BUILDING WITH LIGHT: THE LEGACY OF ROBERT ELWALL
An International Symposium on Architectural Photography

London, Royal Institute of British Architects, November 13-14, 2014

Conveners: Irena Murray HonFRIBA and Gary Van Zante, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Call for Papers

The Royal Institute of British Architects invites papers from photographers, researchers, academics, curators and students in conjunction with the first major retrospective of the work of the British architectural photographer Edwin Smith (1912-1971) – Ordinary Beauty: the Photography of Edwin Smith.

The two-day symposium aims to reflect on the role and relevance of architectural photography as a form of expression, as historical record and as spatial narrative. Additionally, the symposium will examine the impact of collecting architectural photographs as well as their preservation and dissemination by means of digitisation, exhibitions and publications. The presentations and discussions will pay tribute to the late Robert Elwall, founder of the RIBA Photographs Collection and a distinguished curator and author whose influential international history of architectural photography Building with Light has given the symposium its title.

Keynote speakers will include architectural photographers and academics such as Canadian photographer Geoffrey James whose panoramic images of the built landscape explore the relationship between society and its surroundings; Hélène Binet, a Swiss-French architectural photographer based in London and the author of Composing Space: The Photographs of Hélène Binet; Peter Hales, an American photographer, historian and Professor Emeritus, University of Illinois at Chicago; and Iñaki Bergera, a Spanish architect, photographer and theorist.

The symposium’s topics will cover broad research areas such as the historical and contemporary evocation of architectural interiors, buildings, place and landscape; forms of photographic response to genius loci and national identity; the reciprocal influence on and with publishing; and curatorial issues and approaches to architectural photography over time.

Interested participants are invited to submit a 300-word abstract, brief biography and a presentation title by no later than 31 July, 2014. Proposals will be received for a 30-minute slot or a 10 minute - brief communication- slot; the proposed length should be specified in the submission. Mail to valeria.carullo@riba.org