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Photoworks Festival 2026

Un/Stable: Lands, Anxieties, Dreams

Save the Date – Photoworks reveals its plans for 2026 Photoworks Festival in Brighton & Hove

Photoworks is delighted to share the first news for the 2026 Photoworks Festival, opening days set to take place 2-4 October in Brighton & Hove, Sussex, UK.

The festival exhibitions and events will be curated around a dynamic and expansive theme, ***Un/Stable: Lands, Anxieties, Dreams***, which explores the precarity and possibility of this moment, alongside our collective futures. The theme explores the fragile states where personal and collective geographies tremble. Through photography, anxieties surface as borders blur, bodies drift, and realities fracture. Dreams interrupt fear, opening speculative spaces of care, resistance, and reimagining, looking at how histories, identities, futures, and place are interconnected. In a programme

of exhibitions, publications and public programmes charting the geographical, psychological, and metaphysical flows and connections of life, culture, and the environment, the festival maps uncertainty not as loss but as a site of becoming together, publicly and visually.

Photoworks Festival deconstructs the format of a traditional photography festival by curating a programme that encourages audiences input and debate. It utilises the diverse range of spaces and vistas across the city for projects, talks and exhibitions; with artists from across the globe, as well as those living and working nationally and locally.

Organised in partnership with a range of organisations, including Brighton Museums, University of Brighton, Photo Fringe, Marlborough Productions, Dreamy Place, Spectrum Photographic, POST, Italian Cultural Institute, Arts Council England and more. The 2026 edition will feature a launch programme, conference, talks, tours, portfolio reviews, publications and workshops.

Exhibitions will be presented throughout Brighton and Hove, featuring works created by a range of artists from young people to established practitioners. With artworks spanning ecosystems, communities, bodies, and archives, the programme reflects on restoration, ecological and social renewal, with openness to unexpected futures. Presentations will expand thinking on resilience, adaptation, and the shared processes that link us across generations.

Audiences are invited to consider continuity and transformation, solastalgia, nostalgia, and the persistence of memory, while highlighting the interconnections between human and non-human worlds. The theme questions the heteronormative and explores alternatives rooted in fluidity, multiplicity, and interdependence. Featuring an international range of perspectives, the festival engages with subjects including climate change, the Anthropocene, technology and cosmotechnics, queer ecology, identity, and community. It invites audiences to reflect on resilience, transformation, and imagining new, shared futures.

The festival programme will be announced in the coming months.

Photoworks Festival runs alongside Photo Fringe across Brighton & Hove, and details of this will also be shared soon via their team.

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Photoworks

Photoworks is the UK's leading development organisation for photography. We champion photography for everyone and are an international platform, global in reach, that has provided opportunities for artists and audiences since 1995. Our programme brings new experiences to audiences and opens up innovative ways to encounter photography, including the Photoworks Festival (next festival 2026). Photoworks is a registered charity and the only organisation with a national remit for photography in the UK. Our work is supported by public funding through Arts Council England's National Portfolio. In 2025, Photoworks celebrated its 30th anniversary.

Photoworks Festival

Directed by Photoworks, the Photoworks Festival, formerly known as Brighton Photo Biennial, established in 2003, is a globally renowned biennial event that highlights international contemporary photography. Previous festivals have featured Alec Soth, Rinko Kawauchi and Martin Parr, among others. During the pandemic, the festival innovated, presenting itself in a box format, a portable photography festival-in-a-box designed for artists, curators, and communities to stage and share work in their own spaces, as well as outdoors and in past years has shown critically acclaimed work across the city, known to be a hub for photography and photographers.

photoworks.org.uk

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