3rd RPS / University of Wolverhampton Symposium (Wolverhampton/online, 6 Mar 27)

Wolverhampton School of Art, University of Wolverhampton / Online, Mar 06, 2027
Deadline: Dec 7, 2026

Dr Euripides Altintzoglou

3rd RPS Historical Group and University of Wolverhampton Research Symposium.

The Royal Photographic Society Historical Group and the Wolverhampton School of Art invite proposals for papers for the 2027 Research Symposium, taking place on 6 March 2027.

Now in its third year, the symposium continues to develop a distinctive forum for examining the dynamic relationship between photographic history and contemporary visual culture. While grounded in historical research, the event seeks to demonstrate how photography's past remains vital for understanding the pressing questions of the present, from artificial intelligence and machine vision to archives, environmental futures, digital media, and new forms of image circulation. Building on conversations established in previous years, the symposium aims to foster productive dialogue between historical inquiry and contemporary practice, establishing this intersection as a defining characteristic of the event.

Photography has always existed at the intersection of technological innovation, social change, scientific discovery, artistic experimentation, and cultural memory. As emerging technologies continue to transform how images are produced, circulated, interpreted, and preserved, historical perspectives become increasingly important for understanding both continuities and disruptions within photographic culture.

We welcome contributions that draw connections between historical and contemporary frameworks, while remaining open to papers focused on photography's history, theory, practice, materiality, institutions, and technologies.

Suggested Themes

Histories of Emerging Technologies
Exploring historical precedents for contemporary developments in AI, machine vision, automation, computational imaging, virtual environments, and synthetic media. How can photographic history inform current debates about technological change?

Archives, Memory, and Digital Afterlives
Investigations into photographic archives, collections, preservation, digitisation, restitution, access, ethics, and the changing lives of images across analogue and digital environments across cultures and communities.

Photography, Evidence, and Truth
From nineteenth-century documentary practices to contemporary deepfakes and algorithmic image generation, how have photographs shaped ideas of authenticity, knowledge, trust, and public discourse?

Material Processes
Research into historical and contemporary photographic processes and material practices.

Photography, Society, and Visual Politics
Exploring the role of photography in shaping understandings of identity, power, inclusion, activism, conflict, migration, community, and social transformation across different historical periods.

Reframing Photographic Histories
New perspectives on overlooked practitioners, collections, regional histories, marginalised voices, institutions, and photographic cultures that challenge established narratives.

Submissions
We welcome proposals from established scholars, independent researchers, practitioners, doctoral candidates, postgraduate researchers, and first-time presenters. As in previous years, we are particularly committed to creating a supportive and inclusive environment for emerging researchers and first-time conference speakers.

Presentations may be:
20 minutes
Papers may be delivered either:
In person at the Wolverhampton School of Art
Online via Zoom / Pre-recorded presentations (PowerPoint, MP4)

Publication Opportunity:
Speakers will be invited to submit their papers for consideration in The PhotoHistorian, the journal of the Royal Photographic Society Historical Group.

Submission of Abstracts
Please submit:
Paper title
Abstract (maximum 250 words)
Brief biographical note (up to 100 words)
Up to three copyright-cleared images for promotional use and inclusion in the conference booklet, accompanied by captions and image credits where applicable.

To: Janine Freeston ARPS (e: historicalresearch@rps.org) and Dr Euripides Altintzoglou (Course Leader of Photography, University of Wolverhampton) e: E.Altintzoglou@wlv.ac.uk by 1700 (UTC) on 7 December 2026.

We look forward to welcoming researchers and practitioners whose work demonstrates how photographic histories continue to illuminate contemporary concerns and future possibilities.

Reference:

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