

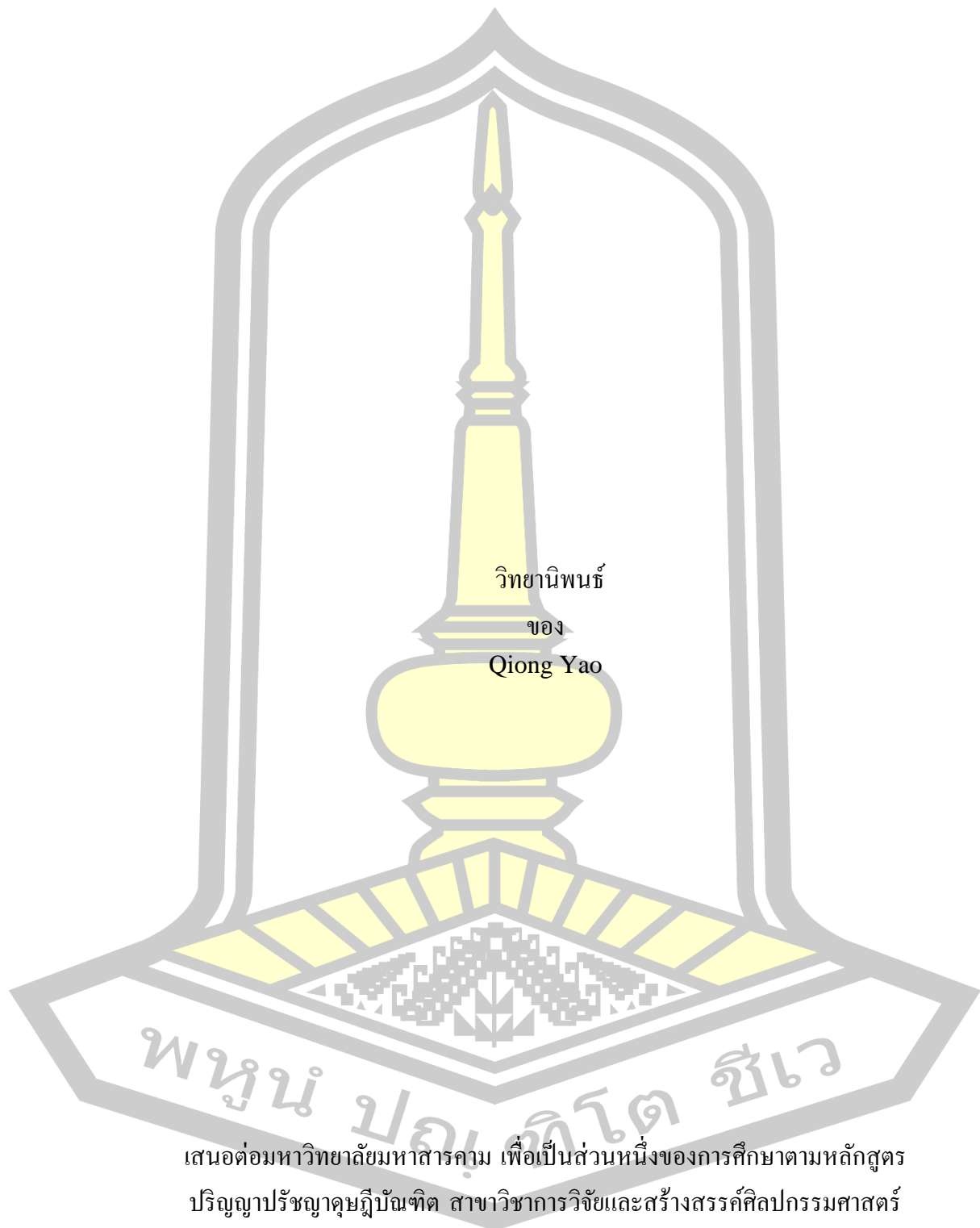
Private Photography in Lianzhou Foto Festival (2005-2019): photographic narratives
and self-consciousness

Qiong Yao

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for
degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Fine and Applied Arts Research and Creation
February 2025

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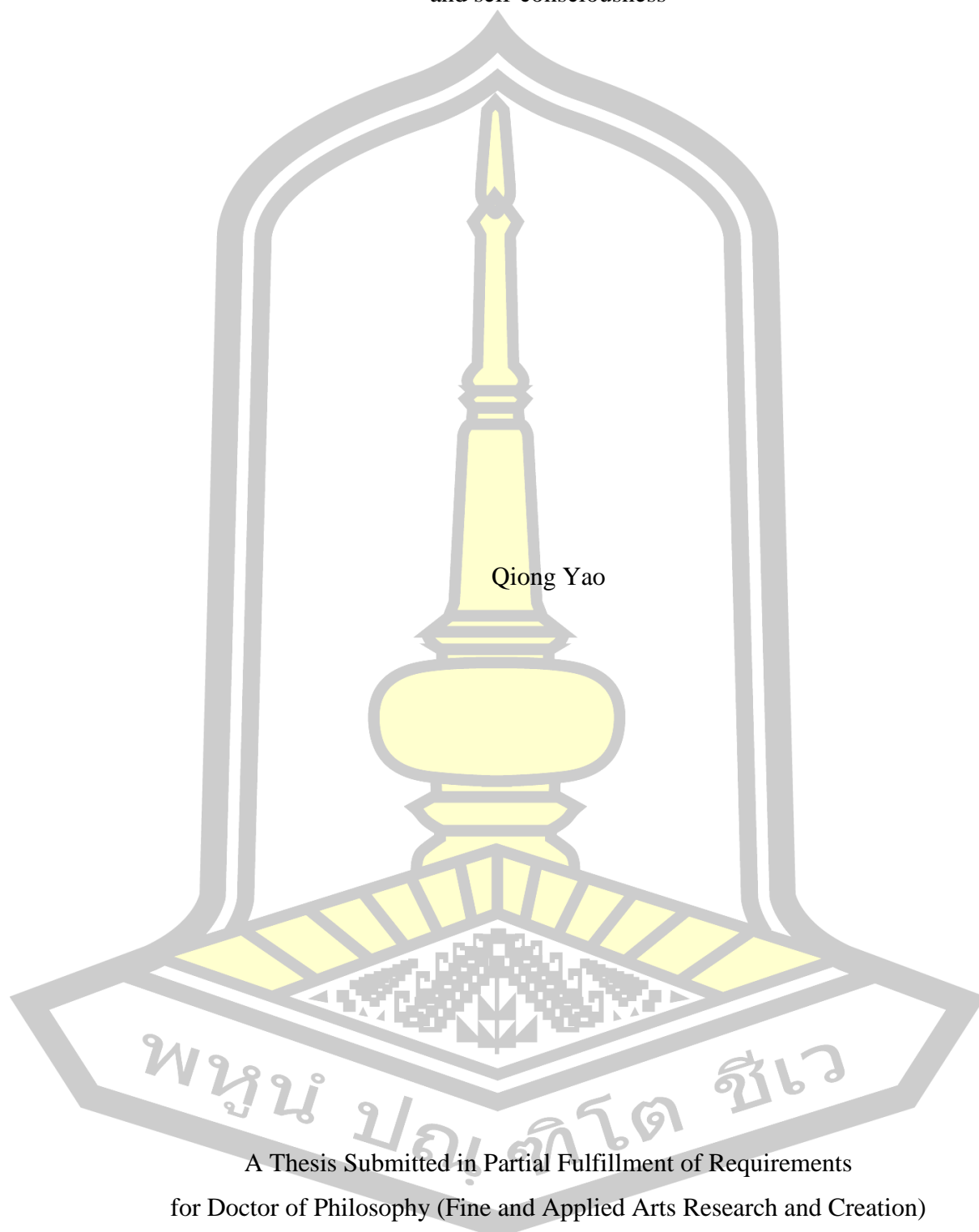


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Private Photography in Lianzhou Foto Festival (2005-2019): photographic narratives
and self-consciousness



Qiong Yao

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements
for Doctor of Philosophy (Fine and Applied Arts Research and Creation)

February 2025

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ABSTRACT

Private photography, as a unique form of photography, has occupied an important position in recording personal history and expressing self-consciousness since its emergence. In China, private photography has gradually gained prominence in the visual arts, and the Lianzhou Foto Festival provides a platform for the display and dissemination of this art form. Since its inception in 2005, the Lianzhou Foto Festival has quickly become an important event in the Chinese and international photographic community, in which private photography, as a much-anticipated form, has been widely displayed and discussed.

This study takes the private photographs exhibited during the Lianzhou Foto Festival (2005-2019) as the text, and uses the concepts of photographic narrative and self-consciousness, as well as content analysis, documentary analysis analysis, and in-depth interviews to explore in-depth the photographic narratives and self-consciousness in these works. The main objectives of the research are: 1. To study the development of Lianzhou Foto Festival and its influence on the city of Lianzhou. 2. To study the develop and influence of private photography in Lianzhou Foto Festival and influence of private photography in Lianzhou Foto Festival 3 . To study and analyse photographic narratives in private photography in the context of the Lianzhou Foto Festival. 4. To study and analyse self-consciousness in private photography in the context of the Lianzhou Foto Festival.

The results of the study show that Lianzhou Foto Festival has played an important role in the development of Lianzhou's culture, economy and society, and has increased Lianzhou's international popularity. Private photography enriches the artistic expression of the festival, enhances the cultural diversity of the festival, and strengthens the international influence of the festival. This study reveals the complex layers of photographic narratives and expressions of self-consciousness, showing how these elements are intertwined to reflect personal and social identities in contemporary cultural contexts.

By analysing these works, this study not only extends the theoretical understanding of private photography in terms of photographic narrative, self-

consciousness, social interaction and identity, but also provides an empirical analysis that demonstrates the manifestations and influences of private photography in the Lianzhou Foto Festival, an important cultural platform. The study reveals the unique structure and expression of private photography in photographic narratives, reflecting the complexity and evolution of individual self-consciousness. At the same time, private photography, as a form of social interaction, not only externalises an individual's inner world, but also serves as a medium for in-depth communication with the audience, further exploring the expression of identity in private photography. This discovery has significant academic value for understanding the role of contemporary photographic art in self-expression and social and cultural interactions, and provides new perspectives for artistic and sociological research. Through the display of private photography in the Lianzhou Foto Festival, the personal experiences and inner feelings of the photographers are revealed, and at the same time, the broader socio-cultural context is revealed, which promotes the study of multiple themes, such as photographic narrative and self-consciousness, social interaction and identity.

In conclusion, this study comprehensively analyses the manifestations of private photography in the Lianzhou Foto Festival and the multiple levels it reflects. This not only deepens the understanding of private photography as a narrative tool, but also reveals its unique role in expressing individual self-consciousness and facilitating social interaction. By exploring how private photography plays a role in self-consciousness, this study provides a new perspective and theoretical basis for understanding the place and influence of private photography in contemporary society and culture.

Keyword : private photography, Lianzhou Foto Festival, photographic narrative, self-consciousness, identity



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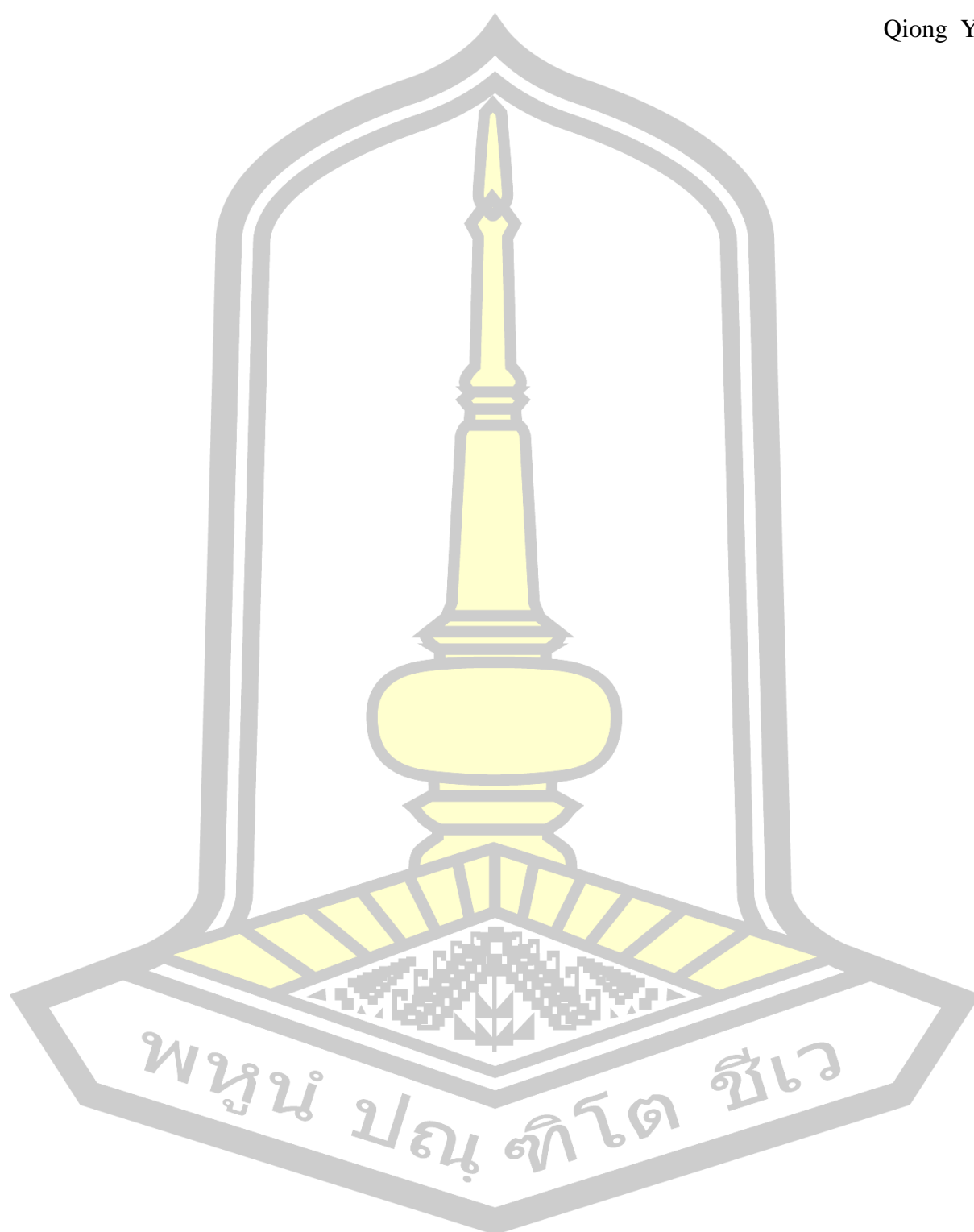


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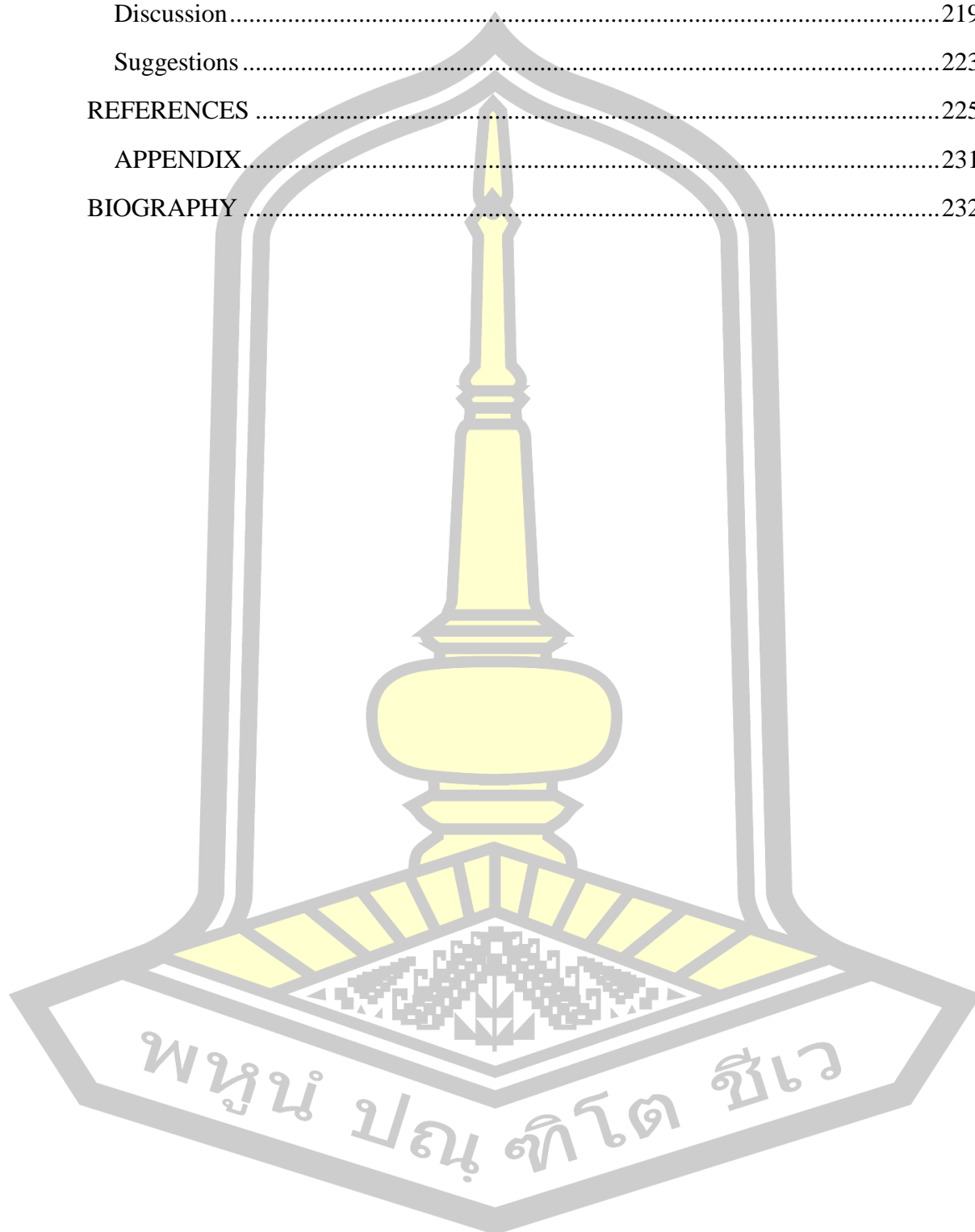
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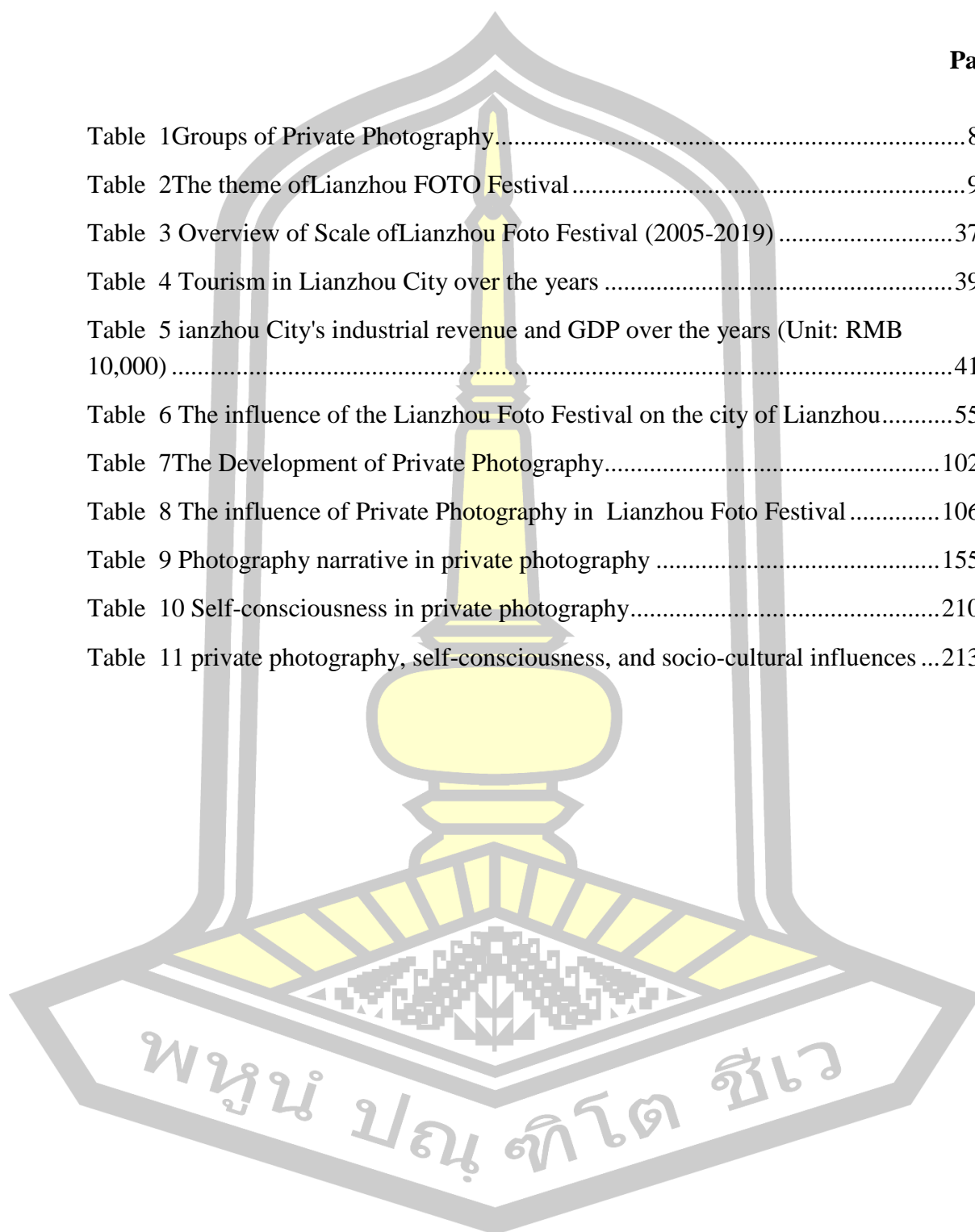
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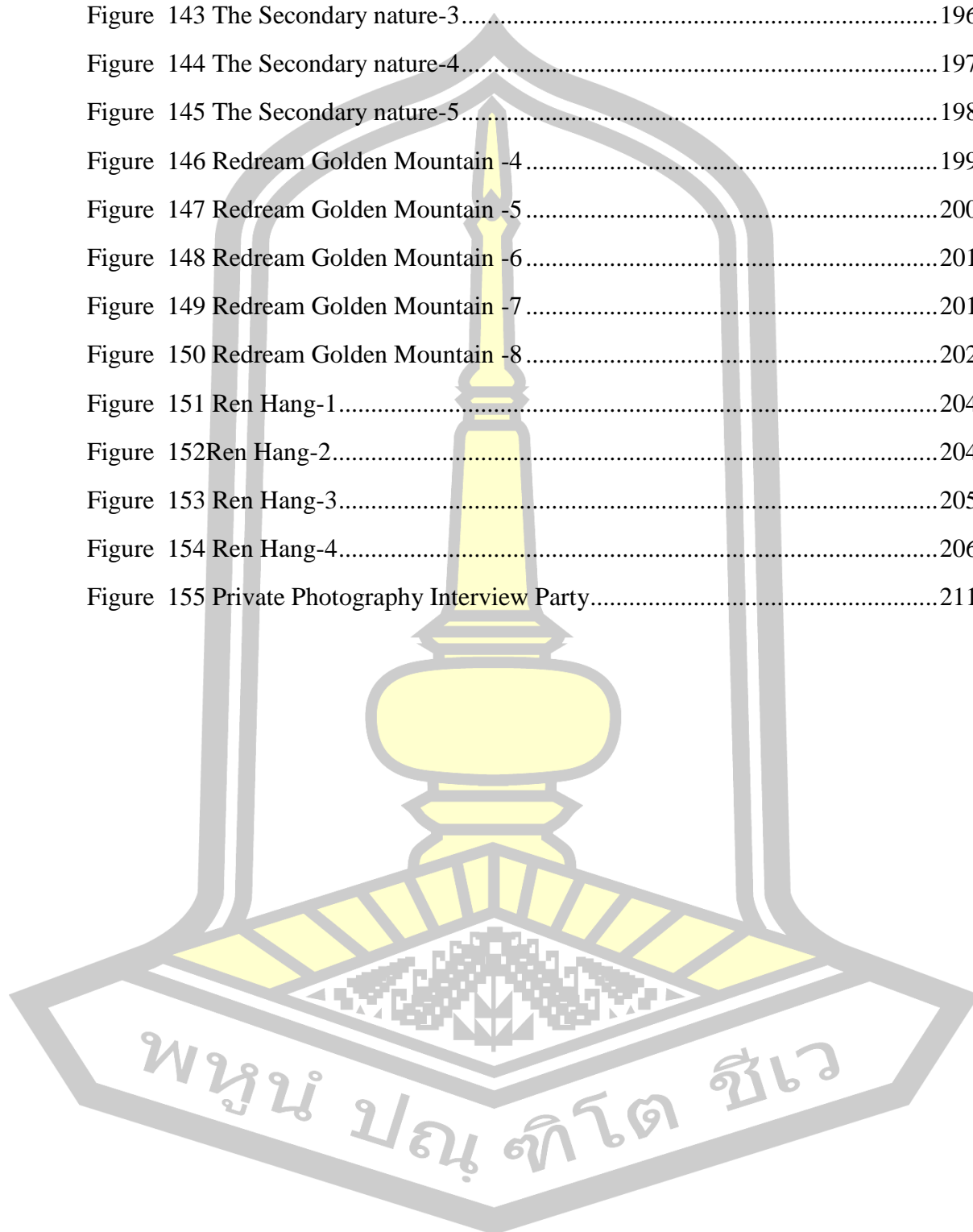
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Chapter I

