

Speculation on Photography and Art under New Technology

GeWen¹ and Li Jingwen²

¹Zhengde Vocational and Technical College, Nanjing, Jiangsu, China

²Yancheng Institute of Technology, Yancheng, Jiangsu, China

Abstract:

With the deeper development of digital technology and the Internet, photography, as a form of artistic expression that once independently existed, now features the blurring boundaries. It has always been said that neither the photographers nor the photography industry can continue the career. At the same time, however, the image-selling websites such as Vision China are successfully listed, and the photography museums are such a hit. This is what British writer Dickens once said, "This is the best and the worst." Photography industry is facing a golden opportunity.

Keywords: New Technology; Photography and Art; Integrated Speculation and Analysis

I. Current condition of photography and art under new technology

With the transition of times, photography has undergone great changes under the influence of the Internet and domestic cultural industry. Both the realization of digitized photography technology and the gradual maturity of the market-oriented operation of photographic artworks have greatly impacted the traditional thinking habits on photography and have highlighted some phenomena that are worthy of speculation by photographers.

1. The Situation on The Market of Photography and Art

The Spring Auction in New York, which had ended in April this year, produced an astounding transcript: the performance of the major auction houses in photography has declined, and the total transaction price of the photography market has leveled off the data during the 2010 economic crisis.

The failure of auction market resulted in Raymond Depardon as well as many other well-known photographers' jointly delivering an open letter on the question "Will photographer the career die?" in France during the 2018 Arles International Photography Festival Week.

On the other hand, it is notable that the prosperity of photographic exhibition and image industry is little affected although the photography auction market is slightly deserted. According to figures, the 2017 Arles Photography Festival brings together 48 exhibitions from 250 artists from all over the world. The number of visitors exceeded 125,000. In the past four years, the number has increased by more than 40%. Looking at the domestic photography industry, the major photographic exhibitions are also approaching maturity, including the Lianzhou International Photographic Exhibition, the Guangzhou International Photography Biennial Exhibition held by the official art institution of the Guangdong Museum of Art, as well as the Jimei Arles Photographic Exhibition held by the Sanyingtang Photography Art Center which was founded and owned by artists. In addition, events such as the Shafei Photography Award and the Hou Dengke Documentary Photography Award have also injected new power into the growing domestic imaging industry.

The two very different phenomena make us seriously rethink the question: What on earth has changed in this era under such a representation? Are professional photographers really going to disappear in this era? What should they do in such a new era?

2. Professional Photographers Are Caught off Guard

I have to admit that the iterative popularization of mobile networks and the application of new photography technologies are quietly and rapidly changing the developing situation of photography. This is especially true for mobile photography, which is greatly influenced by scientific technology. With the continuous evolution of smart mobile terminals, the traditional communication functions of today's mobile phones have been relegated to the second place. The rise in capabilities of both hardware and software has brought about higher pixels, better imaging, and more user-friendly filming effects. In some cases, the phone camera's photographic function has been able to meet the same consumer requirements that once only the professional photographic equipment can achieve. These visible cost reductions directly lower the threshold for photography.

At the same time, as the public are increasingly reliable on the Internet, the network's spreading function is gradually transformed into a way of daily life. The advancement of both imaging equipment and network technology combined, the public's expression is now more focused on the direction of visualization. The public can get rid of abstract words and express their inner feelings with more intuitive photographic language, which includes light, shadow, lines and colors. According to relevant statistics, non-professional photographers, who are also called "Net Generation" photographers, provide most of the current visual network materials. They are the first direct witnesses in the scene. Their images have advanced visual attention and screen impact, and often can cater to hot spots and online topics. "Net Generation" photographers always find that pictures cannot fully satisfy their needs, so the more exciting and eye-catching Live technology has increased the possibility of their becoming stars, and has promoted the "Cyber Celebrity Economy"

in recent years. This is due to the low cost of video equipment and the popularity of the network, which provides convenient creating conditions and greater display space for the spread of "Net Generation".

The violent changes of all these have made the professional photographers who have professional equipment in hands feel sudden and forceful and difficult to adapt, and also have brought confusion to the photographer's choosing shooting direction and their self-positioning.

II. To face new technology photography and artistic speculation

From the invention of Daguerreotype and the birth of Niépce's first photo *Window At Le Gras*, via the popularity of digital cameras nowadays and the application of VR the super virtual reality imaging technology, to the future possible popularization of computational photography, photography was inseparable from "technology" at the very beginning of its birth. In the digital age, light is no longer recorded on film, but is generated by digital light-sensitive components or even directly by computers. This, however, is only the change of media on generating and recording instead of any change on the rationale of photography—generating images, processing images, and finally imaging. It means that a more significant factor besides the technology is working to influence the photography art: which is called artistry in English. Artistry is a derivative of the root "art". Interpretation in the New Oxford English Dictionary is as follows: Artistry is creative abilities and skills. How are the skills and creativity in photographic art presented under new technology?

1. Combination of profession and interest

Now, photography is not only documentary but also a kind of self-expression. Many "new generations" of photographers have emerged. Many of them don't specialize in photography. For instance, the photographer Sun Jun, who studied traditional Chinese painting since childhood, used photography as a medium to combine with meticulous paintings after graduating from China Academy of Art to create works with profound oriental artistic conception. As he himself said: "Chinese people have to make works with what they have in their own emotions, and then, as much as possible, be perfect." Also, astrophotography enthusiasts are applying their professional knowledge to shooting very good Starry photography. These "new generations" of photographers view photography as the main language to practice and explore their own ideas and concepts. According to their own interests and hobbies, they follow the self-ideology and the self-eyes. They look at, listen to, and discover the beauty around them in a way that they understand. They explore their own ways of image expression in a very relaxed state. They make photography a medium and do image practice with diversified manners. They shoot with a serious while humorous state. They create and even make images. They often have rather unique positions and aesthetics and such kind of "natural growth" let their thoughts go back to freedom and make photography a more interesting thing.

