

Press release

Simon ROBERTS *Un air de vacances*

Exhibition from September 8 to October 21 2023

Opening with the artist on Thursday September 7, from 6pm to 9pm

For the upcoming September season, the Sit Down gallery is pleased to present *Un air de vacances*, by photographer Simon Roberts. The exhibition invites us to discover a British artist's view of French people on vacation. Through his series *Impressions of Normandy**, Simon Roberts captures a panorama of outdoor leisure activities. These scenes of seaside bathing, cycling and picnics, far from being trivial, are part of a history of landscape that is either English or French.

*This series was made during a residency initiated by Centre photographique Rouen Normandie from 2014 to 2016, which led to two exhibits in Rouen (2017) and in Caen (2018). The residency continued in 2021 in Cotentin, Normandy, resulting in a show at Château de Flamanville.



Golf paysan, Flamanville, Cotentin 2021, series Impressions of Normandy

© Simon Roberts courtesy galerie Sit Down

NORMANDY : NOS JOURS DE FÊTES

"Here is Normandy, her holidays and festivals, as seen by an Englishman. The Centre Photographique in Rouen commissioned Roberts to travel the regions of upper and lower Normandy as part of an ongoing project, started several years earlier and involving a selection of photographers, to focus on landscapes such as the ocean cliffs, the Seine valley, and regenerated urban areas. For his project, Roberts' residency reveals a territory conceived of as a vast human landscape.

A landscape, far from being a frozen reality, is experience and interaction, a negotiated interface between the environment and the person who peoples it with his or her footsteps and emotions. Collectively and individually, we and the landscape weave together a storyline mixing the real and the symbolic, the cultural and the natural, the objective and the subjective. Over two years of work the photographer has followed a trail of local fêtes, parades, memorial ceremonies and leisure activities. While everything around him is movement, flux, mobility, he stands still. Camped on the top of his van or perched on top of a ladder, he captures the fleeting encounter between an environment and those who occupy it for a day. The tone of the encounter is often casual, as in a still showing a group of friends adopting a corner of the Yport cliffs, readying a barbecue grill as if in a corner of their own garden.

In the physical space of his large-format photographs Simon Roberts crafts a generous, inquisitive and friendly portrait of Normandy and of those who wander her byways. His images, as they explore rural hamlets, beaches, and sports fields, reveal an unexpected and joyous diversity of customs and manners of "living" her landscapes."

Raphaëlle Stopin

Director, Centre photographique Rouen Normandie

(extract)

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PRESS MATERIAL



Chapel of Our Lady of the Guard, Etretat, 2014, series Impressions of Normandy
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Tour de France installation, Etretat, Seine-Maritime, 2015, series Impressions of Normandy
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Cape Carteret, Cotentin, 2021, series Impressions of Normandy
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Léry Poses leisure park, Eure, 2014, series Impressions of Normandy
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Barentinois Football Club, Barentin, 2014, series Impressions of Normandy
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BIOGRAPHY

Simon Roberts (b.1974) is a visual artist based in Brighton, UK. Widely recognised for his tableaux, large-format photographs of the British landscape, his practice also encompasses video, text and installation work, which together, interrogate notions of identity and belonging, and the complex relationship between history, place and culture.

He has exhibited widely and his photographs reside in major public and private collections, including the George Eastman House, Deutsche Börse Art Collection and Victoria & Albert Museum. In 2010 he was appointed the official British Election Artist by the House of Commons Works of Art Committee to produce a visual record of the General Election on behalf of the UK Parliamentary Art Collection; and in 2014 he represented Britain during the UK-Russia Year of Culture. He has been commissioned to make several large-scale public artworks and recognised with numerous awards including an Honorary Fellowship to the Royal Photographic Society, the Vic Odden Award and grants from Arts Council England and the John Kobal Foundation.

Author of several critically acclaimed monographs including *Motherland* (Chris Boot, 2007), *We English* (Chris Boot, 2009), *Pierdom* (Dewi Lewis Publishing, 2013) and *Merrie Albion – Landscape Studies of a Small Island* (Dewi Lewis Publishing, 2017), his work has also been profiled and published widely including in the *New Yorker*, *Granta*, *National Geographic*, *ArtForum*, *Wallpaper*, amongst others.