Introduction

1. Background of the Study

1.1 Definition and Origin of Private Photography

Private Photography is a form of photography that focuses on personal life and self-expression. Unlike traditional photojournalism and landscape photography, private photography focuses more on the photographer's personal emotions, life and private moments. This form of photography originated in the mid-to-late 20th century, particularly in the Western art world in the 1970s and 1980s.

The concept of private photography gradually emerged in China in the 1990s, accompanied by urbanisation and the spread of consumer culture. It broke the boundaries of traditional photography, showing the subtle emotions and private experiences of daily life through the photographer's personal perspective. In his book, Gu Zheng mentions that the emergence and development of private photography in China is closely related to changes in social ideology and values, and that it is an important art form reflecting personal life and self-identity during the period of social transition (Gu Zheng, 2006).

In contemporary art, private photography has won widespread attention and recognition for its authentic and intimate qualities. By capturing the details and moments of daily life, photographers reveal the complexity and richness of human emotions. Western photographers such as Nan Goldin in the early 1980s documented the lives of their friends, families and communities through private photography, forming visual narratives with deep emotional resonance. Nan Goldin took the lives of young marginalised people in his own self-imposed exile from mainstream society as his content, bravely placing in his albums images of himself beaten up and swollen. image of a bruised and swollen nose. In the midst of the high tide of postmodernism, this work broke with the convention of the photographer as a viewer only, and boldly included private life in the vision of photography, hence the name of this kind of photography with an intimate nature. Goldin's work is seen as an important text for exploring gender, identity, and relationships.

Cindy Sherman's work explores issues of identity and gender through her series of selfies. Also through these works, Cindy Sherman not only demonstrates multiple identities and gender roles, but also challenges the viewer's perception of these roles. Her work breaks down the boundaries of gender and identity, revealing the fluidity and malleability of these concepts. At the same time, her work provokes the male gaze, revealing that in traditional art and media, images of women are often the product of a male perspective.

Sentimental Journey by Keisuke Araki: Beginning in 1971, Sentimental Journey chronicles the newlywed life of Araki and his wife, Sumiko. It captures the couple's everyday moments from an extremely personal perspective, from romantic intimacy to the mundane scenes of everyday life, showing the full spectrum of a newlywed couple's life. His photography does not shy away from intimacy and authenticity, even including extremely personal and vulnerable moments, which gives the work a strong emotional resonance. At the same time, it opens up a new visual and narrative approach, using photography for personal narratives and expressing deep

emotions. It challenges the boundaries between the public and the private, between art and everyday life, and raises questions about how the intimate and personal in photography affects the viewer's emotional experience and understanding.

In China, private photography first appeared in public photography exhibitions in China, dating back to the first Lianzhou Foto Festival in 2005, and the naming of private photography in China is also related to this festival. Zeng Han curated the multi-person group exhibition *Self-Private - Cenozoic Photography Group Exhibition* at the first Lianzhou Foto Festival in 2005, which was composed of the works of eleven young photographers. The curator, Zeng Han, won the Outstanding Curator of the Year award at the 2005 Lianzhou Foto Festival, and this group exhibition can be considered a landmark event for the public emergence of "private photography" in Chinese photography, and a naming ceremony for private photography in China. (Gu Zheng, 2006) Private photography has been displayed and promoted on important art platforms such as the Lianzhou Foto Festival, and has become an important part of contemporary art.

1.2 Overview of the Lianzhou Foto Festival

Lianzhou is located in the north-west of Guangdong, a city rich in natural and cultural heritage, situated at the crossroads of Guangdong, Guizhou and Hunan provinces. Early photography in Lianzhou can be traced back to the 1950s, and the local government organised photography training in the 1970s and 1980s, laying a solid foundation for the city's photography culture.

In 2004, Duan Yuting, then a reporter for People's Photography Newspaper, organised a photography workshop in Lianzhou, which caught the attention of Huang Yutuan, the mayor of Lianzhou. Huang Yutuan (2017) said at that time, Lianzhou's economy was facing challenges and needed a breakthrough to attract investment. So the government decided to organise a professional Lianzhou Foto Festival in Lianzhou. Duan Yuting, who had worked at the Pingyao International Photography Festival, was the perfect person to take up this challenge.

"If Lianzhou was an established tourist destination, I probably wouldn't have been able to curate the exhibition I envisaged," she says. "But we were almost completely free." (Yuting Duan, 2014) This Lianzhou Foto Festival makes use of abandoned factories in the city centre, which were soon converted into galleries, injecting a postmodern flavour into Lianzhou's photography scene. With the help of renowned French curator Alain Julien (who worked with Yuting Duan in Pingyao), the festival gained an international dimension, showcasing the work of Chinese and foreign photographers.

Every year since its creation, the Lianzhou Foto Festival has worked with experienced curators from different countries to select the right domestic curators. This collaboration has enriched the festival, with curators bringing fresh perspectives and keen insights into art and photography.

The Lianzhou Foto Festival is divided into international and local photography sections. The overall theme is determined by the Chief Curator and his team, with solo and thematic exhibitions. Individual exhibitions are selected by the Chief Curator's team from a large number of exhibited works, while thematic exhibitions are independently curated by the curators of the curatorial team and then judged by the Chief Curator's team.

The Lianzhou Foto Festival aims to create a platform to promote Chinese photography, showcasing the most dynamic and high quality international exhibitions and artists. The Local Chinese Photography section focuses on current issues in Chinese photography, aiming to provoke thought and address contemporary issues. Unlike other photography exhibitions in China, which often lack a high academic level of process, the Lianzhou Foto Festival is structured with a clear academic intent, exhibiting cutting-edge and experimental works every year (Duan Yuting, 2014).

From the outset, the festival has been an important platform for contemporary photography in China, contributing to the wider cultural and artistic landscape. Over the past fifteen years, the Lianzhou Foto Festival has become a pioneering platform for contemporary photography in China, a veritable Chinese Arles photography festival. (Mas Bird, 2019) "There are three reasons why Lianzhou is exceptional." (Li Zhengde, 2016) "Lianzhou Foto Festival has a broad vision, focuses on reality, and encourages artists to push forward to the experimental frontier." The mission of the Lianzhou Foto Festival is to balance the competing forces, and so far it has done so, says Beijing curator David Luo, adding that the festival means a lot to the city. (David Luo, 2019) The Lianzhou Foto Festival is different from other exhibitions in China. Other photography exhibitions in China think more about the opportunity for all photographers to show their work; everyone is taking what they want, but the process of organising and researching is missing. The Lianzhou Foto Festival, on the other hand, is more of a "festival" of contemporary art through the medium of photography, with an annual structure. Although, as chief curator Duan Yuting said, there have been mistakes and vacillations in the middle of the festival, its organisation and planning are of academic significance anyway. Every year, it presents the latest works of the artists, or the most experimental ones. (Nanwu Mourning, 2014)

1.3 The importance of private photography in Lianzhou Foto Festival

"In China, taking photographs is always a ritual, it always includes posing and consent has to be sought." (Susan Sontag 2001) In terms of China's photographic culture as a whole, before the 1990s, photography in China was basically aesthetic salon photography, a style favoured by many older photographers (and later nicknamed "Old Master" by the Cenozoic youngsters), which slowly came to an end around 2008. This phenomenon did not come to an end until around 2008. (Nan Wu Lian, 2014) The Cenozoic began to explore more different narratives in their photographs. There can be many perspectives for conveying social reality and viewing the world, and at a certain point in history, there is a need to break out of the language patterns that have dominated for so long. Such a breakthrough is, fundamentally, a questioning and subversion of the original narrative form. This form of private photography is the product of various attempts made by Cenozoic photographers.

In 2005, at the first Lianzhou Foto Festival, "Self Private Cenozoic Photography Group Exhibition". The exhibition was meticulously curated by Zeng Han, whose outstanding contribution also earned him the Outstanding Curator of the Year Award. The exhibition brought together a series of works created by Cenozoic photographers, showcasing their novel understanding and expression of the art of photography. In his foreword to the exhibition, Zeng Han (2005) states: "Almost all the image explorations undertaken by the aforementioned Cenozoic photographers are

spontaneous, rather than catering to certain rules of the game. Their photography is initially related to themselves, just like the unique signature of many of them in their photography, which is just a way to describe their individual existence and verify their individual value. The curator, Zeng Han, tries to break the original "photo ritual" in China with the young power of the Cenozoic. In *On Photography*, Susan Sontag (2001) describes the Chinese view of photography in this way. It seems that as soon as the young generation of photographers in China grasps the camera as a weapon, they are intent on shattering the so-called rituals and breaking down the "class discrimination" of photography, attempting to liberate photography, which is a privilege that is used by professionals for "showing off", into a right of expression that any ordinary person can grasp. This exhibition features a number of new generation photographers.

The exhibition featured a number of private photographs by Cenozoic photographers, including Bai Chuan's *Xu Zhu*, Song Tao and Li Weiyu's *Bird's Head Life*, Dai Mouyu's *Two or Three Times*, Tang Xiaoshuang's *Introducing Ourselves*, Liu Yicheng's *Dirty Embryo*, Yao Songxin's *Touch of Love*, and Su Weiguang's *Floating Sky*. With their unique perspectives and expressions, these works explore personal emotions, social observations, and cultural commentaries, thus providing the audience with a diverse visual and intellectual experience.

Through works taken from their own personal perspectives, these young authors, some of whom may be relatively young, reflect how the Cenozoic in China are exploring and expressing their personal identities and social relationships through private photography. The youngest photographer in this exhibition is only 18 years old, and the display of their work not only demonstrates their unique insights into the art of photography, but also signals the rise of a new force in Chinese photography. Self-Private Cenozoic Photography Group Exhibition reflects the attitude of Cenozoic photographers towards photography - exploring the possibilities of photography through self-expression and private experience as a personalised language. These artists use photography as a tool to record their lives, express their individuality, and interact with society, establishing personal values and social identity through image narratives. This exhibition is both their individual expression and a platform for their extensive dialogue with society, demonstrating the important role and far-reaching influence of private photography in modern art.

Private photography enriches the artistic content of Lianzhou Foto Festival with its unique personal perspective and emotional expression. It not only breaks the boundaries of traditional photography, which mostly focuses on documentary, landscape and portraits, but also introduces more diversified photographic themes and styles, pointing the camera at the photographer himself and his close ones to record their daily lives, emotional experiences and personal growth. This self-centred approach to photography breaks through the constraints of traditional photography, giving the photographs more emotional depth and personal colour. For example, photographer Chen Zhe's work *"Bearable"* provides an opportunity for self-repair by photographing the history of self-injury and visualising physical and psychological trauma. These works not only present physical trauma, but also reveal the emotional wounds deep inside through visual narratives.

Private photography presents personal emotions, memories and inner worlds to the viewer through the subjective perspective of the photographer. For example, Liu Bozhi's "Antecedents, Traces, Phenomena, Dreams" is a personal account of such a complex personal experience of an American born in Hong Kong in 1950 to parents of Guangzhou ancestry, whose destiny followed politics, times and history, and the yearning for his roots. In the Lianzhou Foto Festival, photographers show the warmth of family life, the confusion of personal growth, the influence of social change and the complexity of cultural collision through private photography. Private photography is not only a record of personal life, but also a profound observation and reflection on social phenomena. Through these works, viewers can not only see the photographers' personal life experience and emotional experience, but also feel the social and cultural messages behind the photographs.

Private photography is not only unique in artistic expression, but also has a profound influence on the audience. With their real emotions and life records, private photographs touch the viewers' hearts and minds, so that when the viewers appreciate the works, they can produce emotional resonance and thinking. For example, photographer Lümu's work "Daily life" shows that his life relies more on those who are close to him, those who have a place in each other's hearts, those who share happiness or different sorrows. By documenting the details of everyday life, these works evoke the viewer to reflect on their own lives and emotions.

Private photographs also break down the boundaries between art and the viewer to a certain extent, making photography a more intimate and accessible art form. When viewing private photography, viewers can more easily enter the inner world of the photographer and understand the emotions and ideas conveyed by the photography. This emotional resonance makes the private photography works in the photography festival has been widely recognised and loved.

In conclusion, private photography enriches the artistic content of Lianzhou Foto Festival with its unique personal perspective and emotional expression. It breaks the boundaries of traditional photography and introduces more diversified photographic themes and styles, making the exhibition content of the festival richer and more diversified. Private photography not only broadens the scope of expression of photographic works, but also enhances the emotional resonance between the audience and the works, making the festival a platform for displaying and exchanging art, and further promoting the development and innovation of photographic art.

2. Research objectives

The research objectives are mainly divided into the following aspects:

1. To study the development of Lianzhou Foto Festival and its influence on the city of Lianzhou.
2. To and analyse the performance and influence of private photography in the Lianzhou Foto Festival.
3. To study and analyse the photographic narratives in private photography in the context of Lianzhou Foto Festival.
4. To study and analyse self-consciousness in private photography in the context of Lianzhou Foto Festival.

3. Research questions

1. What is the history of Lianzhou Foto Festival? What is the specific influence of the festival on the economic, cultural and social development of Lianzhou City?
2. How has private photography developed in Lianzhou Foto Festival? Which important photographers and works in the festival contributed to the development of private photography?
3. What are the common forms of photographic narrative in private photography in the context of Lianzhou Foto Festival? How do these narrative structures and visual styles help photographers express their personal memories and emotions?
4. How does private photography in the context of Lianzhou Foto Festival express self-consciousness? What role do these works play in self-expression and social roles?

4. Definition of terms

1. Private Photography (私摄影): Private photography is a style of photography that originated in Western society in the 1950s. In 2006, the academic photographer Gu Zheng introduced the term "private photography" to China and translated it as "private photography". The concept of "private photography" was introduced by the Japanese photography critic Kotaro Iizawa in his book "Theory of Private Photography". Kōtarō Iizawa (2000) discussed the concept of "private photography" in depth, and defined it as a form of photography in which one observes, records, and expresses one's emotions through one's own perspective.

2. Photographic Narrative: Photographic narrative is a form of artistic expression that tells a story or conveys a message through photographic images. It combines visual elements and narrative techniques to present emotionally resonant content in the form of a series of photographs or a single image. Photographic narrative emphasises emotional expression and thematic coherence, and enhances visual influence through lighting, composition, colour and shooting angle, enabling the viewer to understand and feel the deeper meaning of the story. It can take various forms of expression, such as photography series, photo books and multimedia narratives, aiming to interact with the viewer and stimulate thinking and emotional responses.

3. Self-consciousness: Self-consciousness refers to an individual's heightened consciousness of his or her own existence and how he or she appears to others. It involves constant attention and reflection on one's own behaviour, appearance, thoughts and feelings. Moderate self-consciousness helps individuals to introspect and self-regulate, but excessive self-consciousness may trigger anxiety, shame, and self-doubt. Self-consciousness is an important object of study in the fields of psychology, philosophy and sociology, involving individual self-perception, social behaviour and mental health.

4. Identity: Identity is an individual's understanding and recognition of his or her role and position in society, culture, gender, race, occupation, family, and so on. This identity involves the individual's self-knowledge of his or her own traits, values, beliefs and behaviours, as well as the self-identity gained in interaction with others and society. Identity has multiple dimensions, and individuals may have multiple

identities at the same time, such as gender identity, occupational identity, and ethnic identity. Identity is not static, but evolves with time, experience and environmental changes. Identity is not only an individual's internal self-knowledge, but also influenced and shaped by social, cultural and historical contexts. Identity contains both the individual's self-identity (internal dimension) and the external identity (external dimension) obtained by the individual in social interaction.

5. Lianzhou Foto Festival: Lianzhou Foto Festival (Lianzhou Foto Festival for short) is an annual photography event held in Lianzhou City, Guangdong Province, China, founded in 2005. The festival aims to display and promote domestic and international excellent photography works, and promote the exchange and development of photography art. The Lianzhou Foto Festival brings together photographers, curators and art enthusiasts from all over the world, with exhibitions covering a wide range of fields, including documentary, artistic and photojournalistic photography. In addition to the exhibitions, the annual exhibition also includes photography lectures, workshops and academic forums, providing a platform for photography professionals and enthusiasts to exchange and learn. With its professionalism and international vision, Lianzhou Foto Festival has become one of the important photography art festivals in Asia.

6. Self-Cognition: Self-cognition refers to an individual's understanding and cognition of his or her own characteristics, personality, abilities, emotions, and behaviours. It includes an understanding of how one behaves in different situations and how one is positioned in society and in relationships. Through self-confidence, individuals are able to form a basic concept of "who I am", which forms the basis of self-consciousness.

