

Antony Cairns: The Future Still Glows in Tokyo

At OFFSCREEN Paris 2026, Antony Cairns will present a Tokyo illuminated by the traces of an imagined tomorrow. His new installation, *MaViCa CTY: Tokyo Blue*, brings photographs of the Japanese capital into a suspended arrangement of Sony MaViCa cameras. Presented by Cob Gallery, the work will be shown at the Chapelle Saint-Louis de la Salpêtrière from 20 to 25 October.

The cameras remain active within the installation, their screens continuously displaying Cairns's photographs. Their physical presence becomes part of the encounter: plastic

bodies, small displays and an image technology whose original promise has outlived its commercial usefulness. Looking at the photographs also means looking at the devices that carry them. Each camera gives the image a body, a scale and a particular kind of light.

Across these screens, Tokyo becomes difficult to hold in focus. Buildings lose their edges, artificial light overwhelms architectural detail, and familiar urban forms drift towards abstraction. The city emerges through fragments and luminous interruptions. These photographs invite a slower kind of attention, allowing uncertainty to shape how a place is perceived. Tokyo begins to resemble a memory formed through the very technology that once promised to describe its future.

Antony Cairns and the afterlife of the image

This relationship between photographs and their material supports runs through Antony Cairns's practice. Working across photography, sculpture and installation, the London-based artist combines analogue processes with digital experimentation. His use of recycled IBM punch cards as photographic surfaces places the history of computing directly inside the image. With the MaViCa works, the screen itself becomes an equally expressive surface, giving obsolete equipment a continuing role in how photographs are experienced.

Antony Cairns, E-ink screen encapsulated in Perspex box.

Negative Date 2012 22cm x 18cm – 32 x 33 x 4.2cm with frame
An accompanying essay by Duncan Forbes, Head of Photography at the Victoria and Albert Museum, offers a critical framework for the installation. In *Retro-Utopia Foreclosed: Antony Cairns's MaViCa CTY*, Forbes considers the work through the idea of lost futures, drawing on Mark Fisher's writing on hauntology. He also connects Cairns's fractured cityscapes to the experimental language of Japan's Provoke photographers, particularly Takuma Nakahira. The camera and the city become carriers of expectations that remain unresolved.

Antony Cairns, MaViCa/ Tokyo Blue x Aquos 01, 2025, Sony MaViCa FD200, 32mb storage memory stick, Sharp LC-15C1 AQUOS colour TV, Camera/ 13 x 10 x 5 cm, TV/ 48 x 38 x 4 cm
Read through this lens, *Tokyo Blue* gives technological obsolescence an emotional dimension. The cameras continue to

function, yet the future they once represented has receded. Their illuminated screens hold that distance open. For viewers accustomed to photographs moving rapidly between interchangeable devices, Cairns's installation offers an encounter with the specific character of a machine: its limitations, its glow and the way it makes a city appear. Suspended in the chapel, those small screens keep an earlier vision of tomorrow visible.

Antony Cairns, LPT 34, 2026, Inkjet on 221 blue and pink pinned computer punch cards, steel pins, archival black foam board

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