

Photo exemplars Classification: The Integration Photographic History Into Photographic Technique

Iwan Zahar¹

Faculty of Creative Technology and Heritage¹
University Malaysia Kelantan, Kota Bharu, Malaysia.
iwan@umk.edu.my

Abstract—The dispute has been long whether photographic lecturers should integrate the history of photography into a course on photography. The photographic lecturers should discuss photographic theory deeply, by introducing photographers such as Henry Cartier Bresson, Cindy Sherman, Barbara Kruger etc to students. Most of the photographic lecturers were more interested in teaching photographic techniques than photographic theory. This paper used content analysis to classify or categorize modernist photograph. The evaluation of photos used Barrett's criticism model. The research used aesthetic exemplars in the form of modernist photographers, or from Alfred Stieglitz to Raghubir Singh. Most of the students were easily to relate with modernist photographers compared to postmodernist photographers. The students were unfamiliar with subject matter, theme, and photos presentation, thus they become difficult interpret postmodernist photos. Moreover, students were more interested in photographic techniques which were used by modernist photographers. The classification of photos will help lecturers to prepare for photographic courses especially for the beginner

Keywords— *Classification; Photo History, Photo Technique, Modernist photographer*

I. INTRODUCTION

We might say that photography is unclassifiable [2]. The statement of Roland Barthes might not be appropriate if we talk about how to prepare learning materials within a frame of photo categories or photo classification. Many photographers or art educators for a long time have tried to classify or made photo categories. The history of photograph includes pictorialism, impressionist, straight movement etc. as an example that art historian tries to classify photographer based on the photographic styles. Usually photo competition divide photos or classify photos based on subject do matter, for example, portraits, landscapes, nudes, etc. Why do we need a new photo classification or a new category? However, Terry Barret visited a college and found that most of students who had completed Photography I and II, but they had not heard or seen work by Henri Cartier-Bresson, John Coplans, etc. The student instructors ignored recent photographic history and concentrate solely on teaching photographic technique. The theory certainly influences practice of what images are made, written and talked about, shown, collected and preserved, and taught [1]. If we have to introduce all fine art photographers

or all high esthetic photos, the subject matter will not be focused on the students who took photography I and II. Usually the beginner students are more interested in photography technique and the medium of photographs. Most of the students were easily to relate with modernist photographers compared to postmodernist photographers. The students were unfamiliar with subject matter, theme, and photos presentation, thus they become difficult interpret postmodernist photos. Moreover, students were more interested in photographic techniques which were used by modernist photographers. They are not interested to know about the concept of making photographs, postmodernist photographers, and photographers styles. In other words, beginner students can appreciate the work by Ansel Adams or many other modernist photographers. The beginner students are usually not interested in Cindy Sherman, Joel-Peter Witkin or many other post modernist photographers. According to Kohler[4], these post modernist photographers use photo techniques such as all exposure techniques, all manipulation of negatives and prints and allow to demonstrate technical dilettantism, which are outside photography I and II. However, modernist photographers render things as objectively as they find them, i.e. clearly and sharply and true to both form and detail. The modernist photographers do not also allow to manipulate their exposed negative in the darkroom and their prints should be the highest technical perfections and contain a rich range of grey tones. All "graphic" or "painterly" effects diminish the realistic quality of the photograph and are therefore to be avoided. For modernist photographers, the camera artist should find his subject and not invent. These methods are suitable with the beginner students and within the range of photography I and II [8].

What is the right strategy to deliver photographic materials which combine photographic techniques and connect with history of photography? I proposed classification based on techniques of photography within the range of photography I and II. The curriculum for photography I is about how to use camera, film, basic composition, and how to take better pictures in and outdoor, and photography II is about basic studio photographs. However, the classification tries to relate the techniques of photography and the photographers whose work has already been considered as high standard fine arts. The darkroom process will be outside the photo classification,

and there will be another classification according to darkroom techniques. This discussion is not included in this paper.

