

## Analysis and Exploration of Popular Photography Concept under Visual Culture

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### Abstract

Visual culture's undisputed place in today's society has been formed for a long time, rapid development, and it is surprising that people often think about how we today have visual elements in every corner of our senses, whether passive or active, people have become accustomed to this kind of life. As a very important part of visual culture, photography art has a unique growth track along with the development of contemporary art, which has brought a series of changes to the invasion of visual culture into people's lives. From 1839 to the present, through nearly two hundred years of history, he brings to the public is often the most intuitive feeling, the era of reading pictures along with the development of visual culture in the long years of human civilization. No matter what kind of photography, it is an important way to lead visual culture. What kind of experience does the general public have for photography as a visual art, what are the advantages and disadvantages, and what information can we get from it? How will the public's view of photography change with the change of visual culture?

**Keywords:** Visual Culture, Photography, Art

### The impact of visual culture and photography on the current society

From the perspective of photography, we have already entered the era of "reading pictures", and there are signs that the rapid development of science and technology and people's faster and faster pace of life will drive people's thirst for vision. Both online media and traditional paper media have produced many changes, the biggest change is the increase of picture information, picture is one of the most intuitive ways to obtain information, events need to express the elements can be explained to a large extent with a few pictures, or even a photo. To a certain extent, many people have forgotten the long meaning brought by words, and are more willing to appreciate the visual impact and rich expression effect shown by a picture. The fast-paced life will change people's cognition and even the aesthetic process.

This study is devoted to the development of current photography in China, so as to influence the public photography concept under the influence of the new media era and establish the

public photography art view, especially the young generation who have a certain interest in photography. Contemporary Chinese photography, whether it is documentary photography or art photography, has been in an environment of vague cognition for a long time, and people are not clear about the meaning of the word photography. People are not clear about what they want to express through photography, is it emotion? Is it attitude? Is it a consideration of conceptual value? This study tries its best to arouse people's thinking about the existing photography system in China, change the influence of current Chinese visual culture on photography enthusiasts, and enable the photography art to have a more complete development in China.

In the years of development of Chinese photography, generations of Chinese artists have continued to "make mistakes" and innovate, exploring the possibility of photography as a new medium to bring artistic expression. We should face up to the influence of photography art on the new visual culture, not limited to photography technology and some strong sense of form in the picture. We should not have a narrow and one-sided understanding of the art of photography, whether it is art galleries, galleries, or some institutions specializing in the exhibition of photographic works, of course, their relationship with art can not be really hostile.

Since photography was born in 1839, it is not an ancient art form, but its inherent magic even makes people feel that "painting is dead". The process of "depicting reality" is fascinating, and a new visual feeling brought by it begins to instill in the society at that time. People began to wonder, if there is photography, then why there is painting? A classical painting that tells a story can be replaced by a photograph. Wouldn't that say it all?

Compared to the painter's drive, which resembles God's creation drive from the beginning, the photographer's drive comes later. Van Lier (2016) This also confirmed the doubts about functionality in the early days of photography. After the birth of photography, for a long period of time for painting and service, people can do a very detailed description of the painting through the form of photography. In the long run, people will find that "no matter how to draw, it will not be more accurate than the camera". At this time, the voice of reflecting on the role of art began to spread, and photography destroyed people's original understanding of visual art. At this time, visual culture had a major impact on people's psychology invisibly, and its development seemed to announce the future of photography under visual culture. People greedily absorb this seemingly young magic, but they do not think that the invasion of visual culture has already paved the way for hundreds of years of history.

Visual culture has attacked in a big way, when everyone has not had a lot of feelings, it has seized too much "psychological high ground", the classical art form is no longer the darling of people's talk, wandering in the people's mouth is the content of the new sense of form, the visual culture of the new era, the photography of the new era with high artistic. The same is true of many excellent photography works. When you sigh that the photos are rich in color and the pictures are exquisite and thorough, you will also feel the inner power transmitted by the images to you and the various demands of artists to extend their works to the whole society. The latter brings people a feeling of functional beauty. Many people classify photography as a "practical art", which is the product that most directly affects people's visual habits. Function itself is a unique aesthetic for human beings. Both technological aesthetics

and technical aesthetics are new terms to describe the development of human society in the new era, which are in line with the impact of photography on visual culture.

