre  
for Photography



Edward Weston, *Shell and Rock Arrangement*, 1931  
© Center for Creative Photography, Arizona Board of Regents /  
Edward Weston, Adagp, Paris, 2025. Courtesy Wilson Centre  
for Photography



Edward Weston, *Nude (Dorris)*, 1933  
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Edward Weston, Adagp, Paris, 2025. Courtesy Wilson Centre  
for Photography



Edward Weston, *Charis, Santa Monica (Nude in Doorway)*,  
1936 © Center for Creative Photography, Arizona Board of  
Regents / Edward Weston, Adagp, Paris, 2025. Courtesy  
Wilson Centre for Photography



Edward Weston, *Nude on Sand, Oceano*, 1936  
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Edward Weston, Adagp, Paris, 2025. Courtesy Wilson Centre  
for Photography



Edward Weston, *Nude on Sand, Oceano*, 1936  
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Edward Weston, Adagp, Paris, 2025. Courtesy Wilson Centre  
for Photography



Edward Weston, *Clouds, Santa Monica*, 1936  
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Edward Weston, Adagp, Paris, 2025. Courtesy Wilson Centre  
for Photography



Edward Weston, *Tomato Field, Big Sur*, 1937  
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Edward Weston, Adagp, Paris, 2025. Courtesy Wilson Centre  
for Photography



Edward Weston, *Sandstone Erosion, Point Lobos*, 1942  
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Edward Weston, Adagp, Paris, 2025. Courtesy Wilson Centre  
for Photography



Edward Weston, *Exposition of Dynamic Symmetry*, 1943  
© Center for Creative Photography, Arizona Board of Regents /  
Edward Weston, Adagp, Paris, 2025. Courtesy Wilson Centre  
for Photography



**Tyler Mitchell**  
**Wish This Was Real**  
15.10.2025–25.01.2026

# The exhibition | Tyler Mitchell

**The MEP is honoured to present the first solo exhibition in France by Tyler Mitchell, a leading figure in his generation of contemporary photography, from 15 October 2025 to 25 January 2026. Entitled *Wish This Was Real*, the exhibition explores the artist's major themes: self-determination and the extraordinary beauty embedded in everyday life.**

Mitchell is driven by dreams of paradise against the backdrop of history. His images propel a visual narrative of beauty, style, utopia, and the landscape that expands visions of Black life and shows how portraiture can be rooted in the past while evoking imagined futures. *Wish This Was Real* covers ten years of Mitchell's dynamic artistic practice in photography, video, and sculpture, demonstrating the influence of the "New Black Vanguard" – the proliferation of images by Black photographers who work across genres of fashion and art. From portraits made in the United States, Europe, and West Africa to his latest prints on fabric and mirrors, he traces photography's vital role in shaping a visual realm in which refuge and repose are central.

*Wish This Was Real* considers Mitchell's work in three thematic sections that follow his artistic evolution. In "Lives/Liberties," his early influences and immersion in skateboarding culture are reflected in images that pursue a dream of leisure, community, and self-expression amid societal unrest, including an early video, *Wish This Was Real* (2015), a startling and atmospheric reflection on innocence and political turmoil in contemporary America. In "Postcolonial/Pastoral," reveries of paradise are underscored by the complexities of history and social identity, as Mitchell stages elaborate scenes in nature that invite contemplation through vibrant landscapes and symbolic references. "Family/Fraternity" celebrates the resilience and heritage of Black communities through intimate family portraits and still lifes, portraying the home as a sanctuary.

The exhibition Tyler Mitchell — *Wish This Was Real* is curated by Brendan Embser and Sophia Greiff, in collaboration with Clothilde Morette, curator and artistic director of the MEP. This exhibition is organised and produced by the C/O Berlin Foundation in collaboration with Tyler Mitchell Studios and made possible with the support of the Art Mentor Foundation Lucerne.

**Curators :**

Brendan Embser & Sophia Greiff,  
C/O Berlin  
Clothilde Morette, MEP

**Production manager :**

Elisa Monteillet, MEP.

On the occasion of this exhibition, a catalogue is published by Aperture for the English version, and by Éditions EXB for the French version.

