

Press release: November 2025

## SUSSEX SPOTLIGHT: ALESSANDRO RAHO

19 November 2025 - 18 January 2026



**Celebrating local talent, artist Alessandro Raho opens the inaugural *Sussex Spotlight* at Hastings Contemporary.**

The gallery, based in the heart of Hastings Old Town, is launching *Sussex Spotlight*, a new series of free-to-visit exhibitions showcasing the work of celebrated artists with links to Sussex.

The first exhibition in the series features St Leonards-based painter Alessandro Raho, whose work explores presence and absence, memory and emotion, and the quiet poetry found in everyday life.

On view from 19 November 2025 to 18 January 2026, the exhibition considers the evolution of Raho's practice – from intimate, pared down portraits to luminous studies of familiar objects.

Born in Nassau, Bahamas in 1971, Raho is celebrated for his confident portraits of figures such as Dame Judi Dench in the National Portrait Gallery and Bryan Ferry. Presented as solitary figures posed against stark white backgrounds, these are portraits that heighten the sitter's presence and the immediacy of their connection with the viewer.

# HASTINGS CONTEMPORARY

The exhibition also looks at Raho's focus on still life, where his attention turns to flowers and inconsequential objects such as chocolate boxes or a pile of books, drawing our attention to the significance of something that might otherwise be overlooked.

Director of Hastings Contemporary, Kathleen Soriano says, *"As a gallery that is firmly rooted in place, nothing gives us more pleasure than being able to celebrate our own and to provide an opportunity for home-grown artists to be represented in their local gallery, here in Hastings. With culture and community at the heart of what we do, we look forward to supporting the incredibly creative community of Hastings and Sussex."*

Sussex Spotlight is a new initiative celebrating the vibrant creativity of local artists and the rich cultural landscape of Sussex. Hosted in Hastings Contemporary's public spaces, the series is free to explore, and offers a platform for both emerging and established artists to share their work. The Sussex Spotlight programme is supported by David and Sarah Kowitz.

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

[IMAGES FOR MEDIA USE CAN BE DOWNLOADED HERE](#)

Image caption: Alessandro Raho, *Pink House*, 2024 © Alessandro Raho. Todd White Art Photography.

## **FOR MEDIA ENQUIRIES**

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**Hastings Contemporary** is a bold, independent arts charity in the heart of Hastings Old Town. Through bold exhibitions, partnerships and events, the gallery brings world-class art to Hastings for the benefit of everyone. With a programme anchored in marine ecology, ocean futures and sustainable cultures, Hastings Contemporary brings together artists, scientists, fishing communities, and the public to explore new creative frontiers – all within an award-winning building on the town's historic fishing beach.

## **Visiting the gallery**

Open Wednesday to Sunday and bank holidays, 11am to 5pm. Under 18s visit for free. Hastings and Rother residents can visit for half price, from just £5. Become a member for unlimited free visits, special invitations, discounts, and more, from just £32 a year.

## **Hastings Contemporary**

Rock-a-Nore Road, Hastings, TN34 3DW  
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**Alessandro Raho** (born 1971, Nassau, Bahamas) is a British artist known for his oil paintings: portraits, still lifes and landscapes that blend intimate observation with cinematic stillness. Raised in South London, Raho studied at Goldsmiths, University of London, graduating in 1994.

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He gained early recognition as part of the Young British Artists (YBA) generation and was included in *Brilliant! New Art from London* at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis in 1995. His portrait of Dame Judi Dench, commissioned by the National Portrait Gallery in London, is among his best-known works. Raho's work is held in major public collections, including Tate, The Museum of Modern Art, New York (MoMA), the Seattle Art Museum, and the Berardo Collection in Portugal. He was recently featured in *Friends & Lovers* at the FLAG Art Foundation in New York (October 6, 2023 – January 20, 2024), and participated in *In The Offing*, a group exhibition curated by Mark Leckey at Turner Contemporary, Margate (October 7, 2023 – January 14, 2024). He also had a show at *Elliott Templeton Fine Arts*, Jack Pierson's art space in New York (November 2023 – January 2024).