

Between Art and Information: Collecting Photographs

Date : February 13, 2013

One Day Meeting, Leicester

Saturday March 2nd, 2013

Museums and Galleries History Group/Photographic History Research Centre, De Montfort University

Registration: www.mghg.org/collectingphotographs/

The status of photographs in the history of museum collections is a complex one. From the inception of the medium its double capacity as an aesthetic form and as a recording medium created tensions about its place in the hierarchy of museum objects. While museums had been amassing photographs since about 1850, it was, for instance, only in the 1970s that the first senior curators of photographs were appointed in UK museums. On the one hand major collections of 'art' photography have grown in status and visibility, while photographs not designated 'art' are often invisible in museums. On the other hand almost every museum has photographs as part of its ecosystem, gathered as information, corroboration or documentation, shaping the understanding of other classes of objects. Many of these collections remain uncatalogued and their significance unrecognised. However recent years have seen an increasing interest in the histories of these humble objects, both their role in collections histories and their histories in their own right.

Professor Elizabeth Edwards
Director: Photographic History Research Centre
De Montfort University
Portland Building 2.4.
The Gateway
Leicester LE1 9BH