

Press Release

Don McCullin. 90

Hauser & Wirth Somerset
14 February – 12 April 2026



‘Over the years going to various wars, this corner of Somerset has saved and restored my sanity and given me a sense of balance just witnessing the change of the seasons and soaking up the ensuing peace and silence of the land’ — Sir Don McCullin CBE, ‘The Stillness of Life’, 2025

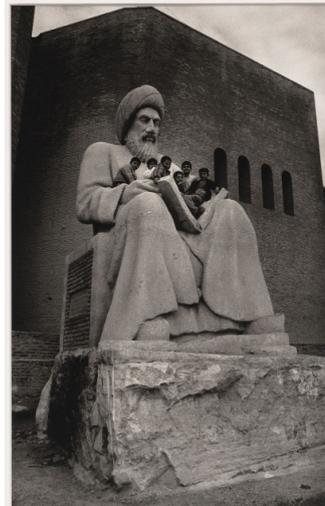
Hauser & Wirth is honoured to celebrate ‘Don McCullin. 90’ in the photographer’s home county of Somerset, marking his 90th year and coinciding with ‘Don McCullin. Broken Beauty’ at The Holburne Museum, Bath. This special presentation will span the Bourgeois and Rhoades Galleries, hung in chronological order to map the dynamism of McCullin’s life and journey in photography to date. The exhibition features works from McCullin’s 2019 Tate Britain exhibition in London, alongside seminal images across his prolific seven-decade career. McCullin’s only self-portrait, taken in 1961 at Crowthers Reclamation Yard, Isleworth, will be exhibited for the first time in the UK, alongside two new images taken in 2026 in West Papua, Eastern Indonesia.

The exhibition traces McCullin’s wide-ranging photojournalism, from conflicts in Berlin, Biafra, Northern Ireland, Syria and Vietnam, to quieter, more intimate moments closer to home. His images capture the transient and tender — the crevices of everyday life, human connection, and moments of grace amid war, deprivation and suffering. Throughout his career, McCullin has documented the beauty of daily existence that occurs within disparate locations, from areas of conflict to urban streets and visions of pastoral ideal. Time is extended and held in ‘Boys in the Book of the Prophet, Arbil, Kurdistan’ (1991) with the same emotional resonance captured in ‘Hessel Street, Jewish District, East End, London’ (1962). Across the 90 works on view, McCullin balances intimacy and theatricality with humour and universal experiences of what it is to be alive in the world.

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Having been evacuated to the safety of Somerset during the Blitz, McCullin has had a lifelong connection with the South West, continually seeking solace and repair amid the ancient landscape. Familiar works featured in the presentation explore local vistas within walking distance of the photographer's home, including 'Dew Pond by Iron Age Hill Fort, Somerset' (1988), shifting between the flooded lowlands of the Somerset levels to woodland streams, nearby monuments and historic hill forts. Rendered in richly tonal black and white, these painterly depictions of the English countryside—the place McCullin has described as his greatest refuge—offer an exquisitely personal and poignant meditation on solitude, memory and the longing for stillness.



The same meditative elegance extends to a selection of still life compositions, carefully composed by the photographer in his garden shed in between decades of global travel. McCullin often refers to these still lifes as providing a deeper form of escapism than his landscapes, drawing inspiration from the great Flemish and Dutch renaissance masters. It is the emotional durability and intuitive presence of McCullin throughout the entire journey of image making, from capturing to developing, that allows us a rare insight into the redemption he has found from the land and place he calls home.

McCullin's desire to document and reflect on sacred locations continues across images of Roman statuary evolving from his Southern Frontiers series, a 25-year survey of the cultural and architectural remains of the Roman Empire. Imbued with both awe and unease, these images, like much of McCullin's oeuvre, inhabit a space between beauty and brutality, evoking the psychological weight of history seen through the photographer's unflinching eye and compassionate gaze. The Holburne Museum's concurrent exhibition 'Broken Beauty' will extend this thread of McCullin's practice with recent works of Roman sculptures captured in museums around the world. The images present sculptures as broken survivors of the classical world, offering a quiet solidity that is a counterbalance to the violence and chaos that McCullin has so famously documented since the 1950s.

About Don McCullin

Sir Don McCullin CBE is widely regarded as one of the most important and celebrated photographers of the late 20th Century, renowned for his unflinching and deeply empathetic documentation of war, famine and human displacement worldwide.

Don McCullin is the recipient of the University of Oxford's Bodley Medal: Life and Work award (2025), for his outstanding contribution to photography and journalism. He was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Medal at the London Design Festival (2022). In 2020, he received the Lifetime Achievement Award at the International Center of Photography in New York. He was knighted in the 2017 New Year Honours, for his lifetime services to photography. He was named Master of Photography at the 2016 Photo London Fair. In 2006, he received the Cornell Capa Award for Lifetime Achievement at the International Center of Photography in New York. In 2003, he received the Royal Photographic Society's Special 150th Anniversary Medal and Honorary Fellowship (HonFRPS). In 1993, he was the first photojournalist to be honoured with a CBE, for his sustained and significant contribution to photojournalism.

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'Don McCullin. Broken Beauty' is on view from 30 January – 4 May 2026 at The Holburne Museum, Bath, UK. 'The Stillness of Life' by Don McCullin is a new book of still life photographs and landscapes published by GOST Books to coincide with the photographer's 90th birthday.

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Hauser & Wirth Somerset

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Gallery opening hours:
Wednesday – Sunday
12 – 5 pm

Garden opening hours:
Wednesday – Sunday
10 am – 5 pm

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Self-portrait in Crowthers Reclamation Yard,
Isleworth, 1961

Still Life with Chalice and Horse Mushrooms in
My Garden Shed, 1989

Boys in the Book of the Prophet, Arbil, Kurdistan
1991

Artwork documentation: Eva Herzog