

# Nottingham Contemporary

## Paul Mpagi Sepuya: *Exposure*

**Easy  
Read**




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Underlined  
Words

In this Easy Read document, difficult words are underlined. We explain what these words mean in the sentence after they have been used.

# Introduction



**This exhibition is a display of artworks by an artist called Paul Mpagi Sepuya.**



**Paul is an artist from the USA.**



**We are showing artworks by Paul at Nottingham Contemporary from 27 January to 5 May 2024.**

# Paul's Artworks



**Paul's artworks are photographs. This exhibition is a display of Paul's photographs.**



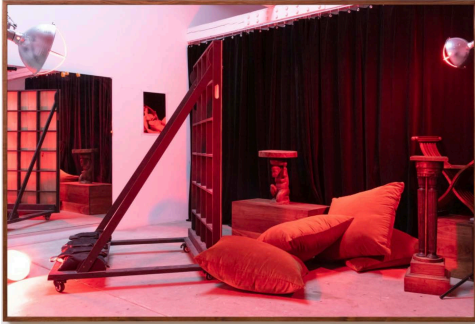
**Paul has been making photos for 20 years.**



**Paul's photos are usually portraits of other people. Sometimes Paul himself is in the photos.**



**The same people are in lots of Paul's photos. He takes photos of his friends instead of using professional models for his photos.**



**Paul takes photos in his studio. He tries to make it a relaxed space where the people he photographs are comfortable.**



**The people in Paul's photos work with Paul to decide where and how to pose on the day they take the photos.**



**The photos in Paul's exhibition at Nottingham Contemporary are mostly from a new series made in the last two years. This new series is called Daylight Studio / Dark Room Studio.**



**The photos from Daylight Studio are taken in bright daylight in Paul's studio or garden.**



**The people in Paul's photos are usually naked. This means Paul's images are often very intimate and sometimes about desire too.**



**These photos reference historical photos which had to be taken outside because the camera needed very bright light to work.**



**The photos from Dark Room Studio are taken in Paul's studio when it is lit by a red light called a safe light.**



**A safe light is used in dark rooms where photos are developed. The red light doesn't damage the negatives which photos are printed from.**



**Paul's Dark Room Studio photos explore different ways of taking photos. Taking photos in low light is much harder.**



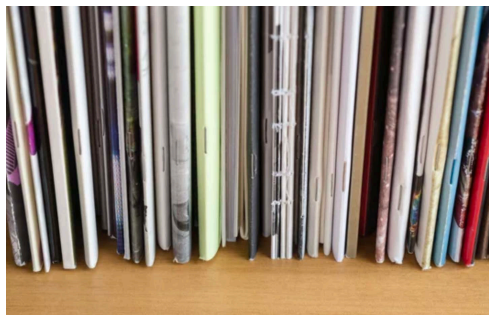
**These photos look soft and blurry compared to the photos taken in bright light.**



Paul is also interested in the two meanings of a dark room. A dark room is not just a space where photos are printed. A dark room can also mean a room in a nightclub where people go to have sex. This is more common in gay nightclubs.



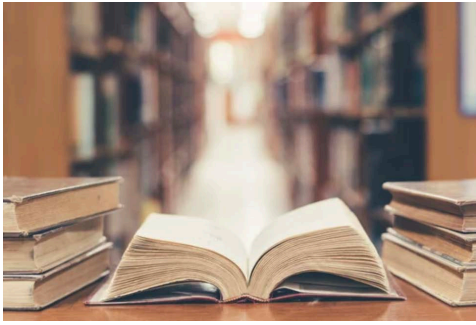
Paul first started making photos for gay zines before social media was the main way of sharing images.



These zines are small booklets of images and text that are usually printed at home instead of being made professionally.



At the time, there were not many Black photographers working in gay zines and the photos in the zines were not often of Black people either.



**Paul is interested in how the history of photography might be linked to the history of being Black and being gay.**



# Cameras and Mirrors



Paul's images are all taken with a single exposure. This means Paul doesn't change anything about the photos after they have been taken.



In some of Paul's photos you can see the camera and tripod in a mirror within the photo.