Roberts holds a BA Hons in Cultural Geography from The University of Sheffield, and is a regular public speaker and visiting lecturer. Outside of his own professional practice he is involved with several not for profit organisations having formerly served as a trustee of Photoworks and currently working as an ambassador for FotoDocument and the Positive View Foundation.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2023 Guernsey Museum & Art Gallery, (Guernsey, UK): *Between Tides*
- 2022 Flowers Gallery (London, UK): *Beneath the Pilgrim Moon*
- 2021 Château de Flamanville (Flamanville, France): *Normandy – Nos Jours De Fêtes*
- 2019 Pallant House Gallery (Chichester, UK): *Inscapes*
 Format Festival (Derby, UK): *The Brexit Lexicon*
 Cortona on the Move (Cortona, Italy): *Inizio*
- 2018 Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art (Japan): *Sight Sacralization*
 Flowers Gallery (London, UK): *Merrie Albion*
- 2017 Robert Morat Galerie (Berlin, Germany): *Public Performance*
 Centre Photographique (Rouen, France): *Normandy*
 FotoHof (Salzburg, Austria): *Landscape Studies of a Small Island*
- 2016 Festival Images Vevey (Vevey, Switzerland): *The Last Moment*
- 2015 Brighton Museum & Art Gallery (Brighton, UK): *Pierdom*
 Verey Gallery (Eton, UK): *Landscapes of Innocence and Experience*
- 2014 BredaPhoto (Breda, Netherlands): *Pierdom*
 Multimedia Art Museum (Moscow, Russia): *Landscape Studies of a Small Island*
- 2013 Robert Morat Galerie (Hamburg, Germany): *Pierdom*
 Flowers Gallery (London, UK): *The Election Project*
 Phos Fotografia (Chieri, Italy): *We English*
 MC2 Gallery (Milan, Italy): *Pierdom*
- 2012 Swiss Cottage Gallery (London, UK): *Let This Be a Sign*
 Pluie d'Images (Bretagne, France): *We English*
- 2011 Centro Brasileiro Britânico (São Paulo, Brazil): *We English*
 Flowers East (London, UK): *We English*
 Potaumnales Festival (Beauvais, France): *We English*
 SIFEST Photography Festival (Savignano, Italy): *An Italian Story*
 mac Gallery (Birmingham, UK): *The Election Project*
 MC2 Gallery (Milan, Italy): *We English*
 Robert Morat Galerie (Hamburg, Germany): *Motherland & We English*
- 2010 EX3 Centro l'Arte Contemporanea (Firenze, Italy): *Motherland, Homeland*
 SIFEST Photography Festival (Savignano, Italy): *We English*
 House of Commons (London, UK): *The Election Project*
 National Media Museum (Bradford, UK): *We English*

GROUP EXHIBITIONS (SELECTION)