2. METHODS

Unlike researchers who employ other empirical techniques, content analysts examine data, printed matter, images, or sounds-texts-in order to understand what they mean to people, what they enable or prevent, and what the information conveyed by them does [6-7]. The research is using content analysis and follows the step. Step one. I chose exemplary photos of art from nearly 77 modernist photographers from various sources such as books, dissertation and retrieved from internet. Step two. After I classified the photographers work with respect to Barrett's photo criticism model. Barrett's critic models will be divided into three steps, description, interpretation and judgment. Description is to describe a photograph or an exhibition is to notice things about it and to tell another, out loud or in print, what one notices. Descriptive information includes statements about photograph's subject matter, medium, and form, about the photograph's causal environment, including information about the photographer who made it, the times during which it was made, and the social milieu form which it emerged. This research will not discuss postmodernist photographer or contemporary's photographers.

Interpretation is to interpret an image or photographs is to make sense of it. To interpret is to see something as representing something or expressing something or being about something. Evaluation is different from interpretation. Interpretations are statements about the meaning of an artwork, whereas judgments are statements about the worth of value of image. When critics do judge photographs, they usually praise them and sometimes fault them [1]. In other words, Judge is the action when the learner decides what type of art is being examined by comparing it to the Theories of Art. In this research, I am more emphasized on description and photo techniques. The classification is not based on meaning of pictures but on photo techniques.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. *The Photo Classification based on photo techniques*

Camera Types.

SLR 35 mm. Usually photographers use many different types of camera but Henry Cartier Bresson preferred SLR 35 mm types of camera and most of his famous pictures are printed in black and white. Medium format cameras. Marilyn Bridges uses medium format to take archeology artefact, landscape, cityscapes from airplane. Large format cameras. Many photographers at the beginning of twentieth centuries, for example, Ansel Adams and Yousuf Karsh employed large format cameras and tried to use smaller cameras in their later carrier. Aperture. Small. Actually there are no living photographers who used only the smallest possible aperture nowadays, except Group F-64 (Ansel Adams etc). They used the smallest aperture to render object details as real as possible. Group F-64 was the pioneer of straight photography. Medium.

Photographers are trained to use f 5.6 or 8 if they took portraits or human pictures. It is possible that many of Henry Cartier Bresson pictures used medium apertures that showed details in the background. Large. There were also no photographers that have large aperture all the times, I just mentioned Eugene Smith pictures in Minamata entitled Bunzo Hayashida, a victim of the Minamata disease, 1971.

Lens.

Normal Lens. Only few photographers used normal lens in most of their work. The normal Lens gives a viewpoint that is very close to what we looked at old paintings such as Rembrandt van Ryn, Vermeer etc. The exception with Henry Cartier Bresson who wanted to be a painters in his early carrier and chose to use normal lens for most of his work. Tele Lens. Usually many photographers change lens when they took pictures, with the exception of Franco Fontana. In one of his personal projects, he made his own photo project by taking only with telephoto lens. Sometimes, he used long telephoto lens and many of his pictures, conceal reality by their unfamiliar flattening of perspectives, their overall sharpness, and their lack of scale references. He took cityscape and landscape. Wide Angle lens. Bill Brandt used ultra wide angles when he took his famous nude series. His nudes proportions became distortion. Fish eye lens. In the extreme cases, Ikko Narahara's work often depicted isolated communities and extreme conditions with his hemispherical-coverage ("circular") fisheye lenses. Macro lens. Ernst Haas's personal project in creation of the world showed many close up pictures with macro lens. However, some photographers used to make the subject matter become much bigger to show the details. One of them is Fritz Goro who invented macro photography, making visible the world that lies between the microscope and the naked eye. Micro lens. Microphotographs of Roman Vishniac and Fritz Goro showed views taken through telescopes and airborne vehicles.

Shutter speeds.

