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MUSEUM  
DIALOGUES

# **Photography and the Museum: Re-evaluating the Past, Capturing the Present, Anticipating the Future**

Friday 22, Saturday 23 and Sunday 24  
November 2024  
University of Sunderland and Online



## Welcome

Photography entered the museum shortly after its invention in the 19th-century, serving as a reproduction tool, a scientific process, a printmaking method, and an expressive medium. However, precisely because of these multiple functions, photography's accommodation posed challenges then, as it does now with the mutable nature of contemporary "post-photographic," born-digital images.

This conference seeks to examine the past, current, and future positioning of photography and its rich histories within museums. It aims to bring together curators, museum workers, archivists, photography practitioners, scholars, and researchers to explore international shifts in museum practices and their implications for global photographic cultures.

The conference is convened as part of *Museum Dialogues*, a 12-month research networking programme that aspires to transcend the disciplinary boundaries of art history, visual culture, photography, new media, museum and curating studies. As a discursive platform, *Museum Dialogues* seeks to bridge theory and practice with a view to developing a comprehensive understanding and exchange of innovative solutions, inquiries, and practical challenges relating to the exhibition, collection, and interpretation of photography.

## Moderators & Speakers

### Museum Dialogues Steering Group moderators

**Matteo Balduzzi**, Curator, Museo di Fotografia Contemporanea, Milan-Cinisello Balsamo (Italy)

**Iro Katsaridou** (Co-Investigator), Assistant Professor, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Greece)

**Alexandra Moschovi** (Principal Investigator), Professor of Photography and Curating, Northern Centre of Photography, University of Sunderland (UK)

**Arabella Plouviez**, Photographer and Emerita Professor, University of Sunderland (UK)

**Amanda Ritson**, Project Manager and Curator, NEPN and Northern Centre of Photography, University of Sunderland (UK)

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### Conference moderators

**Craig Ames**, Artist and Senior Lecturer in Photography, Northern Centre of Photography, University of Sunderland (UK)

**Susanne Burns**, Independent management consultant (UK)

**Suzy O'Hara**, Lecturer in Digital Arts and Enterprise, School of Media and Creative Industries, University of Sunderland (UK)

**Alistair Robinson**, Lecturer in Curating Contemporary Art, Newcastle University (UK)

**Alexander Supartono**, Curator and Lecturer in History and Theory of Photography, Edinburgh Napier University (UK)

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### Conference Technical Manager

**Michael Daglish**, Senior Technician Digital Arts (Photography), University of Sunderland

### Conference speakers

**Shahidul Alam**, Photojournalist, human rights activist, Founder of Drik, Pathshala, and Chobi Mela (Bangladesh)

**Martin Barnes**, Senior Curator, Photography, V&A South Kensington (UK)

**Michela Bresciani**, Curator, Ecomuseo Urbano Metropolitan Milano Nord-EUMM (Italy)

**Briony Carlin**, Lecturer in Contemporary Art Curation, Newcastle University (UK)

**Angela Cheung**, Post-Doctoral Research Associate, SOAS (UK)

**Giuseppe Chiavaroli**, PhD Researcher, University of Modena and Reggio Emilia (Italy)

**Agnese Ghezzi**, Postdoctoral Researcher, LYNX -Center for the Interdisciplinary Analysis of Images, Contexts, and Cultural Heritage, IMT School for Advanced Studies Lucca (Italy)

**Fabrizio Gitto**, PhD Researcher, University of Italian Switzerland and Research Fellow, LYNX -Center for the Interdisciplinary Analysis of Images, Contexts, and Cultural Heritage, IMT School for Advanced Studies Lucca (Italy)

**Sze Ying Goh**, Curator, National Gallery Singapore (Singapore)

**Alexandra Gow**, PhD Researcher, University for the Creative Arts/National Galleries Scotland (UK)

**Lucia Halder**, Head of the Photography Collection, Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum (Germany)

**John Kippin**, Artist and Emeritus Professor in Photography, University of Sunderland (UK)

**Jayne Knight**, PhD Researcher, University of Brighton/National Science and Media Museum (UK)

**Sandra Križić Roban**, Senior Scientific Advisor in tenure, Institute of Art History, Zagreb (Croatia)

**Carol McKay**, Independent writer and curator (UK)

**Daniel Palmer**, Professor of Contemporary Art and Cultural Theory and Associate Dean of Research and Innovation, RMIT University (Australia)

**Christina Riggs**, Professor of History of Visual Culture, Durham University (UK)

**Amanda Ritson**, Project Manager and Curator, NEPN and Northern Centre of Photography, University of Sunderland (UK)

**Colin Robins**, Photographer and Lecturer in Photography, Plymouth University (UK)

**Katrina Sluis**, Associate Professor and Head of Photography and Media Arts, The Australian National University (Australia)

**Baiba Tetere**, Lecturer in Social Sciences, Riga Stradins University (Latvia)

**Oliver Udy**, Photographer and Head of Photography, Falmouth University (UK)

**Liz Wells**, Independent writer and curator, Emerita Professor in Photographic Culture, University of Plymouth (UK)

# Schedule

## Friday 22 November 2024

David Puttnam Media Centre Cinema,  
St Peter's Campus, Sunderland, SR6 0DD

**13:30 Registration in the Media Centre Foyer**

**14:00 Welcome:** Amanda Ritson, Arabella Plouviez, Iro Katsaridou, Matteo Balduzzi

**14:15 Opening Remarks:** Professor Jo Crotty, Pro Vice Chancellor (Research & Global Engagement)

**14:20 Introduction:** Alexandra Moschovi, *Institutional Dilemmas: Complications, Challenges and Opportunities*

**14:40 Keynote: Martin Barnes (UK):** *From Aerial to X-Ray: Repositioning the Royal Photographic Society Collection at the V&A*

**15:20 Q&A chaired by Alistair Robinson**

**15:40 Break**

**Panel One: Reframing Vernacular Photographies**

**16:00 Introduction to Panel 1:** Iro Katsaridou

**16:05 Michela Bresciani (Italy):** *Whose are the Photographs? Authorship and Storytelling of the Territory* ([online](#))

**16:25 Sandra Kržić Roban (Croatia):** *Should Dispersed Vernacular Photographic Voices be Institutionalised? Some Examples from Croatia*

**16:45 Giuseppe Chiavaroli (Italy):** *The Construction of the Factory: Memories of Work and Struggle of Female Textile Workers in Reggio Emilia. A Narrative Perspective for Photography at the Museums of Industry and Labour History*

**17:05 Panel Q&A chaired by Iro Katsaridou**

**17:30 Drinks reception and exhibition preview:** *Re-imag(in)ing WORK: Photographs from the Changing Faces Collection of the International Photography Research Network (IPRN)* [Sunderland Creatives Gallery, National Glass Centre](#) ([not available online](#))

**19:00 Close**

## Saturday 23 November 2024

David Puttnam Media Centre Cinema,  
St Peter's Campus, Sunderland, SR6 0DD

**09:20 Welcome:** Alexandra Moschovi

**09:30 Keynote: Daniel Palmer (Australia):** *Search as Research, or, from Interface to Book: Activating Photography Collections in Australia* ([online](#))

**10:10 Q&A chaired by Alexandra Moschovi**

**10:30 Break**

**Panel Two: Decentralising Heritage: Building Cultural Archives Outside Institutions**

**10:50 Introduction to Panel 2:** Matteo Balduzzi

**10:55 Colin Robins and Oliver Udy (UK):** *Anthology of Rural Life: Shifting the Scope of Regional Archives*

**11:15 Amanda Ritson and Carol McKay (UK):** *Sunderland '73: The People's Visual History. A Model for Activating and Initiating Vernacular Collections*

**11:35 Agnese Ghezzi and Fabrizio Gitto (Italy):** *Expanded Borders: New Relations Between Photographic Collections in the City of Lucca* ([online](#))

**12:05 Panel Q&A chaired by Matteo Balduzzi**

**12:25 Break and tour of Northern Centre of Photography, leaving Media Centre at 13:00** ([optional, not available online](#))

**Panel Three: Rethinking Museums and Archives: Towards Decolonised Institutional Practices**

**13:45 Introduction to Panel 3:** Alexander Supartono

**13:50 Alexandra Gow (UK):** *Enter the Archive: Photographic Representation and Collecting Practices at National Galleries Scotland*

**14:10 Christina Riggs (UK):** *Colonial Photography in the Museum: Digitisation, Display, Decolonisation*

**14:30 Angela Cheung (UK):** *The Unbound Image: The Material Potentiality of Colonial Photographs beyond the Archive*

**14:50 Lucia Halder (Germany):** *IMAGES | COUNTER IMAGES: Collecting, Researching, and Exhibiting Photography in the (De)colonial Museum* ([online](#))

**15:20 Panel Q&A chaired by Alexander Supartono**

**15:40 Break**

**16:00 Future of the Museum Dialogues Network discussion:** facilitated by Susanne Burns, Museum Dialogues Evaluator [Media Centre Room 235](#) ([optional, not available online](#))

**17:00 Close**

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## Sunday 24 November 2024

David Puttnam Media Centre Cinema,  
St Peter's Campus, Sunderland, SR6 0DD

**09:20 Welcome:** Iro Katsaridou

**Panel Four: Hybrid Collections: Presentation and Access Challenges for Analogue and Digital Acquisitions**

**09:30 Introduction to Panel 4:** Suzy O'Hara

**09:35 Katrina Sluis (Australia):** *What Might a Progressive Approach to Curating 21st-Century Digital Practices in the Photography Museum Involve?* ([online](#))