Next page:

Tyler Mitchell, *New Horizons II*, 2022

© Tyler Mitchell  
Courtesy of the artist and Gagolian

# Biography | Tyler Mitchell

Tyler Mitchell is an American artist, photographer, and filmmaker, born in 1995 in Atlanta. He lives and works in Brooklyn.

After studying film at the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University, from which he graduated in 2017, he turned to photography. In 2018, he produced a series of portraits of the singer Beyoncé for the September issue of *American Vogue*—the most important edition of the year. At just 23 years old, he made history by becoming the first Black photographer to shoot the magazine's cover. Tyler Mitchell has developed numerous collaborations within the fashion world, where he has created his own visual language, a blend of gentleness and wonder, that also permeates his artistic work.

His works are part of many private and public collections, including the High Museum of Art (Atlanta, Georgia), the Brooklyn Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Detroit Institute of Arts, FOAM Fotografiemuseum (Amsterdam), the Hessel Museum of Art at Bard College (Annandale-on-Hudson, New York), the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, the Pizzuti Collection at the Columbus Museum of Art, the National Portrait Gallery (Washington DC), and the Cleveland Museum of Art.

Following showings in Berlin at C/O Berlin, in Helsinki at the Finnish Museum of Photography, and in Lausanne at the Photo Elysée Museum, the exhibition *Wish This Was Real* is now on view in Paris, at the MEP.

Tyler Mitchell, *Untitled (Red Steps)*, 2016

© Tyler Mitchell  
Courtesy of the artist and Gagosian

Next page:

Tyler Mitchell, *Curtain Call*, 2018

© Tyler Mitchell  
Courtesy of the artist and Gagosian





# Exhibition Overview | Tyler Mitchell

*Wish This Was Real* traces nearly a decade of creation and shows how Tyler Mitchell, one of the most striking voices of his generation, has developed a singular visual language. His work explores utopia, memory, and intimacy by placing representations of Black life at the heart of a radiant, poetic imaginary. The exhibition is organized into three thematic sections that reflect the coherence and richness of an oeuvre in full bloom.

Tyler Mitchell, *Untitled (Topanga II)*, 2017

© Tyler Mitchell  
Courtesy of the artist and Gagosian





## LIVES / LIBERTIES

As a teenager in Atlanta, Mitchell discovered visual culture through skateboarding and social media, particularly Tumblr, where he began exploring photography's creative potential. His early images, showing young Black people in moments of carefreeness and play, formed a practice that was both intimate and communal. Immersed in Tumblr's eclectic aesthetic, Mitchell absorbed an unexpected mix of art history and contemporary culture. Inspired by Spike Jonze's films, including *Video Days* (1991), he documented skateboarding groups before moving to New York, where he discovered British magazines *i-D* and *Dazed* — his "Bibles of cool" — as well as Ryan McGinley's cult photobook *The Kids Are Alright* (2000). Through these references, Mitchell developed a vision in which skateboarding was not a competition but a form of collective fulfillment.

His first photographic and video experiments, often created with friends in spontaneous sessions, evoke parks and fields of his childhood. Against the backdrop of increasing visibility of violence against Black men, and the emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement following the acquittal of Trayvon Martin's killer in 2013, these suspended moments of leisure and light also functioned as acts of self-protection — brief reprieves of freedom and joy in a world marked by constant threat of violence. Later, Mitchell would say how much that period was marked by conflicting emotions: between violence, creative exuberance, and self-reflection.

« My work has always been about visions of possibility, visions of joy, visions of agency and self-determination—even visions of paradise against the backdrop of history. »

Tyler Mitchell, from *Tyler Mitchell. Wish This Was Real*, Aperture, 2024.

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Tyler Mitchell, *Flotation*, 2022

© Tyler Mitchell  
Courtesy of the artist and Gagolian



## POSTCOLONIAL / PASTORAL

Nature holds a central place in Mitchell's visual world, serving as the chosen setting for his artistic explorations. While the pastoral tradition in art and literature often celebrated idealized, supposedly pure landscapes disconnected from history, Mitchell instead inscribes a living memory, one shaped by injustice and trauma. Originally from Atlanta, one of the greenest cities in the United States, Mitchell draws on Southern landscapes as a deep reservoir of memory and meaning. His photographs staged in Georgia and rural England reflect what he calls a "postcolonial pastoral", depictions of land shaped by both romanticism and historical pain, echoing the writings of Toni Morrison. For Mitchell's subjects, paradise is not lost — it is reclaimed, savoured, and displayed, despite the lingering legacy of segregation and systemic injustice.

