

# Teachers' Resource for Key Stages 4 – 5

## The V&A Photography Centre

Supporting KS4 – 5 Art & Design exam specifications



V&A

[vam.ac.uk/schools](https://vam.ac.uk/schools)

Inkjet print on aluminium and steel by Noemie Goudal (born 1984), *Untitled (Giant Phoenix)*, 2022 ©Victoria and Albert Museum, London

# V&A Teachers' Resource for Key Stages 4 – 5

The Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) in London is the world's leading museum of art, design and performance. Its collection of 2.7 million objects spans over 5,000 years of human creativity. Each object in the museum has a different story to tell and can spark different questions about our connection to design.

The V&A Object Discussion Cards in this pack showcase objects from the V&A Photography Centre. Each Object Discussion Card encourages object-based learning and allows students to develop critical, creative, and collaborative thinking skills with the support of teachers and educators.

The objects in the resource feature works by contemporary photographers from around the world and explore themes such as environment, politics, portraiture, and process. The resource links the themes of the photographs with other contemporary photographers and key historical figures in photography also featured within the V&A's collections.

## **Guidance for teachers and educators**

These cards can be used while visiting the V&A or to support object-based learning in the classroom. You can use the cards as posters in your classroom after the activity. Before starting, please check the suitability of the content of the cards and questions for your students. Some of the object descriptions may include sensitive language and/or topics and may require a more tailored approach. Students can use the cards for individual work, but we recommend students refer to them in small groups to encourage peer-to-peer discussion. Or in some cases, you may wish to facilitate the discussion.

Each card includes an object image, short object description and discussion questions. Encourage your students to take time looking at or drawing the details of the object before taking it in turn to read the description aloud and ask questions within their group. Each Object Discussion Card includes a 'Compare with' section, which invites students to draw comparisons between the themes and processes used by the photographer with other contemporary and historical artists, designers and photographers. This will allow students to explore how themes, subject matter, techniques and processes have changed and developed through time. We suggest giving students about 5 – 10 minutes to work through the questions on each card.

## **Managing student discussion**

We recommend voicing the following discussion guidelines before students start:

- Allow everyone in the group to voice their opinion. Be kind, patient and respectful of other people's views and ideas.
- Don't worry if you don't know what your opinion is yet. Ask further questions to your group or do more research to help you decide.
- Remember that everyone's opinion is valid. If someone has a different opinion to you, listen to them and ask them to explain their reasoning – it might change your own viewpoint.

## Further questions

As well as the discussion points on the cards, use the questions below to encourage further object-based discussion with your students. Not all of them will apply to every object.

- *AESTHETIC*  
What are its stylistic features?
- *TECHNICAL*  
What is it made from? How does it work?
- *INDUSTRIAL*  
How and in what volume is it manufactured?
- *CULTURAL*  
What or who is it responding to?
- *BEHAVIOURAL*  
How do you interact with it?
- *ECONOMIC*  
How does it financially impact the consumer and/or manufacturer?
- *ENVIRONMENTAL*  
Is it sustainable? What is its lifespan?

## Find out more

Encourage your students to find out more about the objects by visiting [vam.ac.uk/collections](http://vam.ac.uk/collections)

## Curriculum and exam specification links

The V&A Object Discussion Cards are designed to support the Art & Design curriculum and allow students to develop their own ideas while exploring the work of others. As well as discussion activities the cards also feature some suggested practical activities that provide students with opportunities to develop photography knowledge, understanding and skills. The activities can be completed collaboratively or independently and can be used to help generate ideas for classroom projects. Links to the curriculum include:

### *Idea development*

- Developing ideas through investigations, demonstrating critical understanding of sources.

### *Practical skills*

- Refining work by exploring ideas, selecting, and experimenting with appropriate media, materials, techniques, and processes.

### *Responding to sources*

- Recording ideas, observations, and insights relevant to your intentions as work progresses.

### *Knowledge and understanding*

- Presenting a personal and meaningful response that realises intentions and demonstrates understanding of visual language.

### *Photographic approaches featured in the cards include:*

- Portraiture
- Location photography
- Studio photography
- Experimental imagery
- Installation
- Documentary photography
- Photojournalism
- Moving image: film, video, and animation
- Fashion photography

# About the V&A Photography Centre

The V&A is an internationally renowned museum that houses one of the best and broadest collections of photography in the world. The V&A was one of the first museums to collect and exhibit photographs beginning in the 1850s.

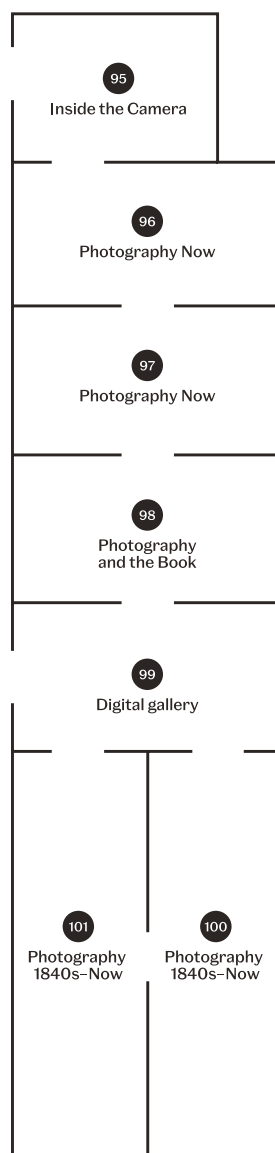
Today, its collection includes over a million objects, ranging from photographs and negatives to technical equipment, books, and archival material.

