

Concerning Photography: The Photographers' Gallery and Photographic Networks in Britain
c. 1971 to the Present

DAY 1 – Thursday 25 November 2021

10.30 Welcome

Panel 1: Institutions, Infrastructures (10.45–13.00)

10.45 Introduction by Shoair Mavlian (Photoworks)

10.50 Anne McNeill (Impressions Gallery), 'Institutions, Infrastructure and Exhibitions: The Case of Impressions Gallery'

In 1972 Impressions was the first photography gallery in the UK to open outside London, and one of the first specialists in Europe. Back then, photography was undervalued in Britain, was not taken seriously with few opportunities to exhibit and our photography heritage relatively unknown or confined to an initiated few. This paper will address the impact the UK's independent photography galleries have had on shaping the ways in which photography has been encountered and understood; with particular reference to the role Impressions Gallery has played in the changes of attitudes to photography to now having an accepted place within mainstream institutions and museums. Impressions Gallery, and indeed all the other UK publicly funded, independent photography galleries (each with their own distinctive personalities), signalled the arrival of photography; placing it firmly on the centre stage of contemporary visual art practice long before it was accepted by mainstream institutions such as Tate. Without these galleries, it is unlikely that British photography would have developed into the successful medium it is today.

11.05 David Bate (University of Westminster), '1979: A Snapshot of the UK'

In 1979 the *Three Perspectives of Photography* exhibition at the Hayward Gallery in London seemed to indicate a new phase of dialogue between art institutions and the growth of UK-based independent photography. Yet, at the same time, the growth of photography-based institutions also seemed to indicate a healthy development of new critical photographic practices. This was also the year that Thatcherism began its governmental project to change Britain. In the conflictual politics and aesthetics of these different factors, the year 1979 represents a pivotal moment in the repositioning of the relations between photography, art and the politics of culture. This talk examines the conflicting dynamics of this cultural period.

11.20 Taous R. Dahmani (PhD Candidate in the History of Art Department at Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne), 'Creating Autograph ABP'

Since its creation in 1988, Autograph ABP has aimed at defending the work and supporting author-photographers from the Caribbean, African and Indian diasporas, first in England and then beyond. Initially a utopian idea, then a very practical and political project and finally a hybrid institution, Autograph ABP has presented itself in turn as an association, an agency, an archive, a research centre, a publishing house and an exhibition space. To tell the story of Autograph ABP is to tell the story of its evolution, that of a militant space having become a cultural institution, and also the story of the people who created and crafted it. This paper recognises three essential moments in the history of the institutionalisation of Autograph: the first encompasses the 1980s and the events that introduced the creation and structuring of the project, which took the form of an association in 1988; the second, from 1991,

corresponds to the restructuring of Autograph, its professionalisation and its progressive establishment in the British and international cultural landscape; the third and final period begins in 2007 with its definitive installation as an artistic and cultural institution, and the inauguration of its building in East London. These three moments in the evolution of Autograph ABP have distinct – though sometimes overlapping – stakes.

11.35 Q & A

11.50 Break

12.05 Andrew Dewdney (London South Bank University), 'Forget Photography: The Arts Council and the Disappearance of Independent Photography in Neoliberal Britain'

This discussion starts from the perspective that for some time we have been living with photography's afterlife in which contemporary photography is a ruined territory populated by archaic knowledge practices. The way out of photography explored in this paper is through forgetting the spectral presence of photography in order, on the one hand, to see the new conditions of the image and, on the other, to witness the trauma of photography's several deaths. This is achieved by a trick of adopting the future present from which photographic knowledge practices of collection, exhibition and archiving appear as discontinuous with the present and capable of cold case reinvestigation. The art museum has absorbed photography through a process of modernist purification, continually expunging the hybrids of the contemporary image and hence, paradoxically, admits not a medium capable of examining the present but photography as heritage.

12.20 Annebella Pollen (University of Brighton), 'Exploring Our Weaknesses on the International Stage: British Council Photography and Self-critique in the 1970s and 1980s'

The British Council, established 1934, has used art for cultural dialogue with over a hundred countries for more than eight decades. Initially funded by the Foreign Office but latterly receiving only a small fraction of its income from government, the art exhibited by the British Council can challenge as well as complement parliamentary agendas. This presentation outlines how photography in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s tested the Council's principle of 'arm's length' independence through its national messaging in international exhibitions. Art's new and expanded forms, encompassing performance, installation and conceptual photography, challenged the supremacy of easel painting and plinth-based sculpture in the 1970s but it also posed challenges to the British Council. New forms provided new provocations but art's most avant-garde manifestations and its increasingly explicit politics also led to controversy. Photographs, this presentation will argue, for all their reality effects, are always more than a straight messaging system. They can clarify but they can also complicate. In the context of British Council travelling exhibitions, always enmeshed in the communication and renegotiation of national identity, photographs' complexities and uncertainties make them risky ambassadors but also potentially profound sites for international engagement.

12.35 Q & A plus panel discussion chaired by Shoair Mavlian (Photoworks)

13.00 End

Panel 2: Pedagogies (14.00–16.15)

14.15 Welcome

14.20 Introduction by Dr Karen Shepherdson (London College of Communication)

14.25 Juliet Hacking (Sotheby's Institute of Art), 'Talking Pictures: Teaching Photography as Art in Higher Education'

This talk examines key moments in the teaching of photography as a creative practice in relation to particular art historiographies of photography, comparing the UK to US and European models, and arguing for a cohesiveness of photographic aesthetics in mid-century US teaching that was not mirrored in the UK in the 1970s. What did this mean for the teaching of photography as an art form? Tracing specific pedagogic approaches and the photographic aesthetics they promoted (e.g. 'Aspen modernism' and 'New Bauhaus' in the mid-20th century and Otto Steinert at the Folkwangschule in Essen, Germany by 1959), this study endeavours to lay the foundations for a more macro-analysis: the nexus between the classroom, photographic historiography and institutional photographic culture.

