

Student name: Wang Chen  
Student number: 2213272  
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# Memory without object: the facticity in digital photograph

## INTRODUCTION

In the realm of visual communication, the technology for the processing of images is getting increasingly sophisticated as a result of the arrival of the digital age. Additionally, the equipment used for photography are becoming increasingly portable and lightweight. It is only with a mobile phone or a camera that one can fully appreciate the pleasure of taking pictures, which is why photography has become such a popular activity. This has not only made it possible for photography to become a tool for visual memory, but it has also significantly reduced the operating costs of the industry as a whole.

The general public is becoming more aware of the fact that visual deception is a phenomenon that is becoming increasingly evident in the process of dynamic communication. Additionally, the instances of counterfeiting that have been revealed in recent years have begun to shake the general public's belief in photographs. Because of this, in the academic field of photography and visual communication, there is a great deal of discussion regarding the authenticity of images, which is a topic that has become increasingly popular over the past several years. It is hard to understate the significance of photography as a new form of artistic expression in the development of social history when one considers the immense amount of time that has been committed to the growth of humankind.

Photography was developed in the 1830s. Before William Henry Fox Talbot introduced photography, there was a dearth of non-verbal methods of conveying knowledge across most academic disciplines. As a result, photography, which is a method that is both quick and convenient, naturally assumed the responsibility of recording history and assisting memory. Photographs, in a way, have the potential to serve as the medium through which we record everything. It is possible to take photographs of objects that already exist, and those that do not exist can be created using post-production technology and creative thought; nevertheless, the memories obtained in this manner are reliable? Can we still put our faith in photographs? Can we still put our faith in photographs? Even if people have preconceived notions about how images should relate to the real world, a more nuanced understanding of the link between photography and the world as we know it is starting to take shape. And how exactly do images modify or even prevent the passage of time when it comes to our memories? Is it

possible for our memories to totally embrace the photographic record, which appears to be real?

This article examines the connection between photography and memory, focusing on the veracity of photographic imagery as well as the constraints that photography places on our ability to remember things.

## Theoretical Background

In terms of the authenticity of images and their limitations, as far as somewhat mature study results are now known, there are diverse research techniques at home and abroad, as well as different understandings of photography and its characteristics. Regarding the research between the authenticity of photography and its limitations, photographers at home and abroad who focus on objective records or the combination of objective recording and virtuality have their own rich research results, and the paper has gained certain enlightenment in other aspects by sorting out and sorting out these research results. This paper seeks to screen and assess photographic images including authenticity and fiction using references to local and foreign literature and research findings.

"Authenticity," which refers to the photographer's unaltered, objective events and situations, using photographic equipment and light to reflect the real situation of things to portray and record, which is a photographer's acceptance of documentary photography, is the core of photographic reproduction. Authenticity is the essence of photographic reproduction. Bresson is credited with the famous quote that "of all the mediums of expression, photography is the only means by which fading moments can be fixed without fail." [Citation needed] In certain respects, photography sheds light on authenticity, which serves as both the medium's primary strength and the rationale of its very existence. According to John Pogue, "for a photograph, it is not only a basic image (oil painting is also an image), but also a truthful representation of life. At the same time, it is also a trace, like printing a real scene with a mode, like footprints or the shape of a corpse replicated after death."

Dorothy Lange also stated, in reference to her photographic works, "For me, the question of subject matter is only one of them; it also includes the problem of method, and one thing I firmly remember is to think about things as they are, without impersonation or confusion, which is a nobler thing than invention or creation." Photography is to make full use of photography's ability to preserve appearance and appearance in order to react or accentuate a particular reality, which is also solid evidence that photography has the allure of duplicating moments. Consequently, based on the purpose of being "separated from the form of matter" yet requiring to represent facts or substances, some photographers consider photographic works to be a record book that can capture facts more correctly, and they can also, in some ways, replace reality. With the evolution of technology, photography has become a channel and method for the public to comprehend and witness complicated events, objects, and architecture from the past. Photographs are now stored in albums that contain more realistic images. William M. M. Evans, an American art historian, once stated that the 19th century began with the belief that "what is logical is true" and concluded with the belief that "what is photographed is true."

