

FORMAT 2024

FORMAT International Photography Festival happens every other year in Derby. As a part of FORMAT's off year programme the festival has partnered with LCB Depot to celebrate its 20th anniversary, bringing amazing international photography to Leicester!

Venues across the city are hosting exhibitions from **25th March - 26th April 2024**. Find out more about the exhibition venues and artists involved at <https://lcbdepot.co.uk/event/format24/> or @lcbdepot



Evidential

Craig Ames

Print based.

Questioning the veracity of photography in the age of algorithmic (re)production, the images in this archive were created as a contemporary comparative study to the seminal photobook Evidence, which was originally self-published by Larry Sultan and Mike Mandel in 1977.

Exploring and stress-testing the relationship between lens-based machine vision and image generating AI systems, the method of fabrication involved two main computational processes. Using various object recognition algorithms, images of the original series were systematically processed to

generate short descriptions of their content. With varying degrees of accuracy, these descriptive texts became the basis of instructional prompts that were processed through an image generating AI.

Deviating from the original book, the archive has been reformatted and resequenced to offer new narrative possibilities. Whilst echoes of Mandel and Sultan's astute and prophetic observations are still evident, the new work also distils contemporary concerns, particularly in relation to the unfolding climate crisis, the impact of transformational digital technologies over the past few decades, and, more recently, the widespread adoption and integration of increasingly powerful AI systems.

The resulting 61 images that make up the series have been recontextualised and output in two distinct, yet interconnected formats. Presented in a museum-grade print box, the first, is a one-off archive of 10" x 8" warm-tone, black and white analogue prints (hand-printed in the darkroom on Ilford warm-tone photographic paper). The second, is a reformatted facsimile version, which is presented as a hybrid print archive / unbound photobook.

Generating both digital and physical feedback loops, Evidential raises important questions regarding the authenticity of analogue archival material. Having witnessed exponential technological developments in recent years with generative AI systems, we are now reaching the point where we can't readily discern what is real from what is not. With so much at stake, how might we navigate this new reality, and how do we urgently recalibrate our understanding of, and relationship with, the photographic image?

Not for sale

Artist Bio

I'm a British artist and photographer with an interest in expanded forms of evidence, simulation, and visual representation in the post-photography / post-truth era. Encompassing these interconnected themes, I have a diverse practice and work with a range of media, including photography, generative AI, text and sourced, online material.

My interest in photography began when I trained to become an evidence photographer whilst serving in the British Army. I've explored a broad range of themes including the commodification of contemporary conflict, Brexit, as

well as the relationship between politics and personality. Over the past few years, I've been working with artificial intelligence imaging systems, exploring the monumental technical advancements and weaknesses, as well as the growing ethical concerns we are currently witnessing with the mainstream adoption of contemporary generative AI imaging algorithms.

My work has been exhibited national and internationally at various galleries, museums, and photography festivals including: Thessaloniki Photo Biennale, Greece; Copenhagen Photo Festival, Denmark; Landskrona Foto, Sweden; Earth Photo, UK; Format Photography Festival, UK; Lishui Photo Festival, China; Currents New Media Festival, USA; Västerbotten Museum, Sweden.

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