At present, photography has become more and more mainstream in the major contemporary art exhibitions in China, which is not what people used to know about photojournalism: It is very testing the photographer's grasp of the overall event, and at the same time, it is necessary to think about the connection between the photos taken and the social hot spots or problems, and attach the relevant text narration and typesetting in the text description after the photo needs to reflect the problem without delay and unnecessary description. On this basis, reasonable use of photographic language, photo light, tone, rhythm, composition, as well as character expression, dynamic, environmental display can affect or even determine the theme of the photo.

The current way of photography is no longer limited to this, different social times have created different styles of photography, and its social theme is unchanged, only its form and the object of service change. More and more photographers begin to serve their inner feelings, which makes photography full of infinite possibilities, and more and more artists begin to express themselves through photography. No matter the content or form is no longer limited to the mass of sentient beings under the shutter, the vast world in the film, it begins to break the boundary between subjective and objective, and opens a new road for visual art. This is something we could not have imagined just a few years ago. Contemporary art has been so, as a kind of information dissemination force, photography is well deserved to be the top. Moreover, the popularity of shooting equipment has also made the earth more transparent than ever before, and "sitting on the ground and traveling 80,000 miles a day" is no longer just a geographical phrase. We can't get rid of the impact brought by such a visual art and the change of real life, and we can't fail to analyze and explore this phenomenon. Every art is constantly developing, and can the visual cultural phenomenon composed of visual art dominate the change of people's attitude towards the future life and the pursuit of art?

### **The contemporary public's awareness of visual culture and pursuit of photography as an art form**

Due to the gradual improvement of people's life quality, the cultural industry is very prosperous. Under the continuous stimulation of visual culture, people begin to pursue various kinds of art. Therefore, people seize the photography that has entered the digital age as a means to realize their artistic dreams. The reasons are relatively simple, first of all, the most important thing is that the threshold for the operation of photography is relatively low compared with other art forms. Nowadays, camera manufacturers make the manual of each camera produced more and more thick and detailed, so that in many photography majors in universities, the teacher teaches students several things at the beginning of the photography class: Read the camera manual. Therefore, photography, which can be mastered through certain simple theoretical knowledge and practical learning, makes many people confident that they can become "creators of art", but this is not the case.



Figure 1: A large number of Chinese photography enthusiasts have similar shooting themes (Retrieved from: <http://www.gjlysy.com/NewsHtml/TravelNews/20210709154940.html>)

Although the influence of visual culture on people is increasing day by day, the result is not ideal when people step into the environment of visual culture. Most people have some "retrogressive" problems in the choice of personal artistic concepts, and a kind of artistic choice that has been abandoned by many people for the pursuit of pure sense of form has appeared. This technique of expression has become the phenomenon at the bottom of the popular art concept. Taking photography as an example, the number of photos in the digital age is bound to increase geometrically compared to the film age, and the cost and threshold of shooting are decreasing every year. Whether it is an artist who has been famous for a long time or just ordinary people who have cameras, there are a lot of so-called "digital garbage" in their cameras, which is like a deliberate "monster" under the radiation of visual culture impact.

In November 2011, Erik Kessels printed all 350,000 photos he uploaded to Flickr in a single day and filled a gallery in Amsterdam with them. Visitors are encouraged to wander through the photographs as a sea of images in which to indulge, pick up the images and discover the stories in them, and thus to feel the coexistence of the vast and private nature of images on the Internet today. This way of creation also confirms the influence of visual culture on the creation of contemporary art. Every "photo" has a specific idea and sense of form of the creator, which is even ironic to the "decisive moment" elaborated by Bresson in a sense. The composition of multiple moments becomes the confusion of the public for the current photography consciousness, which is a challenge in terms of art form and cultural consciousness. Alfredo Jaar once said, "It seems to me that we face a great paradox today. On the one hand, we are bombarded with thousands of images; But on the other hand, images are under unprecedented control - whether that control comes from the government or a private organization. So I think we lose the ability to see and be moved by images. Nothing moves us anymore, nothing makes sense."





Figure 2: 24hrs in Photos (Erik, 2011 )

The photographer is free to choose and decide the final result, which is full of magic. And his position is harder to define than the photographs he takes - or, more precisely, the photographs he helps to take. Van Lier (2016) They may take the scenery that does not look good, the composition that is considered to be meaningful or the right focus or some images that do not reach the safety shutter, or even the same meaningless continuous shooting. Visual impact has become a false proposition, prompting the public to create a fake atmosphere in order to imitate famous artists or make extensive use of photography's not so deep technical means.