Fast shutter speeds. Eadweard Muybridge used two or three banks of twelve cameras each and achieved individual exposures of nearly 1/2000 of a second to record sequential images of human and animal subject [3]. In contrast, Arnold Newman preferred to use slow shutter speeds and sometimes couple with flash to take his portrait pictures. He liked to show the environment of background of his sitter using slow speeds to record available light in his indoor portrait. Medium Speeds. Other photographers, like Henry Cartier Bresson was used possible medium speed to record human movement and gestures Slow speeds. For colored pictures, Ernst Haas used slow ASA film that enabled him to take with slow speed pictures. John Starr used slow speed to take dance as a subject especially classical ballet. Starr portrayed the movement of the dance through the dynamism of his pictures. Often, the dancers were partially obscured by blur effects, which were used to give an impression of the constant movement of forms. Nearly the lowest shutter speed, that Eric Staller involved in "light drawing" to create dynamic images and he selected real street scenes at night which he transformed into settings for light trails. They were done by extremely long exposures, sometimes as long as 20 minutes. During which time sparkled

attached to posts of frames. He was dressed in dark clothing, and kept moving throughout the exposure, no trace of him or the light supports were recorded [5].

Flash.

Direct. The most interesting photographers who used direct flash was Arthur Wegee. He worked in the police department in New York full time, consequently, he was always among the first on the scene of crime- whether it was gangland execution, a fire or a suicide. Weeges existed almost entirely at night, in pictures frontally lit with a flash on the camera. Mixed light. Further flash technique, Annie Leibovitz and Arnold Newman were photographers who often used mixed light indoor. They used flash light and combined with available light for their portrait photos. Andy Earl used sharpness and blur together in the sample photograph to express his interest in form, movement and color. His technique was to shoot in weak day light, using electronic flash and a short time exposure while moving his hand-held camera. Studio flash. However, the most influential studio photographers was Yousuf Karsh. His lighting techniques were copied by studio photographers all over the world. His lighting technique used several harsh light sources to produce rich textures. ASA. Slow ASA film produce rich and saturated color, Ernst Haas often used slow ASA film to take his landscape and animal pictures. The color of his subject matter became more saturated when he took pictures with polarizing filter especially after raining and cloudy days. Merry Alpern used telephoto lens to record prostitution behind the windows. She used nearly with high asa film and push process in darkrooms. Her pictures were high grains but interesting to look. By way of voyeurism, Nobuyoshu Anaki took couples who were making love in the garden; however, Anaki did not use high ASA film. Other examples of the use of high grains was a British photographer, Bill Brandt who used a lot of high ASA film to take his famous distorted nude series.

Lighting. Lighting contrast is the difference between the amount of illumination reaching the brightest and darkest part of a scene. Bill Brandt, Alex Majoli, and Merry Alpern used lighting contrast. Alex Majoli used hard lighting on the person with the dark background, so the pictures become contrast. With similar technique, Eugene Smith took many of his famous pictures in Minamata, Japan. Nearly most of Eugene Smith pictures on Minamata had the tones that came from dark end of the scale-is known as "low key". A picture of Tomoko in the Bath with high contrast lighting from window in the woman who held her dying son is one of the best low key effects. These low key pictures could be compared with Rembrandt or Caravaggio paintings. Sharing similar technique, Roy DeCarava took many low key pictures. In contrast, Richard Avedon took portraits with white background so that the picture, consisted mainly pale tones was known as "high key". Peter Marlow took many city skapes with color photography. His pictures showed many big areas in white, cloudy or other pale colors. These high key photographs could be compared with the way the impressionist painters used colors. The use of many white or other pale color by Peter Marlow in photography reminded the way Piere Augusto Renoir used white color in most of his paintings. Not many photographers took back and rim light, but Ernst Haas, Andy

Earl, and W. Eugene Smith produced some of their best work with these techniques.

Depth and Distances. There were not many photographers who explored their art from above. Such as Marlyn Bridges who preferred to shoot archeological sites and contemporary landscape filled with the evidence of industrialization from above. She preferred to take pictures in the morning and late afternoon when the sun creates long shadow. These shadows enhance three dimensionalities of what lied below and their pattern integrated as defining elements in her photographs. From the above, most of her pictures became pattern and tended to be abstract. Other unusual view point, Garry Winnogard took pedestrians and many urban lifes with tilt viewpoints. The composition became unusual because the relations within subject matter could be diagonally. Most of his subject were in short distances. In 1920's, Alfred Stieglitz, Alvin Landon Coburn, Edward Steichen, Paul Strand, Lazlo Moholy Nagy, Alexander Rodchenko etc took pictures with unusual vantage points and close up. Franco Fontana most frequently used distant viewpoint and telephoto lenses to turn the folds in a landscape into bands of color. He showed what camera saw but not through close up. Ansel Adams showed distances and depth with normal lens or short telephoto lens. His black and white photos showed perspective and still normal view. David Alan Harvey also showed depth and perspective by comparing subject matter in foreground and background. Both photographers considered the scale of changes and normal proportion.