7. Self-evaluation: Self-evaluation is the process by which an individual evaluates his or her own performance, abilities, values, and other aspects. This process involves individuals judging whether their behaviour meets expectations based on their own standards or social expectations, and making adjustments accordingly. The results of self-assessment usually influence an individual's self-esteem and self-confidence.

5. Scope of Research

5.1 Research area

The scope of the study is limited to the private photographs publicly exhibited in the Lianzhou Foto Festival during the period from 2005 to 2019. Private photographs have played an important role in the Lianzhou Foto Festival, and a total of 95 photographers' private photographs were exhibited during these 15 years. As the focus of this study is on photographic narrative and self-consciousness, excluding some parts with similar topics, similar shooting techniques and similar reflective contents, the remaining 41 groups of works come from different countries, and have taken works with different themes and different shooting techniques.

Num	Year	Photographer	Title of work
1	2005	Bai Chuan	Xu Zhu
2	2005	Lin Zhipeng	Number 223
3	2005	Song Tao, Ji Weiyu	Birdhead Life
4	2005	Dai Mouyu	Two three times
5	2005	Tang Xiaoshuang	Self-Introduction
6	2005	Liu Yiqing	Qing Tou Yi
7	2005	Yao Songxin	Touch of Love
8	2005	Su Hanguang	Floating
9	2005	Liu Bozhi	Golden Mountain of Dreams
10	2006	Zhang Meng	Family depth
11	2007	Liu Yiqing	Yi Qing Liu
12	2008	Lu Ning	Daily life
13	2010	Tang Wenjing	My world
14	2010	Tibor Várnagy(Hungary)	1DAY1PHOTO
15	2010	Tetsuko Kawauchi (Japan)	CUI CUI
16	2010	You Li	Silent latitude
17	2011	Chen Zhe	BEES
18	2011	Sun Yanchu	Still addicted
19	2011	Xie Quingzhi	Qian Qian
20	2012	JH Engström (Swedish)	Sketch
21	2012	Murong slippers	Drifting desire
22	2012	Feng Li	White Night
23	2013	Ren Hang	Ren Hang
24	2013	Zhao Gang	My university
25	2014	Jacques Henri Lartigue (USA)	Lartigue outdoors
26	2014	Patricia LayDorsey(USA)	Falling into place
27	2014	Sima Yuan	Secondary nature
28	2014	Xu Yong	Portrait of a friend
29	2015	Jacob Aue Sobol (Denmark)	Sabine
30	2016	Yusuke Yamatani (Japan)	Rama Lama Ding Dong
31	2016	Eriko Koga (Japan)	Tryadhvan
32	2016	Chen Wenjun & Jiang Yanmei	Me & Me
33	2017	Heba Khalifa	Home Made
34	2017	Yuki Naito (Japan)	Mine? Yours? Theirs?
35	2017	Shang Liang	A thousand selfies
36	2017	Akihito Yoshida (Japan)	Fallen leaves
37	2018	Louis Quail (Britain)	Old brother
38	2018	Qiu	Daily writing
39	2019	Daisuke Yokota (Japan)	Taratine
40	2019	Dai Zhiyong	Zhu Fengjuan

Table 1 Groups of Private Photography

Source: Lianzhou Photography Festival

5.2 Research time

The time frame of this study is based on the private photographs in the Lianzhou Foto Festival album edited and published by Duan Yuting, Director of the Lianzhou Foto Festival

From this, the role and influence of private photography in the Lianzhou Foto Festival can be studied. At the same time, the related history was studied. The research period was determined to be from 2005 to 2019, with the following phases.

Year	Theme
2005	Double vision - Starting from Lianzhou
2006	The Origin: Observation and Being Observed
2007	The Alchemy of Shadows
2008	My Camera
2009	Presence and Representation
2010	Does This World Exist!
2011	Toward the Social Landscape
2012	How Far is the Story from the Truth
2013	Farewell to Experience
2014	Encounter (Recreate an Encounter)
2015	Expanding Territories
2016	No Fun No Work
2017	Your Selfie Stick
2018	The Wind of Time
2019	Unforeseen

Table 2 The theme of Lianzhou FOTO Festival
Source: Lianzhou Photography Festival

6 Research Methodology

This study is a qualitative study of basic research, and its goal is to find academic answers, this paper utilizes the following three main research methods:

(1). Content analysis method:

Content analysis is a qualitative method for studying private photography works, which is used to systematically describe and analyse the private photography works in Lianzhou Foto Festival. Through the content analysis method, this study delves into the specific performance of private photography in Lianzhou Foto Festival, dismantling the narrative logic and expression of self-consciousness in private photography works. By analysing the themes and emotional tendencies of these works, the study examines how they construct the relationship between the individual and society, and reflect the photographers' self-identity in the socio-cultural context.

(2) Literature analysis method:

Literature analysis method is used to explore the development history, current situation and problems of private photography in Lianzhou Foto Festival. By collecting, collating and analysing relevant historical documents, photography theories and cultural research materials, this study explores the origin and evolution of private photography. In particular, through documentary analysis of the development of private photography in the Lianzhou Foto Festival, it reveals how it builds narrative

structure and self-consciousness, thus promoting the growth and diverse expression of this form of photography in China.

(3). In-depth interview method:

In-depth interview is a qualitative research method, and this study obtains first-hand information through in-depth interviews with practitioners related to the Lianzhou Foto Festival, exhibiting photographers and audiences. Through interviews with private photography creators, we learnt how they create their works and the emotional expression and social significance they consider in the creative process. The interviews also involved the photographers who participated in the private photography exhibition, exploring in-depth their understanding of private photography and how they expressed their personal emotions and self-consciousness through narratives on the platform of Lianzhou Foto Festival. In addition, the study also uses interviews to understand the audience's perception and interpretation of private photography, and explores the emotional resonance and interaction between the audience and the works.

6.1 Population and Groups

In order to provide a comprehensive analysis of private photography during the Lianzhou Foto Festival, this Research population will be selected as a representative sample from the overall population. These samples include private photographs that have significant influence and typical significance in each festival. The specific population is divided into the following categories:

(1). Curators:

Curators are at the heart of photography exhibitions and they play a key role in selecting and organising them. Curators not only have a deep understanding of the photographers' works, but also have insight into the cultural significance and artistic value behind the works. Therefore, interviews with curators provide insight into the positioning and development of private photography in the Lianzhou Foto Festival.

(2). Critics and scholars:

Critics and scholars can provide different perspectives and insights by professionally analysing and commenting on photographic works. They are able to provide insightful interpretations of private photography from multiple perspectives, including art, society and culture, revealing the underlying themes and social influences in the works. Interviews with this group will help to understand the acceptance and influence of private photography in the academic and critical community.

(3). General audience:

Feedback and reactions from general audiences are important indicators of the social and cultural influence of photographic works. Their opinions can reflect the reception of private photography in the wider society and the extent to which viewers empathise with the emotions and self-expression in the work. Interviews with general audiences can provide insights into the influence and dissemination of private photographic works at the mass level.

(4). Specific groups (art lovers and photography enthusiasts):

Art lovers and photography enthusiasts usually have a deeper understanding and acceptance of photography works. They may pay more attention to details when viewing the works and have a keener sense of the artistry and emotional expression of the works. By interviewing this group, a more detailed and professional evaluation of private photographic works can be obtained.

(5). Exhibiting photographers:

Exhibiting photographers are the core subjects of private photography research. They express their personal emotions and self-consciousness through their works, which is an important source of information for this research. Through in-depth interviews with exhibiting photographers, it is possible to understand their motivation, their creative process, and how they express themselves and record their lives through their photographs.

(6). Government officials:

Refers to the decision-making level of the cultural sector, including local and national officials. The government plays an important role in policy guidance.

6.2 Research Area

Main Research Interests: Private Photography, Lianzhou Foto Festival

Sub-area: private photography with different themes, different shooting techniques and different visual styles.

6.3 Data Collection

6.3.1 Content data collection

(1) Lianzhou Foto Festival data collection

Collect specific data on photography festivals in Lianzhou, and analyse the number of tourists, economic influence, and social and cultural influence brought by Lianzhou Foto Festival.

(2) Collection of data on the content of private photography works

Published albums, analysing the contents of the albums, analysing the photographers to understand their character and motivation; recording and collating the themes and emotional expressions of private photography works

(3) Internet content data collection

Collect relevant internet articles, social media posts and comments; analyse the keywords and topics mentioned in Internet content; examine attitudes and sentiments expressed by Internet users; examining the distribution of discussions and opinions

6.3.2 Document collection

Collect relevant research papers, books and reports; key concepts and theoretical frameworks mentioned in the literature; analyse research methods and data results in the literature; compare understanding and interpretation of the research subjects in different literatures

6.3.3 Interview data collection

Invite participants for individual or group interviews; use open-ended interview questions to guide participants to delve deeper into the research topic;

recording words and participants' expressions during the interview; analysing core ideas and themes

6.3.4 Data collection tools or equipment

Computers, smartphones, text editing software and text analysis tools; data collection text analysis tools or data analysis software; libraries and online databases; document management software; audio and video equipment

6.4 Data Synthesis and Analysis

In collecting the research data, I used the Data Synthesis Framework as a categorisation tool to set the stage for subsequent analysis. In the subsequent study, I will present and organise this information in detail, following the outline of each chapter in the research paper. This study mainly employs the concepts of 'narrative', 'memory' and 'self-consciousness', and explores the relationship between them by analysing their manifestations in private photographs. At the same time, I also analyse in depth the interaction between the individual and society in private photography.

6.5 Research representation

6.5.1 Full text of the study

Descriptive analysis

6.5.2 Research articles

International journals, Scopus level or ERIC

7 Literature review

This section reviews and analyses existing research in the field of private photography and photographic narratives, and identifies the main findings and shortcomings of current research. By sorting out the relevant literature, it provides the theoretical basis and research direction for this study.

7.1 Research on Private Photography

Private photography, as a style of photography, focuses mainly on observation and recording from a personal perspective and the expression of personal emotions. Japanese photography critic Kotaro Iizawa (Kotaro Iizawa, 2000) first proposed the concept of private photography.

Gu Zheng has discussed the concept and meaning of private photography in depth in several of his academic papers and books. The concept of "private photography" in China was first introduced in Gu Zheng's (2005) *A Treatise on Private Photography in China*. The "naming ceremony" of "private photography" in China was a joint effort between the mass media and commercial space, and the 16th issue of City Face Newspaper in 2005 used the album "Photography Private Life" as a way of linking photography with private life. The 16th issue of City Face Newspaper in 2005, in the form of an album entitled "Photography Private Life", linked photography to private life, and while attempting to explain the origins of "private photography" in China, it focused on the introduction of private photography in China and positioned Chinese private photography as "a new means of establishing personal identity, and an adhesive to build new interpersonal relationships."

Zeng Han's group exhibition "Self-Private - Cenozoic Photography Group Exhibition" at the first Lianzhou Foto Festival in 2005 can be regarded as a landmark event for the public emergence of "private photography" in Chinese photography, and

also as a naming ceremony for Chinese private photography. It can also be regarded as the naming ceremony of Chinese private photography. (Gu Zheng 2006)

Gu Zheng's (2007) study of contemporary visual culture, *The Sixth Face of Modernity*, defines "private photography" in both a broad and a narrow sense, and in the book he defines it as follows: "In the broad sense of the word "private photography", it is photography that goes beyond the scope of the lens. In his book, he defines "Private Photography" in a broad sense, that is, the scope of the camera goes beyond the individual and the family and points to all the areas that the photographer is willing to look at. In a narrower sense, "private photography" can be the act and habit of taking and preserving images for one's own personal use."

In *Contemporary Photographic Techniques No. 3 - Private Photography*, Lin Lu (2015) focuses on the position and role of private photography in Chinese contemporary art. He argues that private photography is an important way for Cenozoic artists to express their personal experiences and emotions, and that these works usually show a more realistic and direct slice of life, emphasising personal perspectives and unique feelings.

7.2 Research on Photographic Narrative

Photographic narrative is a way of constructing and communicating a story or concept through photography that combines visual elements such as image content, composition, angle, light and shadow in order to create a multi-layered narrative. Roland Barthes pointed out in *The Bright Room* (1980) that the essence of photography lies in its referentiality, i.e., 'this is there,' a characteristic that gives photography a unique narrative ability to capture the reality of a moment and convey complex emotions and messages through images that reflect the photographer's self-consciousness. Photography is not only a tool for recording reality, but also a medium for telling personal stories and expressing self-consciousness.

Susan Sontag further emphasised in *On Photography* (1977) that photography serves as a text of historical memory, recording the development and evolution of human visual experience. Through visual imagery, photography is able to effectively tell individual and collective stories of history while revealing the inner world and self-perception of the photographer.

Photographic narrative is not limited to the reproduction of reality, but also involves the treatment of time and space. Mick Barr, in *Narratology: An Introduction to Narrative Theory* (1995), emphasises that time and space are important elements in narrative, and that photographic narrative influences the viewer's understanding of the narrative through changes in sequence, frequency and duration. Space, on the other hand, serves as a symbolic element that enhances the atmosphere and themes of the story through environmental depictions.

Photographic narrative has an important place in cultural practice. Luo Gang (2003) and Gu Zheng explored the function of photography as a cultural practice that expresses complex narratives through visual symbols in *The Visual Culture Reader*. In addition, Zhu Qi (2013) in *New Art History and Visual Narrative* analyses how photography has evolved from a traditional means of reproducing reality to an independent form of visual narrative from an art historical perspective. He particularly

emphasises the photographic narrative in postmodern art, pointing out that it has broken the traditional narrative mode through innovative forms such as non-linear narrative, expressionist style and collage, making photography an art form with rich expressive power.

To sum up, photographic narrative constructs a complex and multi-level narrative structure through the skilful use of time and space as well as formal innovations, so that photographic works can intuitively express profound emotions and social meanings. Photography is not only a recording tool, but also an important medium for expressing complex narratives and emotions.

7.3 Research on self-consciousness

Self-consciousness is a multi-layered and complex psychological phenomenon involving the individual's awareness, reflection and self-understanding of his or her own state of being in social interactions. It is not only a simple recognition of one's own existence, but also includes self-perception and behavioural orientation generated through various psychological processes such as memory, social interaction and Self-evaluation. The study of self-consciousness involves many fields such as psychology, sociology and cultural studies, in which different scholars have deeply explored the connotation and formation mechanism of self-consciousness from different perspectives.

In the study of the relationship between memory and self-consciousness, Veronica O'Keane (2010) explores in detail the role of memory in shaping self-identity in her book *Self-Consciousness: Memory, the Brain, and Who We Are*. She points out that memory is not just a passive record of events, but an active process of constructing self-identity. Memory and self-consciousness are closely intertwined, with memory forming the basis of self-consciousness and self-perception, which in turn influences how we remember and interpret past events. This view suggests that memories not only record our past, but also shape our understanding of ourselves and influence our behaviour and decision-making.

Charles Horton Cooley (1902), in *Human Nature and the Social Order*, graphically describes the social dimension of self-consciousness through the concept of the 'mirror me'. He suggests that a person's self-perception is largely formed through interactions with others. Individuals perceive others' reactions to their behaviour as a "mirror" and develop self-consciousness through this social interaction and reflection. This theory emphasises the key role of social interaction in the formation of self-consciousness, pointing out that self-consciousness is not only a reflection of the inner psyche, but also a process of gradual construction through social interaction.

In addition, in the field of psychology, researchers usually associate the self with identity as the core issue in the study of the phenomenon of 'identity' and explore the question of 'who am I'. Sigmund Freud further developed the theory of identity in such works as *The Ego and the Self*, *Group Psychology* and *Ego Analysis*, elaborating on the types, characteristics and forms of identity and its influence on self-consciousness. He argued that identity is an integrated psychological process by which individuals identify themselves, perceive the group to which they belong and, as a result, develop adaptive emotional experiences and patterns of behaviour. Freud's

research provides a profound psychodynamic perspective for understanding self-consciousness, emphasising the close connection between individual identity and self-consciousness.

In relation to this, self-expression (SELFEXPRESSION) is a form of behaviour in which an individual projects his or her emotions, thoughts and ideas outwardly through behaviour, language, etc. Kim and Sherman (2007) delved into the concept of SELFEXPRESSION in their study and emphasised the importance of culture in this process. They found that self-expression is not only an outward presentation of an individual's internal emotions, but is also profoundly influenced by the cultural context, which in turn influences an individual's choice behaviour. Their study suggests that the form and effect of self-expression may differ significantly in different cultural contexts, which reveals the complex relationship between self-expressive behaviour and culture.

In summary, the study of self-consciousness covers a number of dimensions, including the construction of memory and self-identity, the formation of self-perception in social interaction, and the cultural dimension of self-expression. Together, these theories and studies reveal the complexity and diversity of self-consciousness and emphasise the important role of psychological processes, social interaction and cultural context in the formation of self-consciousness.

7.4 Research on the Lianzhou Foto Festival

Since its inception in 2005, the Lianzhou Foto Festival has rapidly developed into an important event in the Chinese and international photography community, attracting widespread academic attention and government support. Duan Yuting, Bao Kun, Wang Ningde, Nan Wuyu Mourning, and Duan Linlin (2015), in their article ‘Lianzhou: Ten Years of Rage - A Dialogue with Duan Yuting, Artistic Director of the Lianzhou Foto Festival,’ point out that the Lianzhou Foto Festival was initially founded not only to promote the art of photography, but also to respond to the economic challenges that Lianzhou was facing at the time. The government hoped that by organising the festival, it would promote investment attraction and the city's economic development. Since its inception, the Lianzhou Foto Festival has achieved remarkable results in cultural, economic and social aspects, and has become an important topic for academic research.

On the cultural and academic level, Lianzhou Foto Festival is known for its high level of academics and open curator system. According to the Lianzhou Foto Festival Catalogue published annually, the festival has established awards for Photographer of the Year, Curator of the Year, and Newcomer in Photography in order to discover and cultivate young and middle-aged photographic talents, as well as to maintain the festival's consistent academic and professional standards. Han Jing (2015) mentioned in ‘Citizen's Festival, Grounded Works’ that the festival has brought art exhibitions closer to the general public through the ‘Affordable Photography’ bazaar, successfully realising the marketisation of art works, and further promoting the development of the festival as a mass and people-friendly event. Jin Lin (2015) points out in ‘An International Photography Exhibition in a County-level City in China’ that the curatorial hiring system and academic pursuit of the Lianzhou Foto Festival make it unique among China's photography exhibitions, and that the cutting-

edge and experimental works on display each year reflect its continuous innovation and exploration in the academic field.

The Lianzhou Foto Festival has also achieved remarkable results in terms of economic and city branding. Yu Hongyang (2015) points out in ‘Lianzhou, a small mountain city's beautiful encounter with light and shadow’ that the Lianzhou Foto Festival has successfully tapped into the cultural heritage of Lianzhou and Qingyuan, established the brand of Lianzhou's external cultural exchanges, and injected a new impetus into the region's cultural soft power. The investment promotion held during the photography festival has also achieved fruitful results, with the first promotion in 2006 attracting more than 3.9 billion yuan of investment, and exceeding 20 billion yuan in 2018 and 2019, highlighting the role of the photography festival in promoting local economic development. In addition, Xiao Jiayi (2015) mentioned in ‘The Key to the Engine of Old City Revival - Design Analysis of Lianzhou Photography Museum under the Theory of Urban Catalysis’ that the establishment of Lianzhou Photography Museum further promotes the revival of the old city and consolidates Lianzhou's leading position in the field of culture and art.

Lianzhou Foto Festival also plays an important role in social and cultural exchange. In his study, He Kun (2021) highlights that the Lianzhou Foto Festival has created a platform for international photographic exchange through colourful exhibitions and high-end forums, promoting academic interaction between artists and audiences. Chen Yuanpeng (2015) also pointed out that the ‘Imaging Experts Meeting’ activity, as a highlight of Lianzhou Foto Festival, provides an important support for the prosperity of the photography industry and further expands the international influence of Lianzhou Foto Festival.

Overall, Lianzhou Foto Festival has played an important role in cultural promotion, academic research, economic development and city brand building. Through continuous innovation and in-depth excavation of culture, Lianzhou Foto Festival not only provides a platform for photographers and audiences to display and communicate, but also injects lasting vitality into the economic and social development of Lianzhou City. This phenomenon not only highlights the important position of Lianzhou as the ‘Photography Capital of China’, but also demonstrates the potential of cultural industry in promoting regional economic and social development.

8. Conceptual Framework

8.1 Concept

This study uses the concepts of ‘photographic narrative’, ‘memory’ and ‘self-consciousness’ from art and sociology.

The study summarises Roland Barthes's *The Bright Room* (2003), Susan Sontag's *On Photography* (2008), Veronica O'Keegan's *Memory, the Brain, and Who We Are* (2010), and Charles Horton Cooley's *Mirror-Me Theory in Human Nature and the Social Order* (1902). In addition, and other studies on photographic narratives, self-consciousness. This study provides a brief introduction to the concepts and

summarises the implications of the research by examining theories about photographic narrative and self-consciousness.

8.1.1 Photographic narrative theory

In terms of the historical development of photographic narrative, its connotation has undergone many changes and expansions. Roland Barthes analysed the nature of photographic narrative in depth in his writings. Barthes points out that photography's narrative ability stems from its unique referentiality, 'punctum' and 'studium', which enable it not only to capture reality, but also to convey complex emotions and information through visual images (Barthes, 2003). This view suggests that photographic narrative is not merely a reproduction of reality, but a reconstruction of reality through visual elements.