Photos are tools that aid in the recording and exploration of our world; they are an extension

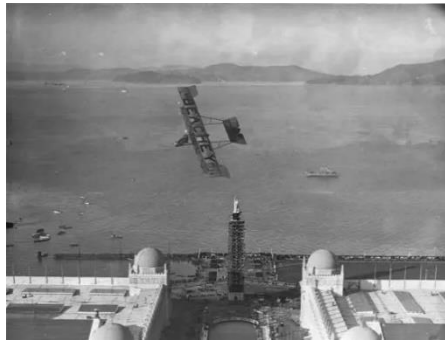
of both the human eye and the human mind. What the camera can do is simply record evidence; regardless of when they were taken, images are not a suitable substitute for humans when it comes to actual memory work. In the book *Understanding the Medium*, McLuhan makes the statement that "human extension is inseparable from so-called amputation." For instance, the wheel extends the person's legs and feet, which relieves the weight of the load burden; yet, it also separates the extended legs and feet from the torso, which creates a new strain on the human. People only use a specific function of their legs and feet when pedalling bicycles and racing on the highway; the function of walking, which is their primary usage of their legs and feet, is ignored. The existence of photographs as recordings of reality deprives us of direct experience and, to a certain extent, direct experience of the world. The photograph is one of a kind due to the fact that in order for it to exist, it needs to be connected to the topic. There is no such thing as a photograph that does not capture or reflect anything at all; hence, the existence of a photograph that does not have a subject is pointless. Memory is a process of independent thinking that does not require any attachment; it is the human brain's recognition, retention, reproduction, or detainer of encountered objects, and it serves as the foundation for thinking, creativity, and other sophisticated mental operations. Memory is the human brain's recognition, retention, reproduction, or detainer of encountered object. In the course of composing the paper, the following techniques are utilized to assess the conclusions: (1) Literature analysis method, the use of literature analysis technique by collecting bibliography, papers, and journals in the data, and using induction, comparison, summary, and other methods to organize the data in order to give literature support and support for the authoring of the paper. (2) The view of connection, as a fundamental method and feature of materialist dialectics, is a view of observing and analyzing the inherent properties of different things, and then intertwining things to a certain extent. It is also a universal and fundamental view when analyzing and solving problems in the process of research and exploration. (3) The work analysis method, through the screening and use of relevant photographic works that meet the thesis writing's theme, analyses the degree of authenticity contained in the relevant photographic works and explores the correlation between the two based on the connection between photos and reality on the basis of listing the photographer's works.

## Case Study (Cases of image fraud)

With the ongoing fraud incidents in the visual communication field, the public's trust in the photo has been shaken as a result of the constant exposure to fraud incidents. Using the audience's belief that what they see is what they get, using pictures to convey false opinions, and trying to persuade the audience is how communicators get their message across.

For example, 'Pose', this type of deception occurs when the designed image appears in front of the viewer as a live capture, the purpose of which is to be widely spread, or if an aspect of publicity, public relations, or publicity is required. Since the advent of photography, posing has been a phenomenon that has existed for a long time. As a result of the limitations of early photographic equipment, large cameras and relatively insensitive photosensitive materials, journalists were often forced to pose for the picture they wanted in order to get the right shot. However, in modern times, it has not been possible to eliminate posing even after these

problems have been resolved.



