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AKADEMIE DER  
WISSENSCHAFTEN

8 APRIL 2025  
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AUSTRIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES  
JOHANNESSAAL  
DR. IGNAZ SEIPEL-PLATZ 2  
1010 VIENNA

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INVITATION TO A PUBLIC LECTURE

# MAKING PATHS AND CLEARING TRACKS

FROM 'COLONIAL' PHOTOGRAPHS TO HISTORICAL PRESENCES

Elizabeth Edwards / Prof. Emerita of Photographic History at De Montfort University, Leicester

In this lecture, I use 'paths and trackways' as a central metaphor through which to examine processes that have, in recent decades, transformed approaches to the archival photographic deposits and accruals. These processes shift photographs in colonial archives and museums from moribund deposits of past practices and ideologies, to vibrant spaces of contested histories and multiple subjectivities – that is, from colonial objects to historical presences. If archives and their photographs, as physical entities, are prone to decay, dissolution, and rearrangement, they are also increasingly mobile epistemically. Photographs have become active spaces where assumptions can be challenged, and newer and larger intellectual contexts can emerge. In particular, I consider three major pathways – the evidential, the experiential and the historiographical – as complex sites of connection where my central metaphor shapes the empirical and conceptual potential of photographs and the conditions of their visibility.

Elizabeth Edwards' lecture marks the opening of the workshop *Encounters with the Photographic Archive* on April 9, 2025. The lecture is taking place within the frame of the Balkan Studies lecture series.

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