This is, in a sense, a step backwards for art, because too many people think that the images that exist on our cameras are real art, and the questions people ask about the general direction of art are not appropriate for this proposition. People will look at each other and mistake this beautiful artistic photo shoot for an art. As we can see, photography itself has also been affected by the great atmosphere of visual culture. A distorted view of photography by many people is spreading, and the changing art of photography is also impacting every pair of keen eyes. Therefore, we have to discuss what the public view of photography needs us to think about at present.

In the eyes of many people, art has a new look with the development of science and technology, and the real formation of visual culture has also made art enter the homes of ordinary people. With the increasing number of art practitioners, the art market has begun to flourish, and various art exhibitions, books and even some so-called art training courses have "suddenly come like spring breeze in the night". On the premise of meeting the needs of daily life, people began to have spiritual needs. The civilianization of artistic pursuit leads to a problem, that is, art can easily be standardized or quantified. Although there are many conventional concepts and rules in visual aesthetics, these rules are easily regarded as "aesthetic Bible" by the public.

We go to bookstores in the category of photography bibliography, even in China's very official bookstores, it is full of photography technology professors and SLR camera advertising, inside the rules are dizzying, and the history of photography, aesthetic thinking and famous works of the content is very little. But real works of art do not have a real law to follow, it is only a relatively low-level standard of the so-called public eye, and it does not need much deep thinking to see the clues. Many people play with their so-called artistic perception, coupled

with some small feelings and small feelings of their own life, constitute some artistic photography works, but there is a problem here, the so-called "artistic" photos do not mean that it is a kind of art.

However, it conforms to a general direction of the development of photography under the background of visual culture. We cannot say whether this direction is right or wrong, but it has been running on the track of visual culture for a long time. The good news is that people still love art, and more understand that art is not a myth, art is from people's thoughts and understanding, especially for photography, which can be described as a "restoration of the public view of photography". This is a victory for the common people, we have taken away the important right to speak in the development direction of visual culture, and the awareness of image expression has also sprung up in people's hearts. In a short span of ten years, the people holding cameras are not only professional photographers or artists, they are most likely ordinary people who have a deep yearning for art, and they use the machines in their hands to record their visual culture in their hearts, and record the various feelings they find from life. If you think of it this way, each person is his own emotional messenger, in control of his own attitude and understanding of the world.

### **The popularization trend of photography and the influence of visual culture communication**

The spread of photography art has made great progress under the condition of continuous rapid evolution of digital technology, and the advanced art form played by some technological monopolists in the early days has become an essential element of life for every family.

The popularization did not destroy photography, but changed it from an object to a culture and then to a form of communication. Although the meaning of each photograph becomes insignificant in the sea of images, whether good or bad, they as collective photography will never be lost in the foreseeable history of mankind. Trying to define a single moment in this complete development as "true photography" is not practical. In fact, it is quite possible that the photography we face today is nothing compared to the infinite possibilities of the future. Photography as an important part of visual art, its direction has always been changing. Until now, many people still think that "photography is dead". Just as more than a hundred years ago, when photography was born, people said in horror that "painting is dead", it is also very ridiculous today. The author also re-examined this problem when creating.

In the process of creation, the author also found that many elements that constitute photography are expanding their fields. I found various ordinary scenes distributed in the countryside and made them into a kind of seemingly meaningless photographic "monument", giving them a sense of ceremony. These scenes seem to be ordinary scenes, many people live in such a seemingly empty environment every day, seemingly absurd, but some sad. I hope to use these meaningless scenes to commemorate the time that has passed, to commemorate history and times, because our often more costly expression and attention to "unimportant" feelings. When people recognize and pay attention to the shackles of this era, only at some point will they learn to live in peace with The Times and affirm the inevitability of meaninglessness.



Figure 3: Monument 1 (Li, 2017)



Figure 4: Monument 2 (Li, 2017)

Although the spirit of photography here is no longer enshrined in people's hearts as in the past, thinking about taking a picture without any composition problems in the most appropriate position, everything seems so reasonable. But today's photography can produce both a lot of "digital junk" and, more likely, timeless classics. Using the example of non-visual arts, we cannot assume that the decline of the record industry will cause the depression of the music industry, let alone that a more advanced technology affects art, and people also want to use artistic means to express science and technology. People should not stifle their artistic needs in a high-level artistic atmosphere. Visual culture has brought art to the public and entered the homes of ordinary people, so we should not set the threshold high.

