



MEP

MAISON
EUROPÉENNE
DE LA
PHOTOGRAPHIE

Press release



Richard Learoyd enters the MEP collection

**Gift of Rafael and Anne-Hélène
Biosse Duplan**

September 2024

President : Jacques Bungert
Director : Simon Baker

The donation

Institutional partner



Patrons and partners



The MEP would like to thank the Collector's Circle of the MEP and the Friend's Association of the MEP for their continued support.

Cover image

Richard Learoyd, *Agnes*, July 2013 (3)
Gelatin silver contact print (Camera obscura), 157,5 x 121,6 cm

© Richard Learoyd
MEP collection, Paris. Donation of Rafael and Anne-Hélène Biosse Duplan in 2024

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Thanks to a generous donation by Rafael and Anne-Hélène Biosse Duplan, five works by the English photographer Richard Learoyd are entering the MEP collection.

“The first work I acquired had its back turned to me, a nude twisted like a column, with a shallow depth of field that evokes distant horizons and a terrifying intimacy. The second was a corpse, that of a flamboyant pink flamingo, its feathers threatening to take flight at the slightest gust of wind. Richard is avidly collected around the world. It was high time for him to join the MEP collection and be exhibited to the Parisian public. It's an honour and a joy to be the catalyst for this.”

Rafael Biosse Duplan

Richard Learoyd's works are made using one of the oldest photographic processes: the camera obscura. Through a custom process, Learoyd creates a room-sized camera in which the photographic paper is exposed. The subject—often a person, either clothed or naked, sometimes a still life—is located in the adjacent room, separated by a lens.

Richard Learoyd chooses his models and their clothes with precision, meticulously controlling every detail of the image.

For his colour images, the light falling on the subject is focused directly onto the photographic paper, without a negative interjecting. Working with colour-reversal Ilfochrome paper, Richard Learoyd uses his camera obscura to produce a single, unique and highly detailed positive image, without the use of negatives or digital technology. The resulting image has no grain. In black-and-white, the image is fixed on a giant negative, and prints are made using the negative/positive process invented in 1841 by the Englishman W. H. Fox Talbot. The negatives measure up to 2 metres wide, making his gelatin silver contact prints the largest ever made. Accompanied by his own camera obscura, Learoyd travels outside his London studio to the English countryside with its rich art historical heritage, along the Californian coast, and across Eastern Europe, producing images that have long been gestating in his imagination.

Richard Learoyd's photographs create narratives that span space and time. Those who appear in his images seem to inhabit a world of particular psychological intensity. Although they appear deeply contemporary, these figures also possess a timeless quality that situates them in the history of art. The subjects he chooses for his still lifes have an exceptional, evocative beauty.

His images have become increasingly complex over time, such as with a group of magpies trapped in wires (*A murder of magpies*, 2013) or his discovery of a discreet and mysterious bag of fishing nets on a beach in Portugal (*The sins of the father*, 2016).

Two colour prints and three black-and-white prints are entering the MEP's collection, showcasing part of photographer Richard Learoyd's technical and aesthetic exercise.

The MEP collection

The collection of the Maison Européenne de la Photographie is representative of international photographic creation from the 1950s to the present day.

It is devoted to the three major media for the dissemination of photography: the exhibition print, the printed page, and film. The collection of photographic works and artist's videos comprises almost 25,000 works to date. It is presented in temporary exhibitions at the MEP and off-site.

The collection covers the full range of artistic approaches, from reportage and fashion photography to current documentary practices and works that straddle the boundary between photography and the visual arts. As an artist-driven collection, it is primarily made up of exhibition prints made by the artists or under their supervision. The MEP's acquisition policy is guided by two principles: taking account of the diversity of artistic approaches in terms of geography, background, and genre, in conjunction with the MEP's artistic direction; and building up a body of work by acquiring entire series produced by the greatest photographers.

The MEP has forged strong relationships with many of its artists and, thanks to their generosity, has been able to assemble a body of work that, for some, spans their entire career. The MEP's collection grows every year, thanks to the exhibitions it hosts, the works it produces, and the donations it receives from the artists it exhibits. Today it also relies on the generosity of major donors and the essential involvement of the MEP's Collectors' Circle, of which Rafael and Anne-Hélène Biosse Duplan are members.

The artist

Richard Learoyd is a British photographic artist. Born in Nelson, Lancashire, in 1966, he studied fine art at the Glasgow School of Art, from which he graduated in 1990. Learoyd is best known for his use of the camera obscura, a room-sized camera. He works primarily with the traditional genres of landscape, portraiture, and still life.

Learoyd's work is collected in prestigious museums such as the V&A and the Tate in London, MoMA in New York, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and the Centre Pompidou in Paris, and has now joined the MEP collection.

Learoyd has had retrospectives at the V&A in London, the J.P. Getty Museum in Los Angeles, and the Fundación MAPFRE in Madrid. He is represented by Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco, and PACE Gallery, New York.

Press images

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Richard Learoyd, *The sins of the father*, 2016
Gelatin silver contact print (Camera obscura), 102,6 x 165,1 cm
MEP Collection, Paris. Donation of Rafaël and Anne-Hélène Biosse Duplan in 2024
© Richard Learoyd



Richard Learoyd, *A murder of magpies*, 2013
Gelatin silver contact print (Camera obscura), 129,5 x 124,5 cm
Collection MEP, Paris. Donation of Rafaël and Anne-Hélène Biosse Duplan in 2024
© Richard Learoyd



Richard Learoyd, *Agnes at table*, 2007
Unique Ilfochrome photograph (Camera obscura), 122 x 122 cm
Collection MEP, Paris. Donation of Rafaël and Anne-Hélène Biosse Duplan in 2024
© Richard Learoyd



Richard Learoyd, *A New Man*, 2015
Unique Ilfochrome photograph (Camera obscura), 147,5 x 122 cm
Collection MEP, Paris. Donation of Rafaël and Anne-Hélène Biosse Duplan in 2024
© Richard Learoyd



Richard Learoyd, *Agnes*, July 2013 (3)
Gelatin silver contact print (Camera obscura), 157,5 x 121,6 cm
Collection MEP, Paris. Donation of Rafaël and Anne-Hélène Biosse Duplan in 2024
© Richard Learoyd

Useful information

MEP – Maison Européenne de la Photographie

Maison Européenne de la Photographie
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or Pont Marie (line 7)

Opening hours

Wednesday and Friday from 11 am to 8 pm
Thursday from 11 am to 10 pm
Saturday and Sunday from 10 am to 8 pm
Ticket office open till 7:30 pm
Closed on Monday and Tuesday

Admission fee

Full price: €13
Over 65 years : €10
Reduced price: €8
MEP Pass*: €40
MEP Pass 18-30*: €25
MEP Pass Donor*: €120
*Pass for two people for an entire year.

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