14.40 Anne Lyden (National Galleries of Scotland), 'The Glasgow Degree'

The Glasgow School of Art was the first of its kind in Europe to offer a bachelor's degree in Fine Art Photography. This paper will explore how this came to be by considering the national and international forces at play alongside key individuals and their contributions to formal education in Britain during the 1970s and 1980s. The establishment of the Fine Art Photography degree at Glasgow required legislative changes and approval from both the Scottish Education Department and the British degree-awarding body, the Council for National Academic Awards. At the time, many schools offered technical classes but few institutions allowed photography courses to count toward a fine art degree. The introduction of this new degree course coincided with the formation of the Scottish National Photography Collection held within the National Galleries of Scotland. Through first-person interviews and research of institutional archives, this presentation will demonstrate how the Glasgow degree was a defining moment in formalising photographic education during the 1980s and was a catalyst for the growing photographic community in Scotland and beyond.

14.55 Q & A plus panel discussion chaired by Dr Karen Shepherdson (London Collection of Communication)

15.10 Break

Artist Keynote (15.20–16.15)

15.20 Presentation by Mahtab Hussain

15.40 Discussion and Q & A

16.15 End

DAY 2 – Wednesday 1 December 2021

10.30 Welcome

Panel 3: Material, Process (10.45–12.45)

10.45 Introduction by Maitreyi Maheshwari (FACT)

10.50 Mo White (Loughborough University), 'The Use of Photography in Artists' Slide-tape Works in the UK Since the 1970s'

This paper will locate the use of photography in slide-tape works by artists during the late 1970s and 1980s in the UK. Slide-tape was a series of projected 35mm photographic slides with synchronised audio, using two or more projectors to fade between images. As a technology, it is significant in the UK for being used by a number of key and emerging artists for a brief period. The moment when these artists' slide-tape works circulated has been largely forgotten and the paper will consider this and the importance of slide-tape as an experimental tool in artists' projected works. In the US, the projected image itself had produced formal interventions by gallery artists in the mid-1960s to 1970s and was later taken up by artists in the UK in different social and political contexts, and with quite different approaches. The projected image was often used with a spoken soundtrack narrating and addressing the concerns in the work, namely gender and race. Among the artists who used the medium were Black Audio Film Collective and Keith Piper, as well as Tina Keane and others who took part in the key exhibition *About Time: Video, Performance and Installation by 21 Women Artists* (ICA, London, 1980). This paper will account for the emergence of this work and suggest slide-tape allowed for artists' experimental work where the simultaneous projection of images and sound were transformed to establish a new medium and consider the reasons for its sudden demise.

11.05 Katrina Sluis (Australian National University), Glimmering Screens, Institutional Dreams: Curating Post-Photography

Over the past two decades, photography institutions have faced an extraordinary challenge conceptualising how they exhibit contemporary photography and engage their audiences amidst a maelstrom of technological change. Confronted with the excessive scale of networked images, major art and photography museums have adopted a number of strategies, including thematic exhibitions in which information and image surplus is subjected to an art historical lens. These shows tend to position socio-technical change as always already a project of the artist, and map a familiar trajectory from Dada to Fluxus to mail art to Amalia Ulman. The appointment of digital curators by European photography institutions in recent years reflects a desire for a more systematic and sustained response to the proliferation of image data we persist in calling photography. But beyond the absurdity of having to uphold medium specificity in a post-media age, what role or agency might 'digital curating' have in the photo museum? This paper explores the limits and possibilities of digital programming. In an age of Instagram bots, computational propaganda and machine learning, it is clearer than ever that the photographic museum has a role to play in contemporary culture and will have to radically reconfigure itself to meet these challenges.

