A one-off retrospective exhibition celebrating the life and work of surrealist photographer, John Thornton.

An Australian-born photographer, whose work was described by Salvador Dali as ‘Magnifico…fantastico.’ As a photographer's delivery lad, where he was captivated by the photographs of Brassai, Weegee, Man Ray, Edward Weston, Karsh of Ottawa, and Wynne Bullock. But he was also drawn to the photographs of girls wearing stockings and suspenders in Spick & Span magazine. His images produced many years later were to be inspired by these photographs.

Having avoided conscription into the Australian forces during Vietnam war ending up in South Africa. Deploring apartheid in South Africa, and having “A Cape Coloured” girlfriend Zelma, who was his first love, he produced an arresting anti-apartheid image titled “The White Cop and Pretty Black Ida”, depicting a newspaper placard on the floor and his housemate Len White and his black girlfriend Toy, both naked. People commented if the authorities were to see it, he would end up on Robben Island with Nelson Mandela.

Moving to London, he became a sought-after advertising photographer, winning numerous awards including the coveted New York Art Directors Club Gold Award, some 24 Awards of Excellence from CA in Los Angeles, D&AD London Silver Awards and many annual inclusions, Cannes Lion de Bronze.

He was drawn to surrealism and inspired by Rene Magritte, Salvador Dali, Giorgo de Chirco, Luis Bunel, Guy Bourdain, Bill Silano, Jeanloup Sieff, Art Kane and Duane Michals. He embarked on producing his distinctive “Surreal Erotic Images” gaining inspiration from all areas, be it visual, the written word or something he had seen, first making drawings before taking the photographs. These images were shown at his exhibitions in Paris, Tokyo, Geneva, Amsterdam, Barcelona, Zurich, Antwerp, Bologna, Milan, London and Cadaques in Spain where Salvador Dali, John’s deity, lived.

This short exhibition features over 40 of Johnny’s works. All were printed and framed from Johnny for exhibitions during his lifetime. Many are unique, either because they are the only ones of the particular picture he ever signed, or because the negatives have been lost and thus can’t be reproduced. Among these works is the truly "Love in the House of a Nobleman”, which is Carbo printed, a process invented in the 19th century and with very few remaining practitioners. It is very rare, and very special.

The works are for sale with proceeds going to support "The Image Thornton Fine Art Photography Trust” and "The Johnny Thornton Award", which aims to help 3 up-and-coming young photographers.