**09:55 Baiba Tetere (Latvia):** *How to Tell the History of Photography? From Analogue Photography to AI-Generated Images*

**10:15 Jayne Knight (UK):** *"What's an Instamatic Camera? Photos are Taken on Phones!": The Changing Story of Popular Photography in the National Science and Media Museum's Kodak Gallery*

**10:35 Liz Wells (UK):** *Dispersed Collections, Dusty Boxes and Accidental Discoveries: Histories of Botany and Photography*

**10:55 Panel Q&A chaired by Suzy O'Hara**

**11:25 Break and tour of NGCA exhibition *The Skin We Live In: Portraits from the NGCA Collection*, leaving Media Centre at 11:30** ([optional, not available online](#))

**Panel Five: Intersections: Exploring the Museum, the Library, and the Archive**

**13:30 Introduction to Panel 5:** Craig Ames

**13:35 Briony Carlin (UK):** *Labels that Stick: Epistemic Encounters with Photobook Collections*

**13:55 John Kippin (UK):** *The Museum in Miniature: A Discussion Paper Based on the Publication of a New Photography Book, Romanitas*

**14:15 Sze Ying Goh (Singapore):** *Between Art and Archive: Negotiating Photography's Status and Role in a Museum Collection*

**14:35 Panel Q&A chaired by Craig Ames**

**14:55 Break**

**15:30 Keynote: Shahidul Alam (Bangladesh):** *A Birth, a History, a Revolution*

**16:10 Q&A chaired by Arabella Plouviez**

**16:40 Closing remarks:** Alexandra Moschovi and Iro Katsaridou

**17:00 Close**

**Conference Introduction: Alexandra Moschovi (UK)***Institutional Dilemmas: Complications, Challenges, and Opportunities*

As a transnational network of scholars, curators, archivists, and photography practitioners, Museum Dialogues has become a dynamic discursive platform for sharing expertise in collecting and exhibiting photography. The network explores how shifts in institutional practices globally influence the appreciation of photographic cultures, and how museums need to adapt to today's evolving image economy by embracing new technologies and modes of dissemination while critically addressing their cultural and economic impact. Discussions have highlighted that many institutions face infrastructural challenges in representing diverse photographic cultures and accommodating the material fluidity of contemporary photographic imagery, suggesting a need to rethink normative curatorial approaches to collecting, accessioning, and presenting photographic works. This introductory presentation seeks to contextualise the conference discussions, including, but not limited to, the passages of photographic images across the museum, the library, and the archive; the institutionalisation of vernacular practices; complications of digital and analogue acquisitions; and ways that institutions can leverage photography to engage different publics and co-create cultural heritage archives.

**Keynote: Martin Barnes (UK)***From Aerial to X-Ray: Repositioning the Royal Photographic Society Collection at the V&A*

The Royal Photographic Society (RPS) collection contains many items of global significance, including some of the very first photographs, famous fine art prints, images across multiple photographic genres, and material evidence of some 200 years of technical and scientific advances. The collections number some 270,000 photographs and negatives, 10,000 cameras and items of technical equipment, an archive of letters and documents, and a library of 27,000 books and journals, alphabetically classified from 'Aerial' to 'X-Ray'.

The Society was founded in 1853, publishing a journal and providing a space for meetings, lectures, demonstrations, and exhibitions. The collection and library were established from the society's beginnings, though the first curator was appointed in 1924. Woven into the meshwork of its collection is also a testimony of the functions, personal and political power structures of a British learned society and its position within former empire.

The RPS was housed in successive locations in London until 1980 when it moved to Bath, with the collection forming the RPS National Centre of Photography. Under financial strain, the RPS sold its collection to the Science Museum Group (SMG) in 2002. The SMG housed the collection at its National Science and Media Museum, Bradford until its transfer to the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) in 2017. Transfer to the V&A again repositioned the itinerant collection, this time within the context of a museum of fine and decorative arts.

With each successive relocation, practical necessities generated conceptual reframing, and vice versa. Transfer to the V&A has enabled greater physical access. However, the collection remains predominantly in analogue form, with little of its breadth currently visible online. In the light of recent scholarship that embraces the multiple genres and cultures of photography — alongside a radical reassessment of the roles and social responsibilities of museums — the RPS collection holds transformative yet untapped potential. Plans to unlock its multilayered holdings

are currently being developed through a workflow of cataloguing, digitisation, conservation, and research. Once in place, it will start to enable new, or previously overlooked or obscured, stories to be told. Yet, the full effect on the perception and functions of the RPS collection as repositioned physically and digitally at the V&A remain to be seen.

**Panel One: Reframing Vernacular Photographies****Michela Bresciani (Italy)***Whose are the Photographs? Authorship and Storytelling of the Territory*

This paper outlines my professional perspective on the power of historical images, private archives, and born-digital photography in recounting the transformations of the territory in an immediate, immersive way that facilitates intergenerational and intercultural dialogue. Within my role as coordinator and curator of exhibitions at the Ecomuseo Urbano Metropolitan Milano Nord (EUMM), I use photography as a tool to preserve the memory of places in order to help inhabitants familiarise with the urban transformations and introduce new citizens to the histories of places. The Ecomuseum archive, composed mainly of citizens' photographs, represents the starting point to compare past and present and to reveal the immateriality of memories linked to disappeared places, thanks to thematic exhibitions designed for educational purposes and heterogeneous audiences.

A significant achievement is the permanent installation inside a World War II bunker in the heart of the large peri-urban park, Parco Nord Milano. The bunker was built during wartime for the workers of the Breda Aeronautica factory. Here, public and private archival photographs illustrate the history of the period while increasing the emotional impact of the visit. In this context, I encounter several opportunities to create photographic exhibitions about contemporary conflicts, focusing on different types of photographs and their use, which as an Ecomuseum, we have experimented over the years. We have had the opportunity to amass a collection of photographs for which authorship is irrelevant, as for instance images from neighbourhood archives. In this case, images can be seen as collective documents, representing the daily experiences of a community without a specific focus on who created them. Through these narratives, many voices are allowed to emerge and contribute to a shared story. In other cases, in the exhibition of the shelters in Parco Nord, the photographs on display mostly come from the private archive of Gianfranco Ucelli. Here, authorship plays a crucial role: the author's biography is relevant to the meaning of his pictures. Collected, and exhibited, these photographs are not simple images. They are stories that reflect the author's specific experience, narrating History in a way that leads to greater interpretative depth, as the audience can connect not only with the image, but also with the context and emotions conveyed by the author's framing.

**Sandra Križić Roban (Croatia)***Should Dispersed Vernacular Photographic Voices be Institutionalised? Some Examples from Croatia*

The status of photography in Croatia and the rest of Yugoslavia was, for a long time, limited to its technical aspects. In recent years, photography has been moving from the margins of artistic events to actively occupy a (more) central place in contemporary cultural-critical discourse. Given the insufficiently developed critical apparatus and lack of familiarity with numerous aspects in which photography was involved at all levels of society, a need to analyse its historical development and role in society has emerged. This particularly applies to vernacular photography, understood

as a type of local everyday imagery that we encounter in various contexts, which often remains outside existing institutional models. The research potential of vernacular photography is particularly interesting from an Eastern European position, because of a discrepancy between national and private identities. Research into vernacular images contributes to the examination of the concepts of microhistory and history of events (Foucault), which have transformed, or will transform, historiography in relation to grand historical narratives. These images are not regarded as a passive result of human activity, but rather as active and constantly developing material (Terry Cook) that critically approaches and participates in social and organisational memory.

Researching human labour and the workers' position in factories through vernacular lenses, as well as images testifying to their leisure time, which could all be brought under the term "vernacular modernism", I have encountered numerous questions. How could these images be mobilised, and is there a need for their musealisation? Can something that is peripheral in content and belongs to everyday life be considered beyond the standard understanding of photography as "secondary documentation"? This presentation will highlight examples from factory archives and factory newspapers, as well as those published in professional and specialised press. These are "dispersed" photographic voices that distil social practices, which, owing to an increasing interest in these areas, we include in curatorial projects and archives, and strive to incorporate into functional digital and analogue exhibits.

**Giuseppe Chiavaroli (Italy)**

*The Construction of the Factory: Memories of Work and Struggle of Female Textile Workers in Reggio Emilia. A Narrative Perspective for Photography at the Museums of Industry and Labour History*

Industrial photography is the communicative tool introduced by companies to project a well-defined corporate image externally. It also entails a relationship between a company's propaganda, informative, and communicative needs and the style of a photographer. In Italy, the trajectory of industrial photography spans from the 1930s to the 1960s and continued thereafter aided by advancements in compact, high-quality cameras, allowing for the first-time images from inside factories.

The case under examination starts from these amateur photographs gathered at the Archive of the Chamber of Labour of Reggio Emilia and is framed by the social conflict in Reggio Emilia's textile sector, which, among its early effects, would produce wage parity in 1961. It is illustrative of the intertwining themes, notably the emergence of a "new female subjectivity," representing a novelty in social, political, and civil rights history. These photographs, taken clandestinely by the female workers, aim to expose their living conditions and the unsanitary environments. It is therefore a very rich story in meanings, yet completely removed from the city's cultural horizon: in recent decades, much has been said about the industrial past of this city but mainly about the Officine Meccaniche Reggiane, which primarily employed male personnel. The choice of Reggio Emilia and its industrial history is due both to the presence of these photographic funds and to its nature as an industrial tourist site within the European Route of Industrial Heritage (ERIH).

A comparative narrative of this kind could be replicated, starting from local and family photographic archives within museums dedicated to industry and labour history present in the ERIH database. Such exhibits could bring visitors closer to the theme of female employment in the industrial sector — still underexplored in Europe and still problematic today — and, thanks to the photographs, attempting to restore the complexity of this European industrialisation story and imagine its future trajectories.