Paul is interested in how showing the camera within the image makes us think about how the photo was made.

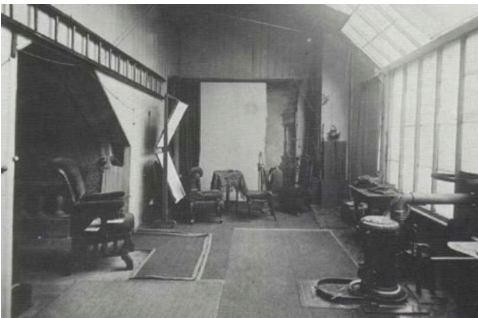


The mirrors in Paul's photos usually have marks or smudges on them so that you can tell you are looking at a reflection in a mirror.

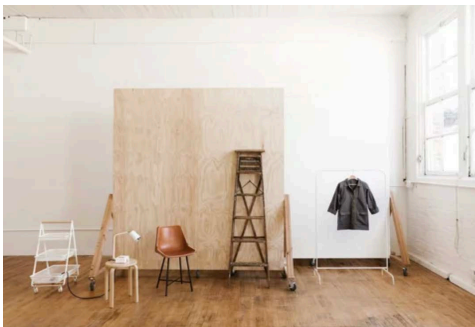


**Sometimes the mirrors in Paul's photos show extra details of the room like prints of old photo works on the wall.**

# Props in Paul's Photos



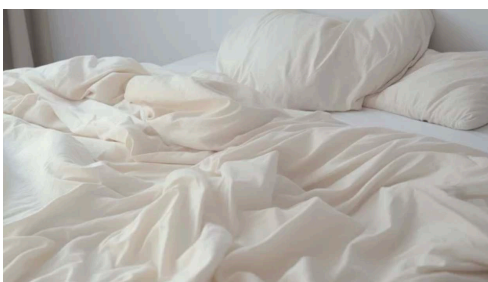
**Paul researched historic studio photography and was interested in the furniture and props in studios.**



**Paul started to buy props for his own studio inspired by this.**



**You might see velvet cushions, woven Asian rugs, European pedestals and chairs and African stools in Paul's photos.**



**Paul is interested in how furniture items like cushions can create their own form of exposure as their creases and dents show you where someone has sat on them.**



**Paul is also interested in how some of these historic furniture items can talk about colonialism.**



**Colonialism is when people from one country take over another country without the permission of the people living there. The new people in charge usually make changes which are not good for the people who were already living there.**



**Often historic American photographic studios had furniture items from all over the world because people from the USA had travelled to and colonised other countries and brought these things back.**

# The Display at Nottingham Contemporary



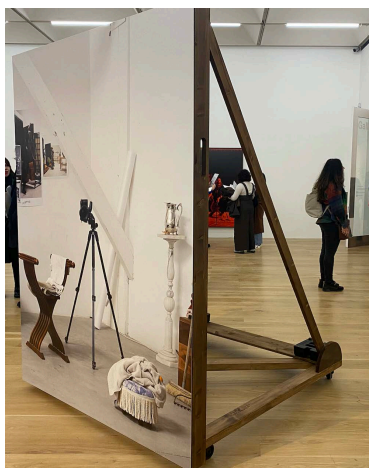
**Some of the photos on display are printed very large and some are very small.**



**Some of the photos are printed on paper and some are printed on metal using an old technique which was used for some of the earliest photos in history.**



**Paul is interested in how images can reveal or hide things. The walls in the exhibition work in the same way, hiding images from some points and showing them through openings so you can't see all the works in one view.**



**Some of the photos are displayed on sculptural structures which look like the mirrors on wheels in Paul's studio.**

# For more information



You can find out more about what we do by looking at our website here: [nottinghamcontemporary.org](http://nottinghamcontemporary.org)



If you would like to help us show more artworks in the future, please think about giving us some money.



We suggest £5 as a good amount.