11.20 Q & A

11.35 Break

- 11.50 Rowan Lear (Doctoral Researcher at the University of West London), 'Honey on the Elbow: Sticky Networks, Invisible Workers and Planetary Processing'
- A long, exhaustive heatwave enveloped Britain in the summer of 1976. Those who could, flocked to beaches for cooler air, taking their cameras with them. Over the summer months, retailers experienced such high demand for photographic equipment that Kodak could not fulfil their orders. Meanwhile, exposed films began to flood in through the mail to photo-processing plants around the country, including one in north-west London. Here, 400 workers and their machines operated long shifts in a sticky photochemical haze: processing, developing, printing and packing thousands of snapshots each day, in a building without a working cooling system. When the mostly female, East African Asian and Afro-Caribbean workforce walked out of Grunwick Processing Ltd, they triggered one of the most significant strikes in British history. The dispute is well studied in histories of labour organising, trade unions and immigration, but little attention has been paid to its implications for the history and theory of photography. Mass film processing, which peaked between 1970 and 1990, is one of the overlooked industries of photographic production. It was entangled with various strategies to expedite photographic production: the development of new cheap cameras and proprietary film formats; the phenomena of free films as a customer retention strategy; and the harnessing of the national postal service. Though marginalised in histories of the medium, employing the most precarious workers, and often seen as peripheral to the activity of corporations such as Kodak, the distributed and exploited work of film processing was utterly central to the expansion of photo-capitalism. Grunwick the company was not an isolated, medium-sized enterprise on the periphery of a much greater project, but a node in the network that is photography's 'planetary processing' (Lier, 2007). Grunwick the strike suggests that the flow of photography's networks is less fluid than viscous, checked by resistances and incongruity. This paper calls for a rethinking of photographic production from the 1970s onwards, as a networked machine which runs precisely because it is sticky, embodied and leaking.
- 12.05 Peter Ride (University of Westminster), 'Stepping into Space: New Media Practice and Independent Photography Galleries'
- This paper looks at the role of the independent photography sector in the 1990s with the emergence of new technologies, the internet and digital photography and explores how photography galleries played a crucial role in supporting the development of new media practice in the UK. Independent photography galleries were important from the 1970s and 80s because of the breadth of photographic practices they represented, but also because they reflected the voice of the practitioner. They offered the space for creatives to explore emergent and exploratory processes, to look at processes as well as final outcomes. From the perspective of the 2020s it seems obvious that digital practices would have been embraced by the photography sector but the historical record shows that was not the case and that, instead, digital practices were regarded by many with caution as they challenged many of the positions that the photography sector had fought hard to establish. This paper looks at a number of initiatives from the independent photography gallery sector from 1992 to 2000, addressing projects championed by organisations such as Impressions Gallery, Focal Point, Fotofeis, Site Gallery, Cambridge Darkroom Gallery and others. Together these examples indicate the importance of the photography sector in generating discussion about the place of photography in digital media and the importance of independent galleries – as spaces of photography – in exhibiting, supporting, commissioning and championing the new.
- 12.20 Q & A plus panel discussion chaired by Maitreyi Maheshwari (FACT)
- 12.45 End

Panel 4: Magazines, Books (14.00–16.15)

14.00 Welcome

14.05 Introduction by Diane Smyth (Journalist)

14.10 Derek Bishton (Journalist and Author), *Ten.8* Photographic Magazine 1978–1992
Ten.8 began as a regional magazine published from Birmingham. Over the course of 14 years from 1978, it published 39 editions and quickly became an internationally recognised journal circulating widely across Europe and America, with contributions from many of the most progressive and articulate photographers and cultural theorists active during the 1980s and 90s. When it ceased publication in 1992, it had a print run of 5,000 and was a staple and valued resource on photography and cultural studies courses worldwide. This presentation traces the development of *Ten.8* from its initial concerns about the nature of documentary photography and the assumptions about its validity and usefulness. It examines how *Ten.8* explored the role cultural theory can play in helping us develop new ways of seeing and understanding how images are inscribed with meaning and pinpoints the way theorists such as Stuart Hall made decisive interventions in these debates through their involvement with *Ten.8*. It recognises the way *Ten.8* provided a platform for black image makers, feminists, and gay and lesbian photographers to put themselves in the frame with key contributions from Sunil Gupta, Rotimi Fani Kayode, Pratibha Parmar, David A Bailey and many others. The presentation also examines how *Ten.8* predicted the impact of digital technology with its *Digital Dialogues* edition in 1991. Finally, it celebrates the achievements and legacy *Ten.8* undertook in touring exhibitions and opening up international venues for photographers such as *Rencontres au Noir* at Arles (1993) and the Black British photography exhibition at Houston Photo Fest (1992).

14.25 John Wyver (Royal Shakespeare Company), 'Screening Photography: BBC Television's Presentation of Photography, 1969–1988'
Across the past 50 years, BBC Television has been a central focus for the presentation, discussion and evaluation of historical and contemporary photography in Britain. Illustrated with a number of brief extracts, this presentation outlines the development of BBC programmes about photography during the first two decades of The Photographers' Gallery and compares the mainstream broadcast coverage with the gallery's exhibition programme. The presentation highlights a number of key broadcasts, including a film first broadcast in 1969 (stretching the temporal boundaries a little) that featured Don McCullin, Eugene Smith and George Rodger; a 1977 film profile of Eve Arnold; a 1982 *Omnibus* film which tasked Lord Lichfield (who also featured in a 1971 *One Man's Week* film), Jane Bown and Jo Spence with photographing the model Jilly Johnson; *Snowdon on Camera* (1982) exploring the market for photography; the 1983 series *Master Photographers*; and Nigel Finch's 1988 *Arena* profile of Robert Mapplethorpe. The examples discussed are situated against BBC Television's dominant understandings in these years of the medium, its makers and meanings, and the conservative visual languages of the films are considered in the context of innovative screen strategies from other documentary contexts.

14.40 Q & A

15.10 David Brittain (Creative Camera), 'In-house Publications of The Photographers' Gallery: 1970–80'
If The Photographers' Gallery was to win legitimation for an art of photography in 1970s' Britain it needed to overcome public and press scepticism. This presentation will show some of the ways that the Gallery deployed its bulletins, newsletters, fliers and so on to pursue its mission during its early years. Such in-house publications functioned both paratextually – complementing the popular

exhibition programme – and as techniques of persuasion for galvanising audiences around the notion of a modernist art of photography and enlisting individuals to support the gallery through charitable giving and other forms of participation. The main producer of these texts was Sue Davies who used the medium of print to her advantage. Precedents for this use of text and photography can be found in the specialist photography magazines of the 1960s – *Photography* and *Creative Camera*. By initiating readers into the arcane realm of art photography they prepared the ground for the photography galleries of the 1970s. This paper will cite two British magazines: *Photography* was a standard bearer for elite photography during the mid-1950s and early 60s and *Creative Camera* became the unofficial voice of the 'creative photography' movement in 1968.