The Photography Centre is a new world-class suite of seven galleries designed to showcase the museum's vast collection, encouraging visitors to explore photography's many histories and its extensive impact on our lives. The Centre's second and final phase has seen an addition of four galleries that feature contemporary displays, new acquisitions and spaces dedicated to camera and photographic books. The Centre's current displays highlight contemporary photographs exploring pressing issues like climate change, colonial histories and identity, challenging visitors to think about their own experiences and responsibilities.

In the Digital Gallery, visitors can explore the evolution of photography in our increasingly digital world, examining the complex relationship between humans, machines, and images. With its extensive collection and diverse displays, the V&A Photography Centre offers visitors the opportunity to experience photography in new and exciting ways, showcasing its impact on our lives, and inviting us to engage with the medium's rich history and evolving future.

## Using the Photography Centre

Immerse yourself in the world of photography in the V&A Photography Centre. Explore the development of photography through books, changing displays, and films. Embrace looking, reading, thinking, and talking while enjoying one of the best and far-reaching collections of photography in the world. Develop a greater understanding of the extensive impact of photography on our lives and experience its diverse histories in new ways.



The Photography Centre is located on Level 2, rooms 95 – 101.

[V&A interactive map](#)

Explore more about the Photography Centre

[vam.ac.uk/info/photography-centre](http://vam.ac.uk/info/photography-centre)

# **Object Discussion Cards**



# ***Radio Telescope, Effelsberg XV: September 12,*** **by Vera Lutter, 2013**

To make this photograph, German photographer Vera Lutter transformed a shipping container into a camera obscura or pinhole camera, one of the earliest and most simple types of camera. Light enters through a tiny hole into a darkened room, projecting an upside-down, reverse image of the exterior world into the interior. Lutter works with an exposure process of several hours, days or even weeks and describes her work as 'slowing down time'. Her pictures of architecture, shipyards, and industrial sites are inverted black and white photographs, called negatives, and because the image is projected directly onto the photographic paper, only one of each picture exists.

In 2013, Lutter travelled to the Max Planck Institute for Radio Astronomy in Bonn, Germany to photograph the Effelsberg Telescope, one of the largest radio telescopes on Earth with a diameter of 100 metres. The telescope collects ancient radio waves that have travelled for light years to reach our planet. For one month Lutter worked to produce a series of black-and-white images of the telescope while it was exploring the farthest reaches of our galaxy.

## **Discuss**

- Look closely at the black and white image. How would you describe the atmosphere and mood of the piece?
- Why do you think the photographer has chosen to document this structure? What other iconic landmarks or structures do you think the photographer could document?
- How does the uniqueness of each photograph add to the narrative of the photographer's work?
- What similarities can you see between the camera obscura used to create the photograph and the telescope?

## **Activities**

- Research pin-hole cameras and experiment with making your own. Basic materials include: an old shoebox, a scalpel or scissors, a sharp pencil, tape, aluminium foil, and light sensitive paper. NB for teachers: please supervise students when using sharp instruments, like scalpels and scissors.
- What structures would you document? Try capturing structures both big and small with a camera, I and consider how you can express their significance. Consider how lighting adds atmosphere to your work.
- Experiment with photograms: these are made by placing objects directly onto photographic paper and exposing them to light leaving an impression of your object onto the paper.

## **Find out more**

- You can find an example of a camera obscura in the Photography Centre (gallery 95).
- Follow this link to find out more about Vera Lutter's photograph: <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O1547617/radio-telescope-effelsberg-xv-september-photograph/>



## Compare with

Compare the Vera Lutter photograph with the following photograph. Consider not only the image itself and the subject matter but also the processes the photographer has used to make it.



Photograph by George Davidson (born 1854), *The Onion Field*, Mersea Island, 1890

©Victoria and Albert Museum, London

English photographer George Davidson created this image using a pin-hole camera. Davidson was a pioneer of Pictorialist photography, a movement popular in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that valued beauty over the documentation of reality. Pictorialists often used experimental photographic processes to achieve a soft focus and delicate tones creating photographs that were almost like paintings.

### Find out more

Follow this link to find out more about this photography: <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O1410658/the-onion-field-mersea-island-photograph-davison-george/>

## Compare with

Compare the Vera Lutter photograph with the following photograph. Consider not only the image itself and the subject matter but also the processes the photographer has used to make it.



Photograph by Bernd and Hilla Becher (born 1931 & 1934), *Silo of Coal, Big Pit Colliery South Wales*, 1975

©Victoria and Albert Museum, London

This German photography duo was fascinated with documenting industrial sites. The Bechers' images convey an eerie sense of the passage of time, as many of the sites they photographed had long come to a standstill.

