

# The Importance of Exploring the Authenticity of the Times to Contemporary Photography Creation

**Jiao Yang**

*LuXun Academy of Fine Arts, Liaoning 110000, China*

**ABSTRACT.** *Photography has developed rapidly since its birth. Many schools and famous works have been born in the history of photography. However, the development of contemporary photography seems to have lost its direction in this complicated artistic environment. In order to keep the development of contemporary photography, the authenticity of photography is of vital importance. Photographic creation should grasp the main theme of the times and the characteristics of the current era. If it leaves the unique characteristics of the times, there will be no reality.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Authenticity; Times; Diversification; Photography*

## 1. Introduction

Since the birth of photography in 1839, photography has gone through nearly 200 years of history. Photography is a very young art in the whole art category. Since its birth, there have been many photography schools and masters. A large number of excellent photography works were born or are being born, which directly or indirectly affect human society. In recent years, with the development of science and technology and people's understanding of photography, photography has entered the daily life of ordinary people. People record every bit of what happens around them in their favorite way, every important moment in their life, and every touching moment around them. It can be said that photography has become more and more closely linked with people's life and has become an important part of people's daily life. However, photography, an art, has also gone through a long process of development and has been baptized for hundreds of years.

## 2. Development of photography

Photography was not recognized as an art at first, and the art at that time was mainly painting, music, sculpture, etc. Photography at the beginning of its birth was

regarded as a "variety show", and its real recognition as a symbol of art was the famous "Two Paths to Life" photographic work created by Relander, a representative of the high art photography school. In 1857, the photography participated in the Manchester Art Authenticity Exhibition in England. This exhibition made photos equal to oil paintings and sculptures for the first time in history and recognized as artistic works. Since then, various photography schools have emerged one after another, and various photography concepts and ideas have been put forward and advocated by representatives of different schools. The schools of Pictorial Photography, Naturalist Photography, Impressionist Photography, Serial Photography and Photographic Separatists, F64, Magnum Photographic Society and other schools have been established successively. The emergence and development of these schools have been accompanied by the birth and development of the whole photographic art history. Their ideas and advocacy are different. However, they have all played a huge role in promoting the development of the whole photography. Photographers have used photography as a brand-new artistic creation method to try almost all possibilities and photographed everything that can be photographed and photographed on the earth and even in the universe so far. Chinese photographer Pan Yue once said, "The earth is so big that neither the human landscape nor the natural landscape knows which corner has not been photographed." This sentence can be described as a very apt demonstration of the current situation of the development of photography art to this day. There is almost nothing that has not been photographed, and there is almost nothing that cannot be photographed. U.S. photographer Robert Frank once said, "You have no problem shooting anything now". Indeed, anything can be photographed. Whether it's the natural beauty you see in your daily life, the landscape you see during your play, the historical and cultural relics that have been preserved for thousands of years, or even a person you meet on your way to work every day, a trivial matter can become the object of photography. People can take out their own electronic equipment at any time to record every moment, no matter what the subject matter is or what the content is. Therefore, it can be said that the number of subjects of contemporary photography and the wide range of subjects are very rare in the historical development process. However, the question also arises: how should contemporary photography continue to develop? In other words, what gives photographic art fresh vitality? The authenticity of the times is a crucial aspect of photography art, an indispensable factor in the creation of photography works with wide influence, and a magic weapon to make photography art stand in the forest of arts.

The classification of photography art mentioned above is extremely complicated and there are many schools. Some of them have completely opposite views, while others have schools that echo and intersect with each other. If we give a big classification to photography, there are actually no more than two categories, one is recording photography, the other is artistic photography. For example, documentary photography includes news photography, documentary photography, scientific photography, medical photography, etc. While artistic photography includes conceptual photography, pictorial photography, post-modern photography, etc. No matter what kind of photography art, no matter what genre of photography, its works contain its own subjective emotion, which is the era in which the photographer

himself was living. Looking back at the entire history of photography, all the outstanding photography works that have been handed down to this day are full of the photographer's emotional cognition of the era in which they live. It is impossible for a photographer's photography not to be influenced by his time, and the emotional changes in his works are also closely related to his time. It can be said that it is the times that have brought up excellent photographers, and it is the hidden emotions in the works that have given the works artistic charm beyond time and space. Therefore, we can always be attracted by some excellent photographic works. In fact, what these works attract us is precisely the emotional strength hidden behind them.

