

Lisa Risbec

Archive & Imaging | Digital Collection Advice | Project Coordination | Creative Support

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Profile

I am an archive imaging specialist and project coordinator with six years of professional experience at the John Rylands Research Institute & Library, one of the UK's most significant special collections. I work across the full digitisation lifecycle, from enquiry and materials assessment through to permissions, delivery, and documentation, and have developed a strong instinct for how collections function and how researchers use them.

Alongside this I offer freelance support to small arts organisations, charities, artist estates, and individuals with collections: helping to structure digital archives, advise on digitisation and copyright, update websites, and bring organisational clarity to collections that have grown gradually and without a system. I work within existing platforms and template-based tools rather than building from scratch, and I bring professional copyright training (CILIP) and daily practical application.

I also have a broader background in project coordination, producing, administration, and marketing across cultural organisations, giving me the practical and communicative range to support projects at different scales and stages, including website updates, content, and communications support alongside archive work.

Freelance Services

Digital Archive & Collection Advice

- Helping organisations think through how a digital collection or archive should be structured, what information is needed, at what level, and how to make it navigable for the people who need it
- Designing tagging and categorisation systems, folder hierarchies, and file naming conventions
- Creating database structures and page templates within existing platforms (Wix, WordPress, Squarespace, and similar CMS tools)
- Advising on what to capture, how to describe it, and how to make it findable

Digitisation Advice

- Working out what to digitise first and why, based on use, condition, and organisational priorities
- Advising on metadata, file naming, storage formats, and long-term preservation
- Practical guidance on handling analogue formats: 35mm slides, colour transparencies, prints
- Thinking through what happens after digitisation, how images are stored, described, and made accessible
- Signposting to organisations and services that can carry out digitisation where specialist equipment is required

Copyright Guidance & Picture Research

- Practical advice on copyright as it applies to collections, reproduction rights, and digital access
- Informed by professional training (CILIP) and daily application in an archival imaging context
- Locating and researching images across archive collections and databases for publications, exhibitions, or digital projects
- Working knowledge from someone who deals with these questions regularly

Website & Digital Organisation Support

- Reviewing how information is structured across a website, what goes where and at what level of detail
- Making content updates using text and images within existing template-based websites and CMS platforms
- Creating designed documents, reports, and resources in Canva
- Setting up simple filing systems, folder structures, and file naming conventions for digital assets
- Creating an archive of previous work, organising, describing, and making it accessible

Archive & Imaging Experience

Imaging Co-ordinator (Part-time)

John Rylands Research Institute & Library, University of Manchester | Oct 2023 – Present

- Managing and coordinating digitisation and imaging enquiries from researchers, students, and external clients worldwide
- Overseeing workflows from initial enquiry through to delivery, including permissions, payments, and copyright compliance
- Acting as a go-to contact for copyright queries, drawing on CILIP training and daily application
- Liaising with curators, photographers, and collection care specialists to assess material suitability and handling needs
- Improving internal workflows and documentation to support more efficient service delivery
- Contributing to an ongoing website update to improve clarity for researchers and users
- Supporting digital collection development
- Ongoing research into contemporary archival theory and debates, feeding into project work and professional development

Historical Project Photographer

John Rylands Research Institute & Library, University of Manchester | Jan 2020 – Dec 2023

- Photographing archival material using high-end equipment (System One cameras, Capture One, Profoto lighting)
- Managing digital image databases and content management systems including LUNA, EMU, and Preservicea
- Liaising across departments; conservation, metadata, curators, and researchers to coordinate projects and improve workflows
- Troubleshooting digital and system issues; contributing to service development discussions

Online archive database creation and website support

In Situ 2025-2026

- Advised on what information should go where and what kind of page would best support it
- Restructured presentation of current programme and archive content across the site
- Set up CMS database within existing template-based website
- Created landing page and project page templates, editable by the client for ongoing updates
- Imported and tagged archive content, developing a tagging system for discoverability
- Resolved technical issues throughout the build
- Updated template based website with new content, set up new pages
- Created designed documents in Canva using existing assets

Project Coordination & Producing

Freelance Assistant Producer

Breaking Barriers | May 2023 – Nov 2023

- Created schedules and managed calendars for three documentary film projects commissioned by Rochdale Council
- Liaised with clients, directors, filmmakers, and participants throughout production
- Produced creative summaries and documentation; contributed to creative direction
- Researched archival footage; conducted on-camera interviews; supported on-location filming logistics

Studio Manager & Mentor

POOL ARTS | Dec 2016 – Sep 2023

- Managed studio spaces, contracts, maintenance, payments, and event bookings
- Coordinated studio systems, schedules, and communications across membership
- Co-curated exhibitions; produced exhibition text, artist statements, and press releases
- Managed website, social media, e-newsletters, and archive of members' work

Creative Resource Developer & Training Facilitator

Cartwheel Arts | *Jan 2016 – Sep 2023*

- Managed resource development projects from research through to design, prototyping, testing, and rollout
- Conducted research, focus groups, and consultation with participants and stakeholders
- Produced written resources, facilitation notes, training materials, and evaluation reports
- Delivered training days across 20+ schools and organisations

Marketing, Communications & Administration

Marketing & Communications Officer

Henshaws Society for Blind People | *2010 – 2014*

- Managed website content, newsletters, blog, and social media across multiple platforms
- Researched and wrote content for diverse audiences; planned and executed email campaigns
- Managed print production and external relationships with suppliers

Marketing Coordinator

Urbis, Manchester | *2007 – 2010*

- Coordinated marketing activity for a major public cultural institution, including email communications and event openings
- Managed website updates alongside scheduling, communications, and logistics across the marketing team

Data Enrichment & Research (Contract)

Identity Experts | *Apr–Jul 2019*

- Data enrichment, research, and database management using Salesforce (Lightning and Classic) and DotMailer
- Streamlined and updated client data; provided reports and recommendations for the sales team

Education & Training

- Commencing PhD study, Manchester Metropolitan University commencing October 2026 practice-based research into archival thinking, materiality, and memory
- MA Fine Art, University of Central Lancashire (2022–2024) Distinction
- BA (Hons) Photography with Audio Visual Media, University of Central Lancashire (2002–2005) — 2:1
- Self-directed education, Islington Mill Art Academy (2012–2016)
- Copyright training, CILIP

Technical Proficiencies

- Imaging: System One cameras, Capture One, Profoto studio lighting, Photoshop, Lightroom
- Digital asset management: LUNA, EMU, Preservicea,
- Archives hub and other archive and other Library systems
- CMS & websites: WordPress, Squarespace, Wix, Salesforce, bespoke institutional systems
- Project tools: Microsoft Office, Google Workspace, Trello, Asana, Slack, Canva
- Windows and macOS | System troubleshooting

Availability

Available for freelance archive advice, digitisation consultancy, digital collection support, and project coordination. Particularly suited to small arts organisations, charities, artist estates, and individuals whose archive work is sitting undone. The scale does not need to be large; a conversation is usually enough to work out whether I can help.