His series *Dreaming in Real Time* (2021), made in Georgia, draws inspiration from the paintings of Georges Seurat, Kerry James Marshall, and Julie Dash's film *Daughters of the Dust* (1991). Populated with numerous figures, these images offer representations long absent from the collective imagination. His 2022 series *Chrysalis* continues this meditation: its title, referring to a butterfly's transformation, suggests emergence and metamorphosis. The young men pictured, immersed in natural settings, perform gestures of ablution and communion, in search of comfort and protection.

Recent works renew the photographic medium through textile supports, including silk, jersey, linen, and cotton. Hung from clotheslines or stretched across wooden frames, they retain the vividness of fashion photography while introducing a more elusive, tactile presence. Figures are sometimes partially obscured by printed fabric, creating mise-en-abyme effects with surreal undertones. In these works, fabric becomes both a narrative and mnemonic device. One photograph printed on mirrored material refers directly to Toni Morrison's novel *Song of Solomon* (1977), where the protagonist's journey of self-discovery resonates with Mitchell's own themes of memory and belonging through images that express transcendence and freedom.

“In many ways, I'm looking to place an idea of self-determination, of personal agency and of joy onto the historical canvas.”

Tyler Mitchell, from *Tyler Mitchell. Wish This Was Real*, Aperture, 2024.

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Tyler Mitchell, *Riverside Scene*, 2021

© Tyler Mitchell  
Courtesy of the artist and Gagolian

Next page:  
Tyler Mitchell, *Convivial Conversation*, 2024

© Tyler Mitchell  
Courtesy of the artist and AGM Collection



## FAMILY / FRATERNITY

Tyler Mitchell has long been interested in the place of family photographs in Black households, as true markers of memory and affirmation. In 2020, he received a grant from the Gordon Parks Foundation to create a series of portraits and still lifes in dialogue with Parks's mid-century photographic work, where domestic interiors were depicted as sites of memory and cultural transmission. Mitchell has spoken of his "obsession with vernacular photography," and of how Black family life is preserved and honoured in quiet, intimate moments.

These images also pay tribute to Parks's pioneering role as a chronicler of Black life through photography and cinema, as well as to Deborah Willis, Mitchell's former professor at NYU and a major historian of African American photography.

In the historic Black neighbourhood of Bedford-Stuyvesant in Brooklyn, Mitchell brought together friends and relatives to create these works. The elegant townhouses, often passed down across generations, serve as backdrops for a reflection on legacy, dress rituals, and the enduring power of appearance. These photographs bring together key themes in Mitchell's practice: the expressive power of fashion, the connection between collective memory and lived experience, and the intimacy of everyday life.

Through this series, Mitchell situates himself in a lineage of artists who have used the camera as a tool to reshape how Black life is represented. His images, at once personal and emblematic, bring subtlety, complexity, and beauty to the stories they tell.

"I had an obsession with vernacular pictures, with Black folks' lives being recorded and photographed in domestic spaces, and how we assert ourselves in the interior, no matter what is happening outside."

Tyler Mitchell, from *Tyler Mitchell. Wish This Was Real*, Aperture, 2024.

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Tyler Mitchell, *Ancestors*, 2021

© Tyler Mitchell  
Courtesy of the artist and Gagolian



# Press images

Images are provided exclusively to the press, and only for purposes of publicity for the duration of the *Tyler Mitchell — Wish This Was Real* exhibition at the MEP. The party reproducing the images must not crop, edit, or add text to the images in any way.