- 2023 Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes (Havana, Cuba): *Where are you from? Cuba Photography Mission*
 Saatchi Gallery (London, UK): *Civilization – The Way We Live Now*
 WHITEcarrara23, (Carrara, Italy): *Still Liv(f)e*
 Fotografia Europea (Reggio Emilia, Italy): *Europe Matters*
- 2022 Les Rencontres de la Photographie (Arles, France): *Songs of the Sky – Photography & the Cloud*
 Mönchehaus Museum Goslar (Goslar, Germany): *Facing Britain*
 Cultuurecentrum Mechelen (Mechelen, Belgium): *Where are you from? Cuba Photography Mission*
- 2021 Croft Castle (Herefordshire, UK): *All Alone – Contemporary Art and Aloneness*
 CiCLO Bienal (Porto, Portugal): *The Horizon is Moving Nearer*
 Imperial War Museum (London, UK): *Generations: Portraits of Holocaust Survivors*
- 2020 Houston Center of Photography (Houston, USA): *Keeper of the Heart*
 Galerie Heinzer Reszler (Lausanne, Switzerland): *Summer Exhibition*
- 2019 National Gallery of Victoria (Melbourne, Australia): *Civilization*
 Oakland University Art Gallery (Oakland, USA): *Your Very Own Paradise*
 Museum of Contemporary Photography (Chicago, USA): *Go Down Moses*
- 2018 Museum of Rome (Roma, Italy): *Commissione Roma*
 National Maritime Museum (London, UK): *The Great British Seaside*
- 2017 Musée de l'Elysée (Lausanne, Switzerland): *Unfamiliar familiarities*
 Fotostiftung Schweiz (Winterthur, Switzerland): *Unfamiliar familiarities*
- 2016 SIA Gallery (Sheffield, UK): *Northern Light: Landscape Photography & Evocations*
- 2015 Minsheng Museum (Shanghai, China): *Work, Rest & Play: British Photography*
 NRW-Forum (Düsseldorf, Germany): *Human Nature*
- 2014 Klompching Gallery (New York, US): *About Land*
 Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art (Sunderland, UK): *Show Me The Money*
- 2013 The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art (Missouri, USA): *Making Pictures of People*
- 2012 Galeria de Arte SESI (Sao Paulo, Brazil): *Observers: British Photography*
 Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Roma (Roma, Italy): *Camera Work / FOTOGRAFIA – Festival Internazionale di Roma*
 Belvedere Museum (Noorderlicht Photofestival, Netherlands): *Terra Cognita*
 Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts (Perth, Australia): *Hijacked III*
- 2011 Carrousel du Louvre (Paris, France): *Electric Vision: BMW Paris Photo Prize*
- 2010 Corcoran Gallery of Art (Washington DC, USA): *100 Portraits / Photographers*
 George Eastman House (Rochester, USA): *What We're Collecting: Art/Not-Art*
 Krakow Photomonth (Krakow, Poland): *Aktualizacja UK*
- 2009 House of Sweden, FotoWeek DC (Washington, USA): *What Lies Beneath*
 C/O Berlin (Berlin, Germany): *Visions of Our Time, Deutsche Börse Art Collection*
- 2008 Museum of Contemporary Photography (Chicago, US): *This Land Is Your Land*
 Museum of Contemporary Art (Shanghai, China): *Unseen*

SELECTED PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Art Collection Deutsche Börse, Frankfurt, Germany
Birmingham Central Library, Birmingham, UK
Centre Photographique Normandie, Rouen, France
Collezione Taurisano, Naples, Italy
Croydon Museum, Croydon, UK
Eton College, Windsor, UK
Fotostiftung Schweiz Winterthur, Switzerland
George Eastman Museum, Rochester, USA
Grundy Art Gallery, Blackpool, UK
Linklaters Foundation Collection, Paris, France
Martin Parr Foundation, Bristol, UK
Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Castilla y León, Spain
Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago, USA
Museum of Sheffield (V&A Acquisition Fund), Sheffield, UK
National Media Museum, Bradford, UK
National Museum Cardiff (David Hurn Collection), UK
Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Missouri, USA
Pallant House Gallery, Chichester, UK
Parliamentary Art Collection, UK
Royal Museums Greenwich, London, UK
Royal Photographic Society, UK
Sir Elton John Photography Collection, London, UK
Swiss Cottage Gallery (London Borough of Camden), UK
The Hyman Collection, London, UK
The Incite Project, UK
Towner Gallery, Eastbourne, UK
University of Warwick Art Collection, Warwick, UK
Victoria & Albert Museum Collection, London, UK
Wilson Centre for Photography, London, UK

FELLOWSHIPS AND PRIZES

- Artists in Residence, Guernsey Photography Festival (Guernsey), 2022
- Arts Council England, DYCP Grant (UK), 2021
- Arts Council England, Grants for the Arts (UK), 2018
- PHotoEspaña Best Photography Book of the Year, Shortlisted for Merrie Albion (Spain), 2018
- Thames Tideway Tunnel public arts commission (UK), 2017
- Rome Commission / British Council Grant (Italy), 2016
- Arts Council England, Artists' International Development Fund (UK), 2016
- Deutsche Börse Photography Prize, nomination for *Pierdom* monograph (UK), 2015
- ING Discerning Eye, Selected Artist (UK), 2015
- UK-Russia Year of Culture, Selected Artist (Russia), 2014
- Source-Cord Prize, Shortlisted (UK), 2014
- Arts Council England, Grants for the Arts (UK), 2014
- Honorary Fellowship, Royal Photographic Society (UK), 2013
- BNL - BNP Paribas Group Award, MIA Art Fair, Finalist (Italy), 2012
- Deutsche Börse Photography Prize, nomination for *We English* monograph (UK), 2011
- Arts Council England, Grants for the Arts (UK), 2011
- BMW Paris Photo Prize, Shortlisted (France), 2010
- Official Election Artist, House of Commons Works of Art Committee (UK), 2010
- PDN Photo Annual, Best Photography Book - *We English* (USA), 2010
- World Press Photo Award, Daily Life Stories, Third Prize (Netherlands), 2010
- Arts Council England, Grants for the Arts (UK), 2010
- New York Photo Festival Book Award - *We English* (USA), 2009
- KLM Paul Huff Award, Shortlisted (Amsterdam), 2009
- Deutsche Börse Photography Prize, Longlisted for *Motherland* exhibition (UK), 2008
- John Kobal Foundation Grant (UK), 2008
- National Media Museum Bursary (UK), 2007
- Arts Council England, Grants for the Arts (UK), 2007
- Vic Odden Award (UK), 2007