15.25 Jacqueline Ennis-Cole (Photographer, Writer and Researcher), Photobooks and Black Women Photographers from the 1980s Onwards

This presentation looks at the role of photobook publications post-COVID and in the light of Black Lives Matter commitments. There is an absence of photobooks representing the work and genres of Black women photographers from the 1980s onwards in the UK. Furthermore, there is an absence of photobooks more broadly by women of colour photographers from the 1980s onwards. What interventions are publishers and editors making to remedy the situation? This paper maps the impact this absence has had on the ability to research Black women photographers. This presentation will enquire into the late Maud Sulter's legacy as an artist and photographer and how as a photography community we counter erasure.

15.40 Q & A plus panel discussion chaired by Diane Smyth

16.15 End

Artist Presentation (18.30–19.40)

18:30 Presentation by Penny Slinger

19.10 Discussion and Q & A

19.40 End

DAY 3 – Thursday 2 December 2021

10.30 Welcome

Panel 5: Exhibitions, Touring (10.45–12:45)

10.45 Introduction by James Boaden (University of York)

10.50 10.50 Ruby Rees-Sheridan (Four Corners), 'On The Move: the Half Moon Photography Workshop's Exhibitions Comments Book' (Paper delivered by Carla Mitchell)
The influential role of the Half Moon Photography Workshop (later known as Camerawork) in the development of socially engaged photographic practice has been increasingly explored in recent years. Publications, archives and academic research have helped to cement its work as a significant contributor to the British photographic landscape. But how was this work received? The Half Moon Photography Workshop's (HMPW) pioneering touring exhibitions were a central element in its aim to democratise the practice and exhibition of photography. Between 1976 and 1984, HMPW produced over 50 such exhibitions on laminated panels. An effective technique for disseminating photography beyond established cultural institutions, these affordable and transportable exhibitions showcased an emerging generation of politicised photographers. Displayed at venues nationwide, their adaptable format enabled thousands of people to view photography for the first time.

This paper takes the HMPW's exhibitions Comments Book as a starting point to examine audiences' responses to these exhibitions in the social and cultural context of the era. It will argue that these innovative forms of exhibition, often shown in non-traditional spaces, helped transform the cultural status of photography as a whole. This paper will provide a close reading of the Comments Book, alongside letters, booking forms and reviews. It will focus on *Growing Old* by Mike Abrahams (1977), *White Hot Light: A Story of a Home Birth* (1982) by Karen Michaelsen and the group exhibition *Guatemala: A Testimonial* (1980). Engaging with new forms of socially engaged photography, reportage and feminist politics, these exhibitions reflect the range of radical photographic projects promoted by HMPW.

Four Corners is investigating this history as part of its Hidden Histories archive project, supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the Paul Mellon Centre.

11.05 Caitlin Langford (Victoria and Albert Museum), *Occupying Space: Signals, The Festival of Women Photographers, 1994*
'If the idea of a festival devoted to women photographers fills you with dread – all strident feminist ideology and questionable exclusivity – the nationwide event *Signals*, coming your way soon, promises to be a pleasant surprise', so said a review of the 1994 *Signals: Festival of Women Photographers*. In September and October of that year, close to 300 exhibitions and events were held throughout the UK and Ireland. All were united in their focus on women photographers, aiming 'to highlight the breadth and diversity of current practices'. The festival sought to challenge the male domination of photography and address the exclusion of women in both histories and display. The festival also expanded the canon of photography through the inclusion of photojournalism and vernacular photographs exhibited alongside those works accepted as 'art', as well as a consideration of digital photographic forms and interaction. Exhibitions and events were held in Sunderland, Salford, Herne Bay, Newport and Dumfries, among many others, and the festival was upfront in its inclusion of regions and avoidance of London-centrism. In addition, the festival was dedicated to 'European photography', centring European practice as the theme of the festival and placing Britain within this scope. Close to 30 years have passed since the festival: did the festival have the

impact that was intended? This paper will consider the festival within its context, noting the rising curatorial interest in photography in the 1990s. It will conclude with a discussion of the developments surrounding the collecting and exhibition of women photographers, with reference to recent exhibitions and ongoing initiatives across the UK.

11.20 Q & A

11.35 Break

11.50 Theo Gordon (Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington D.C), 'Putting Salford in the Picture: Viewpoint Gallery of Photography and the 1980s'

This paper examines the history, programming and politics of Viewpoint Gallery of Photography in Salford (1987–c. 1998). Inspired by the Salford '80 photo-festival, the Labour-majority council conceived of Viewpoint as the flagship venue for photography in the north west of England, and only the second public gallery, after Bradford, devoted to the medium. The project was part of the council's attempted regeneration of central Salford, and community engagement was central to its conception, with darkroom facilities and workshops made freely available to Salfordians. Viewpoint opened at a tense moment in the politics of urban renewal and local authority funding; Salford was one target of Thatcher's post-'87 'inner cities' agenda, whilst the poll tax was shortly to redesign how councils raised revenue for such projects. This paper asks why a gallery of photography was deemed important to social and urban regeneration in 1980s' Salford and explores how the city was 'put in the picture' through Viewpoint's opening, by examining the gallery's support of several significant projects and bodies of work. Case studies include *Fabled Territories: New Asian Photography in Britain* (1989, in collaboration with Leeds City Art Gallery); *Faces of Change* (1991), photographs of Salford's 'new era' at the turn of the 1990s; and *Under the Hood* (1994), Chris Harrison's portraits of local young men. This paper also considers why the gallery closed and faded into obscurity in the late 1990s, and what this reveals about the changing status of photography in the social across the period.