### Find out more

Follow this link to find out more about this photograph: <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O112657/silo-for-coal-big-pit-photograph-becher-bernhard/>



# ***Mareecha's Magic Trick*** **by Vasantha Yogananthan, 2018, printed 2020**

French photographer Vasantha Yogananthan's series *A Myth of Two Souls* is an extensive project inspired by the ancient Indian story of the *Ramayana* that follows the trials and tribulations of Prince Rama and Princess Sita. The photographer travelled over 3,500 kilometres through India, Nepal and Sri Lanka, seeking the *Ramayana's* presence in contemporary society. The series blends chance encounters with constructed scenes to retell the classic tale.

This photograph from the series, titled *Mareecha's Magic Trick*, references a moment in the story where the character Mareecha helps Ravana, King of the Demons, to kidnap Sita by assuming the form of a golden deer. Shot in black and white using a large-format camera, the theatrically staged portrait is later hand-painted by the Indian artist Jaykumar Shankar. The rich, textured background and design on the clothing work together to draw the viewer in and highlight the figure's white shirt and hand gesture.

## **Discuss**

- Look closely at the image. What details catch your eye? What composition techniques has the photographer used to draw the viewer in?
- What message do you think the photographer is trying to convey through the image?
- Why do you think the photographer has chosen to add colour by hand rather than shooting the image with colour film? How do the colours emphasise the message of the work?

## **Activities**

- Create your own epic tale through a series of images. Take photographs of your own journey by taking photographs of places and objects that represent your community.
- Experiment with adding colour to your images by using a hand painting technique. Explore how colour changes the mood and feeling of the photograph.

## **Find out more**

Follow this link to find out about the *Ramayana* – a Sanskrit epic from ancient India, one of two important epics of Hinduism, known as *Itihasas*. The epic narrates the life of Rama, a legendary Prince of Ayodhya in the kingdom of Kosala.  
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ramayana>

[See a depiction of scenes from the \*Ramayana\* in the V&A's collection](#)

## Compare with

Compare the Vasantha Yoganathan photograph with the following photograph. Consider not only the image itself and the subject matter but also the processes the photographer has used to make it.



Photograph by Felice Beato (born 1832),  
*Views of Japan, Volume II*, 1868

©Victoria and Albert Museum, London

The photographic series *Views of Japan*, Volume II, 1868 by Italian-British photographer Felice Beato was compiled in albums for Western audiences. The images documented famous landmarks and landscapes as well as traditional customs of Japanese life. To add to the exoticism of the images, the photographs were then hand-coloured.

### Find out more

Follow this link to find out more about this photograph: <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O1093672/views-of-japan-volume-ii-photograph-beato-felice/>

## Compare with

Compare the Vasantha Yoganathan photograph with the following photograph. Consider not only the image itself and the subject matter but also the processes the photographer has used to make it.



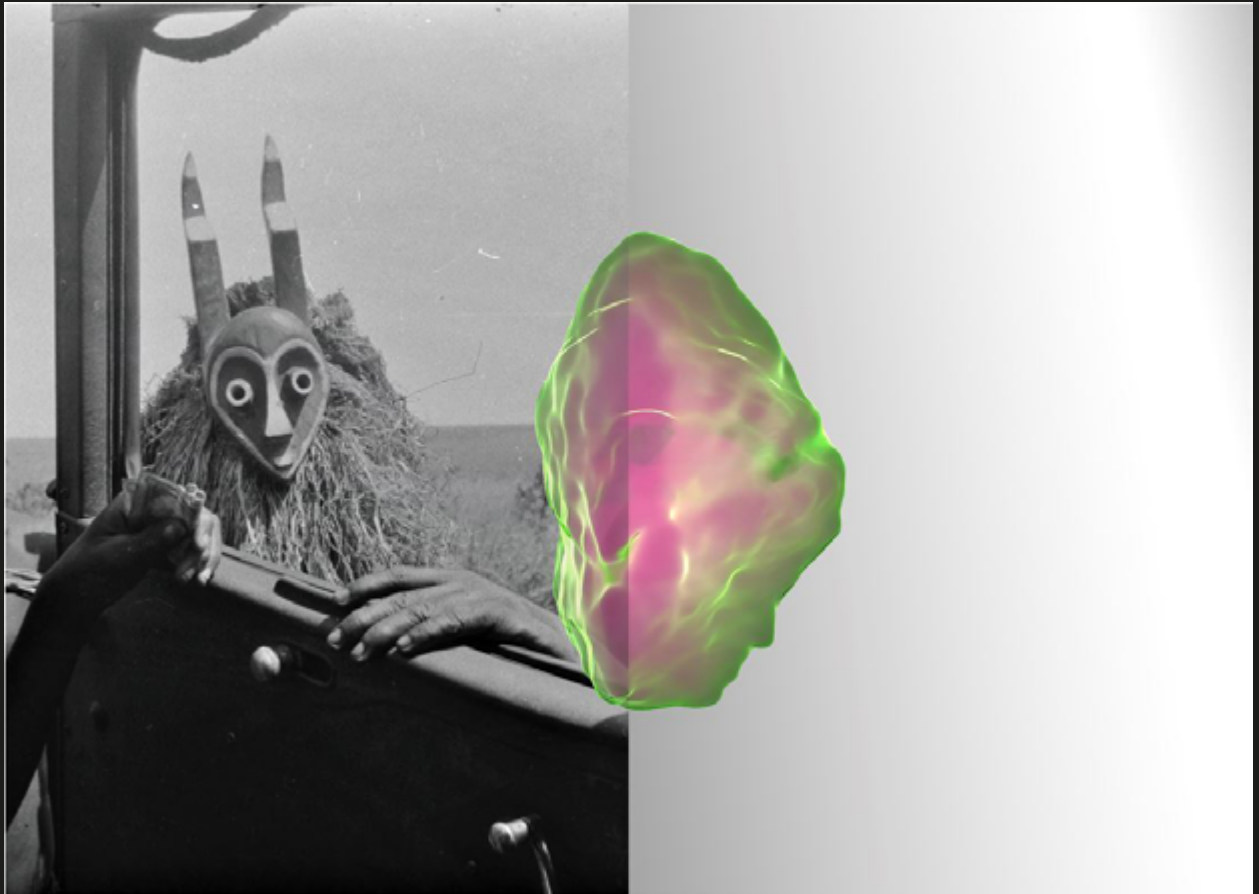
Photograph by Julia Margaret Cameron (born 1815), *Circe*, 1865

©Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Best known for her portraits, the British photographer Julia Margaret Cameron would pose her sitters as characters from stories both real and imagined. In this photograph, a young girl with grapes in her hair poses as the goddess Circe from Greek mythology.

### Find out more

Follow this link to find out more about this photograph: <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O129302/circe-photograph-cameron-julia-margaret/>



# ***Hans Himmelheber, Masked Figure and Men, DRC, Pende Region, 1939, Scan of a Chalcopyrite from the Kipushi Mine, and Reflection in Mirror*** **by Sammy Baloji, 2020**

The Congolese photographer Sammy Baloji's artistic exploration of the Democratic Republic of Congo's history offers a powerful reflection of the ongoing impact of European colonialism. Focusing on the cultural, architectural, and industrial heritage of the Katanga region, where he grew up, Baloji also incorporates archival photographs with contemporary images allowing him to retell Congo's history from the perspective of its people.

This image is taken from Baloji's series *Kasala* that questions the long and brutal history of the exploitation of Congolese people, culture, and natural resources by Europeans. In this series, Baloji layers scans of copper ore mined in the Democratic Republic of Congo over archival photographs taken by Hans Himmelheber, a German anthropologist and art dealer, who visited the country in the 1930s. By recontextualising these colonial-era pictures, Baloji highlights their continued relevance, and by printing the triptych on mirrors, he also implicates the viewer and surroundings into this painful history.

## **Discuss**

- How do you think the use of different materials adds to the piece's meaning? Why do you think the photographer has chosen to include a mirror?
- What do you think about the photographer's decision to use archival photographs in their work? What do they add to the message of the work?
- Does it count as photography if the artist didn't take the picture themselves?

## **Activities**

- Find an old photograph related to your cultural heritage or a specific historical event and use digital or handmade techniques to mix it with your own contemporary photographs. Experiment with layering and juxtaposing the old and new images to explore themes of change, memory, and identity. (NB – Please make sure you have permission to use the photographs before you start this activity)
- Experiment with collaging interesting backgrounds and textures in your photographs. Explore how different images and colours can reflect your thoughts and feelings.



## Compare with

Compare the Sammy Baloji photograph with the following photograph. Consider not only the image itself and the subject matter but also the processes the photographer has used to make it.



Photograph by Maurizio Anzeri (born 1969),  
*Lucy*, 2018

©Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Italian artist Maurizio Anzeri uses delicate embroidery on vintage photographs that he finds at flea markets, creating otherworldly portraits. His threads create elaborate masks that distort his subjects' features and are inspired by his own family's history of mending fishing nets.

### Find out more

Follow this link to find out more about this photograph: <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O1498023/lucy-photograph/>

## Compare with

Compare the Sammy Baloji photograph with the following photograph. Consider not only the image itself and the subject matter but also the processes the photographer has used to make it.