**Keynote: Daniel Palmer (Australia)**

*Search as Research, or, from Interface to Book: Activating Photography Collections in Australia*

Museums and libraries now regularly seek to activate their photography collections for new and diverse audiences. Often this takes the form of inviting outsiders (usually artists) to creatively engage with their collections, a practice made easier since the start of the 21st Century as photography collections have been progressively digitised and made available online. Their resulting activations, often the outcome of commissions or invited research residencies, range from new artworks and performances to temporary exhibitions or interventions in permanent displays. In this presentation, I touch on a range of engagements with Australian photography collections since the 1990s, all of which engage in one way or another with the centrality of settler-colonialism to photography in this country. I focus, however, on two recent projects shaped by their presentation as a book. The first is *Dual/Duel*, a collaborative artist book by Brook Andrew and Trent Walter, with photographs drawn from the State Library of Victoria in Melbourne. The book's form is a series of juxtaposed image propositions that aim to "form new relational narratives connecting the artists' cultural perspectives of Wiradjuri/Sri Lankan/European with issues of conflict, immigration, complicity, and power". The second is my own collaboration with the artist Cherine Fahd at Sydney's Powerhouse Museum (part of the Museum of Applied Arts & Sciences), which is driven by the logic of the online search interface. I will argue that the most traditional medium of the book offers a unique and dialogical space to generate new narratives about difficult histories otherwise absent or hidden in photography collections.

**Panel Two - Decentralising Heritage: Building Cultural Archives Outside Institutions**

**Colin Robins and Oliver Udy (UK)**

*Anthology of Rural Life: Shifting the Scope of Regional Archives*

This paper will discuss the work of the Anthology of Rural Life (ARL) in relation to proactive archival practice. ARL is a collaborative photographic and archival venture focused on the visual documentation of rural communities across Europe. Through engaging with individuals and social groups the photographers record and reflect elements of shifting European economic, social, and cultural climates within diverse rural contexts.

The model that ARL has developed with the regional archive Kresen Kernow for collecting photographic work could be seen as a useful way to respond to an era of 'massification' in imagery. We will discuss some of the ambitions for this approach, particularly to develop an international context for archival practices in provincial and regional institutions.

Some of the considerations for a proactive archival practice would include: approaches to the commissioning of photographic work (systematic production rather than ad hoc collecting/donation policies); a broadening awareness of photographic history and practice (including the material nature of the medium) and the dissemination of work (within immediate social and geographical arenas as well as seeking commonalities with other national or international regional institutions).



**Amanda Ritson and Carol McKay (UK)**

*Sunderland '73: The People's Visual History. A Model for Activating and Initiating Vernacular Collections*

NEPN (North East Photography Network), an initiative of the Northern Centre of Photography at the University of Sunderland, has an established reputation in the social practice of photography. This diverse field of practice includes interrogation and repurposing of existing vernacular photography archives; co-creation of new photographic outputs in participatory contexts, and production of new photographic stories that impact or influence public perceptions. Since 2009, NEPN has commissioned and produced new photographic projects in multiple public and social contexts and has supported the development of the region's photographic practitioners at all levels.

This paper will explore a recent multi-partner project led by NEPN with artist Julian Germain, *Sunderland '73: The People's Visual History (PVH)*. PVH celebrates under-represented aspects of heritage relating to Sunderland's 1973 FA (Football Association) Cup run and win and was supported by a grant from National Lottery Heritage Fund. This event reached beyond the usual football boundaries and affected the whole community. PVH has amassed a photographic archive of at-risk vernacular material. Outputs to date include a co-authored photography book, new photographic portraiture of participants, multi-media artworks, mobile exhibition, reminiscence packs for use in schools and care-homes, as well as new photographic prints. Additionally, short films and captured oral histories preserve participant memories of '73. Together, these materials record the first-hand experiences and emotions of the people who were there, so that those experiences may be shared for the benefit of future generations.

Our paper will unpack the processes by which PVH reactivated an existing but hidden vernacular archive of photographic and intangible heritage, including discussing the concept of co-production and collaboration, the myriad roles of commissioner and artist, and outline some of the benefits for project partners, participants, and wider publics. It will conclude with some reflection on the diversity of the photographic materials collected and created, the complex relationship between heritage, archive and artwork, and the challenges of ensuring ongoing and relevant access to the project's outputs.

**Agnese Ghezzi and Fabrizio Gitto (Italy)**

*Expanded Borders: New Relations Between Photographic Collections in the City of Lucca*

How can we expand the institutional borders and open up the discursive space of museums and archives to highlight their photographic collections in a new way? This is one of the questions addressed while working on Archivi in Rete (Networked Archives). The paper will present the result of this two-year project curated by LYNX in the Center for the Interdisciplinary Analysis of Images, Contexts, and Cultural Heritage of IMT School for Advanced Studies Lucca (Tuscany, Italy). The project's objective is to give visibility to the photographic collections of museums, archives, and other institutions in the city of Lucca, connecting around 40 entities. Archivi in Rete has focused on two main actions: 1) analysis and census of photographic collections, available through an open-access digital platform with over 150 cataloguing sheets; and 2) a public engagement programme for different audiences.

The research allows us to consider the dispersed yet pervasive, networked presence of photography across production uses, preservation and exhibition

contexts. To do so, it provides a methodological shift, offering a reconsideration of provincial and marginal photographic collections and practices as not only connected to local history and identity but also as a vantage point to write a different global history of photography, concerned with the medium's geographic exchanges and diffusions.

Photographic collections are preserved for various purposes: for art historical purposes, as a way to narrate a personal experience, with a scientific mission, or for exclusive photographic valorisation. The Archivi in Rete digital platform provides the opportunity to connect diverse types of photographic heritage — otherwise isolated, invisible to the general public, or described using different cataloguing methods — and to show their connections through the use of metadata. The online public experience is conceived as an initial showcase through which to establish further relationships between audiences and institutions.

### Panel Three - Rethinking Museums and Archives: Towards Decolonised Institutional Practices

**Alexandra Gow (UK)**

*Enter the Archive: Photographic Representation and Collecting Practices at National Galleries Scotland*

The accessible nature of photography as an artistic medium renders it an instrumental site of encounter, expression, and connection, one that has exponential potential for addressing socio-political issues within the gallery space. That being said, it is important to acknowledge that myths around the objective truth of photography have been weaponised against those who are marginalised in society, to the extent that the practice itself is inextricably linked to colonialism, having been used in its origins as a tool to construct and sustain the British Empire. Given the complex history of photography as it relates to women, the LGBTQIA+ community, people of colour, disabled people, migrants, and the working class, it is vital that museums and galleries gain a clear understanding of who is represented within their collections, how these collections are constructed and how this bears upon pressing Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) concerns.

This research was originally commissioned to support National Galleries Scotland in developing an Arts and Humanities Research Council grant application, in collaboration with Fast Forward: Women in Photography, to continue funding their shared research project, *Enter the Archive*. The aims are to evaluate the status of the galleries' photographic archive in relation to EDI and develop knowledge surrounding the stories of diverse communities within this collection, with an emphasis on the lives of women and non-binary people. The bilateral concerns of this paper, with respect to these desired outcomes, are to summarise the *Migration Stories (2011-13)* exhibition programme and to analyse the limitations of the NGS photographic archive more generally, concluding with actionable steps that could be taken by NGS and similar institutions across the UK to develop inclusive collecting practices within their archives.



**Christina Riggs (UK)**

*Colonial Photography in the Museum: Digitisation, Display, Decolonisation*

As museums in the global north/minority world address calls for decolonisation, the use of photographic collections linked to European colonialism remains underexplored in both theory and practice. Digitisation means that such photographs circulate in a cultural commons with little or no contextual framing, repeating the asymmetrical relations of power that created such images in the first place. Temi Odumosu (2020) exhorts us to open a wider dialogue about an “ethics of care” for such images, while Nicholas Mirzoeff’s *White Sight* (2023) reminds us of the powerful role visualisation plays in making and remaking whiteness. In this paper, I extend their insights into the physical and digital spaces of the museum. Using examples from the UK and Italy, I consider how photographs from colonial contexts — archaeology, travel and ethnography, infrastructure projects — have been incorporated into museum exhibitions and other public-facing displays, such as social media, online databases, and the gift shop. In many cases, photographs receive little attention as material and social objects but serve as unproblematised illustrations, enlarged as part of an exhibition design or replicated in promotional material.

For several years now, visual anthropologists and photo historians have offered significant analyses of colonial-era photography and the challenges presented by its digitisation, restitution, and curatorship. A critically informed museum practice in this area had yet to develop, however. Does the nature of the photograph itself – its apparent truth-value and easy familiarity — work against efforts to challenge the dominant frameworks in which photographs were made? Are some photographs un-displayable, or should they be? What practical steps can academics, curators, and other cultural workers take to cultivate an “ethics of care” in our practice?

**Angela Cheung (UK)**

*The Unbound Image: The Material Potentiality of Colonial Photographs beyond the Archive*

The National Archives holds one of the largest collections of photographs in the United Kingdom, much of which was collected to support the administrative function of governmental departments. A significant number of photographs are from the former Colonial Office library collection, founded in 1869. In the early decades of the 21st century, many of these photographs were digitised for the internet so that access to its collection could be widened, delineating a new life for these photographs as unbound images able to transcend the spatial and temporal limits of a physical archive. Colonial photographs now move in transnational slipstreams and their material potential, or potentiality, underwent a radical shift as new audience engagement was made possible.

