

Johnny Pitts: *Home is Not a Place* 23 June – 24 September 2023

The Photographers' Gallery presents *Home is Not a Place* by photographer and writer Johnny Pitts, a reflection on Black British culture, people and geographies, exploring the notion of home.

'My photographic practice involves trying to celebrate Black spaces, capture them while they're still here and give them a home. If not in a literal sense, in a figurative sense, for me home is somewhere that you take with you.' - Johnny Pitts

What is Black Britain? In 2021, photographer and writer, Johnny Pitts, and poet Roger Robinson travelled around the British coast in search of an answer to this question. Their collaboration, *Home is Not a Place*, will be on display at The Photographers' Gallery this June.

Travelling in a red Mini Cooper, Pitts and Robinson's circumnavigation encompassed the coastal, urban, rural and suburban, via the places in-between. Following the coast clockwise, together they set out to document and respond to the many manifestations of Black British culture, and to present an alternative to official and media narratives.

A bespoke 'welcome table' in the gallery will be a focal point for visitors to flick through Pitts' family photo album, chat and exchange ideas. The welcome table, designed by the artist's sister, Chantal Pitts, is inspired by American writer James Baldwin's unpublished novel of the same name. The title of the show is also drawn from a Baldwin quote 'perhaps home is not a place, but simply an irrevocable condition'. Pirate radio playlists and furniture from Pitts' 1980s youth recreate the atmosphere, in which Pitts describes 'a Black or working-class community could feel at home'. Many of his family contributed to this room set – everyone is welcome to take a seat and feel at home.

For the first time, the exhibition includes work from Pitts' ever-growing Japan series - *Sequel to a dream: Ghosts of 1980s Japan*. Pitts lived in Japan as a child in the late 1980s and it looms large in his thinking about the urban landscape, sound, architecture and wider material culture. His time there has directly influenced his prolific habit of collecting photography ephemera and technology. His personal family archive from 1980s Japan is spliced with photographs shot on return trips as an adult with cameras and expired film of the era.

Pitts has built upon his 'Afropean Archive' of over 100,000 images documenting the Black experience in Europe. His images which form *Home is Not a Place* reflect upon the complexity and resilience of Black Britishness at this particular point of time.

Pitts was supported by the inaugural Ampersand/Photoworks Fellowship in 2021. The second edition of the Ampersand/Photoworks Fellowship is now open for applicants from mid-career artists – deadline 30 May 2023. [More information about the Ampersand/Photoworks Fellowship can be found here.](#)

Home is Not a Place is a touring exhibition. It has been on show in Pitts' hometown of Sheffield at the Graves Gallery, and at the Stills Gallery in Edinburgh. The book *Home is Not a Place*, which combines Pitts' photographs with poems by Roger Robinson, was published by Harper Collins UK in September 2022.

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

Notes for Editors

Johny Pitts

Born in Sheffield, Johny Pitts is a self-taught photographer, writer and broadcaster. The founder of the online journal *Afropean.com* and author of *Afropean: Notes from Black Europe*, Pitts spent more than a decade documenting the Black experience in Europe. He currently presents Open Book for BBC Radio 4 and a forthcoming *Afropean* podcast funded by a grant from the National Geographic Society. Pitts has contributed words and images for The Guardian, The New Statesman, The New York Times, and Condé Nast Traveller. His first solo show was held at Foam in Amsterdam in 2020.

The Photographers' Gallery

The Photographers' Gallery (TPG) champions photography for everyone. Located in the heart of central London and home to an international community of photographers, the Gallery explores photography in all its forms, with a diverse and critically acclaimed programme of exhibitions, events and courses. Over the past five decades TPG has helped to establish photography as a recognised art form, introducing new audiences to photography and celebrating its place at the heart of visual culture.

Photoworks

Photoworks champions photography for everyone; an international platform, global in reach, that has provided opportunities for artists and audiences since 1995. Photoworks' programme brings new experiences to audiences and opens up new ways to encounter photography in galleries, the public realm and online. Photoworks is a registered charity and the only organisation with a national remit for photography in England. Our work is supported by public funding through Arts Council England's National Portfolio. photoworks.org.uk
[@photoworks_uk](https://twitter.com/photoworks_uk)

Ampersand/Photoworks Fellowship

The Ampersand/Photoworks Fellowship is a collaboration between The Ampersand Foundation and Photoworks, supported by Arts Council England. The Fellowship is for a mid-career photographer living in the UK and provides a transformative opportunity to complete a new body of work, with a touring exhibition. Submissions are now open for the 2023 Ampersand/Photoworks Fellowship.

Find out more at: thephotographersgallery.org.uk

Visitor information – The Photographers' Gallery

Mon – Weds 10am – 6pm

Thurs & Fri 10am – 8pm (Friday free from 5pm)

Sat 10am – 6pm

Sun 11am- 6pm

Tickets - your ticket covers entry to all exhibitions on the day of your visit
£8 / £5 concessions (members go free)

Advance online booking: £6.50 / £4 concessions

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