The concept of photographic narrative was further expanded in the mid-20th century with the development of narratology. In *Narratology: An Introduction to Narrative Theory*, Mick Barr emphasised that time and space play a key role in narrative, and that photographic narrative influences the viewer's understanding of the story of an image by adjusting the order, frequency and duration of time (Barr, 1995). This expansion takes photographic narrative beyond the static image to a dynamic form of narrative capable of manipulating time and space.

Entering the postmodern period, the theory of photographic narrative changed again. In *New Art History and Visual Narrative*, Zhu Qi points out that photography as an art form has evolved from a traditional means of reproducing reality to an independent form of visual narrative (Zhu Qi, 2013). In particular, he mentioned that photographic narrative in postmodern art has broken the traditional narrative mode through the innovation of non-linear narrative, expressionist style, collage and other forms, making photography more expressive and ideological.

Overall, the theoretical development of photographic narrative reflects its gradual evolution from a tool for recording reality to a narrative medium with a complex structure and deep connotations. The changes and expansions in this process have not only enriched the artistic expression of photography, but also deepened the importance of photography in cultural and social studies.

8.1.2 Self-consciousness theory

Self-consciousness is a multifaceted and complex psychological phenomenon that includes an individual's consciousness, self-knowledge and identity in social interactions. It is not only the consciousness of one's own existence, but also includes identity and behavioural orientation formed by various psychological processes such as memory and social interaction. Research on self-consciousness spans multiple disciplines, including psychology and sociology, and scholars have studied its nuances and mechanisms from different perspectives.

In *Self-Consciousness: Memory, the Brain, and Who We Are* (2010), Veronica O'Keen delves into the critical role of memory in shaping self-identity. She argues that memory is not only a passive record of events, but also an active process of constructing self-identity. Memory is intricately linked to self-consciousness, with memory underpinning self-awareness and self-perception, which in turn influence the way we recall and interpret past events. This view suggests that memory not only records our history, but also shapes our self-consciousness and influences our behaviour and decision-making.

Charles Horton Cooley, in his book *Human Nature and the Social Order* (1902), introduced the concept of the ‘mirror self’ to describe the social nature of self-consciousness. According to Cooley, a person's self-awareness is formed primarily through interactions with others, and the reactions of others act as a ‘mirror’ that reflects a person's self-image. A person's self-consciousness is formed through the reactions of others to them. That is, individuals form their Self-evaluation consciousness by imagining how others perceive them and how they are evaluated by others. This process includes not only passive reflection but also active self-expression. Through self-expression in social interactions, individuals are able to form self-consciousness and self-identity. This process of social interaction and reflection plays a crucial role in the formation of self-consciousness, which emphasises that self-consciousness is not only a product of internal cognition, but also a structure formed through social dynamics.

Kim and Sherman (2007) explored the concept of self-expression in a study published in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, which emphasised the crucial role of culture in the process of self-expression, stating that self-expression is not only an internal need of the individual, but it is also deeply influenced by cultural values and social expectations.

Sigmund Freud further elaborated on the relationship between self-consciousness and identity in works such as *The Ego and the Self* (1923) and *Group Psychology and Ego Analysis* (1921). Freud discussed the types, characteristics and forms of identity and its influence on self-consciousness, arguing that identity is an integrated psychological process in which individuals recognise their place in a group and develop corresponding emotional experiences and patterns of behaviour. Freud's theory provides a deep psychodynamic understanding of self-consciousness, emphasising the intertwined nature of identity and self-consciousness.

In summary, self-consciousness has been explored from a number of dimensions, including memory construction, identity formation and social interaction. Together, these theories reveal the complexity and diversity of self-consciousness, emphasising the critical role of psychological processes and social interactions in shaping how individuals perceive and understand themselves.

8.3 Conceptual Framework

Combining these theoretical perspectives, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how private photography at the Lianzhou Photo Festival reflects and constructs the photographer's sense of self. The framework guides the analysis of the photographs while balancing the personal and social dimensions of photographic practice.

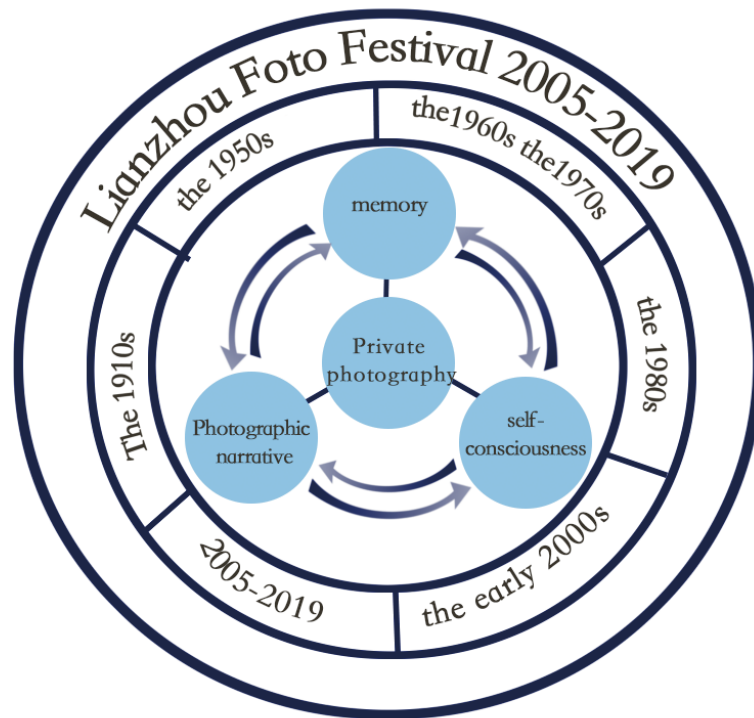


Figure 1 The framework of this article
Source: Illustrated by Yao Qiong, 2023

9 Chapter Structure

Chapter I Introduction

Chapter II The Development and influence of the Lianzhou Foto Festival

Chapter III The Develop and influence of private photography in Lianzhou Foto Festival

Chapter IV Photographic Narrative in Private Photography

Chapter V Self-consciousness in Private Photography

Chapter VI Findings, Recommendations and Conclusions of the Study

10. Benefits of the Study

10.1 Academic Contribution

Advancement of Knowledge

This study will make an important contribution to the existing body of knowledge in the field of photography in China, with a special focus on private photography and its narrative and self-consciousness aspects. Covering a wide range of fields including photographic theory, psychology and socio-economics, the research aims to provide an in-depth understanding and theoretical analysis of private photography in China. Through a comprehensive perspective and rich academic resources, the study will contribute to the further development and deepening of knowledge in the field of private photography in China, and provide a new cornerstone for related academic research.

Theoretical Insights

The research will strengthen the theoretical framework related to photographic narratives and self-consciousness by providing new perspectives and insights. The results of the research will help refine and extend existing theories to make them more applicable to contemporary contexts. By introducing new theoretical insights, this study not only enriches existing academic discussions, but also provides new directions and approaches for future research.

10.2 Practical significance

Guidance for photographers: The results of this study will provide practical guidance for photographers, especially young and emerging artists. Understanding the interplay between narrative structure and self-consciousness can help photographers create more influential and meaningful work.

Curatorial practice: Curators of photography exhibitions, especially those who want to participate in international photography festivals, can benefit from the insights provided by this study. This will help them to curate exhibitions that better reflect the personal and social dimensions of the influence of private photography.

10.3 Social and cultural influences

Cultural consciousness: By highlighting the cultural and social context of private photography in China, this study will promote consciousness and appreciation of private photography in China. It will demonstrate the unique ways in which photographers reflect and engage with social reality.

Promoting self-expression: This study analyses the manifestation of self-expression and self-consciousness in photography, encouraging individuals to explore and express their personal experiences and identities through this medium. This can lead to a greater sense of personal fulfilment and social understanding.

Documenting social change: The study will document the ways in which private photography captures and reflects social change. This can serve as a historical record and provide valuable insights into the evolution of China's cultural and social landscape from 2005 to 2019.

10.4 Benefits for Lianzhou City

Cultural tourism: By analysing the development and influence of the Lianzhou Foto Festival, it will help to promote Lianzhou as a cultural tourism destination. It will attract more tourists interested in photography and art, and promote local tourism and economic development.

Local cultural development: This study will provide valuable insights into the role of the Lianzhou Foto Festival in promoting local cultural development. It will highlight the festival's contribution to the cultural landscape of Lianzhou and encourage further support and investment in the Lianzhou Foto Festival.

Community engagement: The study will emphasise the importance of community engagement in cultural activities. By demonstrating the positive influences of the festival on the local community, the study will encourage greater community involvement and participation in future cultural events.

Economic Benefits: An increase in tourism and cultural activities can bring economic benefits to the City of Lane Cove. Local businesses including hotels,

Chapter II

The Development and influence of Lianzhou Foto Festival

Introduction

This chapter explores in detail the development history of the Lianzhou Foto Festival and its multifaceted influence on the city of Lianzhou. Firstly, since its inception in 2005, the Lianzhou Foto Festival has gradually developed into one of the most academic and internationally influential photography festivals in China by enriching the content of its exhibitions and deepening its themes through co-operation with international curators and artists. Secondly, this chapter analyses in detail the performance of the festival in terms of the combination of academics and internationalisation, the establishment of an international cooperation network, and the deepening and innovation of its themes year by year, demonstrating the path of its diversified development. In addition, this chapter outlines the various awards established by the festival, the expansion of the exhibition scale, and the richness of academic exchanges and interactive activities, highlighting the positive role of the festival in enhancing Lianzhou City's cultural soft power and international image.

In terms of the economic, cultural, social and artistic influence of Lianzhou City, the Lianzhou Foto Festival has significantly enhanced the local economic benefits and promoted the development of tourism and cultural branding. This chapter analyses the festival's driving effect on tourism and related industries through specific data, and explores its far-reaching influence on cultural promotion, social participation and art education. The Lianzhou Foto Festival has not only injected new vitality into the local economy, but also enhanced Lianzhou's international popularity and cultural soft power, and successfully shaped the brand image of "China's Photography City".

Finally, this chapter summarises the important role of Lianzhou Foto Festival as a cultural event for local economic and social development, and shows how the festival has become an important driving force for Lianzhou's economic, cultural and social development through diversified development paths.

1. Origin of Lianzhou Foto Festival

1.1 Overview of Lianzhou City

Lianzhou City is located in the northwestern part of Guangdong Province, with 10 towns and 2 Yao ethnic townships under its jurisdiction in 2022. The land area is 2668.52 square kilometres. At the end of the year, the household population was 536,299, with a resident population of 377,800. The area of arable land is 30,300 hectares, of which 21,000 hectares are sown, with a total grain output of 109,700 tonnes. The area of forest land is 191,300 hectares, with a forest coverage rate of 68.21% and a storage capacity of 11,959,500 cubic metres. It is a national demonstration base for the development of non-metallic mineral industry, China's calcium carbonate city, China's photography city (township), China's hometown of crystal pears, China's hometown of red onions, China's hometown of longevity, China's eco-tourism counties (cities), the national food safety demonstration counties (cities), the national model zone for the quality and safety of exported food and agricultural products, the national selenium-enriched agricultural demonstration

bases, the best city in terms of livability, industry, and tourism, and the Guangdong Province's famous historical and cultural city Guangdong Province. Famous Cultural City of Guangdong Province. (This data is from the official website of Lianzhou City)

As the first "Chinese City of Photography", citizens can visit photography exhibitions at any time, which has become the norm in Lianzhou, inspired by the Lianzhou Foto Festival.

In 2004, the Qinglian Expressway (National Highway 107) was severely damaged, and Lianzhou, which is located in the mountainous area of northern Guangdong Province, also suffered from road difficulties, restricted investment and slowed down socio-economic development.

"At that time, we went to the Pearl River Delta to attract investment, and when we talked about Lianzhou, people only knew 'Lianxian', they didn't know there was a 'Lianzhou', and visibility was very low." Lin Wenzhao (2019) recalled that without fame, it is difficult to develop and rapid development. By now, it is the tenth year since Lianzhou was abolished from the original Lianzhou County to a city (Lianzhou City is a county-level city).

How to find a breakthrough, Lianzhou's city card, to help the rapid development of the local area? 8 March 2005, after the Lianzhou City, four groups of team meeting to discuss the decision to agree to start that year, Lianzhou Foto Festival!

Lianzhou Foto Festival to be held? Lianzhou was questioned for a while that year as soon as the news broke. On the one hand, Lianzhou is located in the north of Guangdong and has undeveloped transport, will there be a small number of respondents to organise such an international cultural event? Secondly, will the festival be reduced to a face-saving project when the government spends money to organise it? Also, can Lianzhou organise a big festival in a small mountain town?

1.2 Establishment of Lianzhou Foto Festival

Early photography in Lianzhou can be traced back to the 1950s. The local government organised photography training in the 1970s and 1980s, laying a solid foundation for the city's photography culture.

In 2004, Duan Yuting, then a reporter for People's Photography Newspaper, organised a photography workshop in Lianzhou, which caught the attention of the mayor of Lianzhou. At that time, Lianzhou was facing economic challenges and needed a breakthrough to attract investment. So they decided to organise a professional Lianzhou Foto Festival in Lianzhou. Duan Yuting, who had worked at the Pingyao International Photography Festival, was the perfect person to take on this challenge.

"If Lianzhou was an established tourist destination, I might not have been able to curate the exhibition I envisioned," says Duan Yuting (2014). "But we were almost completely free." The festival made use of abandoned factories in the city centre, which were soon converted into galleries, injecting a postmodern vibe into the Lianzhou Foto Festival scene. With the help of renowned French curator Alain Julien (who worked with Duan Yuting in Pingyao), the festival gained an international dimension, showcasing the work of Chinese and foreign photographers.

Every year since its creation, the Lianzhou Foto Festival has worked with experienced curators from different countries to select the right domestic curators. This collaboration has enriched the festival, with curators bringing fresh perspectives and keen insights into art and photography.

The festival is divided into international and local photography sections. The overall theme is determined by the Chief Curator and his team, with solo and thematic exhibitions. Individual exhibitions are selected by the Chief Curator's team from a large number of exhibited works, while thematic exhibitions are independently curated and then juried by the Chief Curator.

The Lianzhou Foto Festival aims to create a platform to promote Chinese photography, showcasing the most dynamic and high quality international exhibitions and artists. The Local Chinese Photography section focuses on current issues in Chinese photography and aims to provoke thought and address contemporary issues. Unlike other photography exhibitions in China, which often lack a coherent research process, the Lianzhou Foto Festival is structured with a clear academic intent, exhibiting cutting-edge and experimental works every year (Duan Yuting, 2014).

From the outset, the festival has been an important platform for contemporary photography in China, contributing to the wider cultural and artistic landscape. Over the past fifteen years, the Lianzhou Foto Festival has become a pioneering platform for contemporary photography in China, a veritable Chinese Arles photography festival. (mas bird, 2019) "There are three reasons why Lianzhou is exceptional." (Li Zhengde, 2016) "Lianzhou Festival has a broad vision, focuses on reality, and encourages artists to push forward to the experimental frontier." The mission of the Lianzhou Foto Festival is to balance competing forces, and so far it has done that, says Beijing curator David Luo, adding that the festival means a lot to the city. (David Luo, 2019) The Lianzhou Foto Festival is different from other exhibitions in China in that it is more about the opportunity for all photographers to show their work; everyone is taking what they want but the process of organising and researching is missing. The Lianzhou Foto Festival is more like a "festival" of contemporary art through the medium of photography, with an annual structure. Although, as chief curator Duan Yuting said, there have been mistakes and vacillations in the middle of the festival, its organisation and planning are of academic significance anyway. Every year, it presents the latest works of the artists, or the most experimental ones. (Nanwu Mourning, 2014)

The initial vision and objectives of the Lianzhou Foto Festival stemmed from the vision of the Lianzhou Municipal Government in early 2005, which aimed to achieve a multifaceted strategic goal through the creation of an international annual photography exhibition. The primary goal was to enhance the image of Lianzhou and establish it as a cultural landmark with international recognition. The Lianzhou Municipal Government, in collaboration with photography professionals, hopes to showcase Lianzhou's deep cultural heritage and unique regional charms through the art form of photography, thus establishing the brand image of "China's City of Photography" both at home and abroad. In addition, the establishment of the festival is also aimed at promoting economic transformation, using cultural activities to drive local economic development, especially in tourism and cultural industries. Through continuous operation, Lianzhou Foto Festival seeks to build a platform integrating academics, creation, exhibition and trade, aiming to create a win-win situation for both culture and economy, and to promote Lianzhou's transition from a traditional economic model to a more diversified and modern cultural economy. The implementation of this goal not only enhances the domestic and international

popularity of Lianzhou, but also significantly contributes to the growth of tourist arrivals and the increase of tourism income.

2. Diversification of Lianzhou Foto Festival

From 2005 to 2019, Lianzhou, a small mountain city located in the northern part of Guangdong Province, has successfully organised the Lianzhou Foto Festival for fifteen consecutive years. This event not only creates a high-level international cultural exchange platform where culture and economy, professionalism and market win together, but also fundamentally enhances Lianzhou's popularity at home and abroad and the "soft power" of the cultural brand. Lianzhou Foto Festival brings together photographers and artists from all over the world, and promotes interaction and understanding between people of different cultural backgrounds through various forms of exhibitions, lectures and seminars. The festival provides a platform for global photographers to display and exchange ideas, allowing the artistic concepts and creative methods of different cultures to collide and merge. This multicultural exchange not only enriches the content and diversity of the exhibitions, but also provides the audience with an opportunity to learn about and appreciate different cultures, which greatly promotes mutual cultural understanding and respect.

Since its inception in 2005, the Lianzhou Foto Festival has been increasing its international influence, and its diversified development path has shown an evolution from "double vision" to "no joy, no work". In 2005, Lianzhou International Photography Festival set sail with this theme, marking its pursuit of not only the display of photographic art, but also the exploration of photography as a tool for cross-cultural dialogue. By focusing on Lianzhou Foto Festival, the festival aims to transcend geographical limitations and build bridges of international exchange. Over the years, Lianzhou Foto Festival has continuously innovated its exhibition forms and contents, inviting curators and artists from all over the world to participate in the event, which has promoted the exchange and cooperation of photographic art on a global scale. This diversified development strategy has not only enhanced the international status of the photography festival, but also brought rich cultural resources and economic benefits to Lianzhou City.

2.1 Combination of Academic and Internationality

Since its inception in 2005, Lianzhou Foto Festival has insisted on both academics and internationalisation, and has demonstrated its academic pursuit and international vision in the global photography art world by inviting domestic and international photography masters and scholars, and organising high-level academic forums and exhibitions. The first two editions of Lianzhou Foto Festival had more co-operation with France, and then co-operation was established with the United States, Britain, Germany and other countries. The international chief curators invited to each festival keep changing, and the exhibition themes are also closely aligned with the concerns of Chinese photography at this stage, aiming to trigger more thinking and collisions and to solve practical problems.

For example, the theme of the first exhibition of Lianzhou Foto Festival was Dual Vision, which reveals the duality of history and humanistic development through various forms of visual display centred on images, and prompts people to understand the relationship between images and vision, vision and existence, society, ethnicity, regional culture and globalisation. The theme of the second edition, "Origin:

"Observing and Being Observed", discusses the position of the observer, the stance of the image-maker, the role of observation and the value of the observed. The third theme, The Alchemy of Shadows, explores the significance of photography to today's society and its profound influence on visual and perceptual experience. Each year's theme reflects the Lianzhou Foto Festival's relentless pursuit of academic exploration and artistic innovation.

2.2 Establishment of International Co-operation Network

As Lianzhou Foto Festival continues to be organised, it has established close cooperation with major art galleries, museums and photography festivals around the world, which not only attracts the participation of many international photographers, but also promotes cross-border exchanges of photographic works, and further consolidates its international status. For example, the Lianzhou Foto Festival's cooperation with internationally renowned organisations such as the International Centre of Photography (ICP) in New York and the Arles Festival of Photography in France has significantly enhanced its influence in the international photography community. These co-operations not only bring rich international resources, but also promote cultural exchanges between Lianzhou and the rest of the world.



Figure 2 Lartigue outdoors-1

Source: Lartigue, 2014, the 10th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Cooperation with the International Centre of Photography (ICP) in New York has brought many world-class photographs and renowned photographers to Lianzhou, enabling audiences to enjoy the world's top photographic art. For example, the 10th Anniversary Masters Exhibition of Lianzhou Foto Festival in 2014 featured a large-scale retrospective of Jacques Henri Lartigue, known as the "Mozart of Photography". Figure 2 is one of Lartigue's works. Lartigue has many fans in the Chinese photography industry, and this is the first time that his works are displayed on a large scale in China. In addition, the original works of August Sander, another great German photographer, were also exhibited at the festival the following year. The exhibition of masterpieces not only raised the professional level of the Lianzhou Foto Festival, but also provided valuable learning and exchange opportunities for local photographers.

In addition, the Lianzhou Foto Festival's cooperation with the Arles Photo Festival in France is also an important part of its internationalisation process. As one of the most famous photography festivals in the world, Arles Photo Festival has injected new vigour into Lianzhou Foto Festival with its rich experience and unique perspective. The co-operation between the two has not only promoted the exchange of photographic art between the two places, but also brought many new ideas and inspirations. These co-operative projects have enabled the Lianzhou Foto Festival to showcase a more diverse range of works and gradually establish its brand image in the international photography community.

