

# The influence and significance of typology photography on photographic language

Zhi Li

Art and Design Department, Kunming Metallurgy College, Kunming, China

171908@sina.com

**Keywords:** Typology photography; Photography language; Influence; Significance

**Abstract.** Typology photography has a great influence on the development of photography today, because it breaks down the understanding way and language boundary of photography ontology language and develops the vocabulary of photography. But at the same time the distinctive features of typology photography have bound itself to the new language framework. Typology photography will gradually be digested in the future due to the gradual decomposition of language and become a normal and popular expression in photography vocabulary. The process of digestion has already begun since the students of the Bernd and Hilla Becher selectively inherited typology photography.

## Introduction

Typology photography has a great influence on the development of photography today, because it has really broken the way of understanding the language of photography itself and the language boundary, and has opened up the vocabulary of photography, but at the same time the distinctive features of typology photography have bound itself to the new language framework. This article will analyze and elaborate the influence of typology photography on photography language and the development direction of typology photography itself.

## The Significance of Typology Photography to the Development of Photographic Language

**Typology Photography Embodies a Kind of "Evolution" of Photography Language.** The significance of its "evolution" lies in: Typology photography integrates various language forms of photography itself and forms a perfect and independent language system. Looking back on the history of photography, we can find that there has never been such a fusion in the context of photography. Photography thoughts and expression methods in photography mostly seek meaning in the body of photography. Therefore, photography seems to be in a stagnant state. If we compare the photos taken by people in the early days of photography with those taken by modern people, there is no obvious difference in expression. Apart from the "convenience" and "effect" brought about by the continuous evolution of photography technical conditions, photography's reliance on the noumenon has always limited people's understanding of photography to a constant linguistic criterion. This has resulted in the rigidity of photography's linguistic understanding and aesthetic evaluation. The noumenon of photography seems to be an obstacle to the development of photography. In fact, the noumenon of all arts forms the final barrier of art itself. When an art form finally faces this insurmountable barrier, it is in the process of extinction. There will be many new ways to replace it after absorbing its nutrients. For example, the fate of painting will be the same in contemporary art. Visual art, media art and photography will play the role of substitutes. The "evolutionary" significance of typology photography to photography language lies in that typology photography does not attempt to form a new meaning in the photography noumenon. Typology photography knows that the photography noumenon is an insurmountable part. Therefore, integration of language embodied in typology photography embraces the photography noumenon. Such a hug obtains the excavation and re-understanding of the photography essence, which constitutes the centralized release of the photography connotation dominated by the photography essence, and the conservation and emphasis on the photography essence constitute the independent

value of typology photography. The "ultimate" value of photography is to form an overall observation of human beings and an observation of human beings. Typology photography directly acquires this fundamental value of photography. In fact, photography has always been in the process of releasing its fundamental value, and this release was finally outlined by Sander and realized by the Bernd and Hilla Becher through typology photography. Therefore, the Bernd and Hilla Becher formed the "evolution" of photography language through introverted thinking of photography.

**What Role Does Typology Photography Play in the Development of Photography's Own Language?** Typology photography embodies a strict attitude towards the essence and noumenon of photography, and the dimension of photography language is "conservative" in the principle of observing people, which ensures the continuous value of photography. Photography needs to excavate and abide by the essence, because photography shall not only "toss and turn" in the noumenon. The result of the constant entanglement in contemporary photography is the tireless deconstruction of the photography noumenon, which is essentially confined to the noumenon. This does not constitute a breakthrough in photography. The deconstruction of the noumenon accelerates the process of photography becoming meaningless and worthless. Sugimoto Booth said: "I may be the last photographer" in fact is to explain his concern about the development of photography language value. Typology photography reaffirms the essence of photography in the process of its development, which gives photography its own impetus for development.

### **Typology Photography Affects the Expression of Photographic Language**

Typology photography has made it clear that photography is a person's observation of himself, with the aim of obtaining a person's appearance. This is the fundamental vitality of photography. Photography can only exist if it is maintained in these values. This understanding has had an important impact on the current language development of photography. Many photography thoughts have begun to think about the connotation of photography and to construct the meaning of photography from photography itself. The students of the Bernd and Hilla Becher have also made efforts for the development of contemporary photography in this direction. The photography department of the Dusseldorf Academy of Fine Arts (KunstakademieDüsseldorf) founded by the Bernd and Hilla Becher is called the "Dusseldorf School". Many of them have become important figures in contemporary photography. The reason why such achievements can be established is that the vitality mined by typology photography has been inherited and developed in their photography thoughts. None of the students of Becher inherited typology photography completely. They all selectively inherited some ideas of Becher photography. The formation of this phenomenon shows how typology photography will affect the development of photography language.

**The Difficult Situation of Completely Inheriting Typology Photographic Language.** Typology photography has a complete and independent language system. On the one hand, this independence and integrity bring huge expression energy, but on the other hand, it makes the language of typology photography on the rigid edge. In fact, Becher has pushed the language to an absolute and extreme position. Typology photography seems to have no possibility of moving forward, and a step forward may be dangerous. The comprehensive inheritance of Becher cannot expand the significance of typology photography. On the contrary, typology photography may be completely bound by photography itself, and the value of typology photography may overturn. This is not conducive to the development of typology photography or the role of typology photography in photography language.

