Photographic History without Photographs (Leicester/online, 13-14 Jun 22)

Photographic History Research Centre, De Montfort University, Leicester, UK / online, Jun 13–14, 2022
Deadline: Feb 21, 2022

Gil Pasternak

What is the shape and size of a photographic history that is written from the point of view of having no photographs? When photographs are destroyed, lost, repressed, or never intended to be permanent, it leaves a gap in what we usually refer to as our main research material.

By chance or by design, photographs disappear every day. They might be destroyed, or lost, or designed to fade. They might be rendered undiscoverable through complicated bureaucracy, secrecy, or algorithms. Contemplating the space left without photographs, a veritable foil to the enormity of the image archive, can enrich our understanding of photographic history and methodology. The PHRC seeks contributions interrogating the photographic histories that are not image led, that excavate imageless histories.

In this 10th annual conference of the Photographic History Research Centre (PHRC) we invite papers of 15 minutes addressing contemporary debates in and around the absence of photographs. We invite short abstracts of about 200 words on topics that address themes like (but not limited to):

- Disappearing or fading photographs by design or by accident
- Histories of archival findings and losses
- Suppression of photographs
- Photography as auxiliary to other things
- Historiographical considerations of a photography without images
- Methodological innovations to reconstruct photographic cultures when images are not available, or never were
- Photographs rendered as data.

If possible, we will be offering a hybrid conference this year, or entirely online if not. All speakers will be offered the opportunity to present remotely.

Please send abstracts to phrc@dmu.ac.uk by 21 February 2022, embedding in the document your name, contact details, up to 5 keywords and institutional affiliation (when applicable).

Reference:
CFP: Photographic History without Photographs (Leicester/online, 13-14 Jun 22). In: ArtHist.net, Jan 15, 2022 (accessed Nov 23, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/35669>.