

WEST LONDON TODAY

Photo London 2017: Read Between the Lines

written by WLT CULTURE DESK



Seeing blue: *Londonensi Subterraneis Piccadilly Linea*, 2012 | Phil Shaw/REBECCA HOSSACK GALLERY

Professor Phil Shaw's quirky and imaginative rendering of book spines on bookshelves grouped according to colour and titles to correspond with London's tube lines shows how images can tickle the senses. His works are just one of the many on show at the third edition of the Photo London exhibition at Somerset House.

Founders Michael Benson's and Fariba Farshad's vision for photography in London continues to grow from strength to strength and continues to attract the world's leading curators, collectors and galleries to the capital. This year 89 galleries from 16 countries including Japan, United Arab Emirates, Chile and USA have taken their place in the labyrinthine Somerset House.

Photo London Recommendations from our Critics

Mind the Gaps

This is a quirky, intelligent and imaginative body of work from Phil Shaw, a ground-breaking British digital-printmaker, who creates hyper-real images of great formal elegance and conceptual richness. His distinctive 'bookshelf' prints interrogate the changing place of the printed word in a digital age, and the transfer of meaning through inter-textuality. Depicting books arranged on shelves, their titles merge and melt, forming unexpected connections and new dynamics. These are images to explore and interrogate; they are clever, funny, unsettling, and beautiful.

Shaw's work stems from what he describes as: "Questions relating to what we believe, what we think we believe and what we are told to believe. Probably as a result of a strict fundamentalist upbringing, I have always been troubled by the possibility that things may not be what they appear to be and certainly not what they are said to be.



Shades of grey: *The Truth in Black and White with Some Grey Areas* | Phil Shaw/REBECCA HOSSACK GALLERY

“As a result, I see most beliefs (even scientific ones) as a form of dogma. And I enjoy poking fun at dogma – wherever it lurks. The book titles are all absolutely genuine (with the exception of the Fiction and Friction series). I wouldn’t have done the prints otherwise. They all appear in the British Library Catalogue.”



In circles: *Londonensi Subterraneis Circulus Linea*, 2012 | Phil Shaw/REBECCA HOSSACK GALLERY

In 2004, one of these works was chosen as ‘Print of the Year’ by the Royal Society of Painter-Printmakers. Shaw regularly exhibits at the Royal Academy and his work is included in the Lunder Art Gallery, Colby College, Maine.

He was also commissioned by David Cameron to create the thought-provoking print that was presented to world leaders at the G8 Summit in Northern Ireland in 2013, which now forms part of the National Art Collection.