In this paper, I examine the digitisation of colonial archives such as these to consider the implications of this emancipation from both analogue histories of making, both at the time of the photograph’s production in the colonies but also within the archive itself as the photograph became part of evolving archival and conservation practice over decades. I use a case study of early photographs of Hong Kong, produced during the early colonial period, to consider how their new digital form(s) shape narratives around ideas of place and consider more broadly the role of such photographs within digital ecosystems.

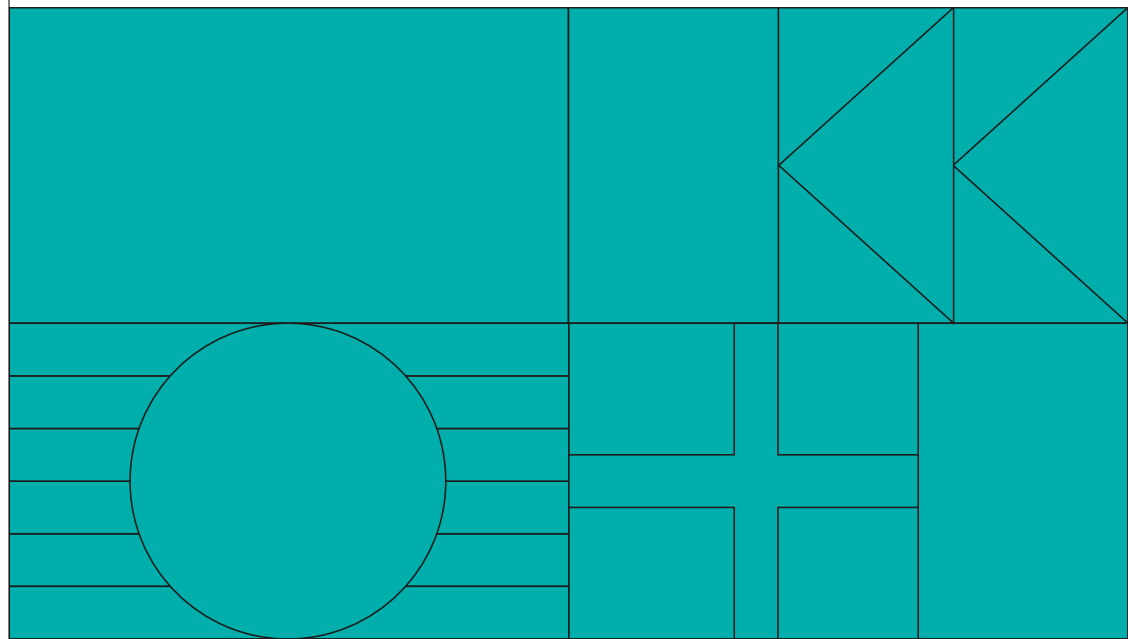
**Lucia Halder (Germany)**

*IMAGES | COUNTER IMAGES: Collecting, Researching, and Exhibiting Photography in the (De)colonial Museum*

Around 100.000 photographic images are being stored at the Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum in Cologne (Germany). A significant part originates from colonial contexts. In the emerging field of anthropology, the first ethnological image archives collected masses of so-called ‘type’ images and highly problematic photographs of physical anthropology.

Sensitive objects, therefore, not only in the sense that they are very fragile due to their materiality and thus require special conservation protection, but also because there are people who are deeply affected by their storage, presentation, or research in the museum. As an ethnological museum, we are faced with the question: What do we do with all these images? Today, the museum defines itself as a museum in transition, seeking new ways to become an interdisciplinary forum for a migration society. The work is shaped by the overdue debate on the ownership of the holdings of anthropological museums, the discourse on the decolonisation of museums, and the handling of ethnographic collections, epistemic violence, and colonial trauma. This transformation is also at the very centre of the work with the photographic collection of the museum. A collection that is determined by the time, ideology, and the people who created, categorised, and ordered it — and by those who are searching for, finding, and re-reading it.

Using the example of two exhibition series, *Artist Meets Archive* and *Counter Images*, I would like to explore the implications of collecting, preserving, and exhibiting photography and discuss questions of accessibility and displayability.



#### Panel Four: Hybrid Collections: Presentation and Access Challenges for Analogue and Digital Acquisitions

##### **Katrina Sluis (Australia)**

*What Might a Progressive Approach to Curating 21st Century Digital Practices in the Photography Museum Involve?*

Although two decades have passed since the convergence of camera and phone, there remains confusion concerning how photographic institutions should respond to photography's afterlife as a software output. In the museum, 'the digital' continues to be approached as a tool rather than culture, and understood differently by marketing, programming, development, and education staff. At a time when post-digital culture is being further diffused into Generative AI, the problem of how to 'represent' photography by public institutions remains pressing. When photography becomes incorporated in computational systems of classification and representation that can only be tangentially asserted as visual, what challenges does this pose to practices of exhibition and display?

In this paper I analyse the limits of existing digital strategies in photographic institutions, drawing on ten years of curatorial research at The Photographers' Gallery, London. I observe how, by privileging the phenomenological appearance of the image on-screen or on the gallery wall, photography curating (and museum pedagogy) risks rendering digital interfaces as transparent and apolitical carriers of information, where the image is comprehended primarily as a text to be decoded. When the opacity of photography is presently exacerbated by its enrolment into the projects of AI and ubiquitous computing, I argue for the need for institutional practices that can apprehend the "expansive onto-epistemological apparatus" (Cox et al. 2021) of the networked image. In doing so, I explore how the analogue mirage of photography is paradoxically being sustained both in the museum and in computational culture, and the significance of practitioner-scholar research in modelling future alternatives.

##### **Baiba Tetere (Latvia)**

*How to Tell the History of Photography? From Analogue Photography to AI-Generated Images*

This research paper explores innovative ways to engage and educate the digital native generation through specially designed programmes about the history of the photographic medium, covering its analogue and digital periods. Museums have collected photographs since the advent of photography but have not always displayed them or developed public programmes that convey how collections can be relevant and what stories they can tell about the medium itself. How can institutions appeal to the new generation when there is so much entertainment and a wide offer of culture and art? How can we integrate and use a collection of analogue photography to show its relationship with today's digital photography? Searching for points of contact and current topics in the performance of new media, the educational programmes discussed in this paper announce the fluid development of the photographic medium and its connection with the legacy of analogue photography. The paper discusses educational and museological theories and empirical studies that could be employed by museum educators to facilitate effective museum learning.

I will introduce two case studies where photographic heritage serves as a window to the past through which we can make links to the present and the future. The first case study is the educational programme "From Stereo Photography to Virtual Image", where participants had the opportunity to learn about the historical development of

3D imaging. The programme was designed at the Latvian Museum of Photography in 2023. The second case study, part of the Public Programme of the Riga Photography Biennial 2025, is an education project in progress that addresses the generational dialogue between the practitioners for the late 20th century and those active today.

##### **Jayne Knight (UK)**

*"What's an Instamatic Camera? Photos are Taken on Phones!": The Changing Story of Popular Photography in the National Science and Media Museum's Kodak Gallery*

The Kodak Museum Collection (KMC), collected by industry leader Kodak and displayed at their company museum in Harrow, UK, between 1927 and 1984, represents over a century of film-based photographic technology and apparatus. Comprising 60,000 cameras, technological apparatus, and photographs as well as advertising material and ephemera, the KMC has been utilised to tell the story of popular photography for the last thirty-five years at what is now known as the National Science and Media Museum (NSMM), Bradford, in the Kodak Museum-turned-Kodak Gallery.

Predominantly pre-digital, the Kodak Gallery presents a number of challenges for both NSMM and its 21st century visitors. Although NSMM continues to offer valuable histories of popular photographic practice, the technology used to snapshot and the infrastructures used to share such images today are fundamentally different from those represented in the object-rich KMC. A small number of new displays have been built to stage interventions to redress these shortcomings by representing digital-based practices but, as I will show, these have encountered their own practical and thematic challenges. With NSMM seeking to adapt its approach, and as visitor expectations and pre-digital knowledge of photographic practice change, there is a pressing need to re-evaluate the existing story of popular photography on display and to consider how the next chapter of this story can be developed as a new opportunity.

This paper, therefore, firstly explores how NSMM has utilised the KMC to tell the story of popular photography, and how they have periodically responded to technological shifts and experiences of popular photography in the age of digital technology and the networked image. Secondly, I reflect on what the changed and unchanged displays mean for today's visitors, who are increasingly unfamiliar with the type of photography represented. Finally, I will consider the future potential of the Kodak Museum Collection in both the museum's permanent galleries and in a continually changing photographic landscape.

##### **Liz Wells (UK)**

*Dispersed Collections, Dusty Boxes, and Accidental Discoveries: Histories of Botany and Photography*

In the context of digital dialogues, this paper reflects on the value and limitations of online collection catalogues when seeking links between histories that have developed along diverse trajectories. As has been extensively discussed, digitalisation risks loss of provenance; index card notes and print versos are often discounted. In addition, semiotic details, and tactile qualities of image-objects are obscured as computer screens impose their singular surface. More particularly, links that may exist within collections may not be cross-referenced, for instance, early 20th-century learned journals using botanical or ecological photographs as illustrations. Online collections offer useful starting points, but, as with all genealogical or socio-historical investigations, serendipity remains a factor.

