

Introduction to remember a person, event, or date



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Introduction

The art of photography is probably one of the most amazing and tempting ways of expressing human feelings, thoughts, emotions, and even hopes.

In comparison to other arts like painting or sculpture where people have a direct contact to what they are doing, the work of photographs seems to be separate because it is impossible to have that direct contact to a subject by means of the camera. Photography reached its popularity and necessity during the period of Modern Age when people get an opportunity to keep pictures and to remember a person, event, or date on them. With the help of photography, it becomes possible to capture special moments keep them for a long period of time. One of the possible types of photography is post-mortem that is characterized by the images of people who have recently deceased. On the one hand, it is hard to comprehend the essence and the necessity of this photography art, and on the other hand, a deep analysis proves that such images help to re-evaluate this life and discover some other important aspects. Post-mortem photography reflects considerably the way of how people comprehend the essence of this world with its beauties and shortages; the photo of a dead person has a number of functions which aim at helping people discover the truth.

Social and cultural functions of post-mortem photography

The point about the art of photography is that much could be done to photos, and people enjoyed the possibility to control these powerful and innovative means.

There has never been another means of art that can easily substitute photography and cover the essence of a being with precise precision of a fraction and basically manifest in a physical memory of the being (Hirsch 49). Photography has many different names and explanations, but one of the most popular ones was the idea by Holmes who called it as a mirror with a human memory. The art of photography was invented by Louis Daguerre in the 18th century; this invention promoted the representatives of the middle class family with an opportunity to memorize the events and people and not to spend so much time and many efforts to on painting. Within a short period of time, this idea gained popularity in the Europe and rapidly spread to the United State. Unfortunately, society faced a considerably amount of problems connected to human death.

The reasons of mortality were difficult to define, this is why those people involved into the science of photography made an attempt to unite this challenge with photos. These attempts gave birth to the post-mortem photography (Hanno 18). The history of this form of memorial photograph or the daguerreotype as early called can be dated back to the 18th century (Stange 144). The mourning industry as well as the sphere of photography in the 19th-20th century became rather popular that promoted the development of such practice like photographing a dead relative or family member. Mehaffey acclaims that first, it was known as memorial photograph or the daguerreotype, however, with time, it became known as post-mortem photography and was used as an integral mourning means and to memorize the moment of death (17).

Social function of this form of art was closely connected to the idea to unite people and give them a chance to hold a moment and memorize it for a long period of time. Due to post-mortem photography, people became able to take another step up and enjoy the results achieved. As for the cultural function of post-mortem photography, it may be evaluated from the way of how subjects were prepared for these photos. Attention to additional details like cribs, human arms, coffins, clothes – all this is a kind of cultural heritage that had to be stored and shared with other generations. Because of constant child mortality, the vast majority of post-mortem photographs tried to represent it as a mortality reminder more than essence of memorializing dead people (Ruby 133). Children mortality in this era was rampant, and it was the main cause for parents opting for a daguerreotype and memorializing by means of post-mortem or memorial photographs' activities.

This service was cheap and not time-consuming like the painting of the portrait was.

Post-mortem photography's impact on human understanding of images

There are many different ways of how post-mortem photography may influence human perception of the world. First, these images introduce a new situation with the help of which it is possible to evaluate the same situations from different perspectives.

Of course, there are some cases when postmortem photography performs the functions which are completely deprived of emotions and feelings. These photos are actually taken by police officers in crime or murder scenes; they

usually help the officers to identify the victim, analyze the time of death, bullet point of entry, angle of weapon insertion (Hanno 29). Specialist uses these photographs to analyze the cause and the motives that are behind the murder of the victim.

Every postmortem carried out is documented in photograph to be used in case the result depicts any foul play on the deceased, and are used as evidence against the defendant in the court of law. However, there are some cases when people are under the control of other purposes and try to underline the significance of their sentiments and grief. The earliest postmortem photography was taken for the purpose of memorizing the dead and having sentiment to the saviors of the departed family member or loved one. Postmortem photographs lost the real value they had in the 18th century. They were particularly guided by religious faith in most part of Eastern Europe.

It was usually a depiction of the person in the photos and an opportunity to become holy.

The ideas of normative conception of human identity and social behavior

This form of photography of the deceased has long been disposed. However, it remains as a possible way to memorize beloved people (Burns 211).

Modern photographs are today's taken to mark very special occasions, but this has not left out postmortem photographs which are taken in crime scenes to determine the case outcomes and gather evidence by police officers, forensic specialists and crime investigation bureaus. Also today's

postmortem photographs are taken but are refrained from children as they are only taken while the coffin is closed during the burial arrangement. In modern times, the idea to promote postmortem pictures is a kind of vulgar and sensationalistic taboo. In some states, portraying of such pictures may leads to litigation to the person who hold the pictures and provoke disturbance and un-respecting the dead. In some cases, it may be viewed as an attempt to create social discomfort associated with death to the person who is viewing the photographs (Ruby 74). Many contemporary photographers have artistically illuminate early works intent in a fashionable manner that is although unacceptable to some religion, beautified, and has no morbid feeling (Hirsch 111).

One similar case is the photographs of Enrique Metinide who is a Mexican tabloid photographer. His photographs are depicted from crime scenes pictures which he incorporated with rich aesthetic compositions in art creation. Many of his works have been shown in the world galleries. Although this artist's attempts are supported in the art world not by all people, there is still a number of fans and admires of this possibility to look at the world in a new way. However, there are some photographs who are rather controversial and explicit with some of their works been banned in some countries. Some of these photographs have led uproars with the religious community: Joel-Peter Witkin, Lyn Hagan, Maeve Berry, etc. These artists have produced the most morbid form of art that ranges from dead corpse to embroidered children mutilated bodies portraits (Stange 187).

These artifacts are horrid and frightening to look at. The traits of bodies have been burned during funeral cremation, and macabre murder scenes and

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strangled mutilated bodies of children serve as the best backgrounds of photos.

Conclusion

In spite of the fact that time is able to change and bring out innovations and challenges, there are still some forms of art which remain to be the same and improved with time. There is no other form of art that matches the effects that post-mortem photography has over human understanding of the world and their role within it. Post-mortem photography may cause different opinions and feelings, and it is wrong to neglect the possibility to influence human minds by means of photos. This is why it is crucially important to spend more time on the analysis of this art form and its characteristics.

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