Through the co-operation with these internationally renowned organisations, the Lianzhou Foto Festival has successfully built a bridge between China and the world. The participation of international photographers and the display of their works have made Lianzhou the centre of attention of global photography art lovers. Lianzhou Foto Festival not only promotes cross-border exchanges of photographic works, but also brings the small city of Lianzhou a wide range of international influence and enhances its status in the global photography community. This international co-operation not only enhances the cultural soft power of Lianzhou, but also provides rich resources and platforms for local photography education and creation.

2.3 Deepening and Innovation of Themes Year by Year

Since the founding of Lianzhou Foto Festival in 2005, its themes have evolved year by year, from the initial "Double Vision" to the later "Unexpected Arrival", constantly exploring new boundaries of photographic art. These themes not only reflect the festival's sensitivity to capturing the issues of the times, but also demonstrate its pursuit of artistic innovation. The Lianzhou Foto Festival has been working closely with international photography organisations. The international chief curators invited to each festival are also changing. The themes of each year's exhibition are closely aligned with the current concerns of China's photographic community, aiming to provoke more thoughts and collisions, and to solve the problems in reality.

The theme of the first Lianzhou Foto Festival was "Dual Vision", which reveals the duality of history and humanistic development through image-centred visual displays that simultaneously accommodate a variety of forms, and promotes consciousness and discussion of the relationship between images, vision, survival, society, ethnicity, regional culture and globalisation. The theme of the second edition of the festival is "Origin: Observing and Being Observed", which explores the position of the observer, the position of the image-maker, the role of observation and the value of the observed. The theme of the third edition, *The Alchemy of Shadows*, discusses the significance of photography to today's society, and how photography profoundly changes and shapes our visual and perceptual experiences. The theme of the fourth session, *My Camera*, emphasises the photographer's ability to directly face and witness today's reality and life situations through an independent stance.

The theme of the fifth edition, "Presence and Reproduction," focuses on the influence of photojournalism on society and its influence on human beings' viewing and perception of the world. The theme of the sixth edition, "Does the World Exist!" questioned the material existence of the hard world and brought thought to a more enlightened place through a spirit of radical reflection. The theme of the seventh

edition, "Towards a Social Landscape", in the process of modernisation, photography has become an important medium for the dissemination and study of reality. The theme of the eighth edition, "Stories, how far from the truth?", transitions the individual's experience of the empirical world to the re-examination and sharing of mass media time through the narrative configuration of photography. The theme of the ninth edition, "Farewell to Experience", reflects on the obstacles to the birth of novel images due to the solidification of the photographic experience.

The theme of the 10th edition, "Recreating Encounters," explores the "visual encounters" between the photographer and the subject, and between the image and the viewer. The theme of the 11th edition, "Expanding Territories", explores the growing interrelationship between different regions of the world. The theme of the 12th edition, "No Joy, No Work", is a photographic insight into the evolution of the times against the backdrop of the redefinition of mankind. The theme of the thirteenth edition, "Your Selfie Stick", explores the expansion of self-imaging images brought about by mobile phone photography and the selfie stick, and its connection in the Internet. The theme of the fourteenth edition, "The Winds of Time," sublimates photography as its own product, interpreter, and witness at the peak of capital. The theme of the 15th edition, Unexpectedly, emphasises the attraction and vitality of the art of photography in its uncontrollability and unpredictability.

By constantly innovating its themes and keeping up with the trend of the times, the Lianzhou Foto Festival is committed to promoting the development of photography in China and has established an important position in the international photography community. The deepening and innovation of these themes year by year not only demonstrates the diversity and infinite possibilities of photographic art, but also makes Lianzhou Foto Festival an important platform for photographic art exchange and innovation.

3.Main Activities and Features

3.1 Establishment of awards

In 2005, Lianzhou International Photography Festival was launched and received great attention from the domestic and international photography circles. While maintaining the consistent academic and professional level, Lianzhou Foto Festival spares no effort to dig out and cultivate young and middle-aged photographers, and promotes the development of China's photography industry. On the one hand, it promotes and showcases China's young artists by organising thematic exhibitions, providing a platform for displaying and exchanging China's outstanding photographic portfolios, as well as an opportunity to enter the field of vision of top international photography practitioners. The establishment of the Yalenge Culture and Art Foundation Award aims to promote the dissemination of Chinese contemporary culture and art on the international platform of Venice, and to establish a new image of Chinese contemporary culture and art; to discover young Chinese photographers and to support their creations. At the same time, young Chinese artists have begun to make a name for themselves in the photography world by participating in the Lianzhou Foto Festival. Zhang Kechun, Li Liang, Dai Xiang, Luo Dan, Chen Xiaoyun, Chen Zhe, You Li, Wang Juliang, Su Wen A large number of young photographers have become more familiar to the industry.

Lianzhou has proved to be successful in demonstrating a globalised cultural path, using a cross-cultural form of photography and an annual visual feast to point out new coordinates for Chinese photography.

"This is a wonderful, professional and high academic standard photography exhibition." In 2010, Hu Ying, then executive vice president of the China Press Photo Association, came to Lianzhou to watch the exhibition and commented. "We organise this exhibition to spread positive energy, so that viewers will know how to improve the technicality of their photos, know how to appreciate them, and learn how to understand this era by reading pictures. The Lianzhou Foto Festival is doing better and better in this regard." Yang Yuanxing, president of the Chinese Society of Art Photography, said.

For example, in the 7th Lianzhou Foto Festival in 2011, Christopher Phillips and Joanna Reihan from the International Center of Photography (ICP) in New York used the theme of "Expanding Territory" to focus on the social changes brought about by rapid urbanisation, population movement and migration. Phillips has selected the work of 22 photographers from around the world to explore the influence of geographic expansion and the growing connections between different parts of the world. Through the photographers' unique creative approach, these works express the complex interactions between different countries and regions, bringing a refreshing experience and perception to the audience.

3.1.1 Photographer of the Year

This award recognises photographers who have demonstrated outstanding talent and innovation in the field of photography. Through a rigorous and professional judging system, this award not only raises the international profile of the winners, but also inspires photographers around the world. The judging system is designed to take into account the uniqueness of the photographer's creations, technical skills, artistic expression, and innovative contributions to the field of photography, thus ensuring that the winners are outstanding in all aspects.

For example, Liu Bozhi, the winner of the Photographer of the Year award at the first Lianzhou Foto Festival in 2005, has produced "Redream Golden Mountain". This series of photographs is a record of Liu Bozhi's personal observations. It begins with Liu Bozhi's family and continues with Liu Bozhi's journey as he leaves Hong Kong to study in North America. He started in Toronto, Canada, then California, USA, and finally landed at the University of Kansas in Lawrence, Kansas. In the process, P.C. Liu had to become a "desk jockey" (black market labourer) to survive due to the high cost of tuition. This environment led him to work with lower-middle class people every day, witnessing poverty and human resilience, and understanding that the "Gold Mountain Dream" is not that simple.



Figure 3 Redream Golden Mountain -1

Source: Liu Bozhi, 2005, the first Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 3 shows Liu Bozhi's father and mother in their small grocery store in the "Redream Golden Mountain" series. The book begins with the story of Liu Bozhi's parents, which is a complex, poignant, hopeless and commonplace tale. Liu Bozhi's father struggled throughout his life at the bottom of the ladder, and one of the three women associated with him is Liu Bozhi's mother.



Figure 4 Redream Golden Mountain -2

Source: Liu Bozhi, 2005, the first Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 4 is also a work in the series of "Redream Golden Mountain". The little girl is Liu Bozhi's niece, Liu An and his second wife Jinfeng, left and right. The person wearing glasses in the middle of the picture is Liu Bozhi's brother-in-law. The album features several photographs of the parents and the family, which are blurred images, old and full of the marks of the times.



Figure 5 Redream Golden Mountain -3

Source: Liu Bozhi, 2005, the first Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 5 shows Liu Bozhi's mother and his cousin, photo taken in Hong Kong. The works of the Photographer of the Year Award have not only received widespread attention in China, but have also been highly recognised on the international stage. Liu Bozhi's works, with their profound social insight and unique artistic expression, have successfully attracted the attention of domestic and international audiences, and won high praise in the international photography community. Their success not only highlights the authority and influence of Lianzhou Foto Festival, but also sets an example for other photographers.

In addition, the award judging process of Lianzhou Foto Festival reflects its emphasis on the diversity and innovative spirit of photographic art. The judging committee consists of renowned photography experts and scholars from home and abroad, who not only pay attention to the technical quality and artistic performance of the works, but also place special emphasis on their originality and reflection of social reality. This multi-dimensional judging criteria ensures that the winning works have high artistic value and social significance.

By establishing this award, the Lianzhou Foto Festival not only promotes the development of global photographic art, but also provides a platform for photographers to showcase their talents and exchange experiences, further consolidating its position in the international photographic community. The influence and authority of the award is not only reflected in the quality and innovation of the winning works, but also in its positive influence on the development of photographic art, bringing continuous creative impetus and inspiration to photographers around the world.

3.1.2 New Photography Award

The New Photography Award is a brand new award launched by Lianzhou Foto Festival in 2011, aiming at discovering and supporting young photographers and providing them with opportunities to showcase their works and develop their careers. As a platform that focuses on promoting the development of the art of photography in China, the New Photography Award not only enriches the content of the festival, but also demonstrates Lianzhou Foto Festival's support and cultivation of the new force of the art of photography.

The New Photography Award provides a platform for young photographers to showcase their works. Every year, Lianzhou Foto Festival selects the most innovative and promising works from the many entries to be exhibited through a strict selection mechanism. These works cover a wide range of subjects and styles, reflecting young photographers' unique perspectives and deep thoughts on real life. Through such an exhibition, young photographers not only gained valuable exposure, but were also able to communicate with and learn from other outstanding photographers to further enhance their own creativity.

For example, young photographers such as Chen Zhe, Sun Yanchu and Liu Gaki are representatives of young photographers who have gone international through the platform of the New Photography Award. Chen Zhe's work "BEES" is an in-depth exploration of his 2010 work "Affordable". Chen Zhe's 2010 work BEES provides an opportunity for self-healing by photographing the history of self-injury, objectifying physical and psychological trauma. These works not only present physical trauma, but also reveal deep emotional wounds through visual narratives. Through photography, Chen Zhe not only records the traces of trauma, but also attempts to heal and rebuild himself through images.



Figure 6 Still addicted-1

Source: Sun Yanchu, 2011, the 7th Lianzhou Foto Festival

In the 7th Lianzhou Foto Festival, Chen Zhe presented his works BEES. Figure 6 is one of the works in Chenzhe's series BEEZ. The works leave a mark of life in the midst of trauma. The author has spent four years documenting the history of the trauma he caused. 'Bearable' shares the same emotion as 'BEES' and expresses the resilience of coping and relentless recovery in the face of strong emotions. The works demonstrate the possibilities of what one fails to do and what one strives for, deeply reflecting the emotional struggle and self-repair process of human beings in extreme situations. Through these works, viewers are able to feel the photographer's deep emotional trauma and how he heals himself through art.



Figure 7 Still addicted-2

Source: Sun Yanchu, 2011, the 7th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 7 is one of Chen Yanchu's works. Sun Yanchu's work "Still Obsessed" What he presents in his works is neither a unique thing, nor a single theme or object, nor a person or a place. What he is obsessed with is just a state of mind. And the camera is just a tool, a tool he uses to express the material world in which he exists, and the state of mind he thus abstracts from it. It can also be said to be an accurate description of the style of his work. Because he has a day job, his effective creative time is only condensed to specific periods of time, either after work or on his days off, but ultimately he returns to the immediate environment and daily life with which he is familiar. Although the limited time may intensify his fascination, personally Sun Yanchu is not the reason why he takes photos near his home. For, he does not need to travel far to feel his purpose, or to pursue the beauty of nature and the qualities of distinctive characters. What fascinates him is to capture those elements of pure reality as he feels and experiences them, usually sensed in a subconscious glance. So, from the objects and features shown within his frames, we can clearly see the influence of urban development, economic growth, modernisation, and the widening gap between groups and individuals. We also see how people dress and interact with each other. However, all these examples do not give me a sense of the content and centre of the narrative; we have to use the images to create a fictional story. The unity that emerges

from this series exists in the choice of the gesture of the image and in the atmosphere that the photograph presents.

Secondly, the establishment of the New Photography Award reflects the Lianzhou Foto Festival's support and cultivation of new forces in the art of photography. As an important cultural event, Lianzhou Foto Festival always pays attention to the future development of photography art. Through the New Photography Award, the festival provides opportunities for young photographers to showcase and develop, helping them to make breakthroughs on the path of artistic creation. Lianzhou Foto Festival not only provides an exhibition platform, but also offers young photographers the opportunity to learn and exchange ideas by organising various lectures and workshops. These activities not only help young photographers to improve their skills, but also inspire their creativity, enabling them to continue to explore and innovate.

In addition, the establishment of the New Photography Award reflects Lianzhou Foto Festival's concern and commitment to the future development of photography. As photographic technology continues to advance and the art of photography continues to evolve, the festival continues to inject new vigour and innovative elements through the New Photography Award to promote the continuous development of the art of photography. By focusing on and supporting young photographers, the Lianzhou Foto Festival not only fosters new forces for the future of the art of photography, but also lays a solid foundation for the continued innovation and development of the art of photography.

Overall, the New Photography Award plays an important role as part of the Lianzhou Foto Festival. It provides young photographers with the opportunity to display and develop, reflects the festival's support and cultivation of new forces, and also demonstrates Lianzhou Foto Festival's concern and commitment to the future development of photography. Through the New Photography Award, Lianzhou Foto Festival not only enriches itself, but also promotes the continuous development of the photographic art and injects new vigour and momentum into the photographic community.

3.1.3 Curator of the Year Award

The Curator of the Year Award is also an important award in Lianzhou Foto Festival. The Curator of the Year Award is an incentive for curators to pursue excellence and innovation. In order to win the award, the curator will pay more attention to the theme design of the exhibition, the selection of exhibits and the innovation of the presentation method. This not only improves the overall curatorial level of Lianzhou Foto Festival, but also brings more novel and creative exhibition experiences to the audience. At the same time, it can attract more excellent curators from home and abroad to participate in Lianzhou Foto Festival. The participation of high-level curators not only improves the quality of the exhibition, but also attracts more famous photographers and high-quality photographic works through their influence and connections, further enhancing the international popularity and influence of the festival.

In 2005, at the first Lianzhou Foto Festival, "Self-Private - Cenozoic Photography Group Exhibition" became the first special exhibition, which was meticulously curated by Zeng Han, whose outstanding contribution won him the Outstanding Curator of the Year Award. The exhibition brings together a series of

works created by young photographers, showcasing their novel understanding and expression of the art of photography.

The exhibition features a number of representative works by Cenozoic photographers, including Bai Chuan's Xu Zhu, Song Tao and Li Weiyu's Bird Head Life, Dai Mouyu's Two or Three Times, Tang Xiaoshuang's Self-Introduction, Liu Yicheng's Dirty Embryo, Yao Songxin's Touch of Love, and Su Weiguang's Floating Air. With their unique perspectives and expressions, these works explore personal emotions, social observations, and cultural commentaries, thus providing viewers with diverse visual and intellectual experiences.

The works of these young authors, some of whom may be relatively young, reflect how the Cenozoic in China explore and express their individual and collective identities through photography. The youngest photographer in this exhibition is only 18 years old, and the display of their work not only showcases their unique insights into the art of photography, but also signals the rise of a new force in Chinese photography.

In the 10th Lianzhou International Photography Exhibition in 2015, Martin Parr, president of Magnum Pictures and a British photographer known for his social documentation of landscapes in the 1990s, exhibited six series of his work, including Common Sense, Small World and The Last Resort. In addition, he curated the "China Photobook Exhibition", which presents the complexities of contemporary China through the lenses of Chinese photographers. Many visitors said in interviews that the visual influence and narrative nature of the photographs enabled them to visualise the unique charms and complexities of different cultures, thus enhancing their respect and appreciation for other cultures.



Figure 8 Martin Parr (UK) in the exhibition
Source: Photo by Chen Yuanpeng, 2015

Figure 8 is Martin Parr (UK) in the exhibition. These exhibition activities not only demonstrate the richness of multiculturalism, but also promote intercultural understanding and exchange through visual arts. In the process of appreciating the photographic works, the audience not only broadened their horizons, but also deepened their understanding and respect for different cultures around the globe. For example, an audience member from Europe mentioned that he had gained a deeper

understanding of Chinese society and culture by watching scenes of urban life captured by Chinese photographers. This kind of cross-cultural visual experience not only breaks down geographical and language barriers, but also promotes intercultural exchange and understanding in a subtle way.

The establishment of the Curator's Award can promote exchange and cooperation among curators. By sharing their curatorial experiences and ideas, the award-winning curators can promote academic exchanges and the development of the curatorial field. At the same time, it also provides a platform for young curators to learn and grow, helping them to improve their professionalism and curatorial skills, and to better disseminate photographic culture to the audience. The Curator of the Year Award encourages curators to pay attention to social hotspots and cultural issues, reflect social reality through the art of photography, stimulate the audience's thinking and resonance, and promote the dissemination and exchange of culture.

3.2 Academic Exchange and Interaction

3.2.1 Lectures and Seminars

Lectures and seminars are an important part of the Lianzhou Foto Festival. These activities provide opportunities for face-to-face exchanges between artists, scholars and audiences from different cultural backgrounds. By engaging in these interactive activities, participants can not only listen to the insights of experts, but also share their own views and experiences, thus creating a multicultural atmosphere of exchange.

For example, Figure 9 is an Academic conference hosted by jenjohom Sotak and Duan Yuting in 2018, the 14th Lianzhou Foto Festival, a themed roundtable academic forum was co-hosted by the annual chief curator, Jéhom Sotak, and the director of Lianzhou Foto Festival, Duan Yuting. During the event, the curators of the annual festival as well as photographic artists from various countries discussed in detail through PPT presentations around the theme of visual investigation and expression, ranging from the population explosion, AI's march towards reality, biodiversity, changes in the stock market, the economic crisis, and algorithmic juggernaut. Participants learnt that behind each work lies the thoughts of the photographer and the cultural differences that exist between countries.



Figure 9 Academic conference hosted by jenjohom Sotak and Duan Yuting in 2018

Source: Photo by Zhang Haize, 2018

At the 16th Lianzhou Foto Festival 2023, the workshop was moderated by curators Gu Zhenqing and Zhang Haitao. Participating artists discussed and shared academic exchanges around cutting-edge hot topics such as the development of image art as the world enters the age of artificial intelligence, the relationship between AI technology images and photography art, and the changes and crises brought by AI to social life. More than ten representatives of photographic artists from Ukraine, France and all over the country discussed topics of common concern to the international photographic community, exploring the future of photographic creation and the exchange of ideas under the influence of new technologies.

The lectures and seminars enhanced the participants' cross-cultural communication skills. A photographer from the United States mentioned in an interview that he had learnt many new creative concepts and techniques through exchanges with photographers from other countries, and that these exchanges had given him a more comprehensive understanding of the development trend of global photographic art. These interactive activities not only promoted knowledge sharing, but also bridged the cultural gap to a certain extent and enhanced mutual understanding among participants from different cultural backgrounds.

3.2.2 "Affordable Photography Bazaar"

Since its launch in 2014, the "Affordable Photography" Bazaar, located outside the Fruit Factory exhibition area, has become one of the highlights of the festival. This bazaar aims to encourage photography artists to produce a series of high edition, low-priced works, so that the art of photography can enter the public's daily consumption market, thus establishing a system for the production, circulation and consumption of photography from the private sector. The core concept of the Bazaar is to bring high-quality photographic artworks to the general public at affordable prices. For example, a 42cm x 29cm microblasted photography work sold at the bazaar is priced at 300 RMB. This price may be a figure to be weighed by the local people in Lianzhou, but it is a reasonable consumer choice for photographers and art lovers. Through this pricing strategy, the festival attracts not only professional photographers and art collectors, but also more general audiences who are given the opportunity to purchase and collect photographic artworks.

Despite the relatively limited sales of high-priced photographic works, most people's attention is still focused on the more affordable photographic derivatives, such as posters, postcards, photographic equipment gadgets and canvas bags. These derivatives are affordable and varied, with both practicality and artistic value, attracting the interest of a large number of general audiences. Through these photographic derivatives, more ordinary people are able to come into contact with and consume the art of photography, thus expanding the audience of the art of photography. This marketing strategy makes the Affordable Photography Bazaar not only a gathering place for photographers and art enthusiasts, but also an important channel for the general public to come into contact with and learn about the art of photography.

"The success of the Affordable Photography Bazaar lies not only in the flexibility of its market operation, but also in its contribution to the public's art literacy. The market not only provides a platform for professional photographers and art lovers to display and sell their works, but also opens the door to the art of

photography for the general public, enabling them to come into closer contact with and appreciate the art of photography. By participating in this bazaar, the audience can not only buy their favourite photographic works and derivatives, but also gain more knowledge and insights about the art of photography through exchanges with the photographers. This face-to-face interactive form allows the public to have a more intuitive and in-depth understanding of the art of photography, and stimulates their interest and passion for photography.