Timing and movement

Panning. Ernst Haas had devoted much of his time to make photo-essays in color for books and illustrated magazines. His early use of slow speed Kodachrome film had caused him image-movement problems, because of the exposure time necessary. Gradually, he discovered the possibilities of using movement blur intentionally. Panning was one of his technique to convey a dynamic sense of actions. Critical moment. Critical moment can influence pictures's structure as well as its content. A photographer may have to wait until a person walked along a distant, winding roads is in exactly the right position within a landscape to balance the picture. Henry Cartier Bresson's famous picture of a man leaping over a puddle was taken at precisely the right instant. A second sooner or later, and the impact of pictures would have been completely different. Other well-known critical moment, when Yousuf Karsh snatched Wiston Churchill cigar from his subject's mouth just before firing the shutter. The resulting picture was considered remarkable for its personality. Picture sequences. Duane Michals specializes in making picture sequences that tell a story. As this example showed his images often involved strange or mystical events. His picture were carefully staged and made use of the special image qualities of photography, such as blur, manipulation of tonal values, and change of scale, to create disturbing. Other photographer, Roman Vishniac was a pioneer of time lapse photography in scientific photography. Juxtaposition. Robert Doisneau had based many pictures on relating formal statues to people and things. He had been capturing aspects of Parisian life for thirty years. He always succeeded in capturing the smallest incident and the juxtaposition of two

incongruous objects Elliott Erwitt also took many juxtaposition and sometimes was absurd. Josef Koudelka made a lot of juxtaposition of persons, animals and other objects. But the juxtaposition between a person in Chen Chi Chang photographs provided alienation and connection feelings.

Subject elements.

Line. Harry Callahan studied line as subject with taking grass, weeds, trees, telephone wires, buildings, horizontal lines in seascapes etc as his personal project. Although Ansel Adams's work had a lot of lines inside his pictures but he was not taking lines as his subject. His lines appeared as branch of trees, train rails, water ripples, and dunes. **Shape.** Brett Weston, son of Edward Weston, had employed lines and shapes to make striking abstracts, completely free from manipulations. **Pattern.** Ralph Gibson used the extreme detail and realism of photography in a highly personal way. **Surfaces,** clothing, parts of buildings became patterns because he took very close up. **Micha Bar Am, Werner Bischof and Nicos Economopoulos** used many patterns in their work. **Ernst Haas** took many patterns of his landscape and nature photos with his close up lens. **Stuart Franklin** employed pattern of objects become his subject matter as well as his backgrounds. **Texture.** Although his landscape pictures were not as well-known as his Young Priest series. However, **Giacomelli** developed a more abstract style in which, through the magic of framing using high angle shots, landscapes became both depictions of land use in Italy and actual photographic 'paintings', no less, with abstract signs. His abstract signs showed a lot of textures. **Shooting with close up techniques,** Brett Weston showed many textures in his abstract photos or his landscape photos. **Form.** Edward Weston dan **Robert Mapplethorpe** showed similarities in their subject matter. Both photographers showed form of nudes and flowers. **Japanese photographers,** Eikoh Hosoe showed interesting forms of the female nude bodies with close up view points and most of his pictures became abstract.

Color.

Primary color. Pete Turner has continued to search for unique relationships between graphic design and bold color. He used many primary color. Other younger generation who used color photograph, **Constantine Manos** use red, yellow, blue, and cyan in his subject matters. **Pastel color.** In contrast, Harry Callahan explored his new "color" for ten years. His subject and subject matter had not difference with his black and white photographs. The only difference, he also took many pedestrians in Mexico, Egypt, Ireland etc. Most of his color used pastel colors. **White color.** **Martin Parr** started to use color in 1982, and he did not intentionally used white or pastel colors for most of his subject matters. He took photos of people wearing white shirts, white chairs, white buildings etc in Britain. **Sharing similar color with Martin Parr,** Peter Marlow used white subject matter in his compositions.