If you need more information please contact us by:

•Post:  
Nottingham Contemporary, Weekday  
Cross, Nottingham  
NG1 2GB



• phone: 0115 948 9750  
• Email:  
[info@nottinghamcontemporary.org](mailto:info@nottinghamcontemporary.org)

# Artwork Credits

Artwork credits tell us who made an artwork and when they made it. The artwork credits for the artworks you have seen in this easy read guide are shown below.



**This is an artwork by Paul Mpagi Sepuya. The title of the artwork is Daylight Studio Mirror (0X5A1511). This artwork was made in 2021. The artwork is a photograph.**



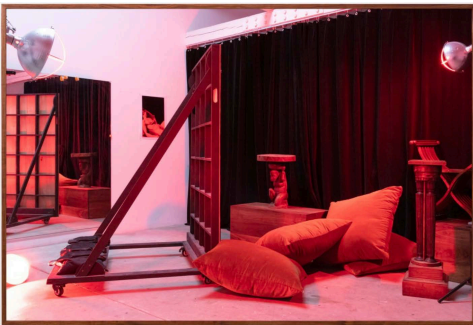
**This is an artwork by Paul Mpagi Sepuya. The title of the artwork is Daylight Studio with Garden Cuttings (\_DSF0334). This artwork was made in 2022. The artwork is a photograph.**



**This is an artwork by Paul Mpagi Sepuya. The title of the artwork is Daylight Studio Mirror, Polishing Silver (\_DSF6189). This artwork was made in 2023. The artwork is a photograph.**



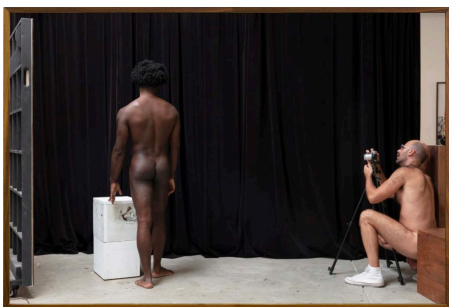
**This is an artwork by Paul Mpagi Sepuya. The title of the artwork is Dark Room Studio Mirror (0X5A3797). This artwork was made in 2022. The artwork is a photograph.**



**This is an artwork by Paul Mpagi Sepuya. The title of the artwork is Twilight Studio (0X5A4176). This artwork was made in 2022. The artwork is a photograph.**

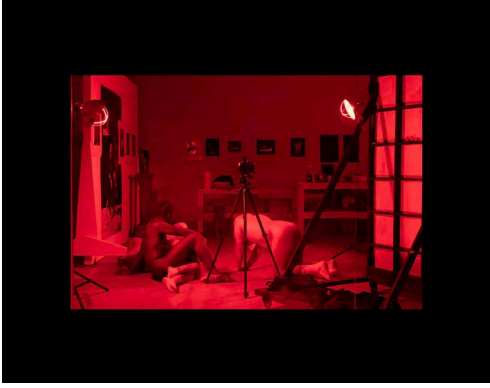


**This is an artwork by Paul Mpagi Sepuya. The title of the artwork is Daylight Studio Camera Lesson (0X5A2613). This artwork was made in 2022. The artwork is a photograph.**



**This is an artwork by Paul Mpagi Sepuya. The title of the artwork is Daylight Studio Session (0X5A4249). This artwork was made in 2022. The artwork is a photograph.**





**This is an artwork by Paul Mpagi Sepuya. The title of the artwork is Dark Room Studio Mirror (0X5A4060). This artwork was made in 2022. The artwork is a photograph.**



**This is an artwork by Paul Mpagi Sepuya. The title of the artwork is Dark Room Studio Mirror (0X5A5515). This artwork was made in 2021. The artwork is a photograph.**



**This is an artwork by Paul Mpagi Sepuya. The title of the artwork is Daylight Studio Mirror (\_DSF1261). This artwork was made in 2023. The artwork is a photograph.**



**This is an artwork by Paul Mpagi Sepuya. The title of the artwork is Daylight Studio Mirror Daylight Studio (\_DSF4055). This artwork was made in 2022. The artwork is a photograph.**



**This is an artwork by Paul Mpagi Sepuya. The title of the artwork is Studio Mirror with Roses at Night (0X5A7732). This artwork was made in 2018. The artwork is a photograph.**