

**Nhu Xuan Hua: Of Walking on Fire**  
Exhibition at Autograph, London  
16 April – 19 September 2026

Curated by Bindi Vora

**Visual arts charity Autograph presents the first UK solo exhibition by French Vietnamese artist Nhu Xuan Hua, asking what is communicated – or withheld – across generations.**

Emerging from the inadequacies of language, *Of Walking on Fire* reflects on the fragility of how stories are communicated – or withheld – across generations. Nhu Xuan Hua's defiantly surreal and uncanny photographs invite us to consider how diasporic memory can splinter, blur and slip from view.

Born and raised in Paris to immigrant parents who fled to Europe following the war in Vietnam (1955–1975), Hua grew up with a palpable distance from her Vietnamese heritage. Her questions about the past were often met with the refrain: *Why are you asking? The past belongs to the past.* This loss of vocabulary, essential to understanding her own history, was further compounded by a communication void between Hua and her parents. Her father, who is oral-deaf, communicates in spoken Vietnamese and a self-taught form of French Sign Language learned in the late 1970s after arriving in Paris.

Across generations, the absence of a shared language within her household profoundly influenced Hua's artistic practice. Working at the intersection of art and fashion photography, her approach is shaped by intuitive connections that resist fixed narratives or singular truths.

*Of Walking on Fire* spans both galleries at Autograph's iconic building in Shoreditch, with Gallery 1 tracing the consequences of lost conversations and gaps in Hua's personal history.

The series *Tropism: Consequences of a Displaced Memory* draws on personal photographs from Hua's family archive, capturing her extended family's early years in Belgium and France. Through digital manipulation, she softens and dissolves the figures into one another, creating images that hover between recognition and erasure. The works reflect on how the past continues to reverberate into the future – and how silence can persist, even in moments of gathering and togetherness.

Throughout the exhibition, Hua's photographs are displayed amongst trinkets, objects and flower vases arranged on ornamental shelves, drawing on the motifs of Vietnamese temples. Painted shadows reference the quiet architecture of the family home.

Acts of looking and remembering are never fixed; they are continually reshaped and reimagined. These shifts unfold in the series *Let the Horses Ride* where memory is approached not as a record of the past but as a site of tension and invention. Hua's inverted images recall photographic negatives – scenes of apparent closeness feel unsettled or ambiguous, foregrounding the tensions inherent in remembering.

Nhu Xuan Hua, said: "In recreating scenes from everyday life, drawn from my scattered memories, it is as if events are replayed to reinvent the narrative and the story – a mother eats a slice of bread while watching her children, wondering how to do better. In this quest lies the immense desire to restore the sacred to the most ordinary things."

In Gallery 2, the works unfold as a space of renewal, where what was once held in silence gathers strength and is carried forward. In a new body of work created for the exhibition, Hua traces a lineage of maternal figures in her life, drawing on the symbolism of the Vietnamese spiritual tradition of Đạo Mẫu – Mother Goddess worship – which honours female deities closely connected to the elements of Earth, Water and the Mountains.

At the heart of the gallery, *Little Super in Versailles – Archive from the year '88* imagines the figure of a young girl as a powerful symbol of resilience, carrying the weight of recurring family rituals and the endurance required to sustain connection across generations. Here, the feminine figure emerges as a restorative force, as Hua reimagines her mother, grandmother and herself, asking: when language collapses what forms of connection might still be carried forward as possibility?

– END –

## Notes to Editors

### Media contact

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Press images and interviews are available.

### Address and ticketing

Autograph, Rivington Place, London EC2A 3BA

Entry is free. Visitors can book timed tickets [on Autograph's website](#) or visit anytime the exhibition is open.

### Links and tags

[Exhibition webpage](#)

[Visiting information](#)

@autographabp on Instagram and TikTok

### About the Artist

Nhu Xuan Hua (b.1989) is a French artist and photographer of Vietnamese heritage. Known for her distinctive visual language, she collaborates with international fashion houses such as Dior, Maison Margiela, Kenzo and Gucci, while contributing to leading publications such as *Vogue*, *Time Magazine* and *Dazed Beauty*. Originally trained in fashion photography, Hua has gradually shifted towards a multidisciplinary and introspective practice that explores memory, identity and displacement.

Hua published her first book, *Tropism: Consequences of a Displaced Memory* (2022), and has presented solo exhibitions at Huis Marseille (NL) and Fotografie Forum Frankfurt (DE). Her work is held in public collections including Huis Marseille (NL), the JP Morgan Collection and the Centre national des arts plastiques (FR). She lives and works between Paris and London.

### New Artist Commission

Autograph has commissioned Nhu Xuan Hua to create nine new works, which will be shown for the first time in *Of Walking on Fire*. Two of these works will enter Autograph's [collection of photography](#).

### New Limited Edition Print

A new 10 × 14 cm limited edition print of Nhu Xuan Hua's *New Chapter, Archive from the year '85* will coincide with the launch of the exhibition to fundraise for Autograph's work. Mounted on Plexiglass and framed to stand or hang, this edition is intimate in scale, recalling a family photograph: a quiet, poignant meditation on memory's instability.

Edition of 20, [available on Autograph's online shop](#).

## **About Autograph**

Established in 1988, Autograph's mission is to champion the work of artists who use photography and film to highlight questions of race, representation, human rights and social justice. Through doing so, they invite people to explore the creative and critical power of visual representation, in shaping our understanding of ourselves and of others. [autograph.org.uk](http://autograph.org.uk)

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