

# Exhibition Honouring Legendary Malian Photographer, Malick Sidibé

by [atelierfiftyfive](http://atelierfiftyfive.com) |



The first UK solo exhibition honouring the work of the legendary Malian photographer, Malick Sidibé is currently showing at [Somerset House](https://www.somerset-house.com) in London. Often affectionately referred to as ‘the eye of Bamako’ Sidibé was one of Africa’s and indeed the world’s foremost photographers of the 20th Century, renowned for his iconic black and white images of ’60s and ’70s Mali that captured a youthful generation reveling in the freedom, confidence and hope of independence. Images through which Sidibé created a valuable archive of modern Mali. Malick Sidibe’s death aged 80, in April this year marked the end of a life privileged to capture a period of the changing social culture of his city Bamako, and in the process leave behind a legacy that has and will continue to enrich lives long into the future.

[Main image credit: *Amis des espagnols*, 1968, <sup>[1]</sup><sub>SEP</sub> Photograph: © Malick Sidibé  
Courtesy Galerie MAGNIN-A, Paris via *The Guardian*]



*[Image credit: Nuit de Noel, Happy Club, 1963, Malick Sidibé via Somerset House]*

Blind in one eye from childhood Malick Sidibé started out in the jewellery trade, before taking up an apprenticeship with one of Bamako's leading society photographer. Opening the doors to his studio, Studio Malick in 1958 in Mali's capital city, Bamako, Sidibé started out as a roving photographer riding his bike through the city, stopping to take images of party-goers resplendent in their best threads as they headed out for nights on the town and getting down on the dance floors of the many parties and nightclubs that popped up all over the city.

The '70s saw an increase in his studio portraiture. Having adopting a more informal, playful approach to studio photography than what was currently practiced at the time Studio Malick became popular with the city's youth as place where creative narratives in a world of make believe could be played out and captured for posterity on film. Decades later Malick Sidibé's images have give us something to treasure, a window into an era and the lives of those who were there to witness and be a apart of it.



*[Image credit: Dansez le Twist, 1965, Malick Sidibé via Somerset House]*

International recognition came in the latter half of Malick Sidibé's career, when his work was presented to international audiences for the first time in the '90s. Sidibé's work soon began to earn awards and accolades, including the prestigious Infinity award for lifetime achievement at the International Center of Photography in New York in 2008. His prints continue to be snapped by art collectors, in addition to forming part of permanent gallery collections across the world.



[Image credit: *Toute la famille en moto*, 1962,  
Photograph: © Malick Sidibé Courtesy Galerie MAGNIN-A, Paris via *The Guardian*]

The Somerset House exhibition of the life and work of Malick Sidibé is accompanied by a curated soundtrack that captures the spirit of the images, pulling you in and making you feel as if you were a part of the action.

*Additional information sourced from:*

[www.theguardian.com](http://www.theguardian.com) Additional details:

For further information about the exhibition at Somerset House visit:

[www.somerset-house.org.uk](http://www.somerset-house.org.uk)

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