INTRODUCTION

The last decade has seen a clear shift in the operational frameworks for the production, dissemination and consumption of photographs in contemporary computerised societies. The representational apparatus of photography is being progressively converted into algorithmic and generative processes through computer automation, connectivity and algorithmic control. Recent developments of AI systems and expanded technologies exponentially transform the possibilities for image making and the ways in which photographic images might be created and used within and beyond virtual space. While this might be exciting times for creators, thinkers and developers, it is also a pivotal moment in the history of photography, with debates taking place about its materiality, social function and essence. Through this conference, we aim to develop a communal discussion, inform critiques and thinking on the making of ‘virtual photography’.

Conference conveners:

Prof. David Bate, Professor of Photography, University of Westminster, UK
Dr Paula Gortázar, Senior Lecturer in Photography, University of Westminster, UK
PROGRAMME

Monday, 13th May 2024, 09:00 – 14:00
University of Westminster, Little Titchfield Street Campus

9:00  Registration

9:30  Introduction: David Bate and Paula Gortázar

10:00  VIRTUALITY AND THE STILL IMAGE

Peter Ainsworth and Sam Plagerson, Goldsmiths, University of London, UK
*The Fractional Space of 3D Computational Images and Ruptures in Visuality*

Liat Lavi, Bezalel Academy for Arts and Design, Israel
*Ethical Imaginariums and Grassroots Metaphysics*

Ziggy Kolker, University of Portsmouth, UK
*Chasing the Trace*

Panel Discussion and Q&A

11:20  Break

11:40  LIQUID IDENTITIES

Gemma Marmalade, University of Derby, UK
*V is for Virtual: ‘Thirst Trap’ Lesbians and Masculine Performativity of TikTok Visual Content*

Chu Yinhua, National Taipei University of Education, Taiwan
*Beyond the Mirror: Selfie Expression in the Age of Virtual Imaging*

Stephanie Hartle, Sheffield Hallam University, UK
*‘To Weave the Mirror’s Magic Sights’: Mimesis and Posthumanism in the Virtual Selfie*

Panel Discussion and Q&A

13:00  Lunch Break
Monday, 13th May 2024, 14:00 – 18:00
The Photographers’ Gallery, Ramillies Street

14:00  NEW PRACTICES IN VISUAL AND COMPUTATIONAL ART

Roc Herms, Visual Artist, Spain
This is Real, Man!

Juanrie Strydom, Solent University, UK
Disability as a Visual Language: Technology and Accessibility

George Legrady, University of California, USA
Mythic Narratives in MidJourney and Stable Diffusion

Simone Santilli, Visual Artist, Independent Researcher and Educator, Italy
Galactic Mine. Photography and Extractivism in the Procedural Universe of No Man’s Sky

Panel Discussion and Q&A

15:50  Break

16:10  PERFORMING NETWORKED ARCHIVES

Anshul Roy, Syracuse University, USA
Rage Against the Archive: Institutional Critique through New Media Art

Livia Foldes, Rhode Island School of Design, USA
NSFW Venus: On Classifying Bodies, from Colonial Archives to Machine Learning Datasets

Ochi Reyes, University of Westminster, UK
She Dreamt...

Panel Discussion and Q&A

17:30    Plenary Session

18:00  Social Drinks
Tuesday, 14th May 2024, 09:00 – 14:00
University of Westminster, Little Titchfield Street Campus

9:00     Registration

9:30     GENERATIVE POLITICS AND ACTIVISM

Lee Wing Ki, Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong
Disobedient Imageries: Netizens and their Critical-political Practices in Hong Kong

Nina Mangalanayagam, HDK-Valand, University of Gothenburg, Sweden
Generating the Past

Megan Williams, Journalist, Creative Review, UK
Visualising Unrest in the Age of Generative AI

Basil Al-Rawi, Visual Artist, Independent Researcher and Educator, Ireland
Building a House of Memory: Expanding Iraqi Archive Photos with Oral History and VR

Panel Discussion and Q&A

11:20    Break

11:40    THE MACHINE AS CO-CURATOR

Nicolas Malevé, Aarhus University, Denmark
The Exhibitionary Complex of Image Generation

Nathalie Dietschy, University of Lausanne, Switzerland
Towards Techno-Worlds: Photography in the Hands of AI Systems

Catherine Troiano, V&A Museum, London
Distilling the Dataset: Ethics and Artistic Practice in Generative Image Cultures

Panel Discussion and Q&A

13:00    Lunch Break
Tuesday, 14\textsuperscript{th} May 2024, 14:00 – 17:30
The Photographers’ Gallery, Ramillies Street

14:00 REBEL ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICES

\textbf{Catherine M. Weir,} Glasgow School of Art, UK
\textit{Frankenstein’s Camera: Reflections on Practice Between Photography and AI}

\textbf{Benjamin Mehigan,} Royal College of Art, UK
\textit{Light Without Heat: The Virtual Reproduction of Wildfire}

\textbf{Adam Brown,} London South Bank University, UK
\textit{Images in Advance of the State: Photorealistic Architectures after the Blockchain.}

Panel Discussion and Q&A

15:20 Break

15:40 EXPANDED VISION AND HYPERSONE

\textbf{Alison Bennett,} RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia
\textit{The Desire of a Third Dimension in Photography}

\textbf{Jack Lander,} Visual Artist, UK
\textit{Indexical Encroachment in Semi-Synthetic Landscapes}

\textbf{Giles Price,} Visual Artist, UK
\textit{Remote Documentary: What is it to Document Virtually?}

Panel Discussion and Q&A

17:00 Closing Remarks

17:30 End