



PRESS RELEASE

Mary McCartney gifts major photographic series to the V&A for display in new Photography Centre

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The V&A Photography Centre
Opening 12 October 2018
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Today, the V&A announces a gift of photographs by the artist Mary McCartney. Known for her intimate, observational photographs, McCartney has gifted 14 prints to the museum from her first ever solo show *Off Pointe - A Photographic Study of the Royal Ballet After Hours*. A selection of these prints will feature in the V&A Photography Centre's inaugural display, *Collecting Photography: From Daguerreotype to Digital*, which opens on 12 October 2018.

Taken in 2004, McCartney's seminal series captures unguarded, behind-the-scenes moments of ballet dancers as they prepare for performances at The Royal Opera House. After a long fascination with ballet, it was a 2004 night out in London's Soho with Royal Ballet dancer, Sian Murphy, that inspired McCartney to reveal unseen aspects of the ballet world, including 'the highs and lows and the prestige and chaos behind the scenes'.

McCartney chose to shoot *Off Pointe* in black and white for its gritty, filmic quality. She wanted her images to look timeless, inviting viewers to fill in the gaps. After spending a significant period getting to know Murphy and her fellow dancers, McCartney was granted access to photograph intimate moments inside their homes and dressing rooms to capture everything but the stage. From dancers smoking in-between acts and drinking Diet Coke in their dressing rooms, to gnarled feet soaking in a bath and the haunting image of an exhausted lone dancer climbing the stairs, her bodice gaping open post-performance, McCartney's series depicts the real-life dedication behind the poised perfection seen on-stage.

Mary McCartney said: *"I'm inspired to make photographs that have a candid, honest quality. Through 'Off Pointe', I wanted to document the hidden details of the ballet world and reveal the contrast between the sometimes gruelling, painful lifestyle of the dancers and their fairy-tale performances. I'm excited that the prints now belong in the V&A. I felt that the museum would really understand this personal project and offer them the perfect home."*

Martin Barnes, Senior Curator of Photographs at the V&A, said: *"Mary McCartney has a talent for taking candid photographs that celebrate the extraordinary in the everyday. She has a keen eye for detailed observation and a personal drive to capture otherwise unseen intimate*

moments. I'm delighted that we can show Mary's fine prints alongside highlights from our historic and contemporary photography collections in our new Photography Centre."

Mary McCartney took up photography in her youth and has since exhibited around the world. Her photography strives to capture moments in time and find the beauty in the everyday. She began making black and white prints with her Leica R7 camera in the 1990s, influenced by photographers Linda McCartney, Diane Arbus, Garry Winogrand and Jacques Henri Lartigue. After discovering the work of American photographer William Eggleston, she developed her interest in colour photography and now works with both, switching between film and digital, dependent on the nature of each project.

Mary McCartney's photographs go on display in the V&A's new Photography Centre from 12 October 2018. Her pictures join the National Collection of the Art of Photography, held at the V&A. It is one of the largest and most important collections of historic and contemporary photographs in the world. On Monday 22 October, McCartney will be in conversation with V&A Curator, Susanna Brown, to talk about her work, family and inspirations and how the three often collide. The event is part of the V&A's Photography Spotlight – a month-long series of events and activities to celebrate the opening of the new Photography Centre.

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Notes to Editors

About Mary McCartney

Mary McCartney (b. 1969) was born in London. Her photographic work has focused on rare moments of unguarded, emotionally charged intimacy that offer a new insight into the subject. Her work has concentrated on portrait and candid reportage photography and has been exhibited at the Royal Opera House, the National Portrait Gallery and Michael Hoppen Gallery in London and the Gagosian Gallery in New York. She was chosen to take the official photograph of Her Majesty The Queen to mark the occasion of her becoming the longest reigning Monarch in history in 2015.

marymccartney.com

About the V&A photography collection

The V&A holds the National Collection of the Art of Photography. The museum has collected photographs since its foundation in 1852 and continues to collect today. The Royal Photographic Society (RPS) collection was transferred to the V&A by the Science Museum Group in 2017. The amalgamation of these world-class collections is the catalyst for the museum's new Photography Centre, which opens on 12 October 2018. The V&A's collection encompasses the work of leading historic and contemporary photographers as well as publications, cameras, and related equipment. When not on display, photographs from the collection can be viewed in the Prints & Drawings Study Room.

vam.ac.uk/collections/photographs

About V&A FuturePlan

FuturePlan is an ambitious programme of development which is transforming the V&A. The best contemporary designers are creating exciting new galleries and visitor facilities, while

revealing and restoring the beauty of the original building. In the past 15 years, over 85% of the museum's public spaces have been transformed, improving access and allowing the collections to be more elegantly and intelligently displayed. By introducing bold new architectural interventions, FuturePlan aims to delight and to inspire visitors, and to continue the museum's tradition of championing new talent.

vam.ac.uk/info/futureplan

For further PRESS information about the V&A's photography collection and the new Photography Centre, please contact Laura Mitchell in the V&A press office on +44 (0) 20 3949 4509 or email l.mitchell@vam.ac.uk (not for publication).

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