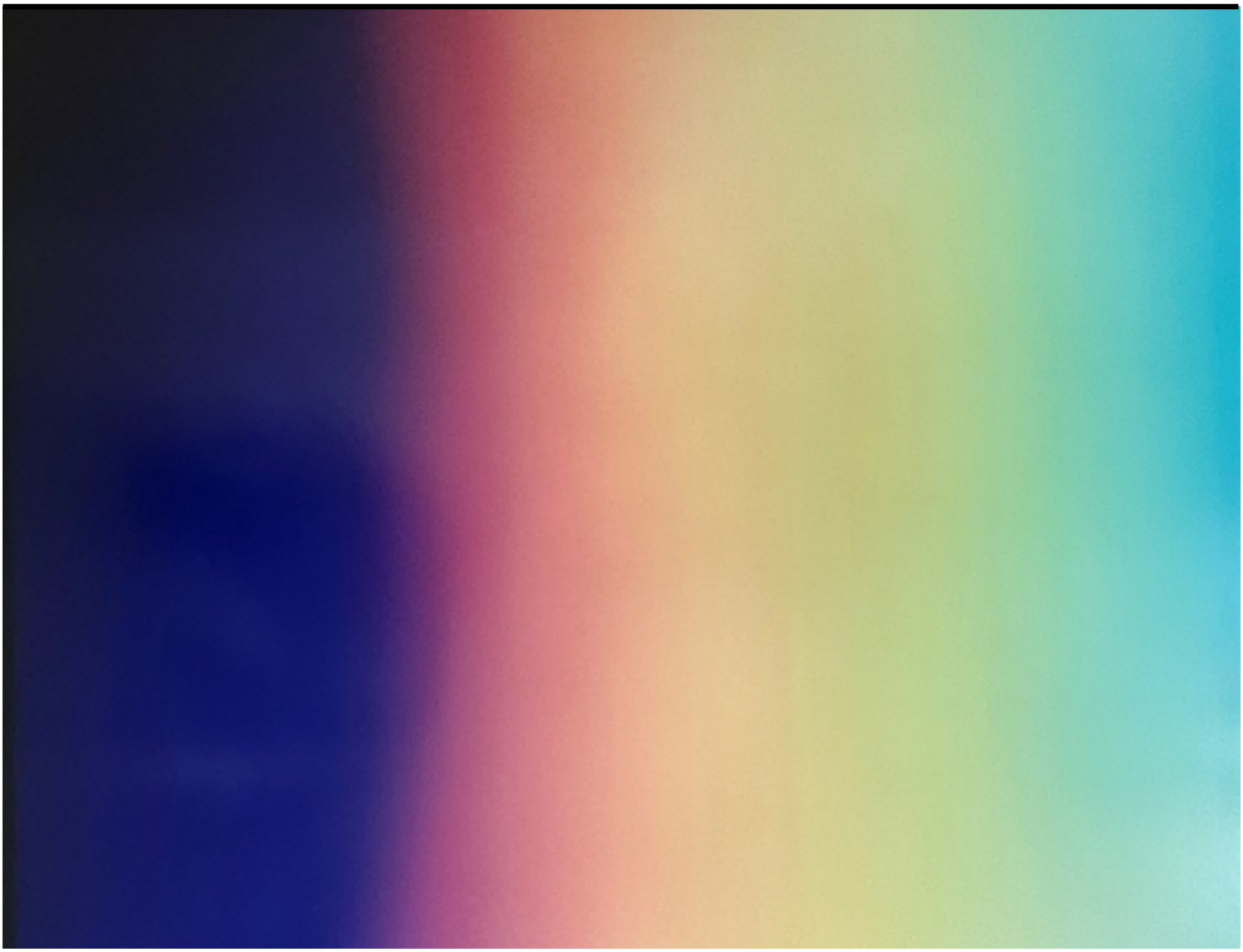
Press release

From February 26 to July 18, 2027

Photographic Alchemies

macLYON



Laure Winants, *Grande Réfraction* #17, série *Time Capsule*, 2024
Spectophotogram, chromogenic print, 140×100 cm
Courtesy of the artist and galerie echo119
Photo: Laure Winants © Adagp, Paris, 2026

Press Tour
Thursday, February 25, 2027

Exhibition on the 1st and 2nd floors of the museum

Curator:
Matthieu Lelièvre,
Head of Collection at macLYON

This exhibition, part of the Bicentenary of Photography, explores photography as a hybrid medium lying at the intersection of art, science and technology. It traces the evolution of the photographic image, from the Lumière Autochrome to algorithmic photography, in a display that features contemporary and historical works alongside material from the archives.

[...]

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BICENTENAIRE DE LA PHOTOGRAPHIE 2026 · 2027 1826 · 1827

VILLE DE LYON

Since its invention two centuries ago, photography has maintained close links with art, science and technology. The history of photography is not just about images; it is also a history of the processes that make those images possible, the supports on which they are produced, and the purposes for which they are intended. The materiality of photography involves chemistry and optics as much as it does the role of the image, its reproduction and its propagation. Technical advances in photography have been the result of constant experimentation in the field, with artists continually seeking to master, appropriate and adapt the techniques, which has led to enormous diversity in what gets photographed and how it is done.

Photography is thus the result not only of a technical process, but also of decisions and actions taken to determine its form. Light and optics, chemical reactions and the characteristics of a light-sensitive surface all have a direct influence on the image produced. The methods used are never merely a means to an end; they affect the very nature of the works and can also open up new possibilities.

At a time when digital technologies and algorithmic systems are transforming the production and circulation of images, to the point of casting doubt on what is actually meant by a 'photograph', materiality is being redefined as techniques evolve and the role of the image in society shifts. Nowadays, many images are produced without a camera and without light capture or physical printing, which leads to a disconnect between the term 'photography' itself and the evolution of its material history. At the same time, artists have taken to revisiting traditional processes and printing techniques. Which suggests that the materiality of photography is not solely the result of its technical and technological history, but is a key element in contemporary artistic practice.

