

HELMUT NEWTON

SUMO



Exhibition Dossier

Helmut Newton (1980): *Big nude III*, Henrietta, Paris



Helmut Newton (1989): „Iman“ - American Vogue - Hotel Negresco, Nizza

Helmut Newton is regarded as one of the most important photographers of the twentieth century. No photographer of his era produced more elaborate or provocative visual compositions than Newton. His nude photography remains striking and intense to this day, as it directly engages the individual boundaries of emotion, taste, and morality. The subjects he portrays exude strength and self-assurance. The models' bodies are clothed less in garments than in a subtle sexual tension that transcends time, leaving all contemporary fashion conventions behind.



Helmut Newton (1989): Elizabeth Taylor - Vanity Fair, Los Angeles

Helmut Neustädter, later known under the pseudonym Newton, was born on 31 October 1920 in Berlin into a Jewish family of manufacturers and died on 23 January 2004 in Los Angeles. He attended secondary school in Berlin until 1936, but dropped out to devote himself entirely to photography. In the same year, he began an apprenticeship with the Jewish photographer Yva (Else Neuländer-Simon), who was forced to close her studio after being banned from working in 1938 and was later murdered by the Nazis.

Shortly after his 18th birthday, on 5 December 1938, Newton fled Berlin for Asia. In 1940, he arrived in Australia via Singapore and became an Australian citizen in 1946. From 1956 onwards, the Australian edition of Vogue became his main client and made him internationally famous. In the 1970s, Newton became one of the most sought-after and expensive fashion, advertising, portrait and nude photographers in the world.



Helmut Newton (1989): Elizabeth Taylor - Vanity Fair, Los Angeles

In April 2000, Newton's so-called *SUMO* photography volume caused a sensation when the first copy set the record as the largest, heaviest, and most expensive book of the twentieth century.

SUMO is far from an ordinary book; it embodies the very essence of Newton's life's work. Conceived by Benedikt Taschen and his wife June Newton, the volume stands as a testament to Helmut Newton's unparalleled photographic genius, a distinction impressively reflected in the book's sheer weight and scale.

SUMO shows every conceivable facet of Newton's complete work: timeless melancholic moods, grandiose refinement of lifestyle, the entire grammar of narcissism and elegance, but also provocative stagings of sexual obsessions. We are confronted with stage-like pictorial spaces, full of drama and travesty. The unorthodox compilation of photographs and themes corresponds precisely to the heterogeneous coexistence and interplay of different genres and styles in Newton's work.



The exhibition “HELMUT NEWTON | SUMO” presents nearly all the photographic pages from the *SUMO* book in their original size and with elaborate framing—floor to ceiling, room by room, page by page. Through a carefully curated selection, the exhibition transforms Helmut Newton’s life’s work into a museum experience, allowing visitors to traverse it as a comprehensive gallery walk.

Exhibits: 200 framed photographs, 100 x 60 cm
Exhibition space: 400 – 800 square meters (size can be adjusted)

Available from July 2026 to end of 2028.

We always appreciate to answer any questions you may have about a potential collaboration.



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