My interest stems from curating and writing on contemporary environmental photography. Specifically, in 2019, as curator for *Seedscapes: Future-proofing Nature* (Impressions Gallery, Bradford, & UK tour), in seeking to read up on botanical photography historically I realised that – other than in terms of art photography – there was something of a lacuna. A research question emerged: when, why, and under what circumstances did the camera come to supplement or substitute for botanical drawing? Focussing on British histories, I am exploring colonial era (commerce-related) images, academic botany researchers with cameras, and photographs relating to UK agriculture, vegetable and herb gardens. Given the incoherence of online information and links, dusty boxes and accidental discoveries remain a core element within my research.

#### Panel Five: Intersections: Exploring the Museum, the Library, and the Archive

##### Briony Carlin (UK)

*Labels that Stick: Epistemic Encounters with Photobook Collections*

While the artwork and commodity known as a ‘photobook’ is gaining visibility, there remains little scrutiny of how these photographic objects behave in collections, scattered across art and reference libraries, offices, and print stores. This paper argues photobooks can possess agency and ambiguity that destabilise hierarchical institutional systems of governance and invite plural modes of approaching photographic collections.

Specifically, the paper introduces case studies including the National Art Library, the New York Public Library, the George Eastman Museum Library and Archive, and the Thomas J. Watson Library in the Metropolitan Museum of Art to explore how photobooks are constructed and valued through institutional actions of collecting, conserving and archiving, which manifest as ways of theorising the world. Photobooks problematise these systems of classification: produced in multiple, comprising creative input from many authors, practitioners, and technologies, and with each mutable copy accruing individual traces.

From the combined perspectives of researcher, curator, and photobook reader, I reflexively critique institutional encounters with photobooks through a theoretical framework of boundary objects (Star and Griesemer, 1989), queer feminist affect (Ahmed, 2007; Adler 2017), and “liberatory” archival practice (Caswell, 2021). This reveals imperialist and heteronormative archival impulses to document and systematise, which impose upon an object a sense of singularity that artificially smooths over the multiplicity of ways it can be known. The paper will draw links between standardised practices for archival care, how photobooks are differentially valorised in general versus special collections, issues of access, and what knowledges are formed about the photobook medium, for whom and by whom. Rethinking the institutional status of ‘traditional’ photographic objects such as the photobook can activate potentials of plurality that align them more closely with the exciting collecting challenges posed by contemporary, born-digital photographic culture.

##### John Kippin (UK)

*The Museum in Miniature: A Discussion Paper Based on the Publication of a New Photography Book, ROMANITAS*

ROMANITAS *Architecture and Ideology* is published by MuseumsEtc, an Edinburgh-based publisher specialising in books introducing debates and issues in and about museums. Their publications are an invaluable additional contribution to the function of museums and provide a vital link between museum curators, museologists, and other creative practitioners. ROMANITAS *Architecture and Ideology* offers an insight into this approach. It is interdisciplinary, and the photographic and textual narratives developed in the book relate to the concept of realism and representation in a particular way (given the virtual and rhetorical context of much photographic output).

Within a world of representations increasingly controlled and curated by a few dominant corporations, the photographic book becomes a curious, and even unexpected, form of resistance. How book publications sit alongside the virtual and online plethora of images will be critical in how we approach the photographic collections of the future. Books become cherished and historic objects. Works of art conceived as books are museums in miniature. They stay with us, and they perfectly bridge the work of the Artist with the Art Gallery and the Museum. I will discuss the genesis, intentions, and possibilities of making ROMANITAS within the general critical and contextual rhetorical framework of the museum, photographic collections, and exhibitions.

##### Sze Ying Goh (Singapore)

*Between Art and Archive: Negotiating Photography's Status and Role in a Museum Collection*

National Gallery Singapore (hereafter the Gallery) is the custodian of over 8,000 artworks from Southeast Asia, an extensive collection complemented and bolstered by related archival materials in its library. The paper looks specifically at the photographic collection and display strategies between two parallel repositories within the same institution – the Gallery’s artwork collection and its Library & Archive – by unpacking the rationale of its classification in negotiating photography’s ambivalent status between art and archive. Inasmuch as they are considered public institutions on account of their funding, operations, and governance, museums are still fraught with the challenge and criticism of their gatekeeping, given the public’s encounter of and access to a museum collection of artworks is heavily mediated by the curatorial hand through exhibition displays and occasionally, facsimiles transmitted in catalogues and programmes.

The implication in loosening or re-evaluating the classification of photographs within collections suggests alternative ways of display and handling which in turn engages different publics as participants instead of passive recipients of knowledge within a museum setting. This provocation to ‘liberate the collection’ takes a leaf out of contemporary artists and their photographic interventions in ‘liberating the archive’ in their works. The paper is part statistical and part speculative, drawing from a recent acquisition by the Library and Archive of an 18-volume artist book by artist Simryn Gill, who partially erased a set of second-hand picture books of military history. Her gesture defies the art-archive binary and underscores an insistence that photographs – and their attendant histories – are best perused in their native format and encountered through the interrelationship of text, images, and pages. The paper intends to draw lessons from the close reading of these specific case studies as a means to rethink museum collections as library resources: accessible, liberated, and generative.

# Abstracts

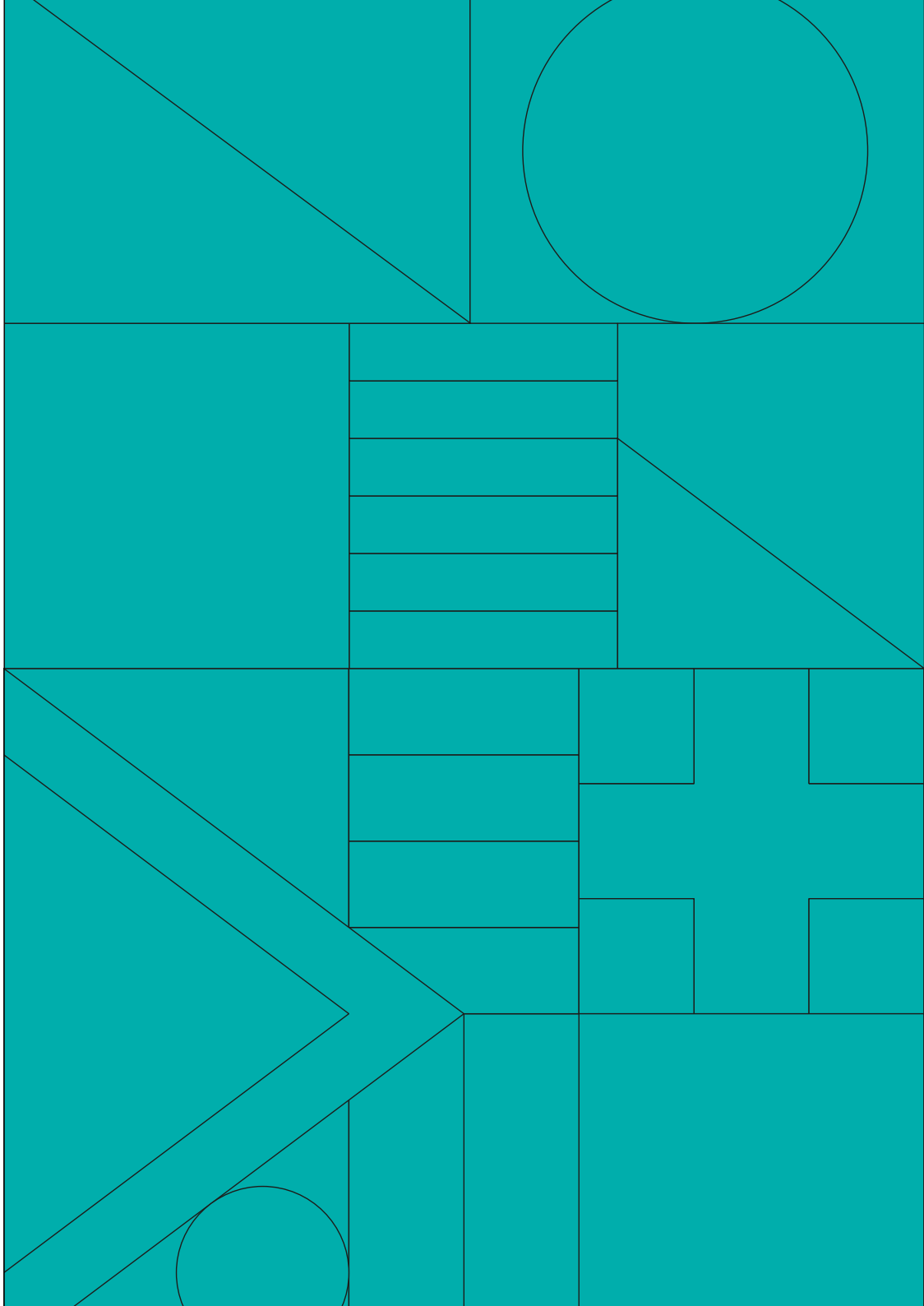
**Keynote: Shahidul Alam (Bangladesh)**

*A Birth, a History, a Revolution*

The unwritten history of photography in Bangladesh is deeply intertwined with the visual memory of the people of this land. Drik Picture Library undertook the task of conserving and documenting the local history of photography in three phases. The first phase involved the birth of Bangladesh in 1971. Interestingly, it was easier collecting work by international photographers than by local ones. The 120 black-and-white negatives of local photographers, carefully wrapped in flimsy polythene, stashed away in a damp gamcha, had almost faded. As their emulsion was eaten away by fungus, scratched a hundred times in their tortuous journey, yellowed with age, they bore little resemblance to the shiny negatives in the modern archives of big-name agencies. They, too, were war weary, bloodied in battle.