12.05 Laura Castagnini (Curator and Writer), *Stolen Glances: Lesbians Take Photographs Curated by Tessa Boffin and Jean Fraser in 1991*

2021 marks the 30-year anniversary of the exhibition *Stolen Glances: Lesbians Take Photographs* curated by Tessa Boffin and Jean Fraser in 1991. What was the impact of this exhibition and what is the continued relevance today for queer self-expression? Why was photography chosen as the ideal 'dyke media'? What are the political implications surrounding the identity category of 'lesbian' and how has this changed over time?

Stolen Glances was the first exhibition and book to explore representation of lesbianism in art and history in Britain. It articulated new definitions of lesbian photography by bringing together ten photographers from Britain and North America – including Ingrid Pollard, Tessa Boffin, Mumtaz Karimjee, Della Grace (now Del LaGrace Volcano) and Deborah Bright – whose work addressed lesbian issues and explored the history and materiality of photography. Notably, the show was intended specifically for LGBT+ audiences, and it explored the intersections of sexuality with race, class, disability and politics. Funded by Arts Council of Great Britain, the exhibition opened on 10 August 1991 at Stills Gallery in Edinburgh and toured the UK and North America during 1991–3. It was a bold and controversial exhibition that directly responded to the UK's increasing culture of censorship and attack on LGBT+ communities. Indeed, the show came under threat of closure at Darlington Arts Centre while media reports sensationalised the educational offer at Stills Gallery (e.g. the headline 'Kids asked to Gay Photo Show'). The impact of Section 28 is of

particular interest today when programming in our institutions is once again the subject of media speculation and government intervention during the present so-called 'culture war'.

12.20 Q & A plus panel discussion chaired by James Boaden (University of York)

12.45 End

Panel 6: Archival Futures (14.00–16:15)

14.00 Welcome

14.05 Introduction by Rahaab Allana (Alkazi Foundation for the Arts)

14.10 Charlene Heath (SSHRC Doctoral Fellow and PhD Candidate at Ryerson/York University (Toronto), 'Archival Work: The Survival of Jo Spence's Polemic'

What is the nature of responsibility for a photo archivist whose duties include, in part, institutionalising an anti-institutional archive? The practice of British photographer and co-founder of Photography Workshop, Jo Spence, was explicitly polemic and collaborative in ways that elide the individualised structures that shape cultural institutions, the art market and modern museums systems, all of which elevate single authors as artists, in an implicit effort to increase the value of 'original' works. After Spence's death in 1992, Photography Workshop's archive became the Jo Spence Memorial Archive under the Workshop's co-founder Terry Dennett's stewardship. For the next 16 years until his death in 2018, Dennett continued his efforts to fulfil Spence's final wishes of making the archive available as a nexus for the study and use of photography and photographic documents for social and political change. However, since 2006 parts of it have been scattered amongst the collections of numerous public institutions and private collections in England, Scotland, Spain, the US and Canada with the largest portion residing at the Ryerson Image Centre, Ryerson University, Toronto. The Jo Spence Estate is now represented by a private London-based gallerist. This paper is a resuscitative gesture: as Spence's collaborative work is increasingly absorbed by the mechanisms of the global, modern art machine, strategies of engagement from the fields of archival practice and material culture studies function to upend the 'postmodernist' packaging of her practice. This paper elucidates on how work done in archives, as opposed to work done in the archival mode, or on 'the archive', function to preserve, reinscribe and give access to the future-oriented polemic of Spence's work.

14.25 Fiona Anderson (Newcastle University), Sunil Gupta and Archival Ambivalence in Queer British Photography

From Here to Eternity, Sunil Gupta's retrospective exhibition at The Photographers' Gallery (2020–21), took its name from a series of diptychs the artist produced in 1999. The series documents a particularly difficult period in Gupta's experience of living with HIV, pairing images of him at doctor's appointments or undergoing medical treatment at home with photographs of the closed exteriors of gay bars and sex clubs in South London. The series explores themes of exclusion, alienation and belonging, in the context of Gupta's changing relationship with HIV and his own body, as well as queer diasporic Indian identity formation in Britain. Although Gupta was involved with the AIDS and Photography group in the 1980s and developed the exhibition and book project *Ecstatic Antibodies: Resisting the AIDS Mythology* with the photographer Tessa Boffin in 1990, he has always felt 'wary of being an AIDS photographer', a concern that plays out across this series.

Focusing on *From Here to Eternity* and considering the significance of the reuse of this title for Gupta's retrospective and the accompanying publication, an intimate and informal collection of snapshots, flyers and letters, this paper explores the function of ambivalence in Gupta's

approach to working with archival material and with cultural institutions. As the exhibition and the publication make clear, Gupta's own archive is both ephemeral and enduring, exhaustive and partial, and, held in his home in South London, has an ambivalent relationship to formal institutionalisation. Engaging critically with discourses of visibility espoused by many museums and galleries and theories of opacity and surveillance from contemporary queer studies, this paper considers Gupta's archival ambivalence as a queer strategy for resisting progressivist preservation narratives and rejecting the terms on which LGBTQ+ photographers in Britain are offered visibility by its major cultural institutions.