Basic Composition

Geometric background. Both photographers, **Arnold Newman** and **Henry Cartier Bresson** used many graphic elements in their background photos. Nearly all **Henry Cartier Bresson** and **Arnold Newman** work had people as their main

subjects with geometric backdrops such as building, windows frames, rail ways, shadows etc. **Portrait of Igor Stravinsky** was one of **Arnold Newman** best works that show geometric. It would be interesting for students to compare and contrast both photographers. **Geometric design.** Before the **Henry Cartier Bresson** era, **Andre Kertész, Paul Strand, Albert Renger Patzsch, Ladislav Berka** etc or 1920's photographers made geometric design with flower, buildings, machine, household object as their subject. **Middle.** Most of the 1920's photographers who used large format cameras tend to place his subject in the middle of the compositions. **Paul Strand** took many his portraits in the middle of his frames. Also **German Photographers, Albert Renger Patzsch** exploring the possibilities for using natural and man-made subject. Most of their subject matters were placed in the middle. Many of **Lee Friedlander** main subject matters were placed in the middle including his famous works, **American Monument.** Also many of landscape and ancient building of **Lyn Davis** used middle compositions. **Rule of third.** Landscape photographers were usually concerned with the horizontal lines in their pictures. **Ansel Adams's** work showed various positions of horizontal lines in his landscape pictures. For teaching purposes, **Ansel Adams** landscape photos should be compared with **Edward Weston** and **Albert Renger Patzsch** works. **Framing.** One of the most popular discussions on how to take better picture books was framing techniques. **Lee Fredlander** applied the side view mirror, rearview mirror, the windshield and the side windows as picture frame. This method allowed for fascinating effects in foreshortening, and wonderfully telling juxtapositions in which steering wheels, dashboards and leatherette bump up against roadside bars, motels, churches, monuments, suspension bridges, landscapes and often **Friedlander's** own image, via side view mirror shots. **Raghubir Singh** in his book the **Grand Trunk Road** used framing techniques but not as much as **Lee Fredlander.**

Table.1. Photo exemplars Classification

Photo Exemplars by modernist photographers	The techniques of photography	Description	Types of film
Henry Cartier Bresson, Robert Frank	Camera Types	SLR 35 mm	Black and white
<i>Marilyn Bridges</i>		Medium Format	Black and white
Ansel Adams, Yousuf Karsh		Large Format	Black and white
Edward Weston, Brett Weston, Ansel Adams.	Aperture	Small	Black and white
Henry Cartier Bresson		Medium	Black and white
Eugene Smith		Large	Black and white
Fritz Goro	Lens	Micro Photography	Color
Ernst Haas		Macro	Color
Ikkō Narahara		Fish eye	Black and White
Bill Brandt		Wide	Black and white
Henry Cartier		Normal	Black and

Bresson, Helmut Newton			white, Color
Franco Fontana		Tele	Color
Arnold Newman, Eric Staller, John Starr, Francisco Hidalgo	Shutter speeds	Slow	Black and white
Henry Cartier Bresson		Medium	Black and white
Eadweard Muybridge		Fast	Black and white
Arthur Weegee	Flash	Direct	Black and white
Annie Leibovitz, Arnold Newman, Andy Earl		Mixed	Black and white, Color
Yousuf Karsh, Phillipe Halsmann		Studio flash	Black and white, color
Ernst Haas	ASA	Slow	Color
Bill Brandt, Sebastio Salgado, Mary Alpern		High	Black and white
Mary Alpern, Bill Brandt, Alex Majoli	Lighting	Contrast	Black and White
Pete Turner			Color
W. Eugene Smith, Sebastio Salgado, Alex Majoli, Trent Parke		Low Key	Black and White
Ernst Haas, Jonas Bendiksen			Color
Richard Avedon, Irving Penn, Mario Giacomelli			High Key
Peter Marlow		Back-and rim-lighting	Color
Eugene Smith, Roy DeCarava			Black and White
Ernst Haas	Color		
Marlyn Bridge	Depth and distances	View point (top)	Black and white
Garry Winnogard		View point (tilt)	Black and white
Elliot Erwitt		false attachments	Black and white
Stieglitz, Alvin Landon Coburn, Edward Steichen, Paul Strand, Lazlo Moholy Nagy, Alexander Rodchenko		Unusual vantage point, Close Up	Black and white
Franco Fontana		Distances view point	Color
Ansel Adams, Henry Cartier Bresson, Bruce Gilden, Burt Glinn, Erich Lessing		Depth through scale changes	Black and white
David Alan Harvey			Color
Ernst Haas	Timing and movement	Panning	Color
Henry Cartier Bresson, Robert Capa		Critical movement	Black and white
Eadweard		Picture	Black and