3.3 Exhibition Scale

Since 2005, Lianzhou Foto Festival has gradually built up its unique exhibition scale and influence.

Year	Number of participating photographer	Number of works displayed	Topic overview
2005	221	1658	Double vision. - From Lianju
2009	262	3985	Presence and representation
2011	386	7522	Towards the social landscape
2015	475	9875	Expanding territory
2019	534	11589	No pleasure, no work

Table 3 Overview of Scale of Lianzhou Foto Festival (2005-2019)

Source: Lianzhou Photography Festival

As shown in Table 3, Lianzhou Foto Festival was held for the first time in 2005, with the exhibition theme of "Double Vision - From Lianzhou". The theme was "Dual Vision - From Lianzhou". This theme was intended to show the history and culture of Lianzhou through the lens of photography, and at the same time to introduce international photographic works, providing a platform for Lianzhou to understand the world. The first festival attracted 221 photographers from more than 20 countries and regions, displaying 1,658 works. This scale was already a considerable achievement at that time, demonstrating Lianzhou's ambition in promoting the art of photography.

The second Lianzhou Investment Promotion Fair will be held in 2006, attracting more than 3.9 billion yuan; by the two investment promotion fairs in 2018 and 2019, Lianzhou attracted more than 20 billion yuan of foreign investment.

During the annual exhibition, Lianzhou also launched a picking line focusing on ancient villages and natural scenery, and the tourism industry is developing rapidly. In 2019, Lianzhou has more than 10 million tourists, a 20-fold increase from 2005.

Lianzhou Foto Festival International Photography Exhibition was founded from 2005 to the 15th edition in 2019, exhibiting more than 50,000 works by domestic and foreign master photographers, with more than 1,000 top photographers from more than 30 countries and regions at home and abroad, and more than 3 million visitors to the annual exhibition.

In 2009, the exhibition scale of Lianzhou Foto Festival was further expanded, with a total of 262 photographers exhibiting 3985 works. The theme of the exhibition was "Presence and Reproduction", which explored the dual role of photography in

recording reality and reproducing history. This theme attracted more international photographers to participate, further enhancing the international influence of the festival.

In 2011, the exhibition scale of Lianzhou Foto Festival reached a new height. A total of 386 photographers participated in the exhibition, displaying 7522 works. The theme of the exhibition was "Towards a Social Landscape", which explored the influence of social change on the art of photography. This theme demonstrated the festival's concern for social reality and attracted many photographers and viewers concerned with social issues.

In 2015, the Lianzhou Foto Festival continued to expand, with a total of 475 photographers exhibiting 9,875 works. The theme of the exhibition was "Expanding Territory", which explored the changes and integration of regional cultures in the context of globalisation. This theme not only demonstrated the role of photography in the globalisation process, but also reflected the important position of Lianzhou Foto Festival in the international photography community.

By 2019, the exhibition scale of Lianzhou Foto Festival reached a new peak. A total of 534 photographers exhibited 11,589 works. The theme of the exhibition was "No Joy, No Work", which explored various phenomena in contemporary society through photographs, and demonstrated the festival's keen capture and profound thinking on the issues of the times. The choice of this theme not only demonstrates the artistic innovation ability of the festival, but also reflects its deep concern for social reality.

Since the founding of Lianzhou Foto Festival, the number of exhibition works has increased year by year, demonstrating its continuous growth and influence as an international photography exchange platform. For example, the first exhibition in 2005 showcased 1,658 works, while in 2019 this number grew to 11,589. This growth not only demonstrates the festival's enormous capacity for artistic display, but also reflects its growing influence in the international photography community.

Each edition of the festival attracts officials, experts, scholars and master photographers from more than 20 countries and regions, as well as up to 100,000 visitors, reflecting its broad international participation and public appeal. The scale of the exhibitions is reflected not only in the number of exhibitions, but also in the deepening and diversification of the themes, such as "Does the World Exist!" and "Towards a Social Landscape" demonstrate the festival's profound exploration of the art of photography and social issues.

Through the expansion of the exhibition scale year by year, Lianzhou Foto Festival continues to attract more domestic and foreign photographers to participate in the festival, and the number of exhibition works has grown significantly, reflecting its continuous growth and influence as an international platform for photographic exchange. The choice of each theme reflects the festival's profound thinking and exploration of photographic art and social reality. Academic and exchange activities, including academic forums, new photography awards, and image experts meeting, etc. The scale and quality of these activities have increased year by year, promoting international academic exchanges and talent discovery.

The exhibition scale of Lianzhou Foto Festival has been expanding during its development, with the number of exhibited works growing from the initial 1,658 to 11,589 in 2019, reflecting its continuous growth and increased influence as an

international photography exchange platform. The exhibition themes of each festival not only demonstrate the festival's pursuit of artistic innovation, but also reflect its profound thinking and exploration of social reality. Through these themes, the festival demonstrates the unique role of photographic art in recording and reflecting social reality, and provides a platform for the audience to understand and think about social reality.

4. Influence of Lianzhou Foto Festival on Lianzhou City

4.1 Economic influence

According to the article of Lianzhou People's Government Office, " Can Lianzhou hold a big festival in a small mountain town? Time Gives the Answer ", Lianzhou Foto Festival also launched a picking line focusing on ancient villages and natural scenery during the festival, and the tourism industry has developed rapidly. In 2018, visitors to Lianzhou Foto Festival exceeded 10 million, a 20-fold jump from 2005. The festival was held in the city of Lianzhou, which is located in the heart of the city.

4.1.1 Tourism growth

Year	Number of visitors (tens of thousands)	Rate of increase	Revenue (RMB100 million yuan)	Rate of increase
2012	521.8	-	22.8	-
2013	665.5	27.50%	31.6	38.60%
2014	734.3	10.30%	35.9	13.60%
2015	794	8.10%	39.2	9.20%
2016	878	10.60%	43.6	11.20%
2017	942.8	7.40%	47.2	8.30%
2018	1006	6.70%	50.6	7.20%
2019	1057.8	5.20%	53.65	6.00%

Table 4 Tourism in Lianzhou City over the years

Source: Extracted from Lianzhou City National Economic and Social Development Statistics Bulletin.

The specific influence of the Lianzhou Foto Festival on the local tourism economy is explored by analysing data on the number of people and income received by Lianzhou City over the years. Since Lianzhou City is only a county-level city, its public information dataset is from 2012, and the official public data of Lianzhou City is from its parent city Qingyuan City, so our data is mainly obtained from the National Economic and Social Development Statistics Bulletin of Lianzhou City published by Qingyuan City Statistics.

According to the data shown in Table 4, between 2012 and 2019, the number of tourist arrivals in Lianzhou City grew from 5,218,000 to 10,578,000, an increase of about 102.5%, with a compound annual growth rate of about 12.8%. Tourism revenue grew from 2.28 billion yuan in 2012 to 5.365 billion yuan in 2019, an increase of approximately 134.8%, with a CAGR of approximately 14.3%. This significant growth demonstrates the growing attractiveness of Lianzhou City as a tourist destination.

The Lianzhou Foto Festival attracts a large number of photographers, artists and photography enthusiasts from home and abroad to visit and participate in the festival each year, which greatly increases the number of tourism receipts. The growth

rates of the number of tourism receipts in Lianzhou City between 2013 and 2015 were 27.5 per cent, 10.3 per cent and 8.1 per cent, which was a key stage in the process of the festival's gradual build-up of its international reputation.

With the continuation of the Lianzhou Foto Festival, the number of tourism receipts in Lianzhou has increased year by year, and the growth rate from 2016 to 2019 has slowed down but still remained in a positive trend. The growth rate in 2016 was 10.6 per cent, in 2017 it was 7.4 per cent, in 2018 it was 6.7 per cent, and in 2019 it was 5.2 per cent. This trend shows that the photography festival has a significant influence on the number of tourism receipts and attracts a large number of tourists despite the fact that the base is increasing year by year.

The growth trend of tourism revenue is similar to the growth of the number of people received, indicating the driving effect of the photography festival on the tourism economy. Between 2013 and 2015, the growth rate of tourism revenue was 38.6%, 13.6% and 9.2%, respectively. The high growth rate in this period reflects the positive effect of the Lianzhou Foto Festival on raising the level of tourism consumption.

After 2016, the growth rate of tourism revenue slowed down, but remained in the positive growth range. the growth rate was 11.2% in 2016, 8.3% in 2017, 7.2% in 2018 and 6.0% in 2019. Although the growth rate declines year by year, the absolute value of tourism revenue keeps increasing, which indicates that the Lianzhou Foto Festival contributes significantly to increasing the consumption level of tourists and tourism revenue.

In summary, since its inception, the Lianzhou Foto Festival has significantly increased the number of tourists received and tourism revenue in Lianzhou City through a rich variety of exhibitions and activity forms, and has had a far-reaching influence on the local economy. The festival not only directly promotes the development of tourism, but also provides a strong impetus for the sustainable development of Lianzhou City's economy through a variety of ways, such as enhancing the city's popularity, improving the tourism infrastructure, driving the development of tertiary industry, promoting the development of the cultural industry, and enhancing the value of the local brand. The success of Lianzhou Foto Festival fully demonstrates the important role of cultural activities in promoting local economic development.

4.1.2 Lianzhou image enhancement

Since its inception in 2005, Lianzhou Foto Festival has not only brought significant economic benefits to the local community, but also established a unique and distinctive cultural image of Lianzhou City. The promotion of ancient architecture tourism and hot spring tourism has significantly enhanced its tourism image and attractiveness. The Lianzhou Foto Festival can be analogised to attract photography enthusiasts and cultural tourists by focusing on photography as a form of culture and art, increasing tourists' consciousness of and interest in Lianzhou's natural scenery and cultural features.

Referring to the table of tourism in Lianzhou City over the years, the sustained growth in the number of tourists received and tourism revenue from 2012 to 2019 (as shown in Table 4), although the direct growth is not directly quantified in relation to photography festivals, such cultural events tend to stimulate the vitality of the tourism market, especially during holidays and special festivals, such as the photography

festival organised in Lianzhou City, which likely contributed to the increase in the number of tourists and the tourism revenue of enhancement. Photography festivals, as a form of cultural branding, can enhance Lianzhou's visibility and showcase its unique natural scenery and cultural features to domestic and international tourists, which in the long term can help form a unique tourism brand image. For example, Yuxi County has increased the visibility of the county's tourism through the organisation of branded cultural and sports activities, and the Lianzhou Foto Festival is likely to have a similar effect.

By organising cultural activities such as photography festivals, Lianzhou can not only directly increase tourism revenue, but also promote the development of related industries such as catering, accommodation, transport and souvenir sales, thereby optimising the economic structure and enhancing the service function of the tertiary industry, similar to the contribution of the tourism industry in Conghua District to the industrial restructuring.

Lianzhou Foto Festival has a positive effect on the enhancement of Lianzhou City's tourism attractiveness and image enhancement by improving cultural influence, increasing visitor experience and attracting tourists. Lianzhou Foto Festival has significantly enhanced the tourism attractiveness and cultural image of Lianzhou City through various efforts in brand building, multi-cultural exchanges, thematic innovations, digital exhibitions and international co-operation. Lianzhou Foto Festival has not only become an important economic growth point of Lianzhou City, but also established a unique cultural brand at home and abroad, and promoted the overall development of local economy and society.

4.1.3 Economic Transformation

Year	GDP	Primary industry	Percent	Secondary industry	Percent	Tertiary industry	Percent
2012	1001479	241719	24.10%	255992	25.60%	503768	50.30%
2013	1099764	258945	23.50%	266127	24.20%	574692	52.30%
2014	1171174	275350	23.50%	269448	23.00%	626376	53.50%
2015	1259704	301640	23.90%	283959	22.50%	674105	53.50%
2016	1372352	352449	25.70%	307029	22.40%	712874	51.90%
2017	1460655	359742	24.60%	323115	22.10%	777798	53.20%
2018	1568920	375530	23.90%	342254	21.80%	851136	54.20%
2019	1554800	419900	27%	431300	27.70%	703500	45.30%

Table 5 Lianzhou City's industrial revenue and GDP over the years (Unit: RMB 10,000)

Source: The data is derived from Qingyuan City Statistical Yearbook.

As shown in Table 5, from the data from 2012 to 2019, the GDP of Lianzhou City has continued to grow, from RMB 100,147,900,000 to RMB 155,480,000,000. In terms of industrial structure, the following features are presented:

Primary industry: the share shows an overall decreasing trend, from 24.10% to 27%, indicating a gradual decrease in the share of agriculture in the economy, but a slight increase in 2019, possibly due to agricultural restructuring or the promotion of specific agricultural activities.

Secondary sector: a relatively stable and slightly fluctuating share of 27.70 per cent in 2019, indicating that the position of manufacturing and industry in the economy remains stable, but the growth momentum may require new catalysts.

Tertiary industry: significant growth, with the share increasing from 50.30% to 45.30% in 2019, showing the expansion of the service sector, which may be driven by activities such as culture and tourism.

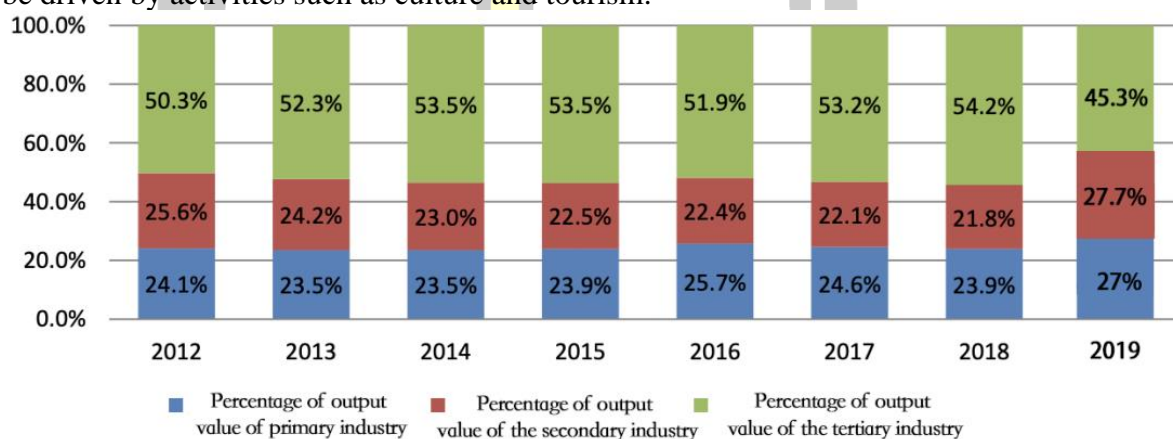


Figure 10 Industry and GDP of Lianzhou City over the years

Source: The data is derived from Qingyuan City Statistical Yearbook.

As shown in Figure 10, Lianzhou Foto Festival has been held in Lianzhou since 2005, and this cultural event not only enhances the city's popularity and cultural soft power, but also has a far-reaching influence on the local economic structure. By analysing the industrial returns and gross product of Lianzhou City over the years, we explore the specific role of Lianzhou Foto Festival in promoting the economic transformation of Lianzhou City.

Tourism is an important driving force for the economic transformation of Lianzhou City. By attracting a large number of tourists, Lianzhou Foto Festival has injected new vigour into the local economy. From the data in Table a, between 2012 and 2019, Lianzhou City has shown a significant growth in the number of tourists and revenue. This growth is not only the natural development of tourism, but also the result of the photography festival drive. During the Lianzhou Foto Festival, a large number of domestic and foreign tourists flocked to Lianzhou, boosting the prosperity of related industries such as accommodation, catering, transport and entertainment. According to the data shown in figure, from 2012 to 2019, the GDP of Lianzhou City has continued to grow, from RMB 100,147,900,000 to RMB 15,548,800,000, with a compound annual growth rate of 6.5 per cent. This growth not only reflects the overall positive trend of the local economy, but also the role of cultural activities in driving local economic development.

Changes in the primary industry

From 24.10 per cent in 2012 to 27 per cent in 2019, the share of the primary industry in Lianzhou City showed an overall downward trend, but rebounded in 2019. This change reflects the fluctuation of agriculture in the economic structure of Lianzhou City. Despite the decline in the share of agriculture in Lianzhou City, its rebound in a given year may be related to agricultural restructuring or the promotion of specific agricultural activities.

The Lianzhou Foto Festival had a limited direct influence on the primary sector, but indirectly promoted the branding and marketing of agricultural products by increasing the overall visibility and attractiveness of Lianzhou City. For example, Lianzhou Foto Festival's speciality agricultural products such as crystal pears and red onions have gained more attention and recognition from consumers through the promotion of the festival, thus increasing their market value and sales. This branding effect not only enhances the added value of agricultural products, but also promotes the modernisation and marketisation of agriculture.

Changes in the secondary industry

The share of the secondary industry was relatively stable between 2012 and 2019, with slight fluctuations, rising from 25.60% to 27.70%. This industry mainly consists of manufacturing and industry, and is an important pillar of Lianzhou City's economy. Despite its stable share, its growth momentum requires new catalysts.

The Lianzhou Foto Festival has indirectly driven the transformation and upgrading of the secondary industry by promoting the development of cultural and creative industries. For example, during the festival, Lianzhou attracted a large number of tourists and photography enthusiasts, and these people not only consumed cultural products, but also created demand for local industrial products.

Cultural and creative industries are an important part of modern economy. Lianzhou Foto Festival promotes the development of cultural and creative industries by showcasing diversified photographic works. For example, during the photography festival, Lianzhou attracted a large number of cultural and creative talents and projects, which not only enriched the supply of local cultural products, but also provided new growth points for the local economy. The development of cultural and creative industries not only enhances the cultural taste of the place, but also provides impetus for the sustainable development of the local economy.

In addition, the government and enterprises in Lianzhou City, driven by the Photography Festival, have increased their investment in cultural and creative industries, such as the establishment of photography studios and cultural and creative parks, etc. The rise of these new industries has injected new vitality and growth points into the secondary industry.

Changes of tertiary industry

The tertiary industry dominates the economic structure of Lianzhou City, growing from 50.30 per cent in 2012 to 45.30 per cent in 2019, showing a significant expansion of the service sector. This trend reflects the rapid development of the service sector, especially culture and tourism, in Lianzhou City in the process of economic transformation.

As an international cultural event, Lianzhou Foto Festival has greatly enhanced the popularity of Lianzhou City. It attracts a large amount of domestic and

international media coverage and attention every year, making Lianzhou a highly sought-after tourist and cultural destination. This high exposure increases Lianzhou's recognition among potential tourists and investors, further boosting the local economy.

As an important cultural event, the Lianzhou Foto Festival has played an important role in promoting the development of the tertiary industry. Firstly, the photography festival attracts a large number of domestic and foreign tourists, which directly drives the development of service industries such as accommodation, catering, transport and shopping. Such tourist spending not only increases the income of the tertiary industry, but also promotes local employment and service quality. Lianzhou City is particularly prosperous during the peak tourism season, and the Lianzhou Foto Festival has led to the rapid development of related industrial chains. The prosperity of the tourism industry further promotes the increase of employment opportunities, raises the income level of residents and enhances the vitality of the local economy.

Secondly, the success of the photography festival has enhanced the cultural brand value of Lianzhou City and attracted more cultural and creative enterprises and projects to land. These enterprises and projects not only enrich the supply of local cultural products, but also provide new growth points for the local economy. For example, some cultural and creative enterprises have launched cultural products with local characteristics, such as photographic albums and souvenirs, through cooperation with the Photography Festival. These products are not only sold in the local market, but also to the whole country and even the world through online platforms.

In order to meet the demand of the large influx of tourists, the Lianzhou city government and enterprises have continuously invested in improving tourism and cultural infrastructure. New and upgraded hotels, catering, transport and public service facilities not only enhance the tourist experience for visitors, but also provide better living conditions for local residents. These infrastructure improvements have laid a solid foundation for Lianzhou to attract more tourists and investors. Meanwhile, Lianzhou Foto Festival not only promotes the development of local economy, but also provides more employment opportunities for local residents. During the photography festival, a large number of tourist receptions, cultural and creative projects and related service industry demand, which directly led to an increase in employment opportunities. This not only raises the income level of residents, but also enhances the vitality of the local economy.

Lianzhou Foto Festival is not only a tourism event, but also a cultural event. Through Lianzhou Foto Festival, Lianzhou City has gradually formed a unique cultural brand, attracting a large number of cultural and creative talents and projects to land. The development of cultural industry not only enriches the supply of tourism products in Lianzhou, but also provides a new growth point for the local economy.

In summary, since its inception, Lianzhou Foto Festival has significantly increased the number of tourists received and tourism income in Lianzhou City through a rich variety of exhibitions and activities, and has had a far-reaching influence on the local economy. The festival not only directly promotes the development of tourism, but also provides a strong impetus for the sustainable development of Lianzhou City's economy through a variety of ways, such as enhancing the city's popularity, improving tourism infrastructure, driving the

development of the tertiary industry, promoting the development of the cultural industry, and enhancing the value of the local brand. The success of Lianzhou Foto Festival fully demonstrates the important role of cultural activities in promoting local economic transformation.

