

Photoworks Festival 2026

Un/Stable: Lands, Anxieties, Dreams

October 2-4 2026 (programmes across the city continue throughout October and some exhibitions for longer across the winter)

Press view: 2 October - 1pm-6pm (plus evening preview)

Un/Stable: Lands, Anxieties, Dreams is the theme for Photoworks Festival 2026. It considers how identity, place, memory, community and the environment are interconnected, asking what it means to live through uncertainty while imagining or creating hopeful futures. The festival addresses issues including climate change, belonging, resilience and social change and is Directed by Louise Fedotov-Clements, Photoworks.

Exhibitions across Brighton & Hove encourage us to question assumptions, embrace multiple perspectives and think critically about the relationships between people, histories, landscapes and technology. Featuring artworks created by a range of

artists – young people, emerging and established practitioners, each exploring subjects that include ecosystems, global and personal archives, forest restoration, ecological and social renewal, including interconnections between human and non-human worlds.



Exhibitions and partners include: **University of Brighton; Jubilee Library; Phoenix Art Space; Brighton Museum & Art Gallery; Hove Museum of Creativity; Regency Town House and Gallery Lock In.**

Opening days events include a conference, co-produced with the University of Brighton, exploring the festival theme; exhibition openings; talks tours and a Queer History Club Night at the Charles Street Tap, organised with Queer Heritage South;

dance amongst a kaleidoscope of images; queer ravers, daring outfits and memories of sweaty nights. We've invited four legendary club photographers, a VJ and DJs to create an immersive clubnight transporting us through the decades of photography, and sounds, from queer clubbing in Brighton & Hove. On 3 October there will be a portfolio review; open review; mini photographers book launch with Thames and Hudson and workshops and October 4 exhibition talks, workshops and tours.

A central highlight of the facilitated programme is the University of Brighton's Wilmot Gallery, which will host the **Luigi Ghirri Emerging Talent 2025 / 2026** exhibition. Presented in partnership with the Italian Cultural Institute and curated by Photoworks Curator Danit Ariel and Assistant Curator Amin Yousefi, the showcase spotlights five emerging Italian artists. Visitors will experience the darkroom and archival investigations of Daniele Cimaglia and Giuseppe Odore, Rosa Lacavalla's moving-image installation *The Crossing Ceremony*, Serena Radicioli's deeply personal investigative work *Non sei più tornato*, and Anie Maki's non-linear ancestral exploration *Milk, Weight, Gravity*.

Simultaneously, the university's Ground Floor will host *Putting ourselves in the picture 1 & 2*, a striking exhibition edited by **Fast Forward: Women in Photography**. This project features compelling visual stories from over 52 refugee, migrant, and nonbinary participants, directly confronting gender discrimination and societal marginalisation through personal photographic projects.

The exploration of forgotten histories and identity extends into other prominent city venues. At the University of Brighton's Dorset Place Gallery, artist **Jermaine Francis** and researcher **Deborah Ireland** will present *Two photographs, a forgotten history*, an archive-driven residency project from the Royal Geographical Society that unravels a complex, easily misinterpreted 1860s narrative post-abolition. Meanwhile, the Jubilee Library will host **Where We Meet by Eva Louisa Jonas, Kairo Urovi, and young Queer Grounds participants, celebrating queer community organizing through DIY carpentry culture.**

Phoenix Art Space will host Tessa Boffin: Where We Touch The Archive, Draft 3 from 2 to 18 October, a queer and feminist archival project exploring Boffin's activist legacy

alongside new contemporary commissions by **Sophie Mak-Schram** and **Leah McLaine**. During the same dates, the historic **Regency Town House** will present two captivating solo shows: **Sam Kaufman's *Pseudomorphs***, a multi-voiced film exploring cephalopod cognition and camouflage, and **Holly Birtles' *Fighting Fish***, which utilizes large-scale darkroom prints and AI collaborations to bridge the ecological narratives of UK and Indian riverways. Additionally, the **Gallery Lock In will open *Bones of Our Land* by Tsz Wai Pun and ecologist Coşkun Güçlü**, commissioned by WMA, a multimedia, soil DNA-sampling installation tracking the evolutionary history of a single Hong Kong hillside, presented in partnership with WMA and Dreamy Place.

For those looking to experience the programme after October, two major museum exhibitions run until Monday 18 January 2027. Brighton Museum and Art Gallery will feature Andreas Scholz's *And So I Watch You From Afar* and *The Most Beautiful Anthropocene*, an island-like installation utilizing ecologically sustainable, cameraless photographic processes to record climate change. Across town, **Hove Museum of Creativity** will host Alma Haser's *Playing With Your Eyes*. Organised in partnership with Thames and Hudson, Haser's meticulously constructed, paper-folded photographic sculptures blur the lines between 2D and 3D art, aiming to inspire a new generation of young creatives.

