

Exhibitions you can't miss this week: Jeff Wall, Berenice Abbott, David Ben White and more

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With an art scene as prominent and ever-changing as London's, you don't want to miss this week's essential exhibitions:

1. Jeff Wall

[Marian Goodman Gallery](#) | October 30th – December 19th

A passionate dedication to the possibilities within photography and an analytic precision is at the heart of Jeff Wall's practice. This exhibition offers a close look at the artist's most recent body of work, continuing and extending a process spanning close to four decades in a disciplined quest for a new form of representation based on the idea of everyday life, a distinct relationship to the canon of art, and to the documentary tradition. Highly respected for pioneering a hybrid form of picture making which has influenced a generation, his work combines formal innovation with a discerning reflection on and research into conditions and social interactions in the real world. Wall's approach to photography is grounded on "the great collage which everyday life is, a combination of absolutely concrete and specific things created by no one and everyone, all of which becomes available when it is unified into a picture." A picture might be engendered from an 'instant', a 'mise en scene', or the 'before' or 'after' of a real or imagined event; a methodology that has given rise to the relevance of what he terms the 'near-documentary', which has been at the forefront of his thinking in recent years. By integrating, truth and artifice, the street and the studio, documentary and the cinematographic, Jeff Wall engages in a boundless exploration of open and closed spaces and the relationships between them, rendering his subjects through a selective strategy of reportage or construction, while being partial to neither.

2. Berenice Abbott

[Beetles & Huxley](#) | October 27th – November 21st

During a career spanning the best part of the twentieth century, Berenice Abbott produced one of the most significant and varied bodies of photography ever made. Born in 1898 in Ohio, Abbott dropped out of college and moved to New York at the age of 19 where she befriended poets, artists and anarchists. Deciding to become a sculptor, she left for Paris in 1921, but impoverished by her lack of success, she took a job as a darkroom assistant to Man Ray. Realising her own talent with the camera, she subsequently opened her own studio where artists and writers would come to have portraits taken. The exhibition includes a selection of these early portraits, revealing the influence of Man Ray and the Surrealists. Returning to New York in 1929 as a successful portrait photographer, Abbott found her home country spiralling into the depths of the Depression. After several impoverished years and in need of work, the Federal Arts Project employed her to photograph the city. Abbott's project is a colossal testament to the dizzying scale and extreme contrasts of the most advanced metropolis in the world. She finally received the opportunity to undertake a long-pursued project to photograph scientific experiments when she was employed by a United States government programme aiming to improve science education in an effort to keep pace with the Russian space programme which had just launched the first artificial satellite, Sputnik. Whilst aesthetically unique from her earlier work, Abbott's science work persisted with her belief that photography should always have a purpose and that it should always teach. The exhibition also shows photographs from Abbott's lesser-known US Route 1 series. Taken during a road trip through the small towns and holdings down the Eastern seaboard, from Maine to Florida, the photographs are Abbott's account of the American Scene.

3. David Ben White: Inside Outside

[l'étrangère](#) | October 30th – December 5th

Absorbed within the language and aspirations of modernist architecture, design and art, David Ben White's works disrupt the self-enclosed logic through a subversion of its objects and spaces. White treats the spaces of the gallery as subjects to be reinterpreted; the model of the white cube is reformed via signifiers of a familiar, domestic interior. On entering the gallery, a constructed environment comprising painting, sculpture and vinyl installation draws the viewer into a re-configuration of the relationship between gallery, artwork and spectator, one that gestures towards an interior design logic. A new group of paintings present a series of imagined interior spaces with plate glass windows as their main point of focus. The tension between transparency and obscurity that is embedded within the material of glass connects to White's distorting of the rectilinear, modernist grid within these works. Through layering, erratic contours and warped perspective, White destabilises the fixed, hierarchical perspective and ordered geometry, which is as much about individual power as it is about a set of prescribed aesthetics.

4. The London Group Open Exhibition 2015

[The Cello Factory](#) | October 27th – November 6th

Receiving a record number of entries to their eighty second annual open exhibition, The London Group, one of the UK's longest-running artists' collectives, present work by 71 artists working in various media including painting, sculpture, drawing, print, photography, digital, mixed media, installation, and video. This year, a special display is dedicated to the late Albert Irvin OBE RA, who was a member of the group for 50 years.