

Photography's Tacit Knowledge (Leicester/online, 15–16 Jun 26)

Leicester, De Montfort University / Online, Jun 15–16, 2026

Registration deadline: Jun 10, 2026

Prof Gil Pasternak

Photography has always depended on diverse forms of knowledge—from chemistry and mechanics to artistic practice—yet much of this expertise remains tacit, embodied, and difficult to articulate. This conference invites participants to explore how such hidden knowledge shapes photographic practice, research, and interpretation, and to consider its broader political, social, and cultural implications in an increasingly interdisciplinary and AI-influenced landscape.

Organised by the Photographic History Research Centre (PHRC) at De Montfort University in Leicester, UK, the 2026 conference examines how photography produces, conceals, and challenges tacit knowledge. Speakers will address methodological and theoretical approaches while reflecting on the continued relevance of these unseen practices across fields such as science, industry, archives, and visual culture.

The programme highlights themes including photographic labour, embodied archival knowledge, scientific imaging, and emerging post-photographic technologies. By foregrounding questions of power, access, and expertise, the conference offers a vital platform for making the invisible visible—and for rethinking how photographic knowledge is created, shared, and understood today.

Programme

Monday 15 June 2026

9.15–9.45 Registration and coffee

9.45–10.00 Welcome: Gil Pasternak, PHRC Director

10.00–10.45 Keynote Lecture

Mirjam Brusius – Title TBC

10.45–11.15 Discussion

Panel 1 Silent Epistemologies

11.15–11.30 Myrto Stamatopoulou – Silent Knowledge in Greek Post-Mortem Photography

11.30–11.45 Andreas Scholz – Photographic Practice Beyond Words: Tacit Knowledge, Dyslexia and the Ecological Wetroom

11.45–12.15 Discussion

12.15–13.30 Lunch

Panel 2 Skilled Silence and the Economies of Photography

13.30–13.45 Molly Kalkstein Izzy Hillman – Holding Taonga: Tacit Knowledge, Custodianship and Māori Photographic Practice

13.45–14.00 Franziska Lampe – Embodied Expertise: Secret Workshop Practices in Photographic Art Reproduction

14.00–14.15 Sandrine Chene – ‘Gentlemen of Photography’: Knowledge Exchange in Context

14.15–14.45 Discussion

14.45–15.00 Comfort Break

Panel 3 Invisible Hands, Tacit Expertise

15.00–15.15 Catarina Cortes Pereira – Retouching Photographic Negatives: The practice, material knowledge and contemporary mediation

15.15–15.30 Anja Hysvær Langgât – Nimble Fingers/Tacit knowing

15.30–15.45 Flor de Ceres Rabaçal – Print in Service of War: The Visibility of the Invisible

15.45–16.00 Jo Gane – Re-creative practice within a historical landscape

16.00–16.40 Discussion

16.45–18.30 In-person and online Reception (We welcome you to meet one another on Teams)

19.30 Conference dinner

Close of Day 1

Tuesday 16 June 2026

9.00–9.30 Registration and coffee

9.30–10.15 Keynote Lecture

Kelley Wilder – Title TBC

10.15–10.45 Discussion

10.45–11.00 Comfort Break

Panel 4 Historical Knowledge, Experimental Insight

11.15–11.30 Zsuzsanna Szegedy-Maszák – Reading Absence: The Photographic Notebook of Miklós Barabás

11.00–11.15 Haohao Zhang – Analogy as Tacit Knowledge: Thereza and Story-Maskelyne, Household Experiments, and Early Photographic Science

11.30–11.45 Chu Yin-hua – Rephotographing Colonial Specimens through Technical and Digital Reconstruction

11.45–12.15 Discussion

12.15–13.15 Lunch

Panel 5 Innovation and Experimental Transmission

13.15–13.30 Hanin Hannouch – The Burden of Proof: Proving Innovation in Color Photography around 1900

13.30–13.45 Momoka Takahashi – The Transmission of Colouring Techniques: From Ukiyoe to

Photography in the Late Nineteenth Century Japan

13.45–14.00 Róman Kienjet – Chains of Platinum Photography: Tracing Tacit Knowledge through The Head (1914) by Richard Polak

14.00–14:15 Martin Jürgens – From Fizeau to FAIR: Past, present and future note-taking practice and its consequences for the photographic experiment

14.15–15.00 Discussion

15.00–15.30 Coffee Break

15.30–16.00 Plenary Lecutre

Jennifer Tucker – Title TBC

16.00–16.30 Discussion

Close of Conference

Location

Leicester, De Montfort University, Room: HU3.02 Hugh Aston Building, The Newarke, Leicester, LE2 7BY

Registration

As in recent previous years, we offer a hybrid conference, allowing speakers and delegates to participate remotely or on site. Registration to attend required by 10 June 2026 - link for registration available via the conference webpage: <https://photographichistory.wordpress.com/annual-conference-2026/>

Registration fee as follows

Conference Dinner – £50.00

Online External (1 or both days) – £40.00

In-Person External both days – £95

In-person External Monday only – £50.00

In-person External Tuesday only – £50.00

In-person Speakers/DMU/PHRC (1 day) – £30.00

In-person Speakers/DMU/PHRC (2 days) – £40.00

Online Speakers/DMU staff and Students – £25

Organization

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Reference:

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