Cosmophotographies, the 2026 Photoworks Annual, takes Yuk Hui's conception of cosmotechnics, and applies it to photography. Hui argues that technology is never neutral, embodying the values, assumptions and ways of knowing which shaped it – while simultaneously shaping them. *Cosmophotographies* asks what ideology is embedded in the camera and the images it produces, and whether we use this technology differently. Hui argues that the cosmotechnics which currently dominates emerged with European modernity, and has helped globalise a disastrous relationship with the world. In the face of impending environmental and climate breakdown, *Cosmophotographies* wonders, can we urgently envisage something else?

The Annual, edited by Diane Smyth, explores these questions with a global cohort of artists, writers and thinkers, who are already putting theory into practice – and vice

versa. Feiyi Wen deconstructs the image and how we use it to see nature, adding a sensitivity to collaboration and chance. Ayobami Ogungbe cuts up photographs of his hometown in Badagry, Nigeria, once a major slave centre. Sergio Valenzuela-Escobedo unpicks camera advertising, showing how a Western viewpoint has been universalised and sold to the world. Yining He contributes an original essay contrasting Western perspectives with traditional Chinese approaches; Beatrice Zaidenberg draws on linguist and activist Yásnaya Elena A. Gil of the Mixe people in Mexico to propose techno-diversities; Taous Dahmani and Omar Kholeif explore wider histories of the medium.

Further events take place throughout October and offer a wide range of activity from conferences, portfolio reviews, talks, tours, workshops and film screenings to be announced soon.

Alongside Photoworks Festival, **Photo Fringe** is taking place from **2–31 October 2026** across Brighton & Hove and along the south east coast, connecting us to coastal communities in Newhaven and Portsmouth. It is the most expansive photo festival in the UK, spanning across the south coast. This year, Photo Fringe returns with a refreshed focus on the grassroots values that have shaped the festival since 2003: artist-led participation, experimentation, community connection and self-curated exhibitions. It will be produced by Ricardo Reveron Blanco.

ENDS

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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 their 30th anniversary.

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Detailed Programme for listings editors:

University of Brighton – Wilmot Gallery

Exhibition: Luigi Ghirri Emerging Talent 2025 / 2026

Dates: Friday 2 October – Sunday 1 November 2026

Address: University of Brighton, 154-155 Edward St, Kemptown, Brighton BN2 0JG

Open: Wednesday – Sunday 12pm-4pm or by appointment

Artists: Daniele Cimaglia and Giuseppe Odore / Rosa Lacavalla / Serena Radicioli / Anie Maki

Explore the works of 5 emerging talents selected by Photoworks from the annual Luigi Ghirri Emerging Talent Award, Italy, presented in the festival in partnership with the Italian Cultural Institute.

Artist Series Descriptions:

- Daniele Cimaglia and Giuseppe Odore are an artistic duo whose photographic work explores the relationship between collective memory and vernacular imagery. Combining community engagement with darkroom experimentation and archival reactivation, they transform private memories into collective narratives as a gateway to explore urgent issues.
- Rosa Lacavalla's 'The Crossing Ceremony' is a moving image installation that combines found footage of the Equator-line crossing rituals, both vintage and contemporary, with evocative imagery of the stars. The work invites viewers to embark on a voyage alongside King Neptune, the revered guardian of the oceans,

as he prepares for the crossing of the Equator Line journey. The work charts the symbolism of traversing an invisible threshold, intertwined with the unrelenting movement of the night sky.

- Serena Radicioli's 'Non sei più tornato' stems from a personal history. In 2012, her father was lost in a clash between two criminal groups. The artist never knew what her father's real job was. When he didn't return home questions remained unanswered until, a decade later, the artist began to research to collect evidence to reconstruct fragments of the story. Radicioli's work combines public and family archives together with her own photographs created in response to unresolved loss and photography's role as a critical tool in rebuilding meaning.
- Anie Maki's series titled 'Milk, Weight, Gravity' reconstructs an elusive narrative focused on ancestral histories. It references the psychological and mental health dynamics that had been silenced for decades but had reappeared like ghosts in the artist's life, much like the artist's family album, it was filled with a chaos of voices, faces and untold stories. The artist presents a panorama of characters, connections and place as a non-linear way of reconstructing her family tree and sharing thoughts in response to a century of family stories.

University of Brighton — Ground Floor

Exhibition: Putting ourselves in the picture 1 & 2

Dates: Friday 2 October – Sunday 1 November 2026

Open: Wednesday – Sunday 12pm – 4pm or by appointment

'Putting Ourselves in the Picture' is an exhibition created from the two books that in combination present a selection of the works created by more than 52 participants who took part in two programmes designed to empower womxn to use photography to tell stories about their own lives. Edited by Fast Forward: Women in Photography, the projects engaged with refugee and migrant women and nonbinary people, whose stories and compelling photography works are the focus of these two striking books. Participants engaged with leading photographers, educators, and national photography partners to create artworks that open our eyes, enthuse our ideas and

crush stereotypes – confronting gender discrimination and the marginalisation of women in our societies.