It is this broader narrative that the exhibition aims to explore, drawing on our own collections at macLYON and also those of other public and private institutions in (for the most part) Lyon, as well as works by invited artists. By bringing together the perspectives of art history, the history of technology, the cinema, and publishing, the exhibition *Photographic Alchemies b*rings together works and practices that the different disciplines have often kept separate, without losing sight of their specific characteristics.

The exhibition is organised into five sections, exploring the photochemical and experimental principles that produced the image; the fruitful relationship between photography and other artistic disciplines; the mechanisation that allowed for mass reproduction; the quest for meaning in a society saturated with images; and the representation of time and space in a fertile dialogue between photography and motion pictures.

Presented over an area of 1,600 m^2 and featuring around sixty artists, *Photographic Alchemies* explores our relationship with images and new forms of the visible.

[...]

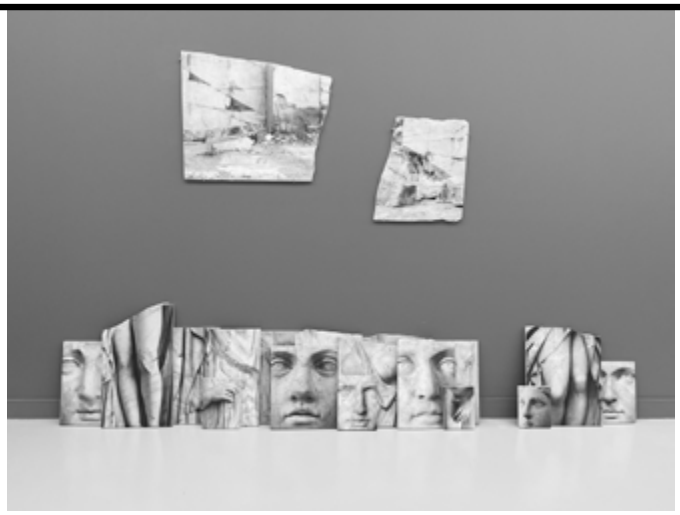
The Lyon collections: a testament to photographic diversity

The project for this exhibition features works and objects drawn from, amongst others, the collections of macLYON, the Lyon Musée des Beaux-Arts, the Musée d'Histoire de Lyon – Gadagne, the Musée de l'Imprimerie et de la Communication Graphique, the Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon (Lyon Municipal Library), and the Institut d'Art Contemporain de Villeurbanne. The photographs collected and curated by these institutions are organised according to different criteria, depending on their specialist areas, their remit and the history of their collections. Some have been acquired for their artistic value; others because of their historical, scientific, technical or documentary significance. Their presentation together underscores the huge diversity of forms photography can take and the vast range of purposes those different forms have been used for.

Artists featured in the exhibition

Blaise Adilon
Fabienne Ballandras
Delphine Balley
Robert Jefferson Bingham
Marinus Boezem
Thibault Brunet
Guénaëlle de Carbonnières
Leyla Cardenas
Hervé Carrier
Jasmina Cibic
COLLECTIF_FACT
Gregory Crewdson
Jacques Damez
Tacita Dean
Erik Dietman
Céline Duval
Henri Fantin-Latour
Mayara Ferrão
Nicolas Floc'h
Claude Gassian
Jochen Gerz
Gilbert & George
Jean-Claude Guillaumon
Mauricio Guillen
Anna Halprin
Richard Hamilton
Tyler Hobbs
Paul Hoegger
Hudinilson Jr.
Zuzanna Janin
Michel Journiac
Karim Kal
Joseph Kosuth
Jean Le Gac
Gabriel Leger
Le Nain frères
Michel Lepetitdidier
Thomas Mailaender
Christian Marclay
Fanette Mellier
Boris Mikhaïlov
Charlotte Moth
Alfons Mucha
Eadweard Muybridge
Jean-Luc Mylayne
Kristina Õllek
Gérard Paris-Clavel
Aurélie Pétrel
Pétrel | Roumagnac (duo)
Éric Poitevin
Marilou Poncin
Patrick Raynaud
Thomas Ruff
Claudio Parmiggiani
Alexandre Rodtchenko
Ed Ruscha
Seton Smith
Hiroshi Sugimoto
Batia Sutter
Jules Sylvestre
Thibault Tourmente
Dune Varela
Marnie Weber
Laure Winants
Wols
Hoy Cheong Wong
Yuan Goang-Ming

The artist Baptiste Caccia has been given carte blanche to occupy the museum's entrance hall and bar (the macBAR).



Dune Varela, *Sculptures*, 2024
Photographic prints on marble fragments
Courtesy of the artist
© Adagp, Paris, 2026



Boris Mikhaïlov, *Untitled* de la série *Yesterday's Sandwich*, 1966-1968
Color print. 155 × 112 cm
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Suzanne Tarasieve, Paris
© Adagp, Paris, 2026



Gregory Crewdson, *Brown Street*, 2018-2019
From the series *An Eclipse of Moths*
Digital pigment print mounted on Dibond. 127 × 226 cm
Courtesy of the artist and Templon Gallery



Jean Le Gac, *Le Voyage du peintre en ballon,* 1985-2008
Installation
Color photographs, polychrome plaster, and a painter's brush; wooden stool; framed typewritten text
Donated by Jean Le Gac in 2025
macLYON Collection
Photo: Lionel Rault



Gilbert & George, *Cemetery Youth*, 1980
Black-and-white photograph on wood panel
180 × 250 cm
On loan from the National Center for Visual Arts since 1985