The next phase was an oral history project initiated in 2017. We started by wanting to know the story of the first camera or the first photo studio of the Khulna district. Our questions hinged on: How did studio photography grow? Did it revolve around a particular photographer? How have political events, such as Partition and the Liberation War, impacted on and influenced photographic practices? How have the state and society's need for photographic images changed over time? How has studio practice changed with the technological changes of the camera? Are there class, gender, or ethnic differences in the pursuit of photography as a hobby and photography as a necessity? More broadly speaking, we attempted to discover the life histories of photographers, to know about their economic successes and struggles, and to unearth the stories behind the photographs taken by them.

The third phase is more recent. The photographs of the July revolution were hard pictures. The violence by our own security forces that led to well over 1000 people killed within the space of a calendar month was unprecedented. The photographs had been taken by DSLR cameras by professional photographers but also on mobile phones by protesters themselves. Some photographs were sent by security forces, who had to obey orders, but found creative ways to prevent the killing. 53 years later, we felt we had a new independence.



**Dr Shahidul Alam** is a writer, photographer, curator, institution builder, and human rights activist. A Time Magazine Person of the Year in 2018 and a National Geographic Explorer at Large, Alam's work has been exhibited in leading museums and galleries, including MOMA (NYC) and Tate Modern. His book *The Tide Will Turn* was 'Critic's Pick' in the New York Times' list of "Best Art Books of 2020". Alam founded Drik Picture Library, Pathshala South Asian Media Institute, Chobi Mela International Festival of Photography, and Majority World Agency in Bangladesh. Arrested and tortured for criticising the government of Bangladesh, Alam has been described as a "Prisoner of Conscience" by Amnesty International. He is currently on bail and faces up to 14 years in jail if convicted. In 2020, Alam was awarded the International Press Freedom Award by the Committee to Protect Journalists. In 2024, Alam represented Bangladesh at the United Nations General Assembly in New York. Alam is a Visiting Professor at the Northern Centre of Photography, University of Sunderland.

**Martin Barnes** is Senior Curator of Photography at the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), London. After gaining an MA in Art Museum Studies from the Courtauld Institute of Art, he began working at the V&A in 1995. Since then, he has built and researched the photography collection, devised exhibitions, and conceived and developed the V&A Photography Centre. His special interests include early processes and experimental photography, industry, nature, and the environment. Barnes has published extensively on historical and contemporary photography and curated numerous exhibitions, often with accompanying books, including: *Twilight: Photography in the Magic Hour* (2006); *Something That I'll Never Really See: Contemporary Photography from the V&A* (2008); *Shadow Catchers: Camera-less Photography* (2010); *Figures & Fictions: Contemporary South African Photography* (2011); *Island Stories: 50 Years of Photography in Britain* (2012); *Richard Learoyd: Dark Mirror* (2015); *Paul Strand: Photography and Film for the 20th-Century* (2016); the British Pavilion, Dubai Photo (2016); *Into the Woods: Trees in Photography* (2017); and *Maurice Broomfield: Industrial Sublime* (2021).

**Michela Bresciani**, who graduated with a degree in Philosophy of Science, specialises in the analysis of migratory flow models, establishing herself as an expert in educational paths and mediation of artistic heritage in an intercultural key. Bresciani has designed and created participatory thematic maps offering knowledge of the territory with a view to enhancing and stimulating active citizenship. She is a research fellow at the Department of Sociology and Social Research at the Bicocca University of Milan, dealing with mapping, territory, and its narration. Bresciani is also the coordinator and curator of the exhibitions and photographic projects of Ecomuseo Urbano Metropolitan Milano Nord (EUMM), where she curated the archival research and exhibition of the Bunker Breda of Parco Nord Milano.

**Dr Briony Carlin** is Lecturer in Contemporary Art Curation at Newcastle University and former Assistant Curator of Photographs at the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), London. Her forthcoming monograph *Encounters with Photobooks: How Art and Experience Matter* (Leuven University Press, 2025) engages feminist new materialist philosophy to make relational understandings about the contemporary photobook as a distinct, plural, experiential art medium.

**Dr Angela Cheung** is a post-doctoral research associate at SOAS, University of London. She was the Research Fellow (Photography) at The National Archives from 2022 to 2023 where she led interdisciplinary research into photographs collected by the former Colonial Office Library. An art historian specialising in the history of photography, she has taught and lectured at universities and museums in the UK. Her research interests include photographic archives, materiality, colonial photography,

photography of China and Sino-British history. She holds a PhD and MA in History of Art from SOAS, University of London, as well as an MA in Photographic Studies from the University of Westminster.

**Giuseppe Chiavaroli** is a PhD candidate in Humanities, Technology, and Society at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia (in partnership with Collegio S. Carlo of Modena and Almo Collegio Borromeo of Pavia; supervisor Luca Stefanelli). His main research interests focus on the relationship between photographic images and literary memory, industrial archaeology understood as corporate heritage, and the archival organisation of active and decommissioned national industrial heritage, starting from the photographic traces of local photographers' workshops. He has published the books *Industria e fotografia. Il caso della Bottega Fotografica Chiolini di Pavia* (2022), and, together with Claudia Trentani, *Luigi Trentani. Fotografo. Tecnica e creazione per la Pavia del Novecento* (2023).

**Dr Agnese Ghezzi** is a postdoctoral researcher at LYNX, the Center for the Interdisciplinary Analysis of Images, Contexts, and Cultural Heritage of IMT School for Advanced Studies, Lucca, Italy. With a background in Contemporary History and a PhD in Analysis and Management of Cultural Heritage, she has been a fellow at the Photographic History Research Centre (De Montfort University, Leicester) and the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence. She was a postdoctoral research collaborator, together with Fabrizio Gitto, on the Archivi in Rete project, which, coordinated by Professor Linda Bertelli, focused on photographic heritage in the area of Lucca (Tuscany). She is currently working on the two-year PRIN PNRR Italian national project 'Fotografiste: Women in Photography from Italian Archives which explores the work of women in the Italian photographic sector between 1839 and 1939. Ghezzi is preparing her first monograph on the intersection between photography, anthropology, and colonialism in Italy between the 19th and the 20th centuries.

**Fabrizio Gitto** is a photographic historian specialising in 20th and 21st century architecture and landscape photography, theories and practices of photographic archives, and intersections between photography and contemporary art. In 2018, he completed a degree in Photographic History (University of Florence) with a thesis on the exhibition *Archive Fever* (New York, 2008). In 2020, he held a scholarship for the project *Photography in Tuscany: Stories of Cultural Heritage*, and, in 2022, he collaborated with the Tuscan region as cataloguer and editor on photographic archives for the digital platform [cultura.toscana.it](http://cultura.toscana.it). Between 2022 and 2024, he was a research fellow with Agnese Ghezzi for the Archivi in Rete project, a two-year project on Lucca's photographic heritage coordinated by Professor Linda Bertelli (IMT School for Advanced Studies, Lucca, Italy). Gitto is currently a doctoral candidate (University of Italian Switzerland) with a focus on photography in architecture magazines in Italy from 1975 to 2010.

**Sze Ying Goh** is a curator at the National Gallery Singapore. She has worked on exhibitions including *Living Pictures: Photography in Southeast Asia* (2022), *Ever Present: First Peoples Art of Australia* (2022), *Something New Must Turn Up* (2020), and *Minimalism: Space. Light. Object.* (2018). In 2019, she co-curated the sixth edition of the Singapore Biennale, *Every Step in the Right Direction*. Her research focuses on Southeast Asian photography and art in the mid-20th century, with an interest in how art refigures issues of identity, mobility, and place. At the Gallery, she is also involved in the development of a series of online courses on Southeast Asian art. Formerly based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, she has worked on exhibitions and public programmes with a focus on artistic interventions sited in urban public space. Her other projects include *Between States* (2017), *ESCAPE from the SEA* (2017), and *more than one (fragile) thing at a time* (2016).

**Alexandra Gow** is a PhD candidate at the University for the Creative Arts (UCA). Their research explores the intersection between feminist theory, social epistemology, and art history. Gow's PhD forms part of the Fast Forward: Women in Photography research project based at UCA and investigates the representation of photographers and subjects from marginalised backgrounds within the National Galleries Scotland photographic archive. Gow previously held the position of Collection and Research Assistant within NGS and currently serves as a representative and organiser for the galleries' Queer Colleague Network.

**Lucia Halder** has been the Head of the photography collection at the Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum (RJM) in Cologne since 2015. Halder studied history and art history and focuses on the accessibility and displayability of inventories of colonial image archives as well as (in)visibilities. Since 2020, she has conceived and realised the exhibition series *Counter Images / Gegenbilder*. The series takes a critical look at the medium of photography and offers international artists and curators a platform for decolonial approaches and counter-positions to conventional modes of representation. She has curated numerous exhibitions related to the history, semantics, and commemorative significance of historical and contemporary photographs. Halder is Chair of the History & Archives Division of the German Photographic Society (DGPh) and Member of the Artistic Board of International Photoscene Cologne.

**Emeritus Professor John Kippin** exhibited at and was a member of the cooperative of young artists responsible for developing 2B Butler's Wharf in the early 1970s at Tower Bridge in London as a key venue for 'alternative' arts practice. This included performance, artists' moving image, photography and installation works. He later moved to Newcastle upon Tyne where he became a member of the Basement Group, a mostly performance-led group of artists that eventually evolved into the artist organisation Locus+. Kippin's work has been widely exhibited in the UK, including venues such as the BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh, the Serpentine Gallery, The Photographer's Gallery, and the Imperial War Museum in London. His work has also been exhibited in Europe, America, and Asia and is represented in many collections including the V&A (London), the British Council and Arts Council England collections. He has published several books and articles, the most recent being the monographs: *ROMANITAS: Architecture and Ideology* (MuseumsEtc, Edinburgh, 2024); *FROM A TRUE STORY* (Kerber, Berlin, 2018); *IN this DAY and AGE* (with Nicola Neate, Kerber, Berlin, 2022). Kippin is an Emeritus Professor of Photography at the University of Sunderland.