There is no doubt that photography is extremely hot today. Everyone can take photos and everyone is taking photos. This has also led to the generalization of images, serious homogenization of images and a large amount of image garbage. Judging from the actual situation, it seems that everyone is a photographer and can take photos at all times. However, it should be recognized that the birth of excellent photography works is not random. To some extent, it is not as easy as in the past to have excellent photographic works. Photography and painting also create a three-dimensional world in two-dimensional images, but they are very different. Susan Sontag, author of *On Photography*, once wrote: "Painting has been restrained from the very beginning because it is a beautiful art, and every work should be a unique and hand-drawn original creation." Photography is very different. The birth and development of photography go hand in hand with the development and progress of human science and technology. In the early days of photography, the negative was metal plate, then wet plate photography, dry plate photography, then Kodak invented the film, until today the rapid development of digital cameras. It's hard to imagine anyone taking metal plates as negatives for photography today, and it's also hard to imagine what future cameras will work on. Photography and painting have essentially different ways of generating images, which leads to different ways of thinking in artistic creation. The biggest drawback of digital cameras is that they are "too convenient" to take pictures, thus creating a large number of junk images, which makes our photography activities more lacking in depth, thought and connotation than before.

Therefore, in order to create excellent photography works in the contemporary era, the requirements for photographers are higher than in the past. However, the authenticity of the times is still the most important and indispensable factor in excellent photography. Art itself does not require complete truth, because we cannot simply equate art with reality, and there are certain differences between the two. Despite the rapid changes in the times, some characteristics of excellent works of art will not undergo earth-shaking changes with the changes of the times. The authenticity of the times is one of the important factors. Art originates from life and is higher than life. Photography is no exception. Art must serve the majority of people, not the artist himself or a small group of people in the circle. Photography creation should grasp the main melody of the times and the characteristics of the current times. If it leaves the unique characteristics of the times, there will be no reality. The works created can only be understood by themselves or a small number of people, thus it is difficult to settle down in the development of the times and

history. The creation of photography art should take pictures of works of the current era that can reflect the living conditions of more than 80% of the population, or the artistic aesthetic standards that they can accept. The works should be authentic, conform to the current social situation, reflect the existing problems in the current society, or be works in a certain state of society, and grasp the authenticity of the times from the viewpoint of creation. If you leave the unique elements of this era in the creation, there will be no sense of reality, and it is easy to create some works that most people do not understand or cannot resonate with the audience. If the photographic works created by an artist are difficult to be accepted by the public, do not conform to the aesthetics of the vast majority of the society or do not conform to the demands of the times, then such works cannot reflect the overall features of the current society and lose the corresponding authenticity. Such works are bound to be rejected by the public and abandoned by the times.

The creation of any work of art, from conception to completion, is only the first step in conveying artistic views and themes. The next step is not the artist's initiative. The next step is the process of acceptance by the audience. Only after the audience has accepted it, can it be finished as artistic creation. This process varies from time to time and from person to person. People of different ages, different viewpoints and even different nationalities have different abilities to understand and accept works of art when they watch and appreciate them. It's like cooking. It's hard for everyone to adjust. A good cook can always satisfy the taste of most people. The same is true of excellent photographers, whose photos can meet the aesthetic standards of most people. How can we do this? That is the embodiment of the authenticity of the times in the works. When photography was first recognized as art, it was due to the rise of high-art photography schools. The representatives and representative works include Leland's "Two Paths to Life" and Robinson's "Fragrant Soul Desires to Die". In terms of picture form, these two photographic works are not very different from oil paintings. The reason for this is largely due to the fact that oil paintings were serious works of art in the West at that time. The picture form of the photos was treated in this way, which was also in line with the art standards of that time. Impressionist photography works are very similar to impressionist paintings at that time. Later, with the progress of science and technology, the light sensitivity of photosensitive materials has greatly improved, making it possible to quickly capture images. Coupled with the miniaturization of cameras, the negative film has also changed from a heavy glass plate to a film that can be rolled up. Therefore, it is possible to quickly capture images, including Stieglitz and the photography separatist group he founded, as well as the later Cartier Bresson, Eugene Smith and Magnum Photographic Society. The above examples are the best embodiment of the authenticity of the photography art. At present, the development of world photography stands at a diversified crossroads. Conceptual photography, post-modern photography, cutting-edge photography, experimental photography and other categories or genres are booming. However, it should also be noted that there are some misconceptions about photography art, which leads to deviation in direction.