14.40 Q & A plus panel discussion chaired by Rahaab Allana (Alkazi Foundation for the Arts)

15.00 End

Artist Presentation (15.20–16.15)

15.20 Presentation by Antonio Roberts

15.50 Discussion and Q & A

16.15 End

BIOGRAPHIES

Rahaab Allana is Curator, Alkazi Foundation for the Arts; Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society (London) and advisory committee member of the Asia Society, India. He is on the board of the Trans-Asia Photography (TAP) Review; Founding Editor of PIX, a publication and exhibition for South Asia (enterpix.in); Founder of the ASAP/art app (asapart.in); and has recently guest-edited *Aperture Magazine's* 2021 summer issue dedicated to image making practices/practitioners in Delhi.

Fiona Anderson is Senior Lecturer in Art History at Newcastle University. She is the author of *Cruising the Dead River: David Wojnarowicz and New York's Ruined Waterfront* (University of Chicago Press, 2019) and Co-editor, with Glyn Davis and Nat Raha, of *Imagining Queer Europe Then and Now*, a special issue of *Third Text* (2021). From 2016–2019, she was UK PI for Cruising the Seventies: Unearthing Pre-HIV/AIDS Queer Sexual Cultures (CRUSEV), a project which explored LGBTQ+ social and sexual cultures of the 1970s and their significance for contemporary public discourse and LGBTQ+ politics and identity across Europe.

David Bate is photographic artist, historian and Professor of Photography at the University of Westminster in London. UK. Publications include: *Photography: Art Essentials* (Thames & Hudson, 2021), *Photography as Critical Practice: Notes on Otherness* (University of Chicago/Intellect, 2020), *Photography: Key Concepts* (Routledge, 2019), *Art Photography* (Tate Publications, 2015), *Zone* (Artwords, 2012), *Photography and Surrealism: Sexuality, Colonialism and Social Dissent* (London: IB Tauris, 2004) and *Zero Culture* (Danielle Arnaud, 2000). He is co-editor of *Photographies* journal (Oxford: Routledge) and has made many contributions to the history, theory and practice of photography.

Derek Bishton was born in Birmingham and, although he admits to significant and long-established love affairs with Jamaica and the East End of London, he still lives part of the time in his home city. He's a journalist, published author, photographer, publisher and internet pioneer. During the 70s and 80s he worked with scores of inner-city political groups and agencies as part of the Sidelines collective, a community design and photography resource he co-founded in 1977 with Brian Homer and John Reardon in Handsworth. They initiated many projects, including the formation of *Ten.8* magazine in 1978. Bishton was a founder member of the editorial collective and continued his close association with the magazine until it closed in 1992. He edited many issues. In 1983 he helped his wife, Merrise Crooks, establish Handprint, a community publishing company specialising in adult literacy materials for African Caribbean students. From 1986–88 he was Director of the Aston Centre for the Arts Photography Gallery. In 1994 he joined the launch team of the UK's first internet newspaper, *Electronic Telegraph*. In 2010 he won a UK Press Award for his work on the exposé of the MPs' expenses scandal. He is now working on a book about his time in Handsworth.

James Boaden is Lecturer in Modern and Contemporary Art at the University of York where he teaches the History of Photography at MA level. In 2016 he worked with Paul Rousseau and Jonathan Law to make a series of films about the photographer John Deakin for the Paul Mellon Centre. James has published essays in journals including *Oxford Art Journal*, *Art History* and *Tate Papers*. He has organised film screenings at BFI Bankside, Tate Modern, Nottingham Contemporary, and The Hepworth Wakefield.

David Brittain has been engaged with photography as a writer, reviewer and editor of *Creative Camera* since 1980. He is a documentary maker, curator and academic researcher in the Media department of Manchester Metropolitan University. David wrote *Inside Photography: Ten Interviews With Editors* (2012), *The Jet Age Compendium: Paolozzi at Ambient* (2009), edited *Creative Camera: 30 Years of Writing* (2000) and has contributed many essays to journals and books including *The Journal*

of *Magazine Media* (2020) and *A Companion to Photography* (2020). He is curator of the current *Light Years* exhibition series at The Photographers' Gallery.

Laura Castagnini is a curator and writer whose research explores the history and current articulations of feminism, especially as it intersects with the politics of race and sexuality, in modern and contemporary histories. She was Assistant Curator, Modern and Contemporary British Art, at Tate, from 2017–2021, where she curated monographic displays of Lubaina Himid and Liliane Lijn as well as assisting on major exhibitions including *Frank Bowling* and *All Too Human: Bacon, Freud and a Century of Painting Life*. She now works freelance and was recently awarded a Research Continuity Fellowship from the Paul Mellon Centre to trace an exhibition history of *Stolen Glances: Lesbians Take Photographs*, 1991.

Taous R. Dahmani is a PhD candidate in the History of Art Department at Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne. She is writing a thesis in the history of photography, under the supervision of Professor Michel Poivert, and has taught the history of twentieth-century photography there for three years. She is the recipient of the Prix de la Chancellerie and as a consequence was based in Oxford at the Maison Française in 2019/2020. Her thesis is entitled *Direct Action Photography: A Typography of the Photographic Representation of Struggles and the Struggle for Photographic Representations* (London, 1968–1989). Her chapter on Polareyes, a 1987 Black British female photographic journal, is forthcoming in *Feminist and Queer Activism in Britain and the United States in the Long 1980s*, (SUNY, 2021). In October 2020 she organised and convened the conference *Let Us Now Praise Famous Women: Women's Labour to Uncover the Works of Female Photographers* at the Weston Library, University of Oxford. She is also editor and content advisor for *The Eyes* magazine and a trustee of the Photo Oxford Festival.