**Dr Jayne Knight** is a photographic historian who has recently completed an Arts and Humanities Research Council funded Collaborative Doctoral Partnership PhD with the University of Brighton and the National Science and Media Museum, Bradford. Titled *From Company Museum to National Collection, 1927-2023: Telling the Story of Popular Photography through the Kodak Museum Collection*, Knight's research produced a comprehensive history of the Kodak Museum Collection and a new historiography of British photography in a museum context. Knight has worked with photographic collections across several museums and archives, including the London Museum and the National Science and Media Museum, and has wider research interests in Kodak, popular photography, and business histories.

**Dr Sandra Križić Roban** holds a PhD in art history and is a critic, curator, lecturer, PhD mentor, and writer, who focuses on contemporary art, history and theory of photography, post-war architecture, and politics of public space and cultural memory. Križić Roban is a senior scientific advisor in tenure at the Institute of Art

History, Zagreb, and Assistant Professor of Culture of Memory at the Academy of Fine Arts, Zagreb, and of Photography and Visual Culture at the Philosophical Faculty, Osijek. She is the PI on the HRZZ project Ekspozicija: Themes and Aspects of Croatian Photography from the 19th Century until Today (2020–2024), and the head of the Office for Photography, a non-profit association dedicated to contemporary photography in Zagreb. Križić Roban has authored a number of books, scientific articles, and book chapters on photography, especially women's practice, cultural migration and conceptual photography, trauma and alternative ways of memorisation.

**Dr Carol McKay** is an independent photography and art historian, curator, and writer. With colleagues, McKay established NEPN (North East Photography Network) in 2009, a research and development initiative for photography hosted by the Northern Centre of Photography, University of Sunderland, which uniquely works across Higher Education and cultural sectors to create a critically engaged context for photographic activity. Her current research interests focus on changing patterns of commissioning, exhibiting, and disseminating contemporary photography, the social practice of photography, photography's communities of practice, and photographer development. McKay was Associate Head of School (Arts), Programme Leader for the BA (Hons) Photography, Video and Digital Imaging programme, Principal Lecturer, and a PhD supervisor at the University of Sunderland until October 2024. McKay completed her PhD at the University of Cambridge and has previously held academic positions at Goldsmiths, the University of London, and the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff.

**Prof. Daniel Palmer** is a Professor in the School of Art at RMIT University in Naarm, Melbourne, where he leads art history and theory. Known for his writing on photography, digital media, and contemporary art, Palmer's book publications include *Installation View: Photography Exhibitions in Australia 1848–2020* (Perimeter Editions, 2021) with Martyn Jolly; *Photography and Collaboration: From Conceptual Art to Crowdsourcing* (Bloomsbury, 2017); *Digital Light* (Open Humanities Press, 2015), edited with Sean Cubitt and Nathaniel Tkacz; *The Culture of Photography in Public Space* (Intellect, 2015), edited with Anne Marsh and Melissa Miles; *Twelve Australian Photo Artists* (Piper Press, 2009), co-authored with Blair French; and *Photogenic* (Centre for Contemporary Photography, 2005). His new book exploring the vast photography collection of the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney, co-authored with Cherine Fahd, is forthcoming in 2025.

**Prof. Christina Riggs** is Professor of the History of Visual Culture in the Department of History at Durham University. She is a historian of photography, visual art, and museum and heritage practices. Her current research considers the role of historic photographs in contemporary culture, from digital colourisation, to museum and heritage displays, to public art and local history. She is also interested in how photography developed in tandem with industrialisation, colonial and imperial expansion (especially in the Middle East), and ideas of heritage preservation — themes that informed her book *Photographing Tutankhamun: Archaeology, Ancient Egypt, and the Archive* (Bloomsbury/Routledge, 2018).

**Amanda Ritson** is a photography project manager, producer, and curator. Since 2009, she has been the Manager of NEPN (North East Photography Network), which commissions photographic projects and develops regional, national, and international partnerships for the presentation of new works and offers professional development programmes and critical dialogues. Ritson's recent projects with NEPN include curation of *Observe Experiment Archive* (a series of commissions and critical conversations exploring the links between photography and science, culminating in



a group exhibition at Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens); *SHIFTS*, a professional development programme (mentoring, talks, workshops); and *Sunderland '73: The People's Visual History*, a photographic and cultural heritage project with Julian Germain. Ritson, who has held previous roles at Arts Council England and IPRN (International Photography Research Network), is currently an Academic Tutor at the University of Sunderland, freelances in the sector, and is Coordinator of Museum Dialogues.

**Colin Robins** and **Oliver Udy** are British documentary photographers based in Cornwall. Both are academics teaching Photography (University of Plymouth and Falmouth University), as well as practitioners working individually within photography and publishing. Robins and Udy have been collaborating on the Anthology of Rural Life project for over ten years. Their shared interest in quiet documentary practice has evolved over time with a collaboration that sheds light on the shifting nature of life in diverse European rural areas. So far, their work has taken them to Finland, Italy, Poland, Hungary, and Turkey as well as different studies in areas of the UK.

**Dr Katrina Sluis** is an Associate Professor in the School of Art and Design at The Australian National University where she leads the Computational Culture Lab. As a curator, educator, and media scholar, her research is concerned with the socio-technical processes underpinning the datafication of art and photography in computational culture. From 2011-2019, she was the Senior Curator of Digital Programmes at The Photographers' Gallery, London developing public projects on machine vision, synthetic imaging, net culture, and speculative photographic education. During this period she also co-founded the Centre for the Study of the Networked Image at London South Bank University, developing partnerships with a series of contemporary art and photographic institutions addressing advanced technologies in the post-digital museum. With Andrew Dewdney, she is the co-editor of *The Networked Image in Post-Digital Culture* (Routledge, 2022).

**Baiba Tetere** is a visual arts researcher and co-founder of the ISSP Association, Latvia. She studied History of Photography at De Montfort University, UK, and is currently writing her doctoral dissertation on early anthropological photography in Latvia in the late 19th-century at the Greifswald University, Germany. Tetere's research interests form an interdisciplinary section of the key areas of visual culture, history of science, and material culture studies, particularly focusing on photographic surveys and the representation of farmers, and theory and management of collections and museums. Since 2006, Tetere has regularly organised educational and art projects related to photography. She currently teaches a course in the history of photography and contemporary photography at the Riga Stradiņš University.

**Emerita Professor Liz Wells** is an independent writer and curator and is Emerita Professor in Photographic Culture at the University of Plymouth. Wells' publications include *Photography, Curation, Criticism: An Anthology* (2022) and *Land Matters, Landscape Photography, Culture and Identity* (2011, reprint 2021). She is the series editor for *Photography, Place, Environment* (Bloomsbury Academic 2016-2021/ Routledge, from March 2021). Recent exhibitions include *Sea, Sand and Soil: Plastics in Our Environment* (Pingyao International Photography Festival, 2021) and *Seedscapes: Future-proofing Nature* (Impressions Gallery, Bradford; RAMM, Exeter; Dick Institute, Kilmarnock, 2020/21). She is currently investigating histories of botanical photography, about which remarkably little has been written, other than in terms of aesthetics. Wells edited and co-wrote *Photography: A Critical Introduction* (2021, 6<sup>th</sup> ed., 7<sup>th</sup> ed. forthcoming 2026), and is editor for *The Photography Reader* and *The Photography Culture Reader* (Routledge, 2019). She co-founded and co-edits *photographies*, a Routledge journal.

**Craig Ames** is an artist exploring themes such as evidence, simulation, and representation in the post-photography/post-truth era. Ames works with a range of media, including photography, generative AI, text, and sourced online material. His works have been exhibited nationally and internationally at galleries, festivals, and museums including: Currents Art and Technology Festival, USA (2023); Lishui Photography Festival, China (2023); Format Festival, UK (2015, 2023, 2024); Copenhagen Photo Festival, Denmark (2023-24); Västerbottens Museum, Sweden (2023-24); Landskrona Foto, Sweden (2023-24); Thessaloniki PhotoBiennale, Greece (2023-24); and Noorderlicht, the Netherlands (2024-25). Ames' works are held in collections at the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), UK, MOMus: Thessaloniki Museum of Photography, Greece, and Huis Marseille, Museum of Photography, the Netherlands. He is a Senior Lecturer in Photography and Programme Leader of the BA Photography, Video and Digital Imaging programme at the Northern Centre of Photography, University of Sunderland.

**Matteo Balduzzi** is a curator in the field of public art and photography. For over fifteen years he has been collaborating with the Museum of Contemporary Photography (Mufoco) in Milan-Cinisello Balsamo, Italy, where he is a curator and has been the artistic programme coordinator since 2018. Mufoco is the only public museum in Italy dedicated to contemporary photography and seeks to promote its archival heritage through specific research projects, integrate the works of emerging artists within the museum's collections, and develop new collaborative projects involving citizens (or public) and artists. In recent years, Balduzzi has curated numerous exhibitions and projects, including *West*, by Francesco Jodice, presented in Toulouse and Naples, *L'Italia e' un Desiderio* at Gallerie del Quirinale in Rome, and *Gabrielle Basilico: Le Mie Citta* at Triennale Milano, and, more recently, *Viaggio in Italia*, on display at the Italian Cultural Institute, Paris in 2024. Balduzzi is a member of the Museum Dialogues steering group.