4.2 Social and Cultural influence

4.2.1 Popular Participation

Since 2005, the Lianzhou Foto Festival has significantly enhanced Lianzhou's social participation and city image through a series of well-planned cultural activities, especially in promoting popular participation and the integration of the art of photography in daily life. Especially after 2006, through the organisation of the "Searching for the most beautiful fields in Lianzhou" themed photography competition and other activities, the festival has successfully stimulated people's enthusiasm for participation and cultural identity. The festival is not only an event for photographers and artists, but also a platform for ordinary citizens to participate in cultural activities. Through organising various photography competitions, photography lectures, photography exhibitions and workshops, the Festival provides an opportunity for the public to showcase their photographic talents and learn photography skills. These activities encourage citizens and tourists to capture the beauty around them with their lenses, which not only enhances the status of Lianzhou's natural beauty and cultural flavour in the public's mind, but also promotes the integration of the art of photography with daily life practices.



Figure 11 citizens watch the Lianzhou Foto Festival
Source: Photo by Huang Jin, 2019

Figure 11 shows Lianju residents visiting the Lianju Photography Museum with their families. In Lianzhou, many people, from officials to citizens, are not only used to carrying a camera to record their lives, but also to the International Photography Festival year after year, which greatly expands their horizons and makes them more sensitive and tolerant to art and beauty. More and more people go to cultural venues such as photography exhibition galleries, cultural centres and libraries after meals to learn, exchange ideas and enrich their spiritual food. By capturing the

beauty around them through their lenses, citizens and tourists not only enhance their interest in and understanding of the art of photography, but also deepen their recognition of the natural scenery and cultural flavour of Lianzhou. Especially in the "Searching for the Most Beautiful Fields in Lianzhou" photography competition, citizens actively participated in recording the beautiful scenery of their hometowns with their lenses, which not only enhanced their love and pride for their hometowns, but also promoted the popularisation and application of the art of photography in their daily lives. In addition, various photography exhibitions and lectures held during the festival provided a rich cultural experience for citizens and visitors. These activities not only showcased the excellent works of photographers from home and abroad, but also provided a platform for the public to learn and exchange ideas. Through these activities, the Festival has successfully integrated the art of photography into the daily life of the public and enhanced their cultural and artistic literacy. Hu Qinquan(2019), a member of the public, said that initially, when members of the public came to see the photography exhibition, they just watched the fun, could not see what the photographs were expressing, and did not form any exchanges. However, after more than ten years of development, the Lianzhou Foto Festival has gradually cultivated the public's ability to appreciate art. Now, many citizens will bring their families to the exhibition, those who know photography will explain for those who don't, and there are exchanges and interactions after seeing the exhibition. This change shows that the Lianzhou Foto Festival has gradually improved the public's artistic literacy and photography appreciation through continuous educational activities.

By combining photography events with local characteristics, such as the photography competition focusing on showing the beauty of Lianzhou's countryside, the Lianzhou Foto Festival not only increases tourists' interest in visiting Lianzhou, but also inspires local residents to rediscover the beauty of their hometowns and take pride in them. The implementation of this series of cultural activities actually builds an artistic platform for all people to participate in, making the Lianzhou Foto Festival an important part of the cultural life of Lianzhou citizens. During the Lianzhou Foto Festival, the display of award-winning works not only brought Lianzhou an artistic aura, but also promoted the growth of the local tourism industry, with an increase in the number of photography enthusiasts and tourists, which further contributed to the diversification of the economy and highlighted the positive catalytic effect of cultural activities on the structural transformation of the local economy.

Through such a cultural strategy, Lianzhou Foto Festival has successfully transformed the art of photography into a tool for enhancing the city's cultural soft power. Photography is no longer just an activity within the art circle, but has become a key force in connecting the people, upgrading the city's image, and boosting the local economy, especially the tourism industry. The extensive participation of the public not only deepens the recognition of local culture, but also creates a unique cultural card for Lianzhou, realising a win-win pattern of cultural and economic development.

4.2.2 Cultural Brand Shaping

Since 2005, Lianzhou Foto Festival, as a cultural driving force, has significantly shaped the brand image of "China's Photography City". This brand effect is not accidental, but through a series of well-planned activities, especially "looking for the most beautiful fields in Lianzhou" and other photography competitions, the art of photography and local characteristics of the integration. The Lianzhou Foto Festival has not only raised Lianzhou Foto Festival's international profile, but more importantly, it has triggered far-reaching changes at the local social level, enhancing community cohesion and cultural identity.



Figure 12 Lianzhou “China's Photography City” award ceremony
Source: Lianzhou Municipal People's Government, 2006

Through the continued organisation of the Lianzhou Foto Festival, Lianzhou has successfully positioned itself as a cultural landmark, and the art of photography is no longer an activity within an ivory tower, but has become part of the daily lives of the people of Lianzhou. The photography competition encourages the participation of all people, not only professionals, but also ordinary citizens are motivated to discover and record the beauty around them. This increased participation is essentially the core of the festival's cultural branding strategy. The Lianzhou Foto Festival not only beautifies the city's image through the display of photographic works, but also builds a bridge between domestic and international photography enthusiasts and the people of Lianzhou, promoting cultural exchange and understanding, and in turn boosting the self-confidence and dissemination of local culture.

The cultural branding of Lianzhou Foto Festival has not only enhanced Lianzhou's international popularity and reputation, but also had a far-reaching influence on the social level. Through the Lianzhou Foto Festival, Lianzhou has successfully transformed the art of photography into a tool to enhance the city's cultural soft power, and improve the cultural literacy and artistic cultivation of its citizens. By participating in photography competitions and exhibitions, citizens not only improved their photography skills, but also deepened their knowledge and love of local culture, thus enhancing their sense of cultural identity and community

cohesion. During the Lianzhou Foto Festival, citizens actively participated in various cultural activities, showcasing the natural beauty and cultural flavour of Lianzhou and enhancing their pride and sense of belonging to their hometown.

Lianzhou Foto Festival promotes cultural exchange and understanding by showcasing photographs from different countries and cultural backgrounds. In the process of appreciating the photographs, the audience not only broadened their horizons, but also deepened their knowledge of and respect for different cultures around the globe. This cross-cultural visual experience not only breaks down geographical and language barriers, but also promotes intercultural exchange and understanding in a subtle way.

The branding of Lianzhou Foto Festival has not only had a far-reaching influence on the social level, but also brought significant benefits to the local economic development. The festival attracts a large number of domestic and foreign tourists and injects new vitality into the local economy, especially in tourism and related industries, which has a positive influence.

As an important cultural event, the Lianzhou Foto Festival has attracted a large number of domestic and foreign tourists and driven the development of related industries. For example, the accommodation, catering, transport and entertainment industries have benefited from the flow of visitors brought by the photography festival. Every year during the Lianzhou Foto Festival, hotels, catering and tourist attractions in Lianzhou see a peak in visitor traffic, which not only increases local financial revenue, but also drives the development of the local economy.

Lianzhou Foto Festival also promotes the development of cultural and creative industries by displaying and selling photographic works. During the festival, activities such as artwork sales, photography exhibitions and development of cultural derivatives attracted a large number of tourists and photography enthusiasts, providing new employment opportunities and sources of income for local residents. This not only enriches the diversified development of the local economy, but also enhances the level of cultural and creative industries in Lianzhou.

The shaping of the cultural brand "China City of Photography" not only enhances the tourism attractiveness of Lianzhou, but also promotes the social consciousness of the value of the art of photography, and stimulates the public's sense of pride and protection of local cultural resources. This strengthening of cultural identity is an intrinsic enhancement of the photography festival to the soft power of Lianzhou's social structure, providing a lasting impetus for the city's cultural heritage and innovative development. Through the popularisation of art and the sharing of culture, the Lianzhou Foto Festival not only brings short-term tourism economic benefits to Lianzhou, but more importantly, it lays a cultural foundation for the sustainable development of Lianzhou, demonstrating how to promote the transformation and upgrading of the local characteristic economy through cultural activities.

4.2.3 Cultural Exchange and Education

The Lianzhou Foto Festival provides a wealth of learning resources for photography enthusiasts of all levels by organising a series of activities such as photography roundtables, academic lectures and one-on-one exchanges with experts. These educational activities cover all aspects from basic photography skills to advanced creative concepts, providing participants with systematic learning and enhancement opportunities. These programmes not only address the basics of photography, but also cover advanced creative concepts, catering for the needs of participants at different levels. For example, the Photography Roundtable and Academic Lectures invite renowned photographers and scholars from home and abroad to give lectures covering a wide range of photographic techniques, artistic creation, visual expression and other aspects. These activities provided participants with a comprehensive body of photographic knowledge and helped them gradually improve their photographic skills from beginner to advanced.

A photographer who travelled from more than 1,000 kilometres away to Lianzhou received valuable advice and recognition by participating in the meet-the-experts sessions in the festival and communicating one-on-one with photography experts. By participating in the workshops and lectures at the festival, this photographer's photographic skills and artistic understanding were significantly enhanced, which greatly assisted him in his future creative endeavours. Such practical educational resources not only enhance the participants' professionalism, but also stimulate their creative passion and love for the art of photography.

Since its launch in 2014, the "Affordable Photography" bazaar, located outside the Fruit Factory exhibition area, has become a highlight of the festival. This bazaar is aimed at encouraging photographic artists to release a series of high edition, low-priced works, so that the art of photography can enter the public's daily consumption market, thus establishing a system for the production, circulation and consumption of photography from the private sector. The core concept of the Bazaar is to bring high-quality photographic artworks to the general public at affordable prices. For example, a 42cm x 29cm microblasted photography work sold at the bazaar is priced at 300 RMB. This price may be a figure that needs to be weighed for Lianzhou locals, but for photographers and art enthusiasts it is a reasonable consumer choice. Through this pricing strategy, the festival attracts not only professional photographers and art collectors, but also more general audiences who are given the opportunity to purchase and collect photographic artworks.

Despite the relatively limited sales of high-priced photographic works, most people's attention is still focused on the more affordable photographic derivatives, such as posters, postcards, photographic equipment gadgets and canvas bags. These derivatives are affordable and varied, with both practicality and artistic value, attracting the interest of a large number of general audiences. Through these photographic derivatives, more ordinary people are able to come into contact with and consume the art of photography, thus expanding the audience of the art of photography. This marketing strategy makes the Affordable Photography Bazaar not only a gathering place for photographers and art enthusiasts, but also an important channel for the general public to come into contact with and learn about the art of photography.

"The success of the Affordable Photography Bazaar lies not only in the flexibility of its market operation, but also in its contribution to the public's art literacy. The market not only provides a platform for professional photographers and art lovers to display and sell their works, but also opens the door to the art of photography for the general public, enabling them to come into closer contact with and appreciate the art of photography. By participating in this bazaar, the audience can not only buy their favourite photographic works and derivatives, but also gain more knowledge and insights about the art of photography through exchanges with the photographers. This form of face-to-face interaction gives the public a more intuitive and in-depth understanding of the art of photography, and stimulates their interest and passion for photography.

4.3 Dialogue with Lianzhou

4.3.1 Establishment of Lianzhou Museum

The construction of Lianzhou Museum of Photography began in 2014 and was completed and opened in 2017. Located on Zhongshan South Road, it covers an area of more than 2,100 square metres, with a building area of 3,639 square metres and a total investment of more than 19 million yuan. The museum has seven exhibition halls, and the ground floor is a popular culture space, open to the public 24 hours a day.

Duan Yuting said the opening of the Lianzhou Museum of Photography is a dream that has existed since the founding of the Lianzhou Foto Festival. "Building such a museum in Lianzhou is something that goes beyond the local experience, and perhaps something that cannot be realised in many big cities."

As an extension of the Lianzhou International Photography Exhibition, the Lianzhou Museum of Photography is unique and modern due to its focus on contemporary photography, making it the first public photography museum dedicated to academic research in China.

On the one hand, it carries out rich international cultural exchanges through the display, collection and research of Chinese and foreign photographic works; on the other hand, as a local cultural facility in Lianzhou, the museum, although academically orientated towards the world, is also a place of cultural activities for the citizens of Lianzhou, and develops them into the museum's most basic audience, which will ultimately allow the photographic culture to blossom here and make Lianzhou a true "City of Photography".





Figure 13 Citizens watch the Lianzhou Foto Festival
Source: Photo by Huang Jin, 2019

Figure 13 shows a foreign photographer introducing his work to the audience in Lianzhou Photography Museum. Since its inauguration and opening in 2017, the Lianzhou Foto Museum has become an important part of the Lianzhou Foto Festival, providing a platform for long-term exhibition and exchange. The museum brings together photographic works from all over the world, and through a combination of permanent and temporary exhibitions, it allows visitors to travel through different cultural contexts, experience the unique perspectives of photographers from different countries, and engage in cross-cultural exploration and exchange. In addition, the museum organises a variety of educational and interactive activities, such as photography lectures, symposiums and photography workshops, inviting renowned photographers and scholars from home and abroad to share their creative concepts and experiences, and promoting face-to-face exchanges between the audience and the photographers to stimulate creative inspirations and collisions of ideas.

The summer exhibition of Lianzhou Museum of Photography presented the intertwining of time and space inside and outside of photography from different perspectives through four exhibitions. Among them, images of Lianzhou captured by the photographers gave Zhang Yan, a citizen, and her two sons a chance to get to know Lianzhou City half a century ago, demonstrating the role of photography in connecting history and reality. Lianzhou Foto Festival has promoted the normalisation of the public to visit photography exhibitions at any time, from the initial questioning to the current reputation as China's most professional photography festival, the exhibition's 14 years of development has witnessed the rise and popularity of landscape photography in Lianzhou Foto Festival. 2004, the famous photographer Duan Yuting visited Lianzhou Foto Festival and decided to hold the festival here, creating a precedent in Guangdong. The four sets of Lianzhou Municipal Teams decided to hold the Lianzhou Foto Festival since 2005, creating a high-level international cultural exchange platform with win-win situation between culture and economy, professionalism and market through "culture on stage and economy on stage". In the 1970s and 1980s, the cultural department of Lianxian County organised photography training for the public in spite of the economic difficulties, and trained excellent photography talents including Wang Dongfu and Huang Zhaoyu, whose

achievements further enriched the photographic resources of Lianzhou. Together, these factors have fuelled the deep cultivation and development of landscape photography in Lianzhou, making it an important base for the art of photography.

Lianzhou Museum of Photography's 2019 Summer Exhibition opening site viewing

Lianzhou Museum of Photography maintains the continuity of cultural exchange through year-round exhibitions and activities, becoming a long-term cross-cultural exchange platform. Visitors can visit the exhibitions and participate in various activities at any time to continuously deepen their understanding and identification with different cultures, making the museum an important window for Lianzhou citizens and foreign visitors to learn about the world and broaden their horizons. The museum organises thematic exhibitions and interactive activities, such as the "Asian Image Art Exhibition", which attracts photographers from China, Japan, South Korea and India, etc. Through photography lectures, audience meetings and photographer workshops, the museum enhances the audience's photographic knowledge and skills, and strengthens their identity and respect for Asian culture.

Overall, the Lianzhou Museum of Photography provides a long-term and continuous platform for cross-cultural exchange through diverse exhibitions and rich educational programmes. Visitors can not only enjoy photographic works from around the world, but also deepen their understanding of and respect for different cultures through interaction and practice, and promote mutual exchange and integration between cultures. The museum is not only academically orientated to the world, but also a place for cultural activities for the citizens of Lianzhou, making photography culture blossom in Lianzhou, and promoting Lianzhou to become a real "City of Photography".

4.3.2 Local Culture Promotion

Lianzhou Foto Festival since 2005, through a series of carefully planned cultural activities, significantly enhance the cultural brand influence of Lianzhou City, especially in the promotion of local culture, the festival has become a force to be reckoned with. With its unique photographic resources, Lianzhou has demonstrated the unique beauty of a small southern city, and successfully promoted local natural and cultural landscapes to a broader stage.

Lianzhou and its surrounding areas, such as Liannan and Lianshan counties, are inhabited by the Yao and Zhuang ethnic groups, possessing strong ethnic characteristics. In addition, the natural landscape scenery of Lianzhou, the Lianzhou Underground River in the national 4A-level scenic area, the precious flora and fauna resources in the national-level Nanling Protected Area, the beauty of the karst landscape, and the ancient villages provide inexhaustible subjects for photography. These rich photographic resources have not only attracted a large number of photographers to come to take pictures, but also provide a wide creative space for local photography enthusiasts.

Lianzhou as a photographer's shooting base for a long time famous, has long attracted a large number of photographers to come to pick up the wind. Local also has a group of photography enthusiasts, their photography level is flourishing, for Lianzhou's photography culture has injected new vitality. The old factories and warehouses in downtown Lianzhou, history has given these buildings a unique sense of beauty and aesthetic significance, providing convenient conditions for the

exhibition of contemporary art. These historical buildings are not only good subjects for photography, but also important symbols of local culture, and through the lens of photography, the beauty of these buildings is more widely spread and appreciated.

Through projects such as the photography competition on the theme of "Searching for the most beautiful field in Lianzhou", the Lianzhou Foto Festival not only captures the essence of Lianzhou's nature and humanities, but also uses photography as a medium to penetrate into every aspect of local social life, effectively promoting the self-expression of local culture and deepening the perception of the outside world. This series of activities not only inspired the public to love and protect local culture, but also attracted more tourists to experience and explore the cultural charm of Lianzhou.

The Lianzhou Foto Festival has successfully promoted local culture to a wider audience by showcasing the natural landscape and humanistic features of Lianzhou. Photographers recorded the beauty of Lianzhou Foto Festival with their lenses, and these works were not only exhibited during the festival, but also disseminated through various media channels, enhancing the popularity and reputation of Lianzhou. The success of the Lianzhou Foto Festival has promoted cultural exchanges between Lianzhou and the outside world, and enhanced the sense of identity and pride in local culture.


Lianzhou Foto Festival further promotes the popularity and development of photography art in the local community by organising various photography competitions, exhibitions and lectures. These activities not only improve citizens' photography skills, but also enhance their understanding and identification with local culture. By participating in these activities, citizens not only enhance their artistic cultivation, but also deepen their knowledge and love of their hometown culture, thus forming a strong sense of cultural identity.

Lianzhou Foto Festival has successfully promoted local culture to a wider audience through a series of well-planned cultural activities. Through the Lianzhou Foto Festival, Lianzhou showcases its rich natural and humanistic landscapes and enhances the city's cultural brand influence. The Photography Festival not only promotes the self-expression of local culture and the deepening of external perception, but also enhances citizens' sense of cultural identity and pride, providing a strong impetus for the inheritance and development of local culture.

The Lianzhou Foto Festival provides an exchange platform for domestic and foreign photographers and scholars through master classes and academic seminars. These activities not only enhance the academic value of the photography works, but also promote the popularisation of photography art education, which especially has a far-reaching influence on the local cultural education in Lianzhou. For example, by inviting renowned photographers and theorists from home and abroad, the festival not only enhances the practical level of the art of photography, but also enhances the public's understanding of and participation in the art of photography through seminars and other forms of in-depth discussion of the relationship between photography and local culture. This dimension of photography education essentially allows the cultural characteristics of Lianzhou to be globally disseminated through intuitive visual language, while stimulating local residents' pride in their cultural traditions and consciousness of their preservation, and forming a unique sense of cultural identity.

This series of initiatives of Lianzhou Foto Festival not only enriches the cultural connotation of Lianzhou, but also builds the brand image of "Lianzhou - City of Photography" on the international level, making the art of photography become the window of dialogue between Lianzhou and the world. Through education and cultural exchange, Lianzhou Foto Festival has successfully promoted the local culture of Lianzhou to a broader stage, promoted the international sharing of cultural diversity and local characteristics, and thus realised deep interaction and integration at the social and cultural levels.

This study uses a table to systematically demonstrate the combined influence of the Lianzhou Foto Festival on the city of Lianzhou in the economic, cultural and social spheres. Through in-depth analyses of data and case studies, the table not only provides a clear overview of the influences, but also highlights the far-reaching significance of these influences in contributing to local development. As a key component of this study, the table not only validates the success of the Lianzhou Foto Festival, but also reveals the wide-ranging and profound influences it has had on local economic transformation, cultural branding, and the enhancement of social participation as a cultural event. These findings further emphasise the importance of this study in both academic and practical applications.