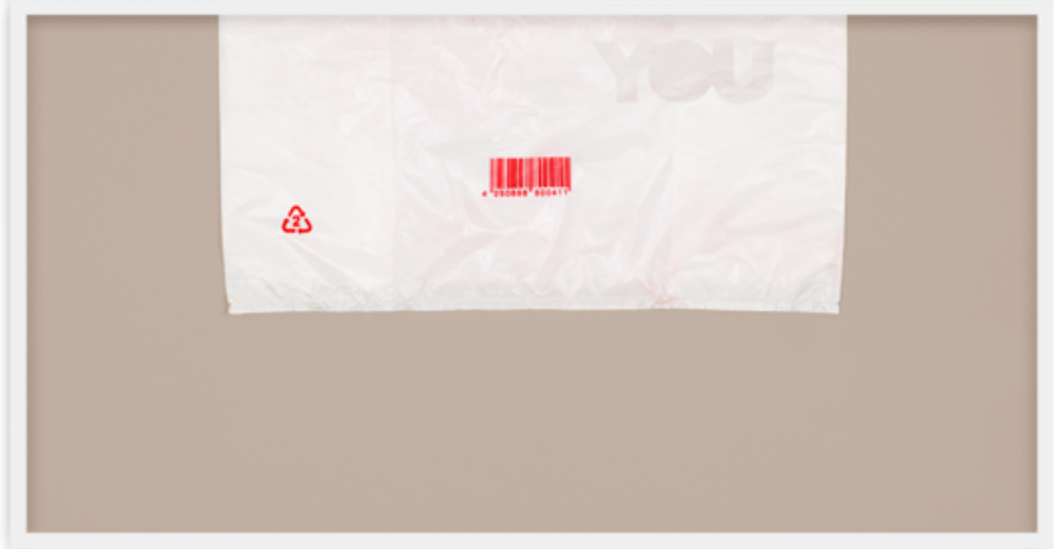
Photograph by Seydou Keita (born 1921 – 2001), *Young Man with a Flower*, 1958

©Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Seydou Keita was a Malian photographer known for his portraits of Malian society – taken in the capital city of Bamako. His works often include props and fashionable clothing to highlight the idealised or imagined socio-economic status. The young Black man in this image sits against a patterned background posing with a flower, wearing a white jacket and silk handkerchief.

### Find out more

Follow this link to find out more about this photography: <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O64616/young-man-with-a-flower-photograph-keita-seydou/>



# ***A poem by repetition by Eugen Gomringer 2,*** **by Natalie Czech (born 1976), 2019**

Natalie Czech is a German conceptual photographer whose work brings together existing images and texts to create new visual dialogues. By adapting elements of pre-existing graphic objects, Czech explores the power of images and the meaning that can be found between the lines that often reveals hidden poetry. Czech's creative process involves searching magazine articles, album covers and product packaging to uncover existing poems by well-known American poets such as Robert Creeley and Jack Kerouac. She then highlights specific words and phrases by hand and photographs the original material, presenting it as flattened and framed pictures.

Czech's layered works challenge the viewer to move their focus between text and image, encouraging them to explore different meanings and make unexpected discoveries. Her use of existing materials to create new works of art raises questions about the role of photography and the power of images in contemporary culture.

## **Discuss**

- Look at this image. Which everyday object has the photographer used to create the image? Why do you think they have chosen this particular object?
- Look at the word the photographer has chosen to highlight, alongside where they have sourced them from. What message do you think they are trying to communicate?
- Consider the choice of image and word. What other combinations could be used? Consider other examples of everyday objects.

## **Activities**

- Experiment with creating a collage using found texts and images, test out photographing your creations. What message or mood are you trying to communicate?
- Create a poem by photographing different words and letters. Explore how different font styles effect the meaning of the poem.

## **Find out more**

Follow this link to find out more about this photograph: <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O1678383/a-poem-by-repetition-by-photograph-natalie-czech/>

## Compare with

Compare the Natalie Czech photograph with the following photograph. Consider not only the image itself and the subject matter but also the processes the photographer has used to make it.



*I shop therefore I am*, Carrier Bag, ca. 1993 (printed), Vinçon Department Store (publisher), Barbara Kruger (artist)

©Victoria and Albert Museum, London

The photo-collage by American artist Barbara Kruger's 1987 photo-collage is a radical take on the famous proposition 'I think therefore I am' made by the 17th-century French philosopher René Descartes. This is one in a series of works in which Kruger addressed the topic of money and consumer culture.

### Find out more

Follow this link to find out more about this object: <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O72123/i-shop-therefore-i-am-carrier-bag-kruger-barbara/>

## Compare with

Compare the Natalie Czech photograph with the following photograph. Consider not only the image itself and the subject matter but also the processes the photographer has used to make it.



*Kitchen cabinet with bottles and jars, Ideal Home*, by John R. J. Taylor (born 1958), 1990

©Victoria and Albert Museum, London

This image is taken from the British photographer John R. J. Taylor's series *Ideal Home*. His work focuses on celebrating the ordinary and work as a historic record or everyday life. His images include photographs of local newspapers, domestic interiors and kitchen cabinets filled with bottles and jars.

### Find out more

Follow this link to find out more about this object: <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O188441/photograph-john-r-j/>



# ***The Zizi Show*, by Jake Elwes, 2020 – 23**

The British media artist Jake Elwes created *The Zizi Show*, a deepfake drag cabaret that explores the meeting of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and drag performance. The artist uses artificial intelligence to generate synthetic drag identities called a deepfake that challenge the biases built into facial recognition technologies. These prejudices often reflect the unconscious biases of their programmers. Elwes uses drag performance to highlight the ethical problems that exist in AI, as computer systems often struggle to recognise marginalised identities.

The performers in *The Zizi Show* are a community of drag artists who consented to having photographic datasets made of their bodies to empower the drag and LGBTQ+ community. Elwes deliberately included diverse bodies, genders and sexualities in the datasets, challenging the lack of representation in the algorithms used to develop new technologies. *The Zizi Show* is celebration of performance, difference, community, and creativity and sees the artist make a claim of technologies that can otherwise be oppressive and exploitative.

