

Photographic History without Photographs (online, 13–14 Jun 22)

online / Leicester, Jun 13–14, 2022

Registration deadline: Jun 9, 2022

Gil Pasternak

Registration now open to attend Photographic History without Photographs online or in person at the Photographic History Research Centre (PHRC), De Montfort University Leicester, UK. As we offer a hybrid conference this year, speakers and delegates can participate remotely or on site.

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.

In this 10th annual conference of the PHRC we will feature papers interrogating photographic histories that are not image led; photographic histories that excavate imageless histories. Each of these will consider topics that address themes like:

- 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.

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

MONDAY 13 June 2022

- 9.00 – 9.30 Registration and coffee
- 9.30 – 9.45 Welcome: Kelley Wilder, PHRC
- 9.45 – 10.30 Keynote Lecture (Chair: TBC)
Anabella Pollen (University of Brighton)
- 10.30 – 10.45 Discussion

10.45 – 11.00 Comfort Break

Panel 1. Productive Absences (Chair: TBC)

11.00 – 11.15 Adeyemi Akande (University of Lagos) - Camera Movements and Reconstructing the History of Photography in 19th Century West Africa.

11.15 – 11.30 Desré Barnard (Cape Town Creative Academy) - "The horror without object": A Philosophical Enquiry Into Photography, Archives, and Absence.

11.30 – 11.45 Discussion

11.45 – 13.00 Lunch

Panel 2. Edge of Visibility (Chair: TBC)

13.00 – 13.15 David Houston Jones (University of Exeter) - Invisible Images: Trevor Paglen and the Eigenface.

13.15 – 13.30 Rachel Lee Hutcheson (Columbia University) - Color as Signal Data in Post-Optical Photography.

13.30 – 13.45 Adam Brown (London South Bank University) - Risk as Trace: The Intentional Precarity of the Digital Architectural Image.

13.45 – 14.15 Discussion

14.15 – 15.00 Coffee break

Panel 3. Lost in the Archive (Chair: TBC)

15.00 – 15.15 Ella Ravilious (De Montfort University) - "Are not the photographs which shew Museum objects superfluous, as long as the objects themselves can be seen in the Museum?": 19th century Painted Photographs in the Museum.

15.15 – 15.30 Katherine Howells (The National Archives of the United Kingdom) - "No copy annexed": Exploring early British photography through digital analysis of entry forms for photographs registered under the 1862 Fine Arts Copyright Act.

15.30 – 15.50 Discussion

15.50 – 16.00 Comfort Break

16.00 – 16.45 Plenary Talk (Chair: TBC)

Sigrid Lien (University of Bergen) and Mette Sandbye (University of Copenhagen) - Activating Absences: Methodological Reflections on the Lost Archives of Early Women Photographers in Denmark and Norway.

16.45 – 17.00 Discussion

17.00 – 18.00 Wine reception

19.00 Conference dinner

TUESDAY 14 June 2022

9.00 Registration and coffee

9.30 – 10.15 Keynote Lecture (Chair: TBC)

Chitra Ramlingham (Yale University)

10.15 – 10.30 Discussion

10.30 – 10.45 Comfort Break

Panel 4. Making and Unmaking (Chair: TBC)

10.45 – 11.00 Christine Slobogin (Durham University) - Prints after Photographs: Medical Imagery and the Anonymous (?) Index.

11.00 – 11.15 Julien Faure-Conorton (Musée départemental Albert-Kahn, Boulogne-Billancourt) - "À terminer": Phantom Autochromes from the Archives of the Planet.

11.15 – 11.35 Discussion

11.35 – 11.40 Comfort Break

Panel 5. Historiographies Lost (Chair: TBC)

11.40 – 11.55 Hanin Hannouch (Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz, Max Planck Institute) – The Wilhelm Zenker/Gabriel Lippmann Debate: The "First" Theory and Photograph of Interferential Color.

11.55 – 12.10 Stefanie Jason (Rutgers University) – Materiality of Absence: The photographic Archive of Mabel Cetu (1910-1990).

12.10 – 12.30 Discussion

12.30 – 13.30 Lunch

Panel 5 (continued). Historiographies Lost (Chair: TBC)

13.30 – 13.45 Julieta Pestarino (Buenos Aires University) – Photographic Archeology to Find the Photos Participating in the Exhibitions of the Group La Carpeta de los Diez [The Folder of Ten].

13.45 – 14.00 Alexander Scott (University of Wales Trinity St David) – In Search of Photographs without an Address: Museums, Photography and the Dilemmas of Archival Research.

14.00 – 14.20 Discussion

14.20 – 15.00 Coffee break

Panel 6. Silent Histories (Chair: TBC)

15.00 – 15.15 Krupa C Desai (Birkbeck University of London) – Fragmented Optics of Development: Looking for Photographic Histories of Displacement.

15.15 – 15.30 Feargal Fitzpatrick (National College of Art and Design, Dublin) – The Invisible Famine.

15.30 – 15.50 Discussion

16.00 Close of Conference

For registration and more information please visit the conference webpage:
<https://photographichistory.wordpress.com/annual-conference-2022/>

Reference:

CONF: Photographic History without Photographs (online, 13-14 Jun 22). In: ArtHist.net, May 13, 2022
(accessed Sep 12, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/36699>>.