**The Development Path of Typology Photography.** Typology photography is still in the fuzzy evaluation and judgment so far. From the establishment of the appearance of typology photography, photography has two cognitive directions for its evaluation: one is artistic, the other is functional. Is Typology Photography Artistic or Functional for Photography? Typology photography has deeply explored the function of photography under the guidance of the essence of photography. Typology photography's understanding of this function of photography goes beyond the current general way of understanding the function of photography, which makes it an art. The two ways of

understanding typology photography actually show the two postures of typology photography in photography, and both postures will appear one by one in photography. Like Picasso, Matisse, Miro, Mondriaan and Kandinsky in painting, the transcendence of a language will eventually be assimilated into a normal language. Because these artists have formed an understanding of abstract language in artistic practice, we can widely use and identify abstract language in daily vision today. The transcendence of these languages is artistic at first, and eventually they will all become the function of serving people. Therefore, typology photography will also be the same. Typology photography will eventually complete the transformation from art to function and become the normal language form in photography. Typology photography will eventually become the basic vocabulary in photography language.

**Selective Inheritance of Typology Photography.** The selective inheritance of typology photography is the excavation, protection and development of typology photography language system, and is the way that typology photography becomes the basic vocabulary of photography language. Typology photography, as a complete language system, is an obstacle between it and other languages in photography. Deconstruction of the concept of typology photography is a necessary way to make typology photography and other integration of language in photography. At the same time, in the process of deconstructing typology photography, various vocabularies wrapped in integrity will be fully excavated and interpreted. Here, we can understand the efforts made by the students of Becher: Andreas Gursky inherited the observation of human beings in typology photography. He pushed the concept of observing human faces in typology photography to a peak, "human faces" is the fundamental context of typology photography, and Guski has carried out in-depth excavation and development of this understanding. The concept of "human faces" has been effectively formed into a vision suitable for modern photography language. People call this observation scale "God's perspective" which indicates that the value of this language has been widely recognized in photography. In fact, Guski's photography can be regarded as "generalized" typology photography, but it is still impossible to construct it into a specific "type" appearance through a person's whole body. Guski's photography language has already influenced many photography languages. For example, the contemporary documentary photography shows the recognition on this cognitive scale. Thomas Ruff inherits typology photography mainly by discussing the essence of photography and exploring the basic function of photography based on the objective principle of photography. Removing people's intention to use photography as a language, returning photography to the simple relationship between machinery and objects, recognizing photography as a medium only, stripping everything from objects and restoring photography to the meaningless critical state of reproduction, in fact, this is the fundamental deconstruction of photography itself, making photography equal to the medium of all images, images become suspended solids without any power, and images keep a fundamental distance from people. This is undoubtedly an extremely rare way of understanding photography. This thorough deconstruction makes Ruff's works a complete "art". Ruff's understanding of media has pushed the deconstruction trend of contemporary art towards all noumenon to a peak, and has manifested his enthusiasm for this thought in many contemporary media arts. Thomas Struth continued the objective thinking of typology photography, and placed the cold and cool attitude of typology photography towards the objective in his photos. This form of objective isolation in reality by means of photos is actually active to suppress and weaken the language ability of photography. However, this kind of separation comes from subjectivity. The purpose of this separation is to emphasize the distance between the viewer and the objective, that is, the distance between the human and the objective. The reality described in the photo becomes a strange and absurd picture that keeps a distance from the human. This way of understanding photography also resonates in contemporary documentary photography. For example, Martin Parr and Strutz of Magnum have similarities in their understanding and shooting methods.

## Summary

Typology photography will gradually be digested due to the gradual decomposition of language in the future development, thus stepping out of the aura of art and becoming the normal and popular expression form in photography vocabulary. The process of digestion has already begun since the students of the Bernd and Hilla Becher selectively inherited typology photography. For example, in modern photography, we can already see some typological languages formed by the development of typology photography. None of the works listed above have the complete concept of typology photography, but the structure and context embodied in these photos are developing towards the direction of typology photography. These photos are already on the edge of the concept of typology photography, which is beneficial to the development of photography language, because people are approaching typology photography, and these photography languages are getting nutrients from typology photography. Therefore, it can be considered that typology photography has begun the process of evolution towards normalization. In many cases, we have seen some "cordial" features of "types", a "broad" typology photography context, a "pan - typology" photography feature and the development direction of typology photography in the future are indeed clear. Typology photography will be transformed into cordial features and become the basic vocabulary of photography description. In the future, typology photography will be extensively traced back in photography. It can be explained that the connotation of typology photography has been excavated to the greatest extent, and its aesthetic meaning has been understood by people in the broadest sense. The concept of typology photography has been effectively transformed into a broad description way, describing people themselves extensively, caring for people in the face of their future.

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