

editor's note

Photography and photo archives are interwoven into the development of the history of art as a discipline. The role of photographs to document works of art and the medium's accepted veracity helped to form the ideal symbiotic relationship with the growing discipline of art history. But while art history has flourished into the 21st century, photo archives have often been seen by many as a relic of the past; an outdated mode of research. Indeed, it is easy to view photo archive collections as dusty artifacts, rows upon rows of boxes smelling slightly of emulsion and fixative. However, today the understanding of the importance of photo archives has evolved into a very nuanced conception. Almost ten years to the day since the Florence Declaration in 2009 proposed recommendations for the preservation of analogue photo archives and affirmed the 'inescapable value of analogue photographs and archives for the future of the arts, social sciences and humanities',¹ our awareness of the multivalent potential for research using these archives has never been greater. The rapid development of digital humanities tools and methods has made this moment extremely significant for photo archives.

Costanza Caraffa has referred to photo archives as ecosystems – 'photographic archives are open, dynamic and complex systems formed by organisms of different kinds which have a reciprocal action among each other and with their surrounding environment...'². This view of the photo archive ecosystem as a living, changing and evolving entity impacting other disciplines seems particularly apposite to this issue of *Art Libraries Journal*. The articles in this issue examine many of the varied environments of photo archives: the PHAROS consortium and its goals for open access; the 'whys' of photo digitisation as well as the 'hows'; the underlying metadata, data models and Linked Open Data techniques that could allow for unprecedented modes of discovery and analyses; a close look at the historical aspects of a photo archive collection and its potential as a rich primary source, and the mobilisation of an army of volunteers to complete a digitisation project. In all cases, these articles reaffirm the intrinsic value of photo archival research while exploring technology's potential to answer new and unanticipated research questions across the extensive photo archives ecosystem.

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1. "Florence Declaration - Recommendations for the preservation of analogue photo archives" (<https://www.khi.fi/en/photothek/florence-declaration.php>). Accessed October 28, 2019.

2. Costanza Caraffa, ed., *Photo Archives and the Photographic Memory of Art History* (Berlin – Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2011).