University of Brighton – Dorset Place Gallery

Exhibition: Two photographs, a forgotten history

Dates: Friday 2 October – Sunday 1 November 2026

Address: Dorset Place Gallery, 3 Dorset Pl, University of Brighton, Brighton BN2 1ST

Artist: Jermaine Francis (with researcher Deborah Ireland)

A presentation of research in progress produced during a residency at the Royal Geographical Society Archive. A film and archive research share the story of two photographs, taken by two very different photographers, using different processes, taken within three years of each other, divided by a continent. Both are a testament to the same forgotten history, which is not clear or easy to read and open to misinterpretation. By researching the photographers, their process and intent, it is possible to unravel an account which we forget at our peril. These photographs should have been impossible to take in the 1860s because of the abolition of the slave trade in 1807, with full emancipation in 1838. These photographs, taken in 1860 and 1863 tell a different story.

Jubilee Library

Exhibition: Where We Meet

Dates: Friday 2 October – Sunday 1 November 2026

Address: Jubilee Library, Jubilee St, Brighton BN1 1GE

Artists: Eva Louisa Jonas, Kairo Urovi & Queer Grounds Participants

Working across staged and improvised image-making, this exhibition explores queer community organizing and DIY building culture. Photographs trace moments of engagement with tools, timber, workshop structures, and one another – gathered during a visit to In Our Hands, a queer-led carpentry organisation based in West Sussex. Developed by artists Eva Louisa Jonas and Kairo Urovi with young people in

response to their workshop environment and its material practices, this installation explores how spaces of making can function as sites of learning and connection.

Brighton Museum and Art Gallery

Exhibition: And So I Watch You From Afar and The Most Beautiful Anthropocene

Dates: Friday 2 October 2026 – Monday 18 January 2027

Address: Brighton Museum and Art Gallery, Royal Pavilion Gardens, Brighton BN1 1EE

Artist: Aindreas Scholz

Bringing together two bodies of work, this exhibition explores ecologically sustainable cameraless photography as a fragile record of environmental change. Coastal edges, vulnerable plant life and unstable landscapes meet within the museum space, forming an island-like installation shaped by erosion, atmosphere, water and time. Scholz's artmaking focuses on environments affected by human activity, encompassing landscapes transformed by pollution and the climate crisis. He experiments with alternative and sustainable photographic processes to highlight the need to critically reflect on our daily carbon footprint. The two projects presented include stunning cameraless photography images created through sustainable processes, whereby the natural chemicals of photographic image making are cleaned in a cyclical process in an ecological wet room designed by the artist.

Hove Museum of Creativity

Exhibition: Playing With Your Eyes

Dates: Friday 2 October 2026 – Monday 18 January 2027

Artist: Alma Haser

Known for her complex and meticulously constructed photographs, Alma Haser expands the traditional photograph using techniques such as paper-folding, collage and mixed media to create layers of intrigue and manipulate photographs into bewildering sculptures. 'Playing With Your Eyes' blurs the lines between two-dimensional and three-dimensional imagery, the real and the imagined. This

exhibition is especially aimed at inspiring young people to be creative. Organised by Photoworks in partnership with Thames and Hudson.

Phoenix Art Space

Exhibition: Tessa Boffin: Where We Touch The Archive, Draft 3

Dates: Friday 2 October – Sunday 18 October 2026

Open: Wednesday – Sunday 12pm – 5pm

Artists: Tessa Boffin Archive, Leah McLaine and Sophie Mak-Schram

Tessa Boffin's artistic practice spanned photography, writing, performance and activism, consistently challenging dominant narratives around gender, sexuality and visibility. Boffin's work remains urgently relevant to contemporary queer and feminist communities and this project asks what it means for an archive to be a generative, collective space. The exhibition features work by Tessa Boffin archives and newly commissioned work from artists Sophie Mak-Schram and Leah McLaine, developed in direct response to Boffin's images, pedagogy and politics. Both artists and the curatorial team have been immersed in extensive archival research, drawing on collections held by the University for the Creative Arts, The Estate of Tessa Boffin/The Gupta+Singh Archives and Hales Gallery (London and New York). This project is grounded in a collective, intersectional approach to curatorial research, led by four emerging curators whose practices are rooted in queer and feminist frameworks: Polly Wright, Jazz Swali, Ricardo Reverón Blanco, and Danit Ariel (Photoworks).