Sphere of influence	Concrete impact	Data support/concrete example																																													
Economic impact	Increased tourism revenue	<table><thead><tr><th>Year</th><th>Number of visitors (tens of thousands)</th><th>Rate of increase</th><th>Revenue (RMB100 million yuan)</th><th>Rate of increase</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>2012</td><td>521.8</td><td>-</td><td>22.8</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>2013</td><td>665.5</td><td>27.50%</td><td>31.6</td><td>38.60%</td></tr><tr><td>2014</td><td>734.3</td><td>10.30%</td><td>35.9</td><td>13.60%</td></tr><tr><td>2015</td><td>794</td><td>8.10%</td><td>39.2</td><td>9.20%</td></tr><tr><td>2016</td><td>878</td><td>10.60%</td><td>43.6</td><td>11.20%</td></tr><tr><td>2017</td><td>942.8</td><td>7.40%</td><td>47.2</td><td>8.30%</td></tr><tr><td>2018</td><td>1006</td><td>6.70%</td><td>50.6</td><td>7.20%</td></tr><tr><td>2019</td><td>1057.8</td><td>5.20%</td><td>53.65</td><td>6.00%</td></tr></tbody></table> <p>From Table4 Between 2012 and 2019, tourism revenue grew from RMB 2.28 billion to RMB 5.365 billion, a growth rate of approximately 134.8 per cent</p>	Year	Number of visitors (tens of thousands)	Rate of increase	Revenue (RMB100 million yuan)	Rate of increase	2012	521.8	-	22.8	-	2013	665.5	27.50%	31.6	38.60%	2014	734.3	10.30%	35.9	13.60%	2015	794	8.10%	39.2	9.20%	2016	878	10.60%	43.6	11.20%	2017	942.8	7.40%	47.2	8.30%	2018	1006	6.70%	50.6	7.20%	2019	1057.8	5.20%	53.65	6.00%
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Cultural influence	Enhanced the city's cultural brand image.	 <p>Successfully shaped the cultural brand of ‘City of Photography’, attracting domestic and international cultural exchanges and tourists.</p>																																													




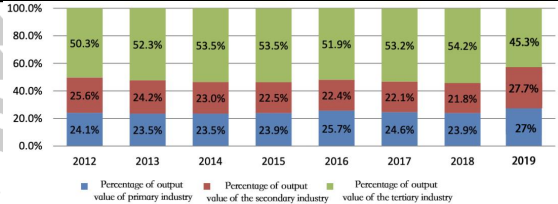
Social influence	Improvement of citizens' artistic literacy and cultural participation.	 <p>Citizens actively participate in photography competitions, exhibitions and lectures, creating a fusion of art and life.</p>
Cultural education	Rich cultural and educational resources were provided.	 <p>Photography lectures, academic seminars and photography workshops were organised during the festival, which enhanced the photography skills and cultural literacy of participants.</p>
Social and cultural exchange	Cross-cultural exchange and understanding were enhanced.	 <p>Promoted Chinese and foreign cultural exchanges through exhibitions, lectures and seminars, enhancing intercultural understanding and respect.</p>
Economic structure transformation	The transformation and upgrading of economic structure was promoted.	 <p>Promoted the proportion of tertiary industry (service industry) in GDP from 50.3% to 54.2%.(The end of 2019 was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, so so the data is not complete)</p>

Table 6 The influence of the Lianzhou Foto Festival on the city of Lianzhou
Source: Statistics by Yao Qiong, 2024

This table effectively summarises the multifaceted influences of the Lianzhou Foto Festival on the city of Lianzhou, breaking them down into specific areas of influence - economic, cultural, social and economic structures - and providing specific examples and data support to illustrate these influences. The following is a detailed analysis.

1. economic influences

Sphere of influence: Increased tourism revenue.

Specific influence: The Lianzhou Foto Festival has greatly contributed to the development of the local tourism industry, with tourism revenue increasing from 2.28 billion yuan in 2012 to 5.365 billion yuan in 2019. This represents a growth rate of approximately 134.8%, highlighting the role of the festival as a major economic driver for the city.

Data Support: The data in Table 4 supports this conclusion by showing a significant increase in tourism revenue over the 7-year period, indicating that the festival has been successful in contributing to economic growth through tourism.

2. cultural influences

Sphere of influence: Enhance the city's cultural brand image.

Specific influence: The festival has successfully established Lianzhou as the 'Capital of Photography', attracting cultural exchanges and tourists from home and abroad. This has not only raised the profile of Lianzhou, but also positioned it as an important cultural centre in the region.

Data support: The festival's ability to attract international tourists and cultural exchanges is evidence of its success in branding Lianzhou as a cultural destination.

3. Social Influence

Sphere of influence: Increase citizens' artistic literacy and cultural participation.

Specific influence: The festival fosters a higher level of cultural participation among Lianzhou citizens. The arts have been visibly integrated into daily life through active participation in photography competitions, exhibitions and lectures.

Data support: The active participation of citizens in these cultural activities is evidence of the success of the festival in increasing cultural participation and artistic literacy among local residents.

4. Cultural Education

Sphere of influence: Provide rich cultural and educational resources.

Specific influence: The festival organises photography lectures, academic seminars and workshops to improve participants' photography skills and cultural literacy, providing them with valuable educational resources.

Data Support: The provision of these educational programmes demonstrates the Festival's commitment to cultural education, enriching the local community and visitors.

5. Social and Cultural Exchange

Sphere of influence: Enhance cross-cultural exchange and understanding.

Specific influence: The festival facilitates important cross-cultural exchanges through exhibitions and lectures that promote cross-cultural understanding and respect among participants from different cultural backgrounds.

Data support: The participation of international artists and scholars in the Festival alongside local participants demonstrates the role of the Festival in fostering global cultural dialogue.

6. structural transformation of the economy

Sphere of influence: Promote the structural transformation and upgrading of the economy.

Specific influence: The festival facilitated the transformation of Lianzhou's economic structure, with the tertiary industry (services) increasing its share of the city's GDP from 50.3 per cent to 54.2 per cent. Although data for 2019 is incomplete due to the New Crown Pneumonia outbreak, this trend suggests a positive influence on the local economy.

The data supports: The transition to a service-based economy shows that festivals play an important role in restructuring the economy and contributing to more sustainable growth.

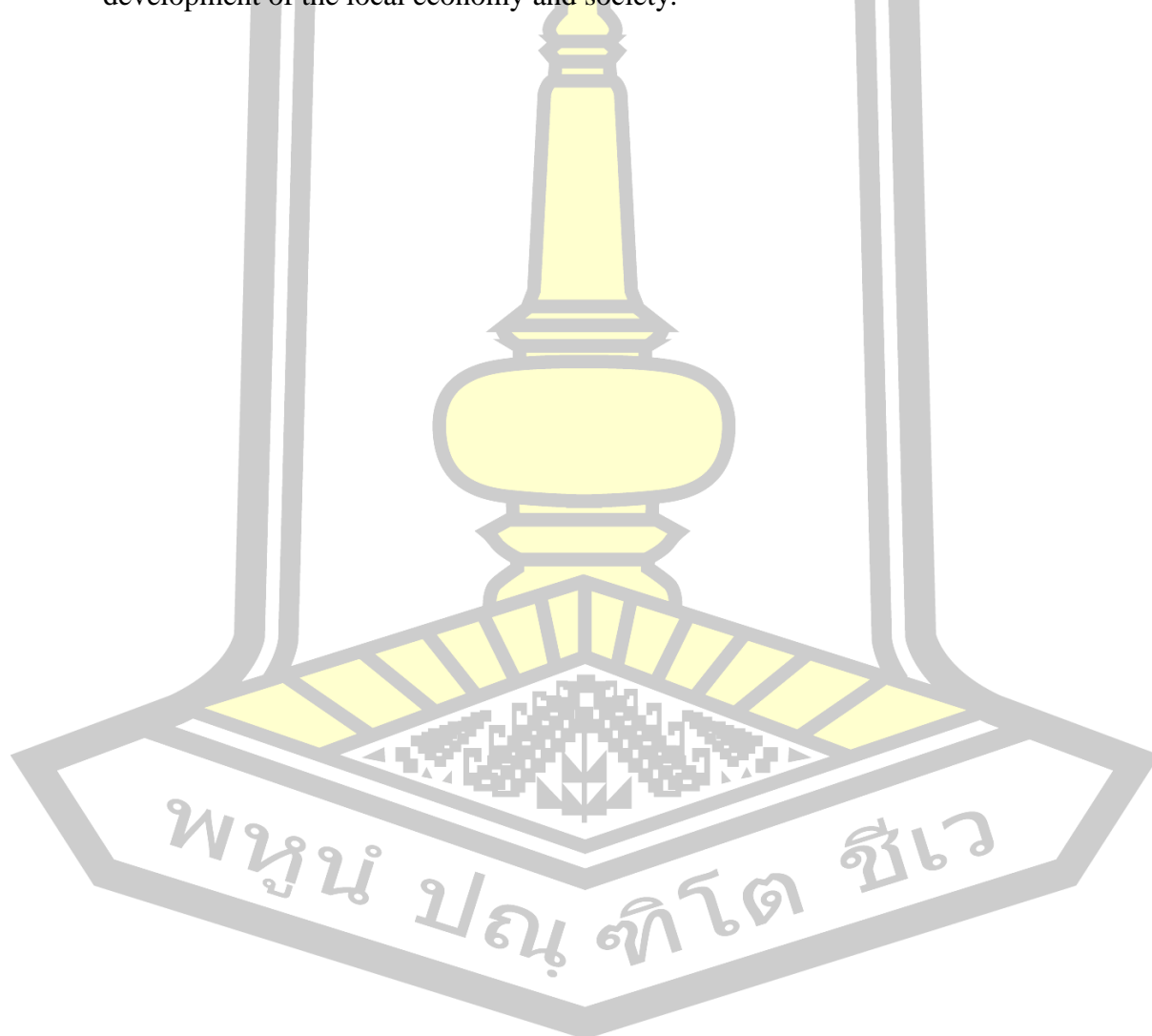
Conclusion.

This table illustrates the comprehensive impact of the Lianzhou Foto Festival, which goes beyond economic benefits to include important cultural, social and educational influences. The festival not only enhances the cultural image and economic vitality of the city, but also contributes to the transformation of the social and economic structure, making Lianzhou an important cultural and economic centre.

5. Summary of this chapter

In summary, since its inception in 2005, the Lianzhou Foto Festival has become a key force in promoting the economic, social and cultural development of Lianzhou City. Firstly, through the co-operation with international curators and artists, Lianzhou Foto Festival has not only enhanced its academic standard and international influence, but also established a wide international co-operation network, deepened and innovated the exhibition themes year by year, and established its own diversified development path. Secondly, Lianzhou Foto Festival has played a positive role in enhancing the cultural soft power and international image of Lianzhou city, and greatly promoted the local economic benefits, especially in the tourism industry and related industries. Data analysis shows that Lianzhou Foto Festival not only brings considerable growth in tourism revenue, but also contributes to the shaping of the city brand, making Lianzhou the "City of Photography in China", and this brand image is widely recognised at home and abroad.

On the social and cultural level, Lianzhou Foto Festival has greatly enhanced the cultural participation and artistic quality of the public through rich and diversified cultural activities, and promoted the dissemination and education of local culture. Lianzhou Foto Festival has not only injected new vigour into Lianzhou City on the economic level, but also strengthened community cohesion and cultural identity on the social level. By successfully integrating the art of photography into daily life, the Lianzhou Foto Festival has not only shaped the unique cultural brand of Lianzhou City, but has also become an important driving force for the overall development of Lianzhou City's economy, society and culture. The far-reaching influence of this cultural event in realising the transformation of the local economy, upgrading the social and cultural level and promoting international cultural exchanges fully proves the central position and irreplaceable role of the Lianzhou Foto Festival in the development of the local economy and society.



Chapter III

Develop and influence of private photography in Lianzhou Foto Festival

Introduction

This chapter explores the development of private photography in the Lianzhou Foto Festival and its influence on the festival. Firstly, it introduces the origin of private photography and its introduction in China. As a personalised form of photographic art, private photography has gradually become an important part of the Lianzhou Foto Festival through observation, recording and emotional expression from a personal perspective. In China, the development of private photography has been influenced by Western modern art trends, and has been further promoted and deepened through the platform of Lianzhou Foto Festival.

Next, the diverse themes of private photography in Lianzhou Foto Festival are analysed, including recording personal life and emotions, reflecting social changes and cultural conflicts, and exploring personal growth and identity. These themes not only demonstrate the rich connotation of private photography, but also give the festival a stronger artistic expression and social significance.

Finally, the influence of private photography on the Lianzhou Foto Festival is discussed, including the enrichment of the artistic expression of the festival, the enhancement of cultural diversity, and the improvement of social influence. Through the introduction of private photography, the Lianzhou Foto Festival has not only achieved greater success on the artistic and cultural levels, but also provided an important platform for audiences to explore and reflect on social issues.

Overall, this chapter reveals the important position of private photography in Lianzhou Foto Festival and its far-reaching contribution to the artistic, cultural and social influence of the festival.

1. Early Exploration of Private Photography

1.1 The introduction of private photography

Private Photography is a form of photography that focuses on personal life and self-expression. Unlike traditional photojournalism and landscape photography, private photography focuses more on the photographer's personal emotions, life and private moments. This form of photography originated in the mid-to-late 20th century, especially in the Western art world in the 1970s and 1980s.

Lin Yi (2015), in his editorial introduction to *An Essay on Private Photography*, suggests that the formation of a concept is a long process, and private photography is no exception. When photographic creations with the nature of private photography initially appeared, people did not know how to define it precisely. As Iizawa Taro puts it in his 2000 book, *A Treatise on Private Photography*, "Although terms such as 'private world' and 'privateness' already existed in the 1970s, the term 'private photography' has been used for a long time, but the term 'private photography' has not been used for a long time. Although terms such as 'private world' and 'privateness' had already been used in the 1970s, the term 'private photography' had not yet emerged

clearly and unambiguously. It was not until the publication of Iizawa Taro's *A Treatise on Private Photography* that the expression 'private photography' was fixed and became a specialised term when discussing this type of photography.

In contemporary art, private photography has won widespread attention and recognition for its authentic and intimate qualities. By capturing the details and moments of everyday life, photographers reveal the complexity and richness of human emotions. Frenchman Jacques I Henri. Lartigue, the son of a wealthy banker, picked up a camera at the age of six and took monumental pictures at the age of seven. He took up the camera, not only as a means of enjoyment, but also with the idea of documenting the daily behaviour of his family, especially the three wives in his life. Indeed, he captured the upper middle-class women of France in a way that is difficult for outsiders to see. These women were only able to be so comfortable, at ease, and even unrestrained in front of his camera.



Figure 14 Madeleine Messager
Source: Henri Jacques Lartigue

Figure 14 is a photograph of his wife taken by Lartigue, look at the picture he took of his beautiful young wife sitting on the toilet. This is the kind of intimate photography within a family that outsiders are not allowed to enter. When the American photographer Evden discovered him, he was, of course, astonished, because it is rare to find such a pure attitude towards one's own family routine. Lartigue's practice of using the daily life of the family as the subject of his photography is in fact the essence of private photography.



Figure 15 Americans
Source: Robert Frank, 1958

Robert Frank's *The Americans* (1958) as Figure 15 is widely regarded as one of the most influential photography collections of the 20th century and a seminal work in the field of private photography. With its unique perspective and presentation, *The Americans* is a profound observation and critique of American society, breaking the aesthetic norms of traditional photography at the time.

Frank travelled the United States between 1955 and 1956 and took a large number of photographs of everyday life. These photographs documented the living conditions of ordinary Americans, capturing the unnoticed details, emotions, and atmosphere of society. “*The Americans*” influenced an entire generation of photographers and contributed to the wider recognition of private photography in the arts and culture.

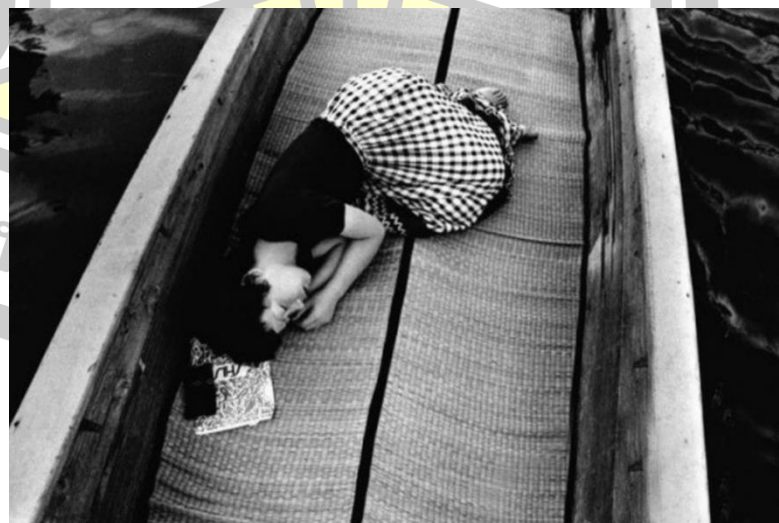


Figure 16センチメンタルな旅
Source: Nobuyoshi Araki

In Japan, the land of "private fiction", Nobuyoshi Araki is the master of private photography. Figure 16 is a photograph of his wife by Nobuyoshi Araki, taken during their honeymoon, lying asleep on the boat. Unlike Lartigue's luxurious and elegant private photography, Araki's private photography has the simplicity of grassroots and the impermanence of Japan's "material sadness". Araki's *Moving Journey*, shot in 1971, records his wedding trip with Yoko, but strangely enough, the images of this trip are always covered with a shadow of death. And unfortunately, when Yoko died in 1990, the work seemed to become a one-liner on his personal feelings.



Figure 17 The ballad of sexual dependency
Source: Nan Goldin

In the 1980s, at the height of postmodernism, the American Nan Goldin made a photographic work, *Narrative of Sexual Dependency*, based on the lives of marginalised groups of young people in her own self-imposed exile from mainstream society. Figure 17 is one of these works, Nan and her boyfriend. In this work, the common traditional family relationship no longer exists, which also implies the abandonment of a mainstream value. The "family form" presented in her photographs is a kind of "extended family" that is highly mobile and separated only by the current feelings and desires. This kind of family does not aim to produce offspring and is not bound by the traditional marriage relationship. The change in the view of the family from the "nuclear family" to the "extended family" in modern Western society has been recorded by her in her photographs, and this kind of intimate photography is therefore called private documentary photography. Her private documentary photography is essentially a kind of private documentary with a social aspect. The "private" here actually includes a social group with a common identity and values. Therefore, her photography is an assertion of her own values and sense of existence for a non-mainstream group. Her photography is a kind of self-assertive private photography, through which she introduces photography to a new dimension of rethinking "public" and "private".

In contemporary Japan, the situation is somewhat different.

It is not the social force but the consumer force that induces the direction of photography. In the mid-to-late 1990s, "girls' photography" emerged, initially as a way for female university students to take photographs of the people around them and to express their views on life. This tendency was discovered by sensitive photographic equipment manufacturers, and through the joint operation with critics, a new trend of "girl photography" was created. A new trend of "teenage photography" was created. There were many talented female photographers, such as Yukie Nagashima and Mika Ninagawa, but with the intervention of the photographic equipment companies, "girls' photography" was eventually incorporated into the structure of image consumption, and photography, as a means of personalised self-expression and communication, was rapidly transformed into a fashion and a way of consuming, prompting the development of consumption and expression amongst young women through the use of photography. photography as a means of personalised self-expression and communication was rapidly transformed into a mode of fashion and consumption, prompting young women's dual desire for consumption and expression through photography.

At the same time, the German Wolfgang Tillmans was weaving a rich and trivial private world through the accumulation of photographs in the form of whispers. Tillmans' photography combines individual whispers with the attitude and style of life of non-mainstream people, presenting the close relationship between contemporary photography and modern life.

From the photographic practices of the above-mentioned foreign photographers, private photography is basically a kind of life attitude for them. Their photographic creations are basically difficult to be discussed separately from their actual lives. Photography has become a means of questioning the meaning of life and developing social thinking and criticism.

1.2 The Introduction of Private Photography in China

The concept of private photography emerged in China in the 1990s, along with urbanisation and the spread of consumer culture. It breaks the boundaries of traditional photography, showing the subtle emotions and private experiences in daily life through the photographer's personal perspective. Gu Zheng mentioned in his book that the emergence and development of private photography in China is closely related to the changes in social ideology and values, and that it is an important art form reflecting personal life and self-identity during the period of social transition (Gu Zheng, 2006)



Figure 18 City Illustrated, issue 16, 2004

Source: City Illustrated, 2004,

In the 16th issue of City Pictorial in 2004, photography and private life were linked together in the form of a special feature, "Photography Private Life". The album was divided into two parts, one of which was China's "Pioneers of Private Photography", introducing young photographers such as Yao Songxin, No. 223, Bai Chuan, and Sugar Xiaoshuang, and even including the photography-loving idol Zhou Xun. The other part is "Masters of Private Photography", which introduces five internationally renowned photographers such as Keiwei Araki, Tillmans, Sally Mann, Nan Goldin and Terry Richardson.

The influence of Araki, Nan Goldin and Tillmans is particularly notable. The greatest revelation that the practices of these three photographers have had on young Chinese photographers is that photography is not only a recording tool, but has also become a new means of establishing personal identity and a glue for building new interpersonal relationships. At the same time, private photography is also good at showing the interrelationship between the photographer and the subject.

In the first Lianzhou Foto Festival in 2005, Zeng Han curated "Self-Private - Cenozoic Photography Group Exhibition", in which the works of 11 young photographers were displayed. This exhibition marked an important moment for private photography in China and can be seen as its naming ceremony. (Gu Zheng, 2006). As Zeng Han mentioned in the preface of the exhibition, the image explorations carried out by these Cenozoic photographers were almost always spontaneous rather than catering to certain rules of the game. Their photography was initially related only to themselves, and many of them signed their photography uniquely just to describe their individual existence and validate their individual value in a photographic way. This spontaneity and personal expression makes private photography occupy a unique position in China's photography world. (Zeng Han, 2005).

Their stylistically diverse photographic explorations were, however, met with rather fierce rebuke from practitioners in the central mainstream media. At a slide show in Pingyao organised by the photographer An, a photographer working in the mainstream media in Beijing questioned the "bottom line" of this