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THE WEIGHT OF THE GAZE - Picasso & Naomi Campbell at Tarmak22



Pablo Picasso adjusting a necklace he made for Jacqueline Roque, 1957.

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Nahmad Contemporary has quietly developed one of the most intriguing exhibition programmes in the Alps, one that understands how historical weight and contemporary perspective can sharpen each other. This winter, at Tarmak22, the gallery presents *Picasso | Painter and Model*, a tightly focused exhibition of

fourteen late works by Pablo Picasso, curated through the lens of Naomi Campbell. The result is neither a conventional Picasso show nor a celebrity-curatorial gesture, but something far more considered: a dialogue about power, visibility, and authorship that feels strikingly current.

The paintings on view belong to Picasso's significant late series *Le Peintre et son modèle*, executed between 1963 and 1965, during his final years in Mougins. Here, the act of painting becomes the subject itself. Across repeated variations of an artist at his easel, confronted by a nude model, often read as a stand-in for Picasso and his wife Jacqueline Roque, the studio is transformed into a psychological stage. Authority, desire and vulnerability are constantly renegotiated, with the balance of power shifting subtly from canvas to canvas.

What makes this presentation compelling is the curatorial perspective Nahmad has invited into the room. Campbell, whose professional life has unfolded almost entirely under the scrutiny of the camera, approaches Picasso's work not from academic distance but from lived experience. Her reflections, presented as a parallel narrative rather than an interpretative overlay, draw attention to the mechanics of the gaze: who looks, who is seen, and who ultimately controls the frame. In her reading, the model is never passive. She may be exposed, but she remains elusive, withholding something essential. Visibility, Campbell suggests, is not synonymous with surrender.

This framing opens the works in unexpected ways. In several paintings, despite the primacy of the painter in the title, Picasso himself recedes, pushed to the margins of the composition, while the model commands the visual centre. The hierarchy implied by artist and subject begins to destabilise. Seen through Campbell's lens, these late works feel less like assertions of mastery and more

like meditations on its fragility: on ageing, legacy and the limits of control.

Nahmad Contemporary's choice of curator feels entirely in keeping with the direction the gallery seems to have taken. Last year's *Calder in Flight*, curated by Edward Enninful, used fashion's editorial intelligence to reframe a modern master. Here, Campbell's voice brings a different but equally sharp perspective, rooted in embodiment rather than spectacle. In both cases, the curators are not outsiders drafted for glamour, but cultural figures whose professional lives resonate directly with the questions the artworks pose.

Installed at Tarmak22, the exhibition benefits from an intimacy that larger institutions often struggle to maintain. The modest scale encourages slow looking, allowing the repetition within the series to unfold gradually. What emerges is not a retrospective statement but a concentrated inquiry into the act of representation itself and the uneasy relationship between seeing and knowing.

In an era where visibility has become a form of currency and self-exposure is often mistaken for power, "Picasso | Painter and Model" feels uncannily timely. The exhibition asks a question that remains unresolved, perhaps deliberately so: does power belong to the one who looks, or to the one who remains – just – out of reach?

JEANETTE WICHMANN

Picasso | Painter and Model, Reflections by Naomi Campbell | Nahmad Contemporary

14 February – 15 March 2026 at Tarmak22, Oeystrasse 29, Saanen