[Download visuals here.](#)



Tyler Mitchell, *Untitled (Red Steps)*, 2016  
© Tyler Mitchell  
Courtesy of the artist and Gagosian



Tyler Mitchell, *Untitled (Topanga II)*, 2017  
© Tyler Mitchell  
Courtesy of the artist and Gagosian



Tyler Mitchell, *Curtain Call*, 2018  
© Tyler Mitchell  
Courtesy of the artist and Gagosian



Tyler Mitchell, *Riverside Scene*, 2021  
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Courtesy of the artist and Gagosian



Tyler Mitchell, *Flotation*, 2022  
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Courtesy of the artist and Gagosian



Tyler Mitchell, *New Horizons II*, 2022  
© Tyler Mitchell  
Courtesy of the artist and Gagosian



Tyler Mitchell, *Ancestors*, 2021  
© Tyler Mitchell  
Courtesy of the artist and Gagosian



Tyler Mitchell, *Convivial Conversation*, 2024  
© Tyler Mitchell  
Courtesy of the artist and AGM Collection

# Cultural Programme

## TALKS / ROUND TABLES / LECTURES

**Thursday 16 October, 7 pm | Auditorium:** Talk with Tyler Mitchell, artist, and Brendan Embser, one of the curators of the exhibition *Tyler Mitchell — Wish This Was Real*, followed by a book signing session at the bookstore from 8 pm.

*This event will be held in English and simultaneously interpreted into French.*

**Friday 24 October | Auditorium:** *New Ways of Seeing*, a festival exploring the impact of digital technologies on our perception and interactions with the world. A day of performances and round tables.

*This event will be held in English.*

**Friday 14 November, 6 pm | Auditorium:** Meeting with artist Diana Markosian to discuss her work, projects, and artistic journey.

*This event will be held in English and simultaneously interpreted into French.*

**Saturday 13 December, 5 pm | Auditorium:** Round table on “Fashion and Inclusivity – A History of Perspectives.”  
*Speakers to be announced.*

**Thursday 8 January, 7 pm | Auditorium:** GAZE TALK, a discussion hosted by *Gaze Magazine*. In partnership with *Gaze Magazine*, the magazine of female perspectives.  
*Speakers to be announced.*

## SCREENINGS

Around the Tyler Mitchell exhibition, a selection of films chosen by the artist:

**Thursday 6 November, 7 pm | Auditorium**

**Thursday 27 November, 7 pm | Auditorium**

**Thursday 4 December, 7 pm | Auditorium**

*Film selection to be announced.*

Around Edward Weston:

**Thursday 30 October, 7 pm | Auditorium:** Screening of films to discover the artist’s universe and sensitivity: *The Photographer*, directed by Willard Van Dyke (USA, 1948, 26 min) and others to be announced.

**Thursday 18 December, 7 pm | Auditorium:** Screening of *The Green Pastures*, directed by William Keighley and Marc Connelly (USA, 1936, 93 min).

## BOOKCLUB

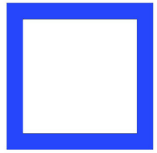
**Thursday 23 October, 7 pm | Library:** Bookclub with Fanny Boucher (Héliog workshop) about the behind-the-scenes of the technical side of book-making.

**Thursday 20 November, 7 pm | Library:** Bookclub with Beata Nowak, art historian specialised in contemporary photography, about the behind-the-scenes of the content side of book-making.

*A third Bookclub is planned for January with a publishing house. Date and presenter to be announced.*

*\* This schedule is subject to change: please visit the “What’s on” section of the MEP’s website for updated information on dates, times, and guests.*

*\* Advance booking is recommended: please use our online ticketing service, accessible via the “What’s on” section of our website; tickets for events are the same price as tickets for the museum, and also grant access to the exhibitions.*



**MEP**

**STUDIO**



# **Felipe Romero Beltrán**

## **Dialect**

15.10–07.12.2025

# The exhibition

From 15 October to 7 December 2025, the Studio presents *Dialect* by Felipe Romero Beltrán, an exhibition that invites viewers to experience time and waiting through gestures and glances.

“My work focuses on specific social situations, moments of transition, where bodies and gestures become a silent language to speak of belonging and displacement.” — Felipe Romero Beltrán

Between 2020 and 2023, Felipe Romero Beltrán documented the lives of nine young Moroccan men housed in a migrant centre in Seville. Having entered Spain illegally and awaiting the regularisation of their administrative status, they remained under house arrest in this detention centre. Over the course of these three years, corresponding to the average legal process duration required to obtain a residence permit, Beltrán developed a relationship of trust with his subjects, whose daily lives he captures and recounts.