MONOGRAPHS

- *New Vedute*. Photographs by Simon Roberts. Essay by Emanuelle Trevi. Minimalist Works, 2019.
- *Green Lungs of the City*. Photographs by Simon Roberts. Editions Bessard, 2018.
- *Merrie Albion – Landscape Studies of a Small Island*. Photographs by Simon Roberts. Essay by David Chandler. Dewi Lewis Publishing, 2017.
- *Landscapes of Innocence & Experience*. Photographs by Simon Roberts. Essay by Martin Caiger-Smith. Verrey Gallery, 2015.
- *Pierdom*. Photographs by Simon Roberts. Essay by Francis Hodgson. Dewi Lewis Publishing, 2013.
- *This is a Sign*. Photographs by Simon Roberts. Self published (newsprint), 2012.
- *The Election Project*. Photographs by Simon Roberts, Essays by Greg Hobson, Sean O'Hagan and Peter Wilby. Self published (newsprint), 2010.
- *We English*. Photographs by Simon Roberts. Essay by Stephen Daniels. Chris Boot, 2009.
- *Motherland*. Photographs by Simon Roberts. Essay by Rosamund Bartlett. Chris Boot, 2007.

PUBLICATIONS

- *Ivon Hitchens: Space Through Colour*. Pallant House Gallery: Chichester, 2019.
- *The Great British Seaside - Photography from the 1960s to the Present*. National Maritime Museum Greenwich: London, 2018.
- *Unfamiliar Familiarities: Outside Views on Switzerland*. Lars Muller Publishers: Switzerland, 2017.
- *1001 Photographs: You Must See Before You Die*. Cassell: UK, 2017.
- *Landscapes of the National Trust*. National Trust Books: UK, 2015.
- *Landmark: The Fields of Landscape Photography*. Thames & Hudson; UK, 2014.
- *Flash Forward Tenth*. Magenta Foundation: Canada, 2014.
- *Show Me The Money – The Image of Finance*. Manchester University Press; UK, 2014.
- *The Photobook: A History Volume III*. Phaidon; UK, 2014.
- *Contatti – Provini D'Autore Volume II*. Postcard; Italy, 2013.
- *Hijacked III - Contemporary Photography from Australia & UK*. BigCityPress: Australia, 2012.
- *Flash Forward - 5th Anniversary*. Magenta Foundation: Canada, 2009.
- *This Day of Change*. Kodansha Limited: Japan, 2009.
- *XL Photography 3*. Hatje Cantz: Germany, 2007.
- *Flash Forward 2007*. Magenta Foundation: Canada, 2007.
- *Granta 94: On the Road Again*. Photoessay by Simon Roberts. Granta: London, 2006.
- *Eyes Wide Open*. Chris Boot: London, 2004.
- *10 Years of the Joop Swart Masterclass*. World Press Foundation: Amsterdam, 2004.

