

## Snap Happy! How Children Became Photographers The Photographers' Gallery 14 Oct 2026 - 21 Feb 2027

The Photographers' Gallery presents *Snap Happy! How Children Became Photographers* this Autumn.

Through photographs and archives, the exhibition celebrates the creativity, curiosity and distinctive perspectives of generations of young photographers.

Do you remember your first camera? Or the first photograph you took? *Snap Happy!* explores the history of children as photographers – and what happens when a camera ends up in a child's hands. From post-war camera clubs to the magazines, comics and photobooks designed for young people, the exhibition traces photography's movement from elite pastime to accessible and much-loved hobby.

Featuring advertising, manuals, comics, toys and an abundance of never-before-seen photographs, *Snap Happy!* reveals a world of invention and mischief. Children built their own cameras from Wellington boots and dolls – the "Wellie-flex" and the "Dolly-Flex" – took clandestine portraits of teachers from under their desks, staged still lives of Barbies and My Little Ponies, and learned darkroom tricks to conjure ghosts and imagine the impossible. High-profile competitions such as Junior Photographer of the Year (1958–72) helped establish over 1,000 school darkrooms, while comic-strip heroines like Camera-Mad Carole and Snap-Happy Hetty showed girls what they might do with a lens.

From snapshots of family, friends and pets to trick photos, selfies and furtive classroom experiments, *Snap Happy!* celebrates a child's eye view of the world through the camera.

*Snap Happy!* is curated by Annebella Pollen, Professor of Visual and Material Culture at University of Brighton, UK, where she researches undervalued archives and untold stories in art and design history. The exhibition is supported by the Leverhulme Trust.

*Whippersnappers: How Children Became Photographers* by Annebella Pollen will be published in September by Four Corners Books.

### **Notes to Editors**

For further press information and image requests please contact: Alex Finch or Robyn Deane at Margaret

[alex@margaretlondon.com](mailto:alex@margaretlondon.com) / [robyn@margaretlondon.com](mailto:robyn@margaretlondon.com).

The Photographers' Gallery  
16–18 Ramillies Street  
London W1F 7LW

+44(0)20 7087 9300  
[info@tpg.org.uk](mailto:info@tpg.org.uk)  
[tpg.org.uk](http://tpg.org.uk)

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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](mailto:press@tpg.org.uk).

### **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.

[tpg.org.uk](http://tpg.org.uk)

### **Visitor information - The Photographers' Gallery**

Monday – Wednesday & Saturday 10.30am – 6pm

Thursday – Friday 10.30am – 8pm

Saturday 10.30am – 6pm

Sunday & Bank Holidays 11am – 6pm

Also at The Photographers' Gallery:

[\*Sanlé Sory: Colour Years\*](#)

[\*William Eggleston: All That Goes Unnoticed\*](#)

[\*NINAGAWA Mika: Captive Blooms\*](#) in Soho Photography Quarter, free

Tickets:

£14 (with £2 donation) / £11 concessions (with £2 donation)

Advance online booking: £12 (with £2 donation) / £9.50 concessions (with £2 donation)

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[info@tpg.org.uk](mailto:info@tpg.org.uk)

Instagram: [@thephotographersgallery](#) [@tpgprintsales](#)

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