**Dr Susanne Burns** is an independent management consultant with more than 40 years of senior management experience in the cultural sector. Her work has encompassed dance, theatre, music, and the visual arts, and she has extensive experience of working in Higher Education. She currently has a diverse portfolio of clients, including the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, MIMA, North East Photography Network, We Make Culture and Wearside Women in Need, and the Wales Wide Training Network. Burns has a Doctorate from Middlesex University and is a qualified coach, action learning facilitator, and mentor. She was Head of Management at the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts (1994-2001) and led the MA Cultural Leadership at Liverpool John Moores University (2002-2009). She was awarded a Churchill Fellowship in 2017 and travelled across the USA and Australia researching support structures for freelance creatives.

**Dr Iro Katsaridou** is an art historian and Assistant Professor at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece. She was formerly the Director of the MOMus-Thessaloniki Museum of Photography (2021-2024), and before that curator at the Museum of Byzantine Culture (2005-2021). She has curated exhibitions of historical and contemporary photography, coordinated the international photography festival Thessaloniki PhotoBiennale 2023 at MOMus, and was a member of the Organising Committee for the 5th Fast Forward Women in Photography conference (Thessaloniki, May 2024). Katsaridou has published contributions in international collective volumes and journals on photography, socially engaged art history, and curatorial practices. Together with Eve Kalyva and Pamela Bianchi, she co-edited the volume *Museums and Entrepreneurship: Capitalising on Culture* (Routledge, 2024). Katsaridou is Co-Investigator of Museum Dialogues.

## Biographies

**Prof. Alexandra Moschovi** is an academic scholar, art critic, and curator seeking to situate photographic practices within broader art historical, museological, and visual culture debates. With interdisciplinary studies in photography and media and a Ph.D. in art history, Moschovi has published widely on modern/contemporary photography and the interface of photography, digital technologies, the museum, and the archive. She co-authored the volume *Greece through Photographs* (with Aliki Tsirgialou and Spyros Asdrahas, Melissa Publishing House, 2007/09), co-edited the anthology *The Versatile Image: Photography, Digital Technologies and the Internet* (with Arabella Plouviez and Carol McKay, Leuven University Press, 2013), and authored the monograph *A Gust of Photo-Philia: Photography in the Art Museum* (Leuven University Press, 2020). Recent curatorial projects include: *Portrayals of History: Voula Papaioannou-Dimitris Harissiadis 1940-1960, Works from the Benaki Museum Photographic Archives* (with Manolis Skoufias, MOMus Thessaloniki Museum of Photography, Greece, 2017); *Poetics, Materialities, Performances: Greek Photographic Books 2000-2023* (MOMus Museum of Contemporary Art, 2023); and *HerStories: Photographic Practices, 1974-2024* (with Iro Katsaridou, Areti Leopoulou, and Penelopi Petsini, MOMus Thessaloniki Museum of Photography and the Experimental Center for the Arts, 2024). Moschovi is Professor of Photography and Curating at the Faculty of Education, Society and Creative Industries, University of Sunderland, UK, and Principal Investigator of Museum Dialogues.

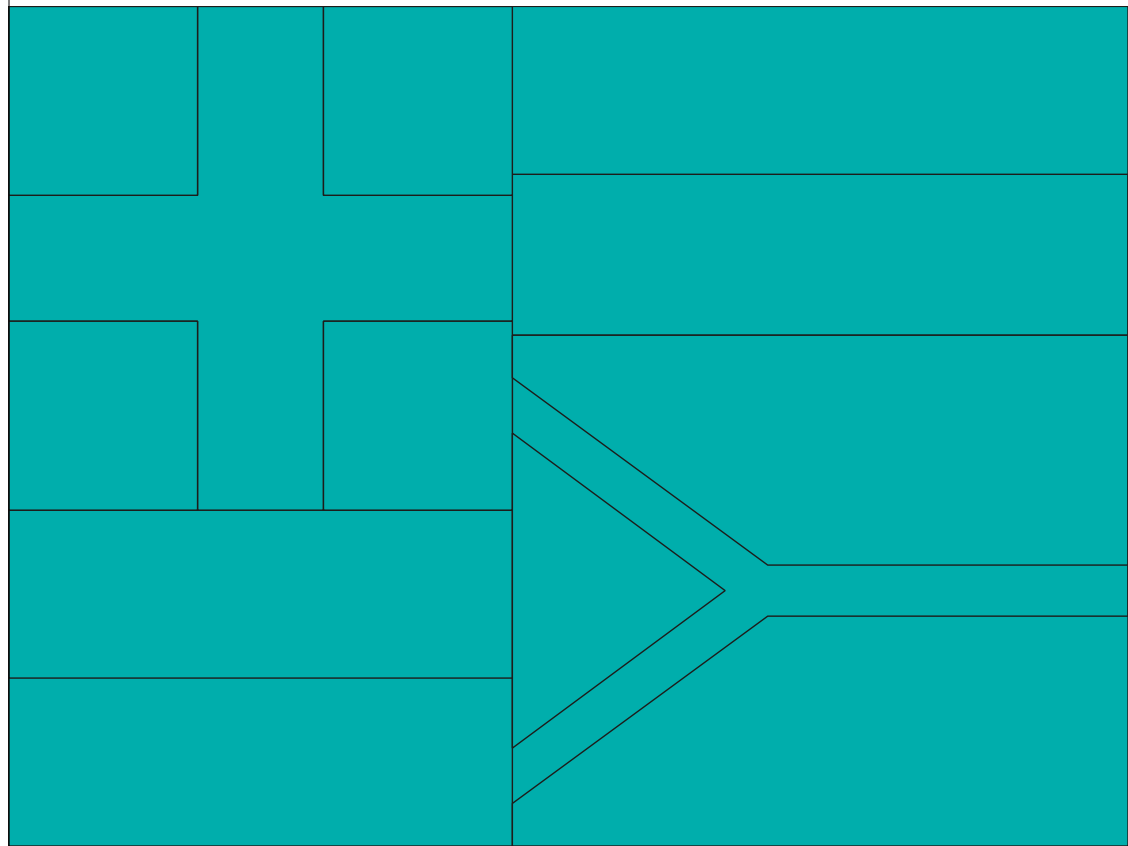
**Dr Suzy O'Hara** is a Lecturer in Digital Arts and Enterprise in the School of Media and Creative Industries at the University of Sunderland, where she leads CoLab Sunderland. As a curator, educator, and practice-led scholar, her research is concerned with exploring the central role that art-making and curatorial praxis play in addressing pressing environmental and social challenges impacting society. Recent projects include curating public programmes that bring diverse cross-sector expertise together to explore the role socially engaged, hybrid arts practices play in engaging local communities with pioneering Big Data scientific discovery, marine environment, and heritage protection, and urgent practical challenges caused by coastal erosion. With Victoria Bradbury, she is the co-editor of *Art Hack Practice: Critical Intersections of Art, Innovation and the Maker Movement* (Routledge, 2020).

**Emerita Professor Arabella Plouviez** is an academic in Visual Arts, specialising in photography and visual culture. With three decades of experience in higher education at the University of Sunderland, she has held numerous leadership roles including, most recently, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Creative Industries. Recognised for her commitment to developing creative talent and fostering inclusivity, she was one of the founders that established the university's Northern Centre of Photography, a leading hub for creative practice research through NEPN. Her work as a photographic practitioner explores themes of identity, community, health, and representation, often focusing on marginalised communities and using image and text to amplify voices rarely seen in mainstream media. With a collaborative approach, her research bridges practical and theoretical dimensions, encouraging students and colleagues to critically examine how visual imagery shapes societal perceptions. Her work has been exhibited and published nationally and internationally. Plouviez is a member of the Museum Dialogues steering group.

**Dr Alistair Robinson** is a Lecturer in Curating Contemporary Art at Newcastle University. He is currently writing a book about European art museums' experiments with collections of modern and contemporary art undertaken across the last decade. He has often supported new work in photographic and video media as a curator, providing artists from Cory Arcangel to Harun Farocki with their first exhibitions in the UK. He has also been the first curator to acquire works by artists including Joanna

Piotrowska for a UK permanent collection. He has held curatorial positions at the Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art, where he established a collection of primarily lens-based artworks, the National Science and Media Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A). He has curated over 100 exhibitions with more than 350 artists from 25 countries. Robinson's publications include *Museum and Gallery Studies: A Primer* (Routledge), *Rank: Picturing the Social Order 1516-2009*. He has created a dozen artist's monographs including *Based on a True Story* (Kerber Verlag), a career survey of John Kippin's work.

**Dr Alexander Supartono** is an art historian and curator specialising in modern and contemporary art in Southeast Asia currently working at the School of Arts and Creative Industries, Edinburgh Napier University. He obtained a PhD in History of Photography from the University of St. Andrews, Scotland. Recent curatorial activities include *Postcolonial Photo Studio 4* (Chobi Mela Festival, Dhaka, 2017) and *Flame of Solidarity*, the presentation of Taring Padi collective at the documenta fifteen (Kassel, Germany, 2022). Latest publications include the co-edited book *Dolorosa Sinaga: Body, Form, Matter* (2020) and the article "The Silent Waiting: Javanese Antiquity and 19th-Century Photography in the Dutch East Indies" in *Living Pictures: Photography in Southeast Asia* (National Gallery of Singapore, 2022).



[www.museumdialogues.co.uk](http://www.museumdialogues.co.uk)

Museum Dialogues is coordinated by the Northern Centre of Photography at the University of Sunderland, UK, with key partners the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece, and Mufoco-Museo di Fotografia Contemporanea, Cinisello Balsamo, Italy.

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