(Figure 1)

And another way to make the photo unreal is photo tampering is a serious problem. The main purpose of this step is to modify and process the image during post-processing. In the digital age, the ability to modify the content of a photograph is not a new phenomenon and it has been around for quite a while. As early as 1914, a photograph of aerobatic pilot Lincoln Beechy in flight surprised the reader (Figure 1), since such a scene could not have been captured with the technology of the day. According to Koeman, the audience may not have anticipated the effort the photographer put into the photograph, as the photographer painstakingly hung Lincoln and the plane with rope, then spent a great deal of time in the darkroom removing the rope traces. As Brugni noted, this type of photo had such a strong effect on the public that publishers realized they could use them to control public opinion. In advertising, it is more common to modify images. Since the advent of digital technology in the 1990s, it has become easy to manipulate images digitally. Adobe Photoshop was first released by Adobe in 1989 for a price of \$895. It gives everyone the ability to change their photos at any time using the "magic". As the photographer arbitrarily manipulates photographs, the sky, earth, mountains, and flowing water may no longer be the original colors in the image, but the photographer will perform subjective color grading. The occurrence of these conditions has raised concerns about the public gradually losing trust in the image in the future as a consequence of these conditions slowly deteriorating.



(Figure 2)

It is the live sightings of the Loch Ness monster that were released last year that are considered to be the most controversial part of the Loch Ness Monster fake photo incident. A number of advanced methods were used by experts to create this fake photo, but it wasn't until a few years later that one of the seven people who created the fake photo revealed the truth: it was a toy submarine, a head made of cork made out of sea serpents, and a long kaiko that was used to make the monster photo, which was later photographed in the lake with the toy submarine.



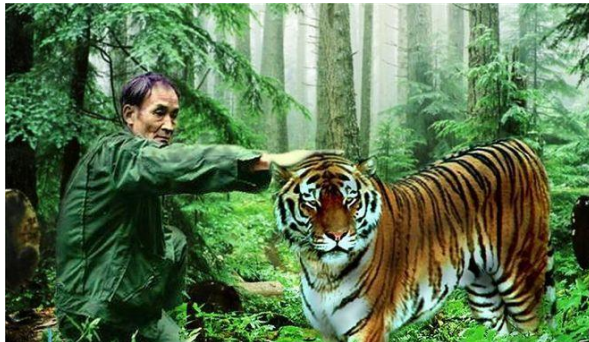
(Figure 3)



(Figure 4)



(Figure 5)



(Figure 6)

Another case in China (figure3,4,5,6), throughout the course of the events, the following sequence of events takes place:

According to a report released by the Shaanxi Forestry Department on October 12, 2007, a photograph of what appears to be a South China tiger was taken by hunter Zhou Zhenglong using both a digital camera and a stock camera. Following the authenticity of the photo being received by some netizens, South China Tiger experts and experts from the Chinese Academy of Sciences questioned the authenticity of the photo, and this attracted the attention of the entire country. The 15th of January, netizens reported that, apparently, the original form of the tiger had once been a New Year painting, which had been uploaded to the Internet in the

shape of the tiger. There were also similar paintings found in Sichuan, Guangdong, and other places after the same New Year paintings were found in Sichuan. The manufacturer of the New Year painting also displayed an archive floor, which had been made in 2002, at the same time as the New Year painting.

It is believed that the attitude of the officials of the "Tiger Faction" began to waver as a result of the publicly displayed New Year paintings, and some speculated that the photos were not real.

There was an event that took place on December 2, 2007, that was organized by the Digital Image Identification Center of the China Photographers Association, the Huaxia Physical Evidence Identification Center a wildlife scientist named Hu Huijian, a detective named Li Changyu, a deputy director of the Fingerprint Inspection Professional Committee of the China Criminal Science Association, Liu Pingping, deputy director of the Fingerprint Inspection Professional Committee, and Lai Jianhuang, vice chairman of the Guangdong Image The doctoral team of six experts from the Department of Electronic and Communication Engineering at Sun Yat-Sen University concluded that the photo was fake along with the chairman of the Department of Electronic and Communication Engineering.