> Follow this link for further information and films about *The Zizi Show* Project. It includes an interview with Jake Elwes on the making of the artwork and clips from the *The Zizi Show* <https://www.jakeelwes.com/project-zizi-show.html>

## **Discuss**

- Why does the artist, Elwes, think it is important to address the issues of AI and facial recognition?
- Discuss why facial recognition systems could potentially impact negatively on certain groups of people? What impact could this have on those groups of people?

## **Activities**

- Create a photo series exploring identity. Use Photoshop tools or filters to experiment with manipulating images.
- Experiment with photographing two or more sitters in the same pose and lighting, shooting from the same angle and perspective – then work to combine the images.



## Compare with

Compare the Jake Elwes with the following photograph. Consider not only the image itself and the subject matter but also the processes the photographer has used to make it.



Photograph by Cindy Sherman (born 1954),  
*Untitled #74*, 1980

©Victoria and Albert Museum, London

American artist Cindy Sherman adopts a range of identities in her photographs. Her self-portrayal examines the stereotypical imagery of a woman and shows how identities are a form of social performance. In this photograph we see Sherman pose wearing a wig, a bright yellow coat and holding a clutch bag. The use of costume and props as well as background of the New York City street makes the viewer question the identity of the woman and perhaps make assumptions.

### Find out more

Follow this link to find out more about this photograph: <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O82900/untitled-74-photograph-sherman-cindy/>

## Compare with

Compare the Jake Elwes with the following photograph. Consider not only the image itself and the subject matter but also the processes the photographer has used to make it.



Photograph by Herbert Bayer (born 1900),  
*Humanly Impossible*, 1932

©Victoria and Albert Museum, London

This is a photomontage artwork from the series *Man and Dream* by Austrian designer Herbert Bayer. Bayer has created a haunting image by cutting and sticking a self-portrait to appear as though he is holding a chunk of his own arm. Created in Berlin in 1932 as Hitler rose to power, Bayer's work has a dreamlike yet disturbing quality that represented the Germanic identity of the time.



# ***Untitled (Giant Phoenix),*** **by Noemie Goudal, 2022**

French artist Noémie Goudal's work expands photography beyond its traditional limits, creating immersive installations and performances that are inspired by her in-depth research about human history and the natural world. Her latest work, *Untitled (Giant Phoenix)* demonstrates her fascination with paleoclimatology, the study of ancient climate history. The artwork features the Phoenix Atlantica palm tree, which helped prove the existence of a supercontinent known as Pangaea that saw the world's continents joined in one mass over 200 million years ago.

Goudal uses a complex process to create her artwork. She starts by her photographing the trees, printing the photographs life-size, then rephotographing them on location. The final installation has a layered effect made up of rectangular photographs of the palm tree at night printed onto aluminium and steel. The piece measures over 3 metres in width and height. And as the viewer moves from left to right, the image fragments, and reforms. The experience draws attention to the analysis of climate and geology to reveal our geography as fleeting and constantly evolving.

## **Discuss**

- Look closely at the artwork. Does anything strike you as unusual?
- Goudal's work blurs the line between photography, sculpture, and installation. How do you think you it would feel to walk around and experience the work?
- The work explores ancient climate change to help viewers develop an understanding of the direction our planet is heading in the future. Why do you think the artist wants to give us this perspective on the history of the planet?

## **Activities**

- Experiment with creating your own photography installation. How can you turn your images from 2D to 3D?
- Test out some lighting techniques to experiment with contrasts and spotlight effects to light or shadow your subject. How can you use lighting to create a sense of drama or narrative.

## **Find out more**

- Follow this link to find out more about the object: <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O1728334/untitled-giant-phoneix-2022-photograph-no%C3%A9mie-goudal/>

## Compare with

Compare the Noémie Goudal photograph with the following photograph. Consider not only the image itself and the subject matter but also the processes the photographer has used to make it.



Photograph by Eadweard Muybridge (born 1830), *Camel Trotting*, 19th century

©Victoria and Albert Museum, London

The series '*Animal Locomotion*' by British photography Eadweard Muybridge was the first scientific study to use photography. Muybridge was a pioneer of photographing motion. He used a bank of separate cameras to make split-second shots of animals and humans while they were moving. With this technology, he captured images of the separate stages of movement never seen before by the human eye.

### Find out More

Follow this link to find out more about this photograph: <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O1056419/camel-trotting-photograph-muybridge-eadweard/>

## Compare with

Compare the Noémie Goudal photograph with the following photograph. Consider not only the image itself and the subject matter but also the processes the photographer has used to make it.



Photograph by Awoiska van der Molen (born 1972), '#351-10' from the series *Sequester*, 2013

©Victoria and Albert Museum, London

This black and white image of trees and plants by the Dutch artist Awoiska van der Molen demonstrates her interest in untamed landscape and immersion in nature. Her monochrome landscapes investigate a sense of solitude that can be experienced in isolated locations. The photograph is a collotype print, which involves many layers of ink and has the power to produce great depth and detail in an artwork.

