

Diane Arbus
Sanctum Sanctorum

6 November–20 December, 2025
24 Grafton Street, London



Diane Arbus, *Female impersonator on bed, N.Y.C. 1961, 1961*
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— *Sanctum Sanctorum*: a sacred room or inner chamber; a place of inviolable privacy

Diane Arbus: Sanctum Sanctorum, an exhibition of forty-five photographs made in private places across New York, New Jersey, California, and London between 1961 and 1971, will be on view at David Zwirner, London, from 6 November to 20 December 2025, and will travel to Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco in

spring 2026. The exhibition will be accompanied by a comprehensive monograph reproducing all works in the exhibition, jointly published by both galleries.

Through her singular combination of intelligence, charisma, intuition, and courage, Diane Arbus was frequently invited into homes and other private realms seldom seen by strangers. Though made in intimate settings, her photographs evidence no sense of intrusion or trespass. Instead, they reveal an unspoken exchange between photographer and subject, a moment of recognition in which confidences emerge freely and without judgment.

Arbus's desire to know people embraced a vast spectrum of humanity. Her subjects in *Sanctum Sanctorum* include debutantes, nudists, celebrities, aspiring celebrities, socialites, transvestites, babies, widows, circus performers, lovers, female impersonators, and a blind couple in their bedroom. The exhibition brings together little-known works, such as *Girl sitting in bed with her boyfriend, N.Y.C. 1966*; *Ozzie and Harriet Nelson on their bed, Los Angeles 1970*; and *Interior decorator at the nudist camp in his trailer, New Jersey 1963*, alongside celebrated images like *Mexican dwarf in his hotel room, N.Y.C. 1970* and *A naked man being a woman, N.Y.C. 1968*.

While many of Arbus's photographs have become part of the public's collective consciousness since her landmark retrospective at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 1972, seen in this context, viewers may discover aspects of even familiar works that have previously gone unnoticed.

Sanctum Sanctorum follows two recent major exhibitions of the artist's work: *Cataclysm: The 1972 Diane Arbus Retrospective Revisited* at David Zwirner New York (2022) and Los Angeles (2025), and *Diane Arbus: Constellation* at LUMA, Arles (2023–2024) and the Park Avenue Armory, New York (2025).

Diane Arbus (1923–1971) is widely regarded as one of the most original and significant artists of the twentieth century. Her bold black-and-white photographs demolish aesthetic conventions and upend all certainties. Since her death in 1971, her work has been exhibited worldwide and is held in major institutional collections including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum of Modern Art, New York; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC; National Gallery, Washington, DC; Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto; Tate Gallery, London; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; and numerous others.

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