As with the famous fake photo of the Loch Ness monster, this is a method of photo testimony that helps to achieve the purpose of attracting attention, which is similar to the famous fake image of the Loch Ness monster. It must be noted, however, that due to the background being the digital age, the South China tiger fake photo does possess many distinctive characteristics that make it stand out in the online world.

## Case Study 2 (photographer Wang Xiaohui)

Photographic works reproduce these subjects when shooting certain subjects, such as scenes in the natural environment, human industrial undertakings, and human daily life. However, it is important to keep in mind that while the photographer shoots or records the facts of the subject, if he correctly grasps some factors that reveal the material sense of things, then, to a certain extent, the real things in the photo are given thoughts and feelings. When this is combined with the authenticity of the photography itself, there are also some explorations in the subsequent development of photography.

Whether it be in the early days of photography or in the digital age, genuine expression has always been an essential component of the creative process. Ms. Wang Xiaohui, an artist who currently resides in Germany, is an artist who has a background in architecture. She has a very extensive creative vocabulary, and the rest of the world views her as a prototypical pure photography artist. However, amid the numerous creations, there is a collection of pictures in the style of self-portraits. These pictures are not only a genuine inner monologue, but they



(Figure 7)

are also an objective and genuine on-site video record. Ms. Wang Xiaohui went to Germany to continue her education after she graduated from university with her husband Yu Lin. In the year 1986, Wang Xiaohui and Yu Lin, both young teachers at the Department of Architecture at Tongji University, came to Germany on a visiting scholar program as young teachers from Chinese universities. During this period, Yu Lin won a doctoral scholarship, and Wang Xiaohui also passed the doctoral entrance examination with excellent results and was also awarded the doctoral scholarship. Xiaohui and Wang Xiaohui both began their studies in Germany, but Wang Xiaohui did not settle for a doctorate in architecture while simultaneously teaching at two different universities in Germany. As a matter of fact, she was more obsessed with photography than anything else and she had the idea of becoming a full-time photographer. If you are so interested in art as you are, just be a professional artist, and if you can't make money, I will support you." This is what Yu Lin told Wang Xiaohui when she was faced with the decision of what to do. As a result of this encouragement and support, Wang Xiaohui has decided to resign from her teaching position in order to devote herself solely to her passion of arts and crafts. Yu Lin taught her all technical issues, helped her set up a tripod, took lenses and metric scales, and was willing to be Wang Xiaohui's photography assistant, establishing strict requirements and conscientious help to gradually push Wang Xiaohui towards the photography path she liked.

Tragically, her husband was killed in a vehicle accident while they were going out, and Ms. Wang Xiaohui was also gravely injured and unable to move following the tragedy. Ms. Wang Xiaohui was dealing with the twin tragedy of the passing of her husband as well as her own physical misery when she struggled to lift the camera she was holding in her hand, videotaped herself suffering on the hospital bed, and chronicled her challenging days and nights spent in the hospital. (Figure 7)

As a result of the use of film cameras with manual focusing, the focus and picture composition cannot be controlled freely or subjectively. Additionally, because it cannot be deleted and retaken through playback like it can on modern digital cameras, the final photo picture form will naturally not have a strong visual impact and aesthetic pleasure like many classic photography, and it will present us with a lot of imaginary images. Despite the fact that they are simply hazy impressions, they have brought Ms. Wang Xiaohui closer to her genuine spiritual self.

A scholar from Fudan University named Professor Gu Zheng made the following observation regarding these works at one point in time: "Her swollen face and the rehabilitation equipment around her show the price of her escape from the brink of death, and from the confrontation and dialogue with her harsh life reality, she has begun to understand the true meaning of life more deeply." According to him, this was "the most genuine selfie in the annals of photographic history." Ms. Wang Xiaohui believes that through selfies, the camera can see the absolute true self, and when a person faces the third eye alone, the state of the self is at its most natural and real. However, under the common constraints of wide-angle lens and manual focus, the photo does not show the beauty that women who love beauty want to see. To take a picture of herself, she may lift her hand because the wide-angle lens she is using does not require the use of a tripod. She is unsure if the focus is accurate or what she will look like in the final image, but she is determined to capture the moment as it actually occurred. This can be seen of as a visual diary in the truest meaning of the term, as it very

accurately reflects her state of mind and the circumstances in which she found herself. To this end, Ms. Wang Xiaohui stated that the truth is the most important thing in art, even if it is only the truth in the eyes of the artist herself. In other words, the truth is the most important thing in art.