### Find out more

Follow this link to find out more about this photograph: <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O1359624/351-10-from-the-series-photograph-awoiska-van-der/>



# Apple iPhone, 2007

The iPhone, introduced by Apple in 2007, revolutionised the mobile-phone industry and transformed photography forever. Although not the first company to integrate a high-quality camera into a mobile phone, Apple's iPhone surpassed its competition with its sleek design and easy internet access.

The iPhone's first model launched with the tagline 'today, Apple is going to reinvent the phone'. It allowed anyone to instantly take, edit, and share photographs globally in seconds. Soon, a worldwide network of photographs emerged with over 1 trillion snapshots captured each year. Simultaneously the rise of social media platforms saw the birth of selfies, filters, and hashtags, giving us a place to share our photographs. Today, billions of people carry a camera with them at all times, ready to record any aspect of their lives. By allowing us to document and share events in seconds, smartphone technology has changed the way we experience the world around us.

## Discuss

- What impact has the iPhone had on photography? Do you think a photograph taken on an iPhone can be considered art?
- How is technology changing the way we make and look at photographs? Has social media changed the way we share and look at images?
- Compare and contrast photographs of a similar subject taken on different cameras. What do you notice about the quality of the work or the tone produced?

## Activities

- Create a photography series using a smart phone. Experiment with colour. Can you play around with this when shooting and in post-production? See how vibrant you can go with your colours while maintaining artistic and technical quality.
- Experiment with creating your own photography lenses to hold in front of your phone, what effects can you create to blur or focus your images?



## Compare with

Compare the iPhone with the following camera.



Camera, Kodak (manufacturers), circa 1888

©Victoria and Albert Museum, London

This was the first roll-film hand camera manufactured by the Eastman Kodak company. It was the forerunner to the Kodak Brownie camera (manufactured in 1900) which introduced the snapshot to the masses. Because of the Brownie's simple design and low cost, the series was so popular that it continued to be produced for the next seventy years.

### Find out more

Follow this link to find out more about this object: <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O1431362/camera-kodak/>

## Compare with

Consider the iPhone and the following photograph taken on a smartphone. Think about the context in which this photograph was taken and the significance of the type of camera the photographer has used.

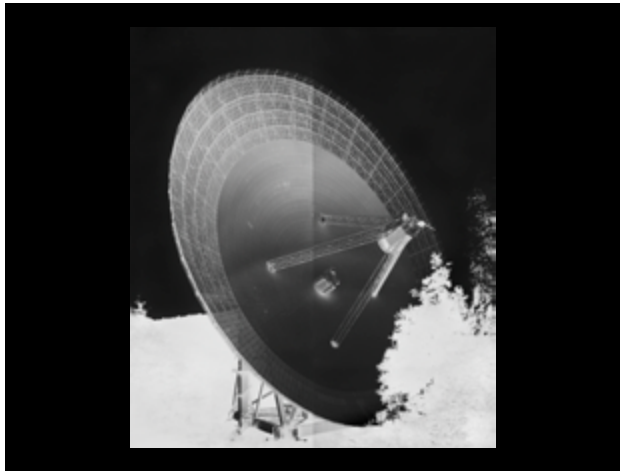


Photograph by Joana Choumali (born),  
*Sans Titre 5* from the series *Ça va aller*, 2019

©Victoria and Albert Museum, London

The Ivorian photographer Joana Choumali's practice focuses on documentary portraits. The images in the series *Ça va aller* are all taken on her smartphone and document the local people of Grand-Bassam one month after a terrorist attack. Choumali has added embroidery around the lone figures to express her own emotions and connect with the people in the images.

## Sketch & notes



### ***Radio Telescope, Effelsberg XV: September 12, 2013***

To make this photograph, German photographer Vera Lutter transformed a shipping container into a camera obscura or pinhole camera, one of the earliest and most simple camera techniques. Light enters through a tiny hole into a darkened room, projecting an upside-down, reverse image of the exterior world into the interior. Lutter works with an exposure process of several hours, days or even weeks and describes her work as 'slowing down time'. Her projected images of architecture, shipyards and industrial sites become an inverted black-and-white image, making each print a unique negative on paper.

#### **Discuss**

- Look closely at the black and white image. How would you describe the atmosphere and mood of the piece?
- Why do you think the photographer has chosen to document this structure? What other iconic landmarks or structures do you think the photographer could document?
- How does the uniqueness of each photograph add to the narrative of the photographer's work?
- What similarities can you make between the camera obscura used to create the photograph and the telescope?

## Sketch & notes



### ***Mareecha's Magic Trick, 2018***

French photographer Vasantha Yoganathan's series *A Myth of Two Souls* is an extensive project inspired by the ancient Indian story of the *Ramayana* that follows the trials and tribulations of Prince Rama and Princess Sita. The photographer travelled over 3,500 kilometres through India, Nepal and Sri Lanka, seeking the *Ramayana's* presence in contemporary society. The series blends chance encounters with constructed scenes to retell the classic tale.