2. Pay attention to the photographic art market

The embedding of new technology and Internet communication model have increased the attention of photographic art and have activated the photographic art market. From the holding of major photographic exhibitions, the establishment of art galleries and auction houses, to the improvement of mechanisms, the domestic photography market has gradually become standardized and industrialized. Therefore, establishing a new understanding of photographic works, as well as analyzing and solving the market-oriented operation of photographic works is a problem that both photographers and collectors need to think. Just like the famous photographer Liang Wenchuan said: "Photography, as an independent form of visual art, is expanding its influence in the art market and further narrowing the price gap between photographic works and awesome works of other kind of media, which caused people to pay attention to the photographic market."

As early as 2006, *Sightseeing on Hushan*, created by Lang Jingshan, who is well known to the public for combining photography technology and Chinese traditional landscape painting concept, the master of "Composite Picture", was traded at the Sotheby's auction in Hong Kong with more than 820,000 Hong Kong dollars, and this transaction price, which exceeded the valuation twice, made all parties satisfied. In addition, in the Beijing Huachen 2003 Autumn Auction, *I Prefer to Love You Rather Than Be Immortal* was sold for 44,000 yuan. Lang Jingshan's works became out of demand in the art auction market at home and abroad, along with other Chinese modern artworks using photography as a presenting means. When referring to the Chinese image auction market, I had to mention a photographer Wang Qingsong. Whether you like his work or not, there is no doubt that his photography has been recognized by the international photography market. It is said that his work is collected by Prince William of England, the Billstone Foundation of Spain, the San Diego Museum of Art in California, the K20 and K21 in Düsseldorf, Germany, and the Cisneros Foundation in Miami, USA." According to China Securities Journal: "In February this year, Wang Qingsong held a solo exhibition at the American International Photography Center *When the World Collide*.

In July, his work *Historical Monument* participated in the 42nd French Arles Photography Festival. This is not the first time Wang Qingsong has participated in the Festival. The high and the lowbrow of his work have already left strong recognition in the world." This series of data illustrates the success of Wang Qingsong's works in the marketing of photography. It also shows that domestic photographers are gradually enhancing the artistic value of their works and themselves by establishing exhibitions and marketing through auctions and collections. However, there is still a gap between the domestic photography collection market and foreign countries'. At present, the image collection market has yet to be standardized. Photographers, brokers, curators, critics, galleries, auction houses and collectors have to form a benign operating mechanism, and the economic market also needs prospering.

1, Breaking the border and integrating actively, content is king

In the Internet era, photography is divided into a variety of modules. There are independent modules for drawing, imaging, displaying, disseminating and consuming. The technical expressions are also

diversified. They can be filmed, digital, computer-made, and can be combined with virtual images. This series of modular transformations has enabled photography to break through the circle of photographers and become a consumer product in the form of mass photography, moving from the art hall to the market. In addition, the popularity of VR and the maturity of various new technology, digital photography has broken through the traditional technical barriers and opened the "unlimited" concept of "carnival." This series of diversified developments is rapidly changing and innovating the extension and connotation of photography. This undoubtedly requires photographers to break the border, actively integrate, and keep in mind that content is king.

Photographer Guo Yingguang's work *The Happiness of Obedience* combines documentary photography and artistic creation techniques together, using photography as the main medium, along with video, installation and handmade books. Guo Yingguang's creating approach represents many young photographers, who not only do camera photography, but also make video works, focusing on photography's media functions. They add other elements and re-create, centering on storytelling and creativity. Just like the photographer Liu Bolin said, "The survival of photography in networked era will experience the ambiguity of the boundary between photography and modern art. Photography is no longer an independent form of art, but a tool for expression and narrative of all art categories." However, no matter how the narrative is expressed, content is always one of the cores of photography. Also, the photographer Zhong Weixing once said: "The photographer is a person who takes observation for a profession. Whether he observes as a reporter on behalf of the public or as a performer for others, his viewing activities and practice determine that his eyes are a special window of spiritual energy exchange." These two words illustrate several dimensions that photographers should master. The value of professional photography is not just the simple "seeing", but is to make full use of the photographers' literacy, experience, position and spirit to have a wise and profound dialogue with the world on the basis of "seeing". The core is also the reason why traditional photography has such shocking aesthetic power and could give birth to great works beyond time and space. It will never fade when time moves on; instead, it will be even more precious in the changes of the times.

The examples in the opening of this article can also well prove this point: in the era of "Net Generation" photography, it doesn't mean that professional photographers are bound to marginalize and disappear although the tide of the times has, to some extent, affected the performance of the photography auction market. The flourishing development of the photography exhibition indicates the improvement of the public's aesthetic cognition. In the electronic photos filled with the Internet, we can see that the public still maintains the recognition of beauty and insists on the search for good works. This undoubtedly provides a good space for the development of photographers and the entire photography industry. These are the strong reasons why professional photographers will not easily die out and will stand firm in the new era.

Conclusion:

In the times when the boundaries of this photographic art are blurred, the digital technology is continuously updated, and the complex image market and the noisy reality are blended, it matters whether photographers can take a serious and humorous attitude to use the art of photography to view the world and open a way to dialogue with the world, and most importantly, let photography art provide a variety of ways with people to think about the world and personal existence and connection.

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