*Dialect* blends various types of imagery: some candid, others staged in collaboration with the protagonists, who notably reenact memories of their journeys. In the face of judicial violence, imprisonment, and forced migration, Beltrán employs a formal visual language where softness and tenderness emerge in each image.

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**Felipe Romero Beltrán** (born 1992 in Bogotá, Colombia; lives and works in Paris) is known for his socially engaged artistic work exploring themes of migration and identity. His work has been featured in numerous solo and group exhibitions internationally.

Beltrán has published several books: *Magdalena* (2020, Anomalas Editions), *Dialect* (2023, Loose Joints Publishing), and *Bravo* (2025, Loose Joints Publishing), the latter in partnership with Fundación MAPFRE.

**Curator**  
Clothilde Morette, MEP

**Production manager**  
Élisa Monteillet, MEP

This exhibition is organised with the support of

**DIOR**  
PARFUMS

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## The MEP supports emerging artists

In parallel with the Galleries' programming (levels +2 and +3), which features large-scale exhibitions by established artists every four months, the Studio (level +1) presents emerging artists in their first institutional solo exhibitions, with two exhibitions per season.

Cover image:  
Felipe Romero Beltrán, *Dialect*, 2022  
© Felipe Romero Beltrán

#feliperomerobeltran  
#studiomep



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Felipe Romero Beltrán, *Dialect*, 2022  
© Felipe Romero Beltrán



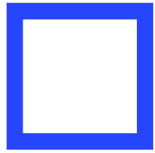
Felipe Romero Beltrán, *Dialect*, 2022  
© Felipe Romero Beltrán



Felipe Romero Beltrán, *Dialect*, 2022  
© Felipe Romero Beltrán



Felipe Romero Beltrán, *Dialect*, 2022  
© Felipe Romero Beltrán



**MEP**

**STUDIO**



# **Sarah van Rij**

## **Atlas of Echoes**

11.12.2025–25.01.2026

# The exhibition

**In the second part of the Season, from 11 December 2025 to 25 January 2026, the Studio welcomes the photographic project by artist Sarah van Rij, who offers a unique vision of the street, somewhere between documentary observation and poetic construction.**

The exhibition presents a selection of series created by Sarah van Rij during her wanderings through major metropolises. Combining urban landscapes, self-portraits, and collages, the artist paints a poetic portrait of the modern city: fragmented, enigmatic, and driven by a cinematic rhythm. Through her lens, passers-by become characters in an urban theatre; silhouettes framed through windows, cast shadows, or fleeting details of hands and clothing captured in motion.

This visual approach, positioned at the crossroads of street photography and cinematic aesthetics, transforms the ordinary into a sensitive stage. Each image conveys the intensity of a fleeting moment, revealing how chance, the rhythm of the crowd, and light come together to compose fragmentary narratives.

Sarah van Rij also creates collages exclusively from her own photographs, as a way of recycling her work and extending her visual explorations beyond the act of shooting.

With this keen attention to the invisible signs of everyday life, Sarah van Rij questions the very act of looking: What do we really see when we wander through the streets? What do the gestures of others, reflections, tell us? Her photographs open up a space for projection and daydreaming, where contemplation and imagination intertwine.

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**Sarah van Rij**, (born 1990 in the Netherlands) lives and works in Amsterdam. A self-taught artist, she began her journey in 2018 with street photography, gradually expanding her practice to include landscape, still life, portraiture, and more recently, collage. Her work is characterised by an acute sensitivity to detail and atmosphere. In parallel, she works in editorial contexts, with her personal and commissioned projects featured in international publications such as *The New York Times*, *M Le Monde*, *i-D*, and *Vogue Italia*, and exhibited in various institutions and festivals across Europe. Notably, she was selected for Foam First Editions in 2019. Her work will soon be shown in solo exhibitions at the Chiba Prefectural Museum of Art (Japan, 2025) and PHOXXI at the Deichtorhallen in Hamburg (2025).

