
Documentary Photography: Capturing Different Realities

From the early caveman paintings we have always been akin to record and capture events that have certain significance to us. There were always developments and inventions of mediums to aid with his process. However with invention of camera, documenting events has changed significantly as photography seems to be the best medium. "Capturing Different Realities" takes a look at Documentary Photography from artist in the 20th century and how their photographs has aided the growth of Documentary Photography and morphed into what we as "Documentary Photographs" today. In addition to the general understanding of camera's ability to document realities, the exhibition will simultaneously assess and question the prized photographs from great photographs to questions and understand the aesthetic value of the photograph, their artistic expressions to delve deeper into its value as piece of art. The exhibition mainly focuses on documentary photos from famous artist from 20th century.

Some artist in this exhibition like have taken a broader approach on documentary photography or perhaps even with reality itself, and have chosen to let their creative forces influence their documentary process and stage some of the photographs. However humanist artist have strongly contradicted with the idea of these manufactured photographs, supporting the idea of straight photography where photographer plays primary role of an observer only. In addition to these idea, some artist have been able to form a strong connection with her subject that manifests itself through strong images that are often hidden from our sights and are beyond our imagination. Even with the diversity, these artists and photograph serve a purpose of documenting certain events that are happening, it even documents broader mindset that can be found within finite world of documentary photography. After all, using artistic liberty to express a potential scene also documents the world inside the photographer which is very similar to sharing what the photographer has experienced and witnessed. So, this contradicting differences in approach within the documentary photography makes a very interesting and powerful exhibition that helps us give definition to documentary photography.

In addition, accessing the formal aspects and the excellent use of the medium gives us a interesting insight as to why the exhibits boarding work of art as well. as well as questioning the photographs. So the exhibition has taken liberty to look in this the artistic possibilities within the documentary photography along with the aesthetic experience the photographs have created. The exhibitions houses works from master photographers really helped shape the world of documentary photography. Artist Robert Capa, Henri-Cartier Bresson, Brassai (Gyula Halász), Vivian Maer, Robert Frank, , Mary Ellen Mark, Arthur Fellig, Cindy Sherman. Firstly Endre Erno Friedmann (October 22, 1913 – May 25, 1954), mostly famously known as Robert Capa was born in Hungary. He is considered one of the greatest war photographer. He was able to

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documented Spanish War, the Second Sino- Japanese war, World War II across Europe and many more. It was in the Spanish war, in 1936, where he shot the most famous photo the "Falling soldier" with his 35mm camera. Understanding the need and importance of documentary photography he later co-founded Magnum Photos, the world's most biggest photojournalism organisation along with his good friend Henri-Cartier Bresson in Paris. Even though he was co-founder of photojournalist organization, later his photograph of the "Falling Soldier" came under heavy scrutiny as it was believed to be staged by some. However, even though it might have been a staged photograph, it can be considered documentary as it is not uncommon for soldiers to fall in the battle field as war casualties. Being able to produce that in an image with use of artistic liberty does document a possibility of a soldier falling as a war casualty.

Capa famously said "if your pictures are not good enough, you're not close enough", unfortunately while trying to get close to his subject stepped on a landmine, that killed him making him a casualty of war. Henri Cartier-Bresson (August 22, 1908 – August 3, 2004) born in France in a wealthy merchant family was a French humanist photographer considered a master of candid photography. At a young age, Cartier-Bresson was gifted a box-brownie, a small kodak camera that he would shoot pictures of his family members. However once he saw Martin Munkácsi's "Three Boys at the Lake Tanganyika, he was inspired by the spontaneity of the photograph and started taking photography seriously and really started shooting the daily lives as a humanist photographer. However initially, inspired by his painter Uncle, he first started his artistic journey as a painter. Training under Andre Lhote, who worked with Pablo Picasso as a cubist painter, Cartier-Bresson learned most of his geometric implication from Renaissance paintings that his master made them replicate rigorously. Along with the training, he had privilege to visit a café where Surrealist would hold meetings, which strongly influenced his photography. Picnic on the Banks of the Marne, taken in 1938, that he shot with his 35mm Leica Rangefinder, Shows his vision of geometry and influence of surrealism. Cartier-Bresson had begun to devise a whole new manner and focused on daily lives of normal people. By 1932, at age 24, his images of common men and women in France, Spain, Italy, and Mexico began appearing in publications and on gallery walls. Robert Frank (born November 9, 1924) is a Swiss-American photographer who is still active even with at this age. He is most famous for his notable work, The Americans, where he documented daily lives of the Americans, and pruned open the side of America that was properly hidden from the world.

One of the reason he could document the lives of American in different light was because he was not American and was not indoctrinated in the American culture. Initially, Frank had come to the US as a fashion photographer for Harper's Bazaar, and was very optimistic about the United States' society and culture. However, not being able to exercise his freedom in his photograph along with the differences in culture, the fast pace of American life and the materialistic mindset of the Americans made Frank view America as often "bleak and lonely"

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place". His photograph shot in 1955, "Businessmen working on briefcases on laps during commute aboard Pennsylvania's Afternoon Congressional" explains his thoughts, which was evident in his photographs. This earned Frank com. Vivian Dorothy Maier (February 1, 1926 – April 21, 2009) was an American street photographer who was not famous until after her death. A Chicago collector, John Maloof, acquired some of Maier's photos in 2007, while two other Chicago-based collectors, Ron Slattery and Randy Prow, also found some of Maier's prints and negatives in her boxes and suitcases around the same time.

Maier's photographs were first published on the Internet in July 2008, by Slattery, but the work received little response. She primarily worked as a nanny in New York City where she took most of her photographs. She was able to document regular days in New York City with her camera while she went out on a walk with the children that she nannied. Her hidden talent and unusual story surrounding her life has been a primary subject of including the film Finding Vivian Maier (2013), which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival, which has helped her to establish as an artist. Brassai (Gyula Halasz) - Brassai was a pseudonym adopted by Gyula Halasz (9 September 1899 – 8 July 1984) who was born in Brassó, Kingdom of Hungary (a part of Romania) and later became a naturalized French after years of being stateless. He was trained as a sculptor and worked as a photojournalist for Hungarian Newspaper. Even though he is a documentary photographer he is also known for his artistic liberties he takes in his photographs. He published a book "Midnight in Paris", that documented the quiet as well as glowing parts of Parisian Night life. One of the photographs in his book shows a couple with . He is known for his technical abilities to shoot in the night. Weegee (Arthur Fellig) – Weegee is a pseudonym adopted by Arthur Fellig who was a tabloid photographer for New York Post. He seemed to have a sixth sense for emergency situations, that he would shoot. He was known to stage photographs for New York Post, that really started blurring lines between.

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