#### **Discuss**

- Look closely at the image. What details catch your eye? What composition techniques has the photographer used to draw the viewer in?
- What message do you think the photographer is trying to convey through the image?
- Why do you think the photographer has chosen to add colour by hand rather than shooting the image with colour film? How do the colours emphasise the message of the work?

## Sketch & notes



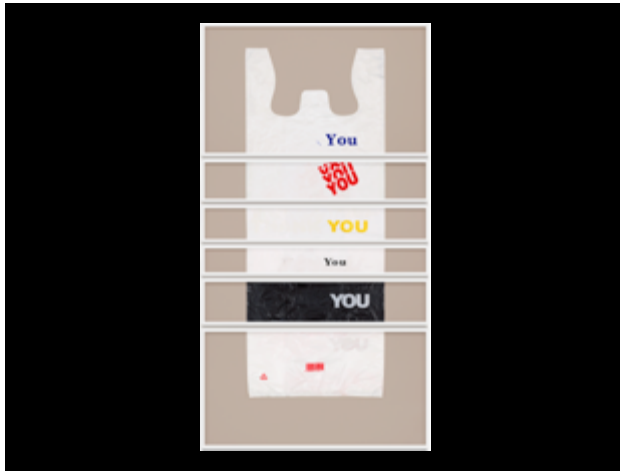
### ***Hans Himmelheber, Masked Figure and Men, DRC, Pende Region, 1939, Scan of a Chalcopyrite from the Kipushi Mine, and Reflection in Mirror, 2020***

Congolese photographer Sammy Baloji's artistic exploration of the Democratic Republic of Congo's history offers a powerful reflection of the ongoing impact of European colonialism. Focusing on the cultural, architectural, and industrial heritage of the Katanga region, where he grew up, Baloji also incorporates archival photographs with contemporary images allowing him to retell Congo's history from the perspective of its people.

#### **Discuss**

- How do you think the use of different materials adds to the piece's meaning? Why do you think the photographer has chosen to include a mirror?
- What do you think about the photographer's decision to use archival photographs in their work? What do they add to the message of the work?
- Does it count as photography if the artist didn't take the picture themselves?

## Sketch & notes



### ***A poem by repetition by Eugen Gomringer 2,*** **2019**

Natalie Czech is a German conceptual photographer whose work brings together existing images and texts to create new visual dialogue. By adapting elements of pre-existing work, Czech explores the power of images and the meaning that can be found between the lines and often reveals hidden poetry. Czech's creative process involves searching magazine articles, album covers and product packaging to uncover existing poems by well-known American poets such as Robert Creeley and Jack Kerouac. She then highlights specific words and phrases by hand and photographs the original material, presenting it as flattened and framed pictures.

#### **Discuss**

- Look at this image. Which everyday object has the photographer used to create the image? Why do you think they have chosen this particular object?
- Look at the word the photographer has chosen to highlight, alongside where they have sourced them from. What message do you think they are trying to communicate?
- Consider the choice of image and word. What other combinations could be used? Consider other examples of everyday objects.

## Sketch & notes



### ***The Zizi Show, 2020 – 23***

British media artist Jake Elwes created *The Zizi Show*, a drag cabaret that explores the meeting of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and drag performance. The artist uses artificial intelligence to generate synthetic drag identities that challenge the biases built into facial recognition technologies. These prejudices often reflect the unconscious biases of their programmers. Elwes uses drag performance to highlight the ethical problems that exist in AI, as computer systems often struggle to recognise marginalised identities.

#### **Discuss**

- Why does the artist, Elwes, think it is important to address the issues of AI and facial recognition?
- Discuss why facial recognition systems could potentially impact negatively on certain groups of people? What impact could this have on those groups of people?

## Sketch & notes



### ***Untitled (Giant Phoenix), 2022***

French artist Noémie Goudal's work expands photography beyond its traditional limits, creating immersive installations and performances that are inspired by her in-depth research examining human history and the natural world. Her latest work, *Untitled (Giant Phoenix)* is an example to her fascination with paleoclimatology, the study of ancient climate history. The artwork features the Phoenix Atlantica palm tree, which serves as evidence of a supercontinent known as Pangaea that saw the world's continents joined in one mass over 200 million years ago.

#### **Discuss**

- Look closely at the artwork. Does anything strike you as unusual?
- Goudal's work blurs the line between photography, sculpture, and installation. How do you think you it would feel to walk around and experience the work?
- The work explores ancient climate change to help viewers develop an understanding of the direction our planet is heading in the future. Why do you think the artist wants to give us this perspective on the history of the planet?



## Sketch & notes



### Apple iPhone, 2007

The iPhone, introduced by Apple in 2007, revolutionised the mobile-phone industry and transformed photography forever. Although not the first company to integrate a high-quality camera into a mobile phone, Apple's iPhone surpassed its competition with its sleek design and easy internet access.

#### Discuss

- What impact has the iPhone had on photography? Do you think a photograph taken on an iPhone can be considered art?
- How is technology changing the way we make and look at photographs? Has social media changed the way we share and look at images?
- Compare and contrast photographs of a similar subject taken on different cameras. What do you notice about the quality of the work or the tone produced?