Photography teaching in many universities and colleges is misleading to students. Photography works created by teachers or students are neither fish nor fowl, which makes people confused. However, they are euphemistically called conceptual photography, which is almost completely divorced from the reality of the times and does not really conform to the standards of conceptual photography. These works look very personal, but their creation violates the spiritual core required for the creation of excellent works of art and is just an empty artistic shell, with serious formalization problems. These works are far from meeting the basic requirements of excellent art creation, so they can only be regarded as artistic graffiti. Whether it's documentary photography or artistic photography, excellent works have the authenticity of their times. Without the authenticity of this era, the works have lost their vitality and become empty and boring. In order to make photography full of the authenticity of the times, photographers must have a broader vision and cannot just "take photos". We should constantly broaden our vision and know more about photography. Photographers must really realize that the mastery of knowledge is the first step to complete excellent photography works and is also an essential link. Not only should we learn and comprehend the relevant knowledge of photography art, but also other similar art categories. They are very helpful to our photography art creation. Photographic creation should return to "authenticity", remove the tackiness in the works, remove the craftsmanship in the photographic images, and have elements different from others to appear in their own works. The imitation of previous works of art should be developed and innovated. We should not only inherit, but also imitate previous works with craftsmanship. We should have our own views, research, views and performance of the times. Images should be internationalized and should be considered, conceived and created from a global perspective, because local arts may not necessarily conform to the cultures of other countries in the world. Excellent photography works compare thinking with spelling thoughts and ideas. Photographic works should be free from falsehood and truth, and free from coarseness and refinement.

### **3. Conclusion**

The creation of photographic works should be combined with the present. One cannot abandon a certain historical stage to talk about this period of history. Photography should be pragmatic, closely combined with the times, and more contemplation and comprehension should be carried out. One's artistic thoughts should keep pace with the times, one should form one's own style in continuous creation, and one's own works should be filled with the authenticity of the times. Only in this way can one finally form one's own school.

### **Reference**

- [1] J.W. Li (2018). A probe into the value of traditional photography techniques in contemporary photography creation. Popular literature and art, no.10, p. 34-35

- [2] Y.C. Yu (2017). Research on Tianjin Folk Photography Art creation based on Visual Design . The study of communication power, no.11, p. 81-82
- [3] Y.F. Zheng (2018). The greatness of "stealing"! The glory of "stealing"! On the unconventional means and significance of news photography. Television Guide, no.8, p.28-29
- [4] J.J. Sun (2019). On the theme Choice and value significance of documentary photography . Media Forum,no.3, p.50-52
- [5] Z.Q. Li (2017). Immaterial in the image world: an analysis of image creation and symbolic still life photography creation. Camera, no.9, p.71-72 .
- [6] Z.X. Li (2019).On the Application of Landscape creation in the creation of Conceptual Photography : the changes of the Network Age. Chinese artists, no.4, p.11-12.
- [7] Y.Q. Xun (2016). A study on the influence of Film Technology on the Communication of Film Art: a case study of Wang Yu's Photography. Beauty and the Times, no.7, p. 8-9
- [8] H.G. Ma (2018).Multidimensional fusion of body expression in contemporary Chinese Photography: a case study of selfie Photography since 2009, Ginseng flowers, no.1, p. 78-79
- [9] Y.C. He (2018).Talking the works of Wolfgang Tiernans and Gerhard Richter as an example ,on the use of schema language in artistic creation . Science and Education Exchange, no.5,p.54-55.
- [10] H.F.Ma(2018). An aesthetic study of expressionless photography language. Popular Literature and Art, no.2, p.44-48.