

The City and Its Stories

9th edition of the Institut's Research and Creation Grant

Building on the theme of the 2025 Grant, *Landscape and Its Stories*, the Institut pour la photographie turns to the city for its 2027 edition: *The City and Its Stories*.

From Charles Marville's views of Paris transformed by Haussmann to the many commissions and heritage surveys, including the Grand Paris Commission, and from Street Photography to portraits of cities at night and Ed Ruscha's conceptual experiments in Los Angeles, the city is so omnipresent that it seems almost inseparable from the history of photography. Countless photographers have sought to capture its beauty, modernity, historical roots, vanity at times, or failed utopias. Sometimes, all of these at once. For the stories bound up with the city are constantly intertwining, much like the crowds that pass one another in the street, or the inhabitants who, from time to time, cross paths.

But the city is more than a subject to be represented. Shaped by people, history, geography, politics and technology, it also transforms the ways in which the urban is represented visually. Its structures and rhythms, its patterns of movement, encounters with others, and the visible and invisible forces that run through it all prompt photography to reinvent itself, giving rise to often polyphonic accounts of the city. Visual form expresses a relationship to space, to verticality and horizontality, to proximity and distance, in which the urban environment, with its solid forms and open spaces, networks and fabric, creates a text, a semantics of the city, as Karlheinz Stierle already observed in *The Capital of Signs* (2001). The city thus derives its aesthetic and dynamism from the many cycles that animate and shape it. Yet it is also chaotic and complex, woven from histories and stories that are personal, speculative, rooted in memory or fictional, all of which contribute to the construction of visual cultures. As a site of collective or individual experience, spanning an entire lifetime or contained within a single memory, it opens the image onto intimate and atmospheric worlds, shaped by night and day, the seasons, love, sorrow and struggle. It also becomes a photographic subject approached through fiction, including literature and cinema, as well as through study, chronicle and investigation.

The Institut's research and creative support programme aims to foster and bring together diverse approaches to photography, from the history of photography, visual anthropology and visual studies to digital humanities, the social sciences and humanities, and research in the visual arts. As every year, the call is open to photographers, artists, researchers and curators.

Both international in scope and rooted in its home region of Hauts-de-France, the Institut will also pay particular attention to projects that draw on the region's specific resources and engage with a range of public programmes and encounters.

Closing of the call for applications on December 1, 2025 at 3 p.m. (Paris Time)