



**MESSAGE FROM SIMON HILL HONFRPS
PRESIDENT AND CHAIR OF THE TRUSTEES, THE ROYAL PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY**

Thank you for inviting me to speak at this 25th International Audio Visual Festival. I am sorry not to be here in person, but a combination of factors prevents me from doing so, not least a rail strike that causes me to miss two other RPS engagements over the course of this weekend. I was prevented from attending the 24th RPS IAVF event in person - as were we all - due to the restrictions of the COVID pandemic. It would have been lovely to be here with you and I would so liked to have met Lorenzo De Francesco, the FIAP Director of AV Services, a Judge for this Festival.

This theatre at RPS House, in which this 25th IAVF is taking place, is named for Tony Troman ARPS APAGB. Tony joined the RPS in 1975 and within a year he had a seat on the Committee of the 1st RPS IAVF. It is thanks to Tony and his generous legacy that made it possible to equip this theatre to the standard that we all enjoy, and which facilitates the hybrid delivery of this year's Festival, which has attracted 65 entries from 12 countries and 72 authors. Such participation is a truly amazing achievement that endows this Festival with its premier position in the AV world, thanks in no small measure to the dedicated work of a team of highly skilled and committed volunteers.

In addition to this Festival, which will use Tony's legacy to such great effect, so many other organisations and groups - within and outwith the RPS - also benefit directly from his generosity. It is in this space that our distinctions are assessed and while AV has been an RPS Group for 52 years, previously with its own distinctions, it is unfortunate that an AV distinction is no longer available within the RPS distinctions framework. I hope that one day it will again be possible.

As a schoolboy, I have fond and very vivid memories of mounting slides in Gepe mounts for my Dad as he worked, often late into the night, on his own AV productions. Although in those days, it was with two banks of three Kodak Carousel projectors rather than on a computer. Working with him taught me so much about the unique qualities of AV as a medium: AV storytelling is such a potent tool for conveying narratives. It leverages the synergy of audio and visual media to create such an immersive and emotionally resonant experience for the audience. There really is nothing that can compare to the storytelling power of a well-crafted AV production.

I hope you enjoy the Festival and please - if at all possible - try to arrange the next RPS International AV Festival on a date before the date of the RPS AGM in 2025. That is when my Presidency of the RPS, after five years, comes to an end and I really would like to make it in person to one of these Festivals. I can't think of a more enjoyable way of delivering my last function as President than to be here with you in person for the 26th Festival.

So, enjoy the Festival and give a nod of appreciation to Tony for his wonderful legacy from which so many people derive such benefit and pleasure.

Thank you.