

Dennis Morris: Music + Life 27 June – 21 September 2025

Discover music, culture and Black British identity through the lens of Dennis Morris.

Opening at The Photographers' Gallery this June, *Music + Life* celebrates the work of British-Jamaican photographer Dennis Morris. Renowned for his intimate portraits of cultural icons such as Bob Marley, The Sex Pistols and Marianne Faithfull, Morris's images are a vivid exploration of music, identity and social change.

Music + Life captures the spirit of some of the most pivotal moments in 20th-century culture, from the soulful vibrancy of reggae to the rebellious energy of punk. Morris provides a rare glimpse into the lives of legendary musicians, revealing the trust and connection he forged with his subjects. His candid photographs of Bob Marley, both on and off stage, along with the raw, chaotic world of The Sex Pistols, illustrate his unique ability to capture the personalities behind the music.

His long and fruitful collaboration with Bob Marley began when he was just 14. He bunked off school and asked Marley if he could photograph him. Of their lifelong partnership, he said "It was much more than just taking the photos. It was a teaching, a learning, a growing."

Morris's work with Marley caught the eye of reggae fan John Lydon. He went on to become The Sex Pistols' official photographer, capturing their chaotic rise and wild, anarchic performances and life behind the scenes.

Describing his experience working with Marley and John Lydon, Morris said "Bob Marley gave me a sense of myself, showed me how to keep myself grounded, taught me spirituality and my history as a Black man. And then punk came along and taught me how to kick the door down."

Music + Life highlights Morris's early documentary work, which reflects life in the multicultural neighbourhoods of post-war London. His powerful series of photographs, such as *Growing Up Black*, *Southall* and *This Happy Breed* document everyday life and Black and Asian British culture, and celebrate the pride and resilience of communities often overlooked, capturing their challenges and triumphs with authenticity and respect.

Morris captured daily life in church, on the streets and at parties, alongside portraits he took in a makeshift studio in the flat he shared with his mother. He vividly documented the arrival of sound systems in England and the late-night blues dances where the Jamaican community gathered to dance to reggae, capturing the spirit of a vibrant self-made culture.

"I was actually very shy, but with a camera in my hand I felt untouchable, this is why, I think, I was able to get through people's doors and make them feel comfortable. You find a way to be invisible." - Dennis Morris

Music + Life brings together Morris's work capturing Black British culture in the 1970s, with a who's who of music legends and stars of the 70s, 80s and 90s. Images will

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include reggae pioneers Bob Marley, Lee 'Scratch' Perry and The Abyssinians; punk groundbreakers The Sex Pistols, Public Image Ltd and The Slits; Oasis, The Stone Roses, Patti Smith, Grace Jones, The Prodigy, and many more. Records, merchandise and graphic design created by Morris will also be on show, including the iconic PiL Metal Box.

Dennis Morris: Music + Life is a collaboration between Maison Européenne de la Photographie (MEP), Paris, and The Photographers' Gallery. A new book *Dennis Morris: Music + Life*, published by Thames & Hudson, is available now.

Notes to Editors

For further information on exhibitions and for press images and credits/captions, please contact Alex Finch alex@margaretlondon.com / Robyn Deane robyn@margaretlondon.com / Phoebe Heins phoebe@margaretlondon.com.

For general information and enquiries about The Photographers' Gallery, including the archive, Print Sales Gallery, or Bookshop contact: press@tpg.org.uk.

Dennis Morris

Dennis Morris (b. 1960, Jamaica) developed his love for photography at a very early age when he joined the camera club at his local church in Hackney. His career took off when he met Bob Marley when he was 14.

Morris has created some of the most iconic images of Marley and the Sex Pistols, and many other influential musicians and bands. As an art director, his design credits include Public Image Limited's famous pill box logo and their first two album covers.

Several books have been published on his work, including *Bob Marley: A Rebel Life* and *Portraits of the King*; *The Bollocks, on the Sex Pistols*; *Growing up Black* and *Coloured Black*. Morris has exhibited internationally – from Beijing and Tokyo, to New York and Cleveland in the US. His work is held in many collections, including Tate Britain, the National Portrait Gallery and the V&A in London; and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Find out more about [Dennis Morris](#).

The Photographers' Gallery

The Photographers' Gallery explores how photography is connecting, captivating and radically changing our world today. The Gallery's programme and spaces – from exhibitions, talks, workshops and digital platforms, to the galleries, shop and cafe – all explore the beauty, complexity and future of photography. Right outside the Gallery, the very best of contemporary photography is shown for free, day and night, in Soho Photography Quarter.

Find out more at: thephotographersgallery.org.uk

Visitor information – The Photographers' Gallery

Monday – Wednesday 10am – 6pm

Thursday & Friday 10am – 8pm

Saturday 10am – 6pm

Sunday & bank holidays 11am – 6pm

Tickets – your ticket covers entry to all exhibitions on the day of your visit

£10 / £7 concessions (members go free)

[Save with advance online booking: £8.50 / £6 concessions](#)

Currently on show at The Photographers' Gallery until Sunday 15 June 2025:

[Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation Prize 2025](#)

[Peter Mitchell: Nothing Lasts Forever](#)

[Dennis Morris: Music + Life](#) will be on show alongside [Felicity Hammond: V3: Model Collapse](#)

At the Print Sales Gallery, [Alma Hase: Everything has an End, Only a Sausage has Two](#) is on show until 22 June 2025, free

[Coming up at The Photographers' Gallery in 2025](#)

The Photographers' Gallery
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