While she does not define herself as a fashion photographer, Sarah van Rij is regularly commissioned to bring her unique perspective to projects in the creative and luxury sectors.

## Curator

Victoria Aresheva, MEP

## Production manager

Élisa Monteillet, MEP

**This exhibition is organised with the support of**

**DIOR**  
PARFUMS

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## The MEP supports emerging artists

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Cover image:

Sarah van Rij, *Flower man*, Amsterdam, 2024

© Sarah van Rij

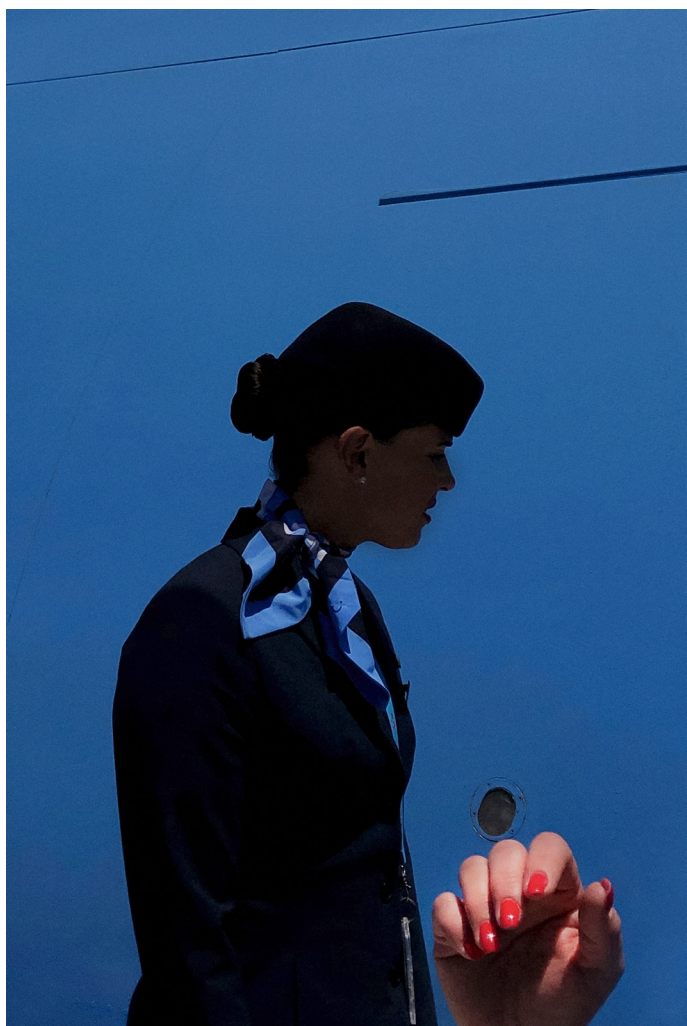
**#sarahvanrij**

**#studiomep**



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Sarah van Rij, Grèce, 2019  
© Sarah van Rij



Sarah van Rij, Séoul, 2022  
© Sarah van Rij



Sarah van Rij, *Self Portrait I*, Amsterdam, 2024  
© Sarah van Rij



Sarah van Rij, *Tin Foil Tale*, Paris, 2019  
© Sarah van Rij



Sarah van Rij, *Collage II*, Amsterdam, 2024  
© Sarah van Rij

**President:** Jacques Bungert  
**Artistic Director:** Clothilde Morette

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The MEP wishes to thank the MEP's Collectors Circle and the Society of Friends of the MEP for their continued support.

**#mepparis**  
**@mep.paris**



# Useful information

## **MEP — Maison Européenne de la Photographie**

5/7 rue de Fourcy 75004 Paris

01 44 78 75 00 – [mep-fr.org](http://mep-fr.org)

Metro stops: Saint-Paul (Line 1) and Pont Marie (Line 7)

## **Opening hours**

Wednesday–Friday: 11 a.m.–8 p.m.

Thursday: 11 a.m.–10 p.m.

Saturday–Sunday: 10 a.m.–8 p.m.

(Exclusive access for members on Sunday mornings, 10 a.m.–11 a.m.)

Monday–Tuesday: closed

## **Admission**

Full price: €13

Discounted admission: €8

## **For media inquiries, please contact:**

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