Muybridge, Duane Michals, Roman Vishniac		sequences and Time Lapse photography	white
Elliot Erwitt, Robert Doisneau, Rene Burri, Chien Chi Chang, Josef Koudelka	Juxtaposition	Juxtaposition	Black and white
Harry Callahan, Brett Weston	Subject elements	Line	Black and white
Brett Weston		Shape	Black and White
Micha Bar Am, Werner Bischof, Nicos Economopoulos, Ralph Gibson		Pattern	Black and White
Ernst Haas, Stuart Franklin			Color
Mario Giacomelli, Brett Weston		Texture	Black and White
Edward Weston, Robert Mapplethorpe, Ansel Adams, Eikoh Hosoe	Form	Black and white	
Pete Turner, Constantine Manos	Color	Primary color	Color
Harry Callahan		Pastel	Color
Peter Marlow, Martin Parr		White	Color
Henry Cartier Bresson, Arnold Newmann	Basic composition	Geometric background	Black and white
Andre Kertész, Paul Strand, Albert Renger Patzsch, Ladislav Berka		Geometric design	Black and White
Paul Strand, Albert Renger Patzsch, Lee Friedlander, Lynn Davis		Middle	Black and white
Lee Friedlander, Raghubir Singh	Rule of thirds, placing the horizon	Framing	Black and White
Ansel Adams, Albert Renger Patzsch		Black and white	

Special notes must be considered using the classifications as given below.

1. The classification actually differentiate photographs which were made with the same or similar photo technique. It will be difficult to write all the titles of the photographs and classify them. It will be easier to use this classification if we select photographers who use specific photo techniques.
2. The classification are not intended to differentiate modernist and post modernist photographers. Although most of the photographers in the classification are modernist photographers, some photographers such as Martin Parr, Ian Berry,

Constantine Manos are contemporaries photographers who took pictures during post modernist era.

4. CONCLUSION

The photo classification based on photo techniques helps photography teachers during preparation materials and delivery especially for photography I and II. The integration of theory in the beginning of the course will help students to relate between history of photographs and photo techniques. Students do not only learned the photo techniques, but they also learn the way photographers approach the subject, and the method to develop their themes. The classification shows us that many photographers develop photo technique to achieve their photographic styles.

REFERENCES

- [1] Barrett, T (2006), *Criticizing Photographs, an introduction to Understanding Images*, Ed4. , New York: Mc Graw Hill.
- [2] Barthes, R, (2000) *Camera Lucida*, Great Britain: Vintage.
- [3] Davis, K.F. *The High-Speed Photographs of Francis Blake*, *The Massachusetts Historical Review*, Vol 2 (2000), pp 1-26.
- [4] Kohler, M, 1989, *Constructed Realities: The Art of Staged Photography*, Zurich: Edition Stemmler.
- [5] Langford, M, 1982, *The Complete Encyclopaedia of Photography*, Ebury Press.
- [6] Krippendorff, K.(2004). *Content Analysis An Introduction to Its Methodology*. Sage: California.
- [7] Neuendorf, K.A.(2002). *The Content Analysis Guide Book*. Sage : California.
- [8] Zahar, I. (2010, Nov). *The Use of Barrett Critics Model : Concrete Learning Strategic to improve student photo appreciation*. Paper presented at *The Third Asia Pacific Educational Research Association Conference (APER)*, Kuala Lumpur,