

***Awakening in Blue: An Ode to Cyanotype* exhibition marks the opening of the Nederlands Fotomuseum in the Santos warehouse**



Suzette Bousema, *Future Relics 40*, 2025 © Suzette Bousema

Rotterdam, 2 December, 2025

***Awakening in Blue: An Ode to Cyanotype* (February 7 to June 7, 2026)** is one of two temporary exhibitions marking the launch of the Nederlands Fotomuseum, the National Museum of Photography, in the Santos warehouse. The presentation celebrates the timeless beauty of one of the oldest and most recognizable photographic techniques: cyanotype. This deep-blue medium is known for its artisanal character and slow, direct process. In addition to rare early blueprints, the exhibition features work by fifteen contemporary artists who breathe new life into this nineteenth-century technique, combining it with new media and a variety of materials. Their work explores current themes such as ecology, colonialism, and the body as a living archive. The exhibition is designed by MAISON the FAUX, a Dutch interdisciplinary collective renowned for their boundary-pushing work at the intersection of fashion, performance, and installation art.

Early Blueprints

Early applications of the cyanotype technique form the starting point of the exhibition. Examples include several early blueprints, among them original cyanotypes of the Santos warehouse, the new home of the Nederlands Fotomuseum. These technical drawings from 1901 by architects J.J. Kanters & J.P. Stok Wzn, executed in cyanotype, come from the Rotterdam City Archives and are on display for the first time.

A New Generation of Blue

The exhibition also gives extensive attention to a new generation of artists who are rediscovering cyanotype and transforming it into a contemporary, expressive visual language. Using this deep-blue

technique, they explore the boundaries between photography, textiles, installation art, participatory projects, and multimedia. By deliberately choosing artisanal methods and natural processes, they create work that is slow and tactile, in contrast to today's fast-paced digital image culture. Cyanotype, which requires only four elements — iron salts, water, light, and a surface — allows for a direct connection between object and substrate, with sunlight, water, and time acting as co-creators of the image. The exhibition is organized around three interconnected themes through which the artists present their personal and societal perspectives:

Ecology

Artists such as Pai Dekkers, Suzette Bousema, Glithero, and Anne Geene work closely with nature, using cyanotypes to capture what often remains invisible: tidal rhythms, traces of plants, and the fragility of ecosystems.

The Colonial Past and Present

Using cyanotype as a powerful medium, creators like Farah Rahman and Sarojini Lewis examine and reinterpret colonial histories. Where the technique was once used for documentation and control, it is now employed for restoration, resistance, and reshaping stories.

The Body as an Archive

In this section, artists such as Shehera Grot, Rabin Huissen, and Marijn Kuijper explore cyanotype as an intimate gesture of touch and presence, with the body serving as a carrier of both personal and collective memories.

Design by MAISON the FAUX

The exhibition is designed by MAISON the FAUX, a Dutch interdisciplinary collective known for their boundary-pushing work at the intersection of fashion, performance, and installation art. Their scenography for *Awakening in Blue* translates the slow, sensory nature of cyanotype into a spatial experience where light, shadow, and color are constantly in motion.

Exhibition: *Awakening in Blue: An Ode to Cyanotype*

Location: Nederlands Fotomuseum, Rotterdam

Date: 7 February - 7 June, 2026

Design: MAISON the FAUX

Including work from (among others): Anne Geene, Arash Fakhim, Farah Rahman, Glithero, Marijn Kuijper, Maryam Touzani, Muhcine Ennou, Pai Dekkers, Rabin Huissen, Ričards Briška, Sarojini Lewis, Shehera Grot, Suzette Bousema, Vincent Zanni and Yasmijn Karhof

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