## Conclusion

As the famous communication scholar McLuhan put it in his famous quote "media is information", he was clearly pointing out that technological innovation plays a crucial role in the development of the content industry as a whole. A rapid development of science and technology has led to an ever-increasing decrease in the cost of using digital technology, an ever-increasing improvement in the ease of use of the technology, as well as a decline in professionalism, which has resulted in the status quo that is now present in the professional imaging field. Taking into account the previous chapter, it is evident that the image is no longer the moment when the shutter is pressed in the traditional sense as the advent of the digital age has made it a more complicated process. This is because in the digital age, photography technology is relatively inexpensive, information and media are becoming increasingly popular, and fraud is on the rise. People can manipulate photographs, so this moment may be real or fake. They can also reshoot, or repeatedly shoot, in order to "choose one out of 10,000", or even delete it. Obviously, it doesn't matter if these just show up in your own pictures. It looks like this in mass media photos, what would it look like?

The presentation of photographs is using friendly and more compelling than the world as it actually exists. In the same way that many people believe that they are the lovely people in the beauty camera, and they are not even willing to accept their true selves, or after traveling, they always spend a lot of time carefully selecting and processing the photos they take into beautiful appearances, and in the end, everything in their memory becomes everything in the photos, which is not reality. In today's world, many people believe that they are the lovely people in the beauty camera, and they are not even willing to accept their true selves. These kinds of photographs not only do not assist us in remembering, but they really work against us. The presence of photographs will invariably lend an air of artificiality to the event in question; regardless of the topic at hand, there will invariably be some indication of performance. The powerful appeal of photographs has become a stimulant for the way in which we process memory; as a result, genuine recollections are frequently obscured by an excessive number of fictitious photographs.

In the afterword that was published in 1998 for the book titled "The Ballade of Sexual Dependence," which was created by the American artist Nan Golding, she elaborated on the uncertain relationship that exists between photography and memory, as well as between photography and the denial of death and memory. The idea that photographing a person won't keep them around forever is a depressing one, but the reality is that without photographs, we probably wouldn't remember anything we've ever had. It doesn't matter what we're trying to remember—the history of a nation, the rise and fall of a nation, the life of an ant, or the fading glory of a plant—photographs can help us remember it. In spite of all the limitations of photographs, they actually assist us in remembering more things to some

degree. It is inevitable that it will be unreliable if we continue to focus on the connection between photography and the real world. If, on the other hand, we view photography not as a mirror reflection of reality but as a tool for creating a reality through photography, then these photographs will always be able to reliably recall the events that they depict because they were created rather than merely reflected on by photographs. In this process, we need to be watchful at all times to prevent ourselves from falling into the trap of untruth, which would make photography an instrument that could be used to delete memories and tamper with the past.

Despite their limitations, photographs can actually help us remember more things in some way, from the history of a country, the rise and fall of a nation, to the life of an ant, to the withering glory of an old plant; photographs can help us remember more things, despite their limitations. It is inevitable that photography and reality are bound to be unreliable if we are stuck in the authenticity of photography and reality. When we no longer view photography as a mirror reflection of reality, but rather as a method of creating a reality through photography, then these photos will always retain reliable memories, because these photos do not reflect memories by themselves, but rather create a reality through them. In order to ensure that we are never caught in the trap of falsehood in this process, we need to be vigilant at all times to avoid falling into the trap of using photography to destroy memories and tamper with history.

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