Everyone has his own artistic dream in his heart, and the problem is that he needs some guidance. The popularization of art is not in a proper range now. The key to the problem is that art education is not perfect, and there are a lot of problems in both institutional college education and socialized adult re-education. Although visual culture is a kind of influence produced by the development of The Times, art without certain correct guidance will be distorted by the double-edged sword of visual culture, and then form a wrong artistic concept. At this time, the problem comes back to the original fetters that destroy the development of photography -- the distorted view of photography.

In fact, the most basic meaning of contemporary photography is to express oneself, do not rely on any rules and regulations to express their own emotions and feelings, and show their inner feelings between reality and dreams into photos, photography is no longer a technology to press the shutter. In fact, what photographers value most is a metaphor, something unexpected in the picture. In other words, this is the problem and direction that all art should think about and face. In China, vision is no longer a matter of art, The Times have given it more meaning, it has too much bearing, if you want to use photography to convey such elements to people, then its space will be very large. This is also a deep thinking problem for our contemporary Chinese young photographers, how to deal with this layer of relationship, sometimes need to separate from the impact of technology on you.

No matter what kind of art, I think the important prerequisite for its good development is its popularity. The threshold may not be low enough, but people should love it very much and make more and better possibilities for this art through the concept of the public. Art has infinite possibilities, and its development also represents the high pursuit of the people at the spiritual level. People love photography to a certain extent to meet their backlog of aesthetic taste and creative enthusiasm for a long time, even if it is the nature of salon photography or some personal characteristics of strong private photography are so, at least in the lack of artistic cultivation and practical learning of the crowd, the popularity of photography gives people to complete the art of the "life skills" hope, although it is not a task.

They hope to keep up with the rapid development of visual culture, and hope to become the right people to choose ideas in this era, which also forms a contrast in visual art. Only in this way, photography will have a deep reform from the bottom up, and art is enjoyed by the people. One must wonder why there were so many more masters of photography a few decades or even a hundred years ago than there are now, when there is a shortage of masters. This is also an illusion brought by the prevalence of visual culture. The amount of information on the Internet is increasing day by day, and the number of photos on the Internet far exceeds people's imagination.

The degree of networking in contemporary China is so high that even traditional paper media have been found to have a signal of decline due to various restrictions on communication. Good photos in the era of readable pictures are often submerged in a large number of so-called "along with", everyone has the right to spread their captured every moment, in the level of life, there is no so-called survival of the fittest, only personal taste, each person's exposure to a certain extent compared to the last century is geometric growth, we can only recognize the power of visual art, Exercise your eyes and find out what the standard of visual art is.

In the field of contemporary visual art, photography boldly expresses the unforeseeable and impossible phenomena in our inherent thinking, changes the space of visual art and culture from a single objective existence to the experience people will have in the future, and turns to the most distant world in our hearts, where all kinds of breakthroughs in visual culture are also located. Photography exposes them one by one to people's eyes, and leaps forward to lead people into the deepest cave in the era of visual culture. When people walk out of it and return to the environment full of realistic sunlight, people's inner depths have been "exposed"



by the powerful power of visual art. Left the conceptual impression that photography wants to show the world.

### **Conclusion**

Things that may be bad habits in everyday life and are therefore often suppressed or covered up are restored to their rightful place in the art world. (EH Gombrich, 1995) People are always lost in the world of self-cognition, forgetting the way we express ourselves and express life. They always vent their emotions in a conventional way, but they can't get a response. The impact of visual culture makes photography a good emotional output point, and people have been fully aware of the formation of their personal views on photography.

In the era of visual culture, photography art shows us the infinite possibilities that human beings can feel in visual perception, and changes people's inherent concept of photography art. The public view of photography is influenced by the double-edged visual culture, and the public view of photography in turn affects the direction of the development of visual art and the further formation of visual culture. On the one hand, the change of the objective program of photography art has an irreversible impact on human civilization, digital waste is flooded in front of people, social phenomena and the confusion of related pictures are easy to form a certain cultural pollution. Photography, after all, has been taken out of the hands of the few and become a part of everyday life. But on the other hand, the visual culture of the common people is the initial embodiment of the civilianization of art, involving all aspects of society, which creates another visual civilization, and can even be said to be the most important component and foundation of contemporary visual civilization. In such a big environment, photography art continues to move forward along with visual culture, and people continue the life course of art, so that we can see that the public view of photography under the influence of visual culture in the future has moved to a unique direction.

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