Andrew Dewdney is Co-director and Co-founder of The Centre for the Study of the Networked Image, and Professor of Educational Media at London South Bank University. He has written and lectured widely on new media and museology. His new book *Forget Photography* (2021) is published by Goldsmiths Press. Of particular note to this paper is that he chaired the Arts Council Photography Advisory Panel between 1992–95.

Jacqueline Ennis-Cole is a neuro-diverse Black female photographer, writer and researcher with a postgraduate interest in Black women in photography. In September 2022, she will begin an interdisciplinary PhD research-led and practice-led programme at UCL/The Slade focused on black women photographic practices from the 1980s onwards. Jacqueline graduated with distinction from UAL Wimbledon (MA in Drawing) and Kingston University (MA in Photography) and earned an MSc in Anthropology from Brunel University. Her undergraduate BA study at UCA Farnham involved weaving and textile design; and she achieved a BSc in Social Science from the Open University.

Theo Gordon an art historian, currently working as the Terra Foundation for American Art Postdoctoral Fellow at the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington D.C. She gained her PhD from The Courtauld Institute of Art in 2018 and has since taught at the University of Sussex. Her current research focuses on photography and AIDS in the UK in the 1980s and 1990s, and on Duane Michals, Sunil Gupta, and 1970s' gay photography in the USA.

Juliet Hacking is the Programme Director of the MA in Contemporary Art, and Subject Leader in Photography, at Sotheby's Institute of Art, London. She is the General Editor of *Photography: The Whole Story* (2012; 2021); author of *Lives of the Great Photographers* (2015) [both Thames & Hudson], author of *Photography and the Art Market* (Lund Humphries, 2018) and the Co-editor (with

Joanne Lukitsh) of *Photography & the Arts: Essays on 19th-Century Practices and Debates* (Bloomsbury, 2020). She is also Co-series Editor of *Hot Topics in the Art World* with Lund Humphries (forthcoming, beginning October 2021).

Charlene Heath is a SSHRC Doctoral Fellow and PhD Candidate in the joint program in Communication and Culture at Ryerson/York University in Toronto and the Archivist & Research Coordinator at the Ryerson Image Centre (RIC), home to the largest portion of the Jo Spence Memorial Archive. She holds a BFA in Photography from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada and a MA in Photographic Preservation and Collections Management from Ryerson University in collaboration with the Eastman Museum in Rochester, New York, USA. She has written reviews and articles for *BlackFlash Magazine*, *Photography & Culture*, *Aperture Blog*, *Revue d'art canadienne/Canadian Art Review (RACER)*, and *Transbordeur photographie*. Through an analysis of the now dispersed Jo Spence Memorial Archive, her forthcoming dissertation considers the enduring legacy of political photographic practice in Britain in the 1970s and 80s.

Catlin Langford is the inaugural Curatorial Fellow in Photography, supported by the Bern Schwartz Family Foundation, at the Victoria and Albert Museum. She is presently working with the V&A's autochrome collection, which will inform an upcoming publication with Thames & Hudson/V&A. Langford was previously Assistant Curator at the Royal Collection Trust where she specialised in nineteenth-century photography. She completed her Masters at the Courtauld Institute of Art in 2016, focusing on the curation of vernacular photographs. Her research interests include colour photography, vernacular photographs and women photographers and the intersections between these.

Dr Rowan Lear is an artist and writer, recently awarded a PhD in Photographic History and Theory at the University of West London under the supervision of Professors Michelle Henning and Helen Hester. Informed by feminist new materialist, posthumanist and process philosophies, their thesis argues that photography has constituted a new kind of body. Rowan has delivered research papers at leading photography conferences in Europe, and has conducted research in archives and collections in the UK and North America. In 2018–19, Rowan organised Planetary Processing, a peer forum for experimental photographic artists at The Photographers' Gallery.

Anne Lyden is Chief Curator, Photography at the National Galleries of Scotland in Edinburgh where she is responsible for a collection of 55,000 photographs. Prior to joining NGS, Anne was Associate Curator of Photographs at the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. She has curated numerous exhibitions, including the work of Hill and Adamson, Paul Strand and Diane Arbus. She is the author of several books including, *Railroad Vision: Photography, Travel and Perception* (2003), *The Photographs of Frederick H. Evans* (2010), *A Royal Passion: Photography and Queen Victoria* (2014) and, most recently, *A Perfect Chemistry: The Photographs of Hill & Adamson* (2017).

Maitreyi Maheshwari is the Head of Programme at FACT, a Liverpool based organisation for the support and exhibition of art and film that embraces new technology and explores digital culture. There she manages an ambitious artistic programme that connects with science and digital technologies, engaging people with some of the most pressing challenges of today. She was previously Programme Director at the Zabłudowicz Collection in London and has also worked at Tate Modern and Artangel. Maitreyi has a degree in History of Art from Edinburgh University and a research masters in Humanities and Cultural Studies from the London Consortium, Birkbeck College.

Shoair Mavlian is Director of Photoworks. She is responsible for the strategic vision and artistic direction of the organisation including exhibitions, publishing, digital content and learning, and engagement. From 2011–2018 Mavlian was Assistant Curator, Photography and International Art at

Tate Modern, London, where she curated exhibitions including *Don McCullin* (2019), *Shape of Light: 100 Years of Photography and Abstract Art* (2018), *The Radical Eye: Modernist Photography From the Sir Elton John Collection* (2016) and *Conflict, Time, Photography* (2014). While at Tate Modern she helped build the photography collection and curated collection displays enjoyed by over five million visitors per year. In 2018 she was named one of *Apollo* magazine's 40 under 40 Europe – Thinkers.