SELECTED PRESS

- Lydia Figes, "Ten artists to follow on Instagram in 2022", *Art UK*, January 2022
- Hana Kaluznick, "Pandemic Objects- The Sea", *V&A Museum*, December 2020,
- Michael Prodger, "Election Artists", *The Critic*, December 2019.
- Giuseppe Scaraffia, "Cartoline dalle Italia", *iO Donna Magazine*, June 2019.
- Gemma Padley, "Best Shots", *RPS*, June 2019.
- Sarah Schmerler, "Photograph is 30", *Photograph*, January-February 2019.
- Daniel Maidman, "Photographing the Nation: Simon Roberts at Flowers Gallery", *Whitehot Magazine*, January 2019.
- Ann Hermes, "Distance tells a story in Merrie Albion", *Christian Science Monitor*, December 2018.
- Connor, Goodwin, "In New York, peering through Simon Roberts' eyes", *Blouin Artinfo*, December 2018.
- Simon Denison, "A Discontented Land," *Source*, n°93, Spring 2018.
- Travis Elborough, "Books Review – Merrie Albion", *The World of Interiors*, May 2018.
- Conor Risch, "Simon Roberts' Landscape Photos Illuminate Post-Brexit Britain", *Photo District News*, April 2018.
- Renata Ferri, "So British," *Amica*, April 2018.
- Sylwia Serafinowicz, "Simon Roberts – Flowers Gallery exhibition review," *Artforum*, April 2018.
- Stephen Clarke, "Merrie Albion book review," *Photomonitor*, March 2018.
- Lottie Davies, "Brit Crit," *Pro Photographer*, n°21, 2018.
- Adrian Burnham, "You Blighted Kingdom", *The New European*, January 2018.
- Kitty Grady, "Snapshot – Merrie Albion", *FT Weekend*, January 2018.
- Tim Clark, "Top 10 Photobooks of 2017 – Merrie Albion", *1000 Words*, December 2017.
- "Sean O'Hagan's best photography books of 2017", *The Guardian*, December 2017.
- Rebecca Fulleylove, "Simon Robert's photographs create a portrait of Britain over the last ten years", *It's Nice That*, 16 November 2017.
- "London – Portfolio by Simon Roberts," *Hotshoe*, Issue 200, October 2017.
- Video Art Visions: (Re)framing Switzerland Part 2 – Summer, *Nowness*, May 2017
- Video Art Visions: (Re)framing Switzerland Part 1 – Winter, *Nowness*, February 2017.

THE GALLERY

Established in Le Marais area in Paris, the Sit Down gallery was founded by Françoise Bornstein in 2005. Since 2013, the gallery has been entirely devoted to photography and its programming consists primarily of documentary and fine-art photography. The gallery aims to showcase young emerging photographers and support renowned international photographers. Sit Down is also interested in artists who bring photography into dialogue with other mediums or question the limits of its mimetic use.

In addition to organizing personal exhibitions, Françoise Bornstein invites curators to participate in exhibition projects during special events such as LES RENCONTRES DE LA PHOTOGRAPHIE in Arles. The gallery takes part in international art fairs like PARIS PHOTO, ART PARIS, PHOTO LA in Los Angeles, *THE PHOTOGRAPHY SHOW presented by AIPAD* in New York, UNSEEN and HAUTE PHOTOGRAPHIE in Amsterdam...

Sit Down gallery is a member of the French "Comité Professionnel des Galeries d'Art" and of the Association of International Photography Art Dealers (AIPAD).

ARTISTS

Jean-Michel ANDRÉ (FR, 1976)
Aurore BAGARRY (FR, 1982)
Stéphane BELZÈRE (FR, 1963)
Celine CROZE (FR, 1982)
Pauline FARGUE (FR, 1975)
Tim FRANCO (FR, 1982)
Virginie ISBELL (FR-USA, 1959)
Marco LANZA (IT, 1957)
Antoine LECHARNY (FR, 1995)
Jean-Gabriel LOPEZ (FR, 1962)
Robert McCABE (USA, 1934)
Marie MAUREL DE MAILLÉ (FR, 1978)

Frédérique PETIT (FR, 1949)
Salvatore PUGLIA (IT, 1953)
Jean-Charles REMICOURT-MARIE (FR, 1990)
Simon ROBERTS (UK, 1974)
Florian RUIZ (FR, 1972)
Martine SCHILDGE (FR, 1951)
Silvi SIMON (FR, 1970)
Chantal STOMAN (FR, 1967)
Laure VASCONI (FR, 1965)
Matt WILSON (UK, 1969)
Tom WOOD (IR, 1951)
Charles XELOT (FR, 1985)

CONTACT

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