PRESS RELEASE
24 NOVEMBER 2026

The Royal Photographic Society Awards 2026 Announced –
The world's longest-running photography awards





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Captions (left to right):
Roger Deakins, *The Dragon ride - Cleethorps*, 2026 © Roger Deakins; and Timon Benson, *Compression* (2023) © Timon Benson. All images courtesy The Royal Photographic Society

The world's longest-running photography awards, The Royal Photographic Society Awards, has announced the recipients for 2026. The RPS's most prestigious honour - The RPS Centenary Medal - has been awarded to Sir Roger Deakins. Regarded as one of the greatest and most influential cinematographers in cinema history, he is the recipient of numerous accolades, including two Academy Awards for Best Cinematography and five BAFTA Awards for Best Cinematography.

The RPS Award for Achievement in the Art of Photography (under 30) is given to British photographer, **Timon Benson**, an artist at the start of his career whose work is gaining significant national and international acclaim. Benson's work spans documentary, choreography and abstract, contemplating the nature of the medium and its relationship to contemporary life.

Reflecting the science of photography, **The RPS Progress Medal** in the science of photography is presented to **Professor Marc Levoy**, the American computer graphics researcher and Professor Emeritus of Computer Science and Electrical Engineering at Stanford University, a vice president and Fellow at Adobe Inc., and a Distinguished Engineer at Google. Levoy's combination of fundamental research, technological innovation and successful real-world application represents precisely the kind of important advance in imaging science recognised by the RPS Progress Medal.

Award-winning British photographic artist, **Mandy Barker**, whose work involving marine plastic debris has received global recognition, receives **The RPS Award for Environmental Responsibility**. Working with scientists she aims to raise awareness about plastic pollution in

the world's oceans, highlighting the harmful effect on marine life, climate change and ultimately ourselves - inspiring action, leading to change.

Polly Braden, the documentary photographer and filmmaker whose long-term, collaborative projects explore how people live, work and find their place, has been awarded the **RPS Award for Social Impact**. Her latest project, *Against the Tide*, made with *The Guardian*, followed young people in seventeen coastal towns. It was exhibited at Arnolfini, Bristol and Firstsite, Colchester, and took sixteen young people to Parliament to give evidence to MPs.

Now in its 148th year, the Royal Photographic Society Awards is the world's longest running and most prestigious photography honours, dating back to 1878. The Awards recognise individuals working across both still and moving image. Rather than rewarding a single image, the RPS Awards celebrate the photographers and recipients themselves - highlighting significant achievements and showcasing new and emerging talent across a range of categories that range across photography and the moving image's genres and applications, including moving image; new media; science and imaging; education; publishing; and curation.

Victoria Humphries, CEO, Royal Photographic Society, says of the 2026 Royal Photographic Society Awards, "*One of the things that makes the Royal Photographic Society special is the breadth of people and practices that make up our photographic community. The RPS Awards provide an opportunity to recognise and celebrate those who are making a difference, whether through their creativity, innovation, research, education or their contribution to the wider photographic community. As an organisation, we believe that photography is for everyone, and these RPS Awards demonstrate that there are so many different ways to engage with, contribute to and shape its future. It is a privilege to celebrate this year's recipients and to shine a light on the individuals whose passion, expertise and commitment continue to inspire others and help photography thrive.*"

Sir Roger Deakins, winner of the 2026 RPS Centenary Medal, says of the Awards, "*I'm very honoured to receive this award from the Royal Photographic Society. Although I have been more known for my work in cinematography, still photography has always been a passion and more personal to me. To be recognized by the Royal Photographic Society for my work in stills is amazing and means a great deal to me.*"

Anthony Luvera, Director of Education Chair of the judging panel, explains, "*The RPS Awards recognise the extraordinary breadth of talent, creativity and commitment that shapes photography today. They celebrate not only outstanding photographic work, but also the people whose ideas and contributions demonstrate photography's power to shape how we see and understand the world, challenge perspectives and contribute to society. It is a pleasure to*

Captions (left to right): Polly Braden, *Cohen* © Polly Braden; and Mandy Barker, *Conferva tibia (Tights, Nylon)*. Recovered clothing specimen from the series *Photographs of British Algae Cyanotype Imperfections*, 2023 © Mandy Barker. All images courtesy The Royal Photographic Society

recognise this year's recipients and the important contributions they have made to photography and its wider cultural and social impact."

The complete list of RPS 2026 Awards Recipients is as follows and is available with more information and images on each recipient here https://rps.org/awards.

The Royal Photographic Society 2026 Awards Recipients –

RPS Award for Photography with Young People with RPS Honorary Fellowship	***Aneesa Dawoojee FRPS***
RPS Eastlake Medal & RPS Honorary Fellowship	***Geoffrey Batchen***
RPS Progress Medal & RPS Honorary Fellowship	***Marc Levoy***
RPS Centenary Medal & RPS Honorary Fellowship	***Sir Roger Deakins***
RPS Award for Social Impact with RPS Honorary Fellowship	***Polly Braden***
RPS Award for Photography Curatorship, Criticism or Research with Honorary Fellowship	***Pelumi Odubanjo***
RPS Award for Environmental Responsibility with Honorary Fellowship	***Mandy Barker FRPS***
RPS Award for Achievement in the Art of Photography (under 30yrs)	***Timon Benson***
RPS Award for Photography Education with Honorary Fellowship	***Wendy Ewald***
RPS Honorary Fellowship	***Jermaine Francis***

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Notes to Editors

About The Royal Photographic Society

The Royal Photographic Society (The RPS) is an educational charity with an international membership. Founded in 1853, when photography was in its infancy, the objective of The RPS is to make the art and science of photography more widely available and is committed to bringing photography to everyone. Today, The RPS is a world-leading photographic community, made up of accomplished artists, dedicated academics, hobbyists, and seasoned professionals. The RPS aims to inspire people through its innovative exhibitions, its award-winning RPS Journal, and its highly respected awards and events. The RPS helps photographers create images through its educational programmes, qualifications, and its public initiatives; and it seeks to connect photographers through specialist groups and its UK and international communities. Membership is open to everyone.

www.rps.org