Recent Photoworks projects include *Photoworks Festival: Propositions for Alternative Narratives* (2020), *Ursula Schulz-Dornburg, Zone Grise/The Land in Between* (MEP, Paris 2019) and *Brighton Photo Biennial: A New Europe* (2018).

Anne McNeill has played a role in British photography as curator, editor and writer in a career spanning nearly four decades. She began her career in the darkrooms at Camerawork 1984, founding Director of Photoworks 1995 and Artistic Director of Photo98, the UK Year of Photography. Since 2000, McNeill is the Director of Impressions Gallery, a charity that helps people understand the world through photography.

Recent writing includes *Zanele Muholi* (2019) *Granta Art+Photography* and *Being Inbetween* (Bluecoat Press, 2020).

Her most recent project *In Which Language Do We Dream?* (2021) considers the power of authentic representation from the photographic perspective of a Syrian refugee family. This is a co-authored exhibition, with McNeill guiding the photographic selection through collaboration and discussion with socially engaged photographer Rich Wiles and the al-Hindawi family.

Dr Annabella Pollen is Reader in the History of Art and Design at the University of Brighton. She has published on the history of photography in Britain. Her books include *Mass Photography: Collective Histories of Everyday Life* (2015) and *Photography Reframed: New Visions in Contemporary Photographic Culture* (2018, co-edited with Ben Burbridge). She has two new books forthcoming: *Nudism in a Cold Climate*, a study of British nude photography, 1920s-1970s, and *Art Without Frontiers*, a commissioned history of the British Council's art collection and its use in international cultural relations since 1935.

Ruby Rees-Sheridan is the Curatorial and Archive Coordinator at Four Corners, where she co-curates exhibitions exploring hidden histories of photography, and works on Four Corners Archive. She is currently the Project Coordinator on Four Corners' Hidden Histories project, carrying out research into the fascinating history of Half Moon Photography Workshop's laminated touring exhibitions. She previously completed an MA in Museum Curating and Photography at the University of Sussex

Dr Peter Ride is the Course Leader for the Masters in Museums, Galleries and Contemporary Culture at the University of Westminster. He has worked in a wide range of arts organisations including the National Museum of Photography, Film and TV, The Photographers' Gallery, Cambridge Darkroom Gallery, The Arts Technology Centre (Artec), London and DA2 Digital Arts Development Agency. He is the Co-author, with Professor Andrew Dewdney, of *The New Media Handbook* (Routledge, 2006) and the *Digital Media Handbook* (Routledge, 2013) and he has published widely on new media projects in museums and galleries.

Dr Karen Shepherdson is Programme Director and Reader for Photography at London College of Communication. Karen is a recognised academic researcher and practitioner within the field of photography. Since 2016 she has been a member of the Arts and Humanities Research Council Peer Review College and in 2017 was appointed Co-editor of the *Journal for Photography and Culture* (with special responsibility for Europe and the UK). She considers her roles as curator, writer, practising artist and academic researcher emphatically supportive of each other, with research underpinning

practice and practice illuminating research and teaching. Prior to joining UAL, Karen was Co-director of the Centre for Research on Communities and Cultures and also Director of Postgraduate Studies at Canterbury Christ Church University's School of Creative Arts and Industries. Karen has supervised and examined PhD and Masters by Research students and has designed learning materials specifically for practice-based postgraduate researchers. She has a continued an interest in theory-practice interchange.

Diane Smyth is a freelance arts journalist who contributes to publications such as *The Guardian*, *The Observer*, *The FT Weekend Magazine*, *Creative Review*, *The Calvert Journal*, *Aperture*, *FOAM*, *IMA*, *Aesthetica* and *Apollo* magazine. Prior to going freelance, she wrote and edited at BJP for 15 years. She has also curated exhibitions for institutions such as The Photographers' Gallery and Lianzhou Foto Festival.

Katrina Sluis is Associate Professor and Head of Photography & Media Arts at the School of Art & Design, Australian National University. She was previously Senior Lecturer and founding Co-director of the Centre for the Study of the Networked Image (CSNI), London South Bank University. From 2011–2019 she also held the inaugural post of Senior Curator (Digital Programmes) at The Photographers' Gallery, London, where she is presently Adjunct Research Curator.

Mo White is an artist, writer and lecturer. Mo works in moving image and photographic media and has exhibited widely, including exhibitions in New York, Dublin, Athens, Belfast and Birmingham. Her research concerns gender, diasporic and queer identities and their effects on contemporary artists and art practices and she was awarded a PhD in 2007 for her research examining artists using the moving image in the UK since the 1970s and has since published on slide-tape, most recently in *Practices of Projection: Histories and Technologies* (2020) Oxford University Press. Mo is a Lecturer in Fine Art at Loughborough University.

John Wyver is a writer and producer with the independent production company Illuminations, specialising in documentaries about the arts and screen adaptations of performance. He is Director, Screen Productions for the Royal Shakespeare Company, and he produces the RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon broadcasts and recordings. He is Professor of the Arts on Screen at the University of Westminster, and his publications include *Vision On: Film, Television and the Arts in Britain* (2007) and screening the *Royal Shakespeare Company: A Critical History* (2019).

For a number of years John was a Trustee of The Photographers' Gallery and was Acting Chair when the gallery secured the site of its current home in Ramillies Street.