Regency Town House

Exhibition: Pseudomorphs

Dates: Friday 2 October – Sunday 18 October 2026

Address: Regency Town House, 13 Brunswick Square, Hove BN3 1EH (Note: stepped access)

Artist: Sam Kaufman

Sam Kaufman presents 'Pseudomorphs', a film about cephalopods, doubling bodies, institutional friction, hypnosis and disappearance. It is staged across three locations: a marine biology laboratory studying cephalopod cognition and skin camouflage; a beach home to giant ammonite fossils; and the mesopelagic zone of the sea. The film takes the pseudomorph as its starting point – a decoy ink body created by cuttlefish, squid and octopuses – to think through disparate instances where the body's boundary against the world becomes unstable and altered. It is narrated through multiple voices: interview fragments, email correspondence, and out-of-body experiences.

Regency Town House

Exhibition: Fighting Fish

Dates: Friday 2 October – Sunday 18 October 2026

Artist: Holly Birtles

Holly Birtles, as part of her Chennai Photo Biennial X Photoworks Darkroom Residency, developed a series titled 'Fighting Fish'. Whilst in Chennai, she reflected on an ongoing body of work inspired by the Thames River London and Estuary in Kent, Essex and Suffolk, where performers and artists contemplate their choreographed roles as 'Thames Monsters.' In Chennai, Birtles responded to the Adyar and Cooum river, identifying parallels linked to sentimentality, dedication, care, and destruction. This exhibition of largescale darkroom prints and AI collaborations recontextualises image generator methodologies to examine speculative ecological struggles through both the material and the digital.

Gallery Lock In

Exhibition: Bones of Our Land

Dates: Thursday 1 October – Sunday 25 October 2026

Address: Gallery Lock In, Little Western St, Brighton BN1 2PU

Artists: Tsz Wai Pun & Coşkun Güçlü

Created by artist duo Tsz Wai Pun and ecologist Coşkun Güçlü, this multimedia project, commissioned by WMA on the theme of Hope, focuses on a single hillside undergoing ecological restoration on the Northern slopes of Tai Mo Shan in Hong Kong, tracing its ecological and human history and reading its soil as a record of recent ecological change and deep evolutionary time. The layers of this installation present time as something that accumulates at multiple scales, alongside connection in the midst of uncertainty. Through film, sound, archival materials, photography, scientific fieldwork, and soil DNA analysis, the artists approach the hillside as a palimpsest, a landscape continuously rewritten across centuries and beyond. Volcanic geology, agricultural history, destructive hill fires, colonial intervention, and ongoing ecological restoration are all layered within the same landscape. In this reading, a single hillside becomes a site of entanglement, where past, present, and future do not unfold in sequence but coexist and refract through one another. 'Bones of Our Land' invites us to listen anew to the soil, the forest, and the living archive buried beneath our feet. Co-curated by Louise Fedotov-Clements and Chloe Chow. Presented in partnership with WMA, Gallery LockIn and Dreamy Place. Commissioned by WMA for the 2025/26 theme Hope.

POST

Dates/times: 2 Oct 9am–6pm and 4 Oct 10am–4pm

Artists Johanna Alarcón, Marilyn Stafford, Marilyn Stafford FotoReportage Awardees *When the Earth Gives Birth* by the 2026 Marilyn Stafford FotoReportage Award Winner, Johanna Alarcón. Visitors can also view a presentation of highlights from a decade of award-winning projects, together with a display of photographs and books by renowned twentieth-century photographer, Marilyn Stafford (1925–2023), the Award's eponymous heroine

University of Brighton – room 101

Dates: 2 oct – 1 nov 2026

Address: University of Brighton, 154–155 Edward St, Kemptown, Brighton BN2 0JG

Opening times: weds – sun (12:00 – 16:00) or by appointment

Artists: Debmalya Ray Choudhuri

Selected by Photoworks as part of the International Photography Festivals Association international open call, Debmalya Ray Choudhuri, *The Weight Of the Earth* is a diary of fragility, loss, and desire. This ongoing project is the artists' response to the suicide of a lover, and confrontation with tuberculosis as a young adult, alongside their questioning of identity as a South Asian immigrant in a politically and socially fragmented America. Built over seven years, this series is a multilayered narrative. The work examines the intricate relationship between mourning and melancholia. It also raises the question of what it means to be queer. The project features self-portraits and portraits of strangers and friends, influenced by the idea of a rhizome and expands on conversations around mental health, suicide, trauma related to trans and queer experiences, desire and longing. By adopting the form of a collaborative performance fiction, the artist raises the question of self-affirmation and create a community in the "imagined homeland" of America.

Photoworks Friends will receive free or discounted entry to all Photoworks Festival exhibitions and events. By becoming a Friend, you'll support emerging photographers and creative opportunities for young people, while enjoying a range of exclusive benefits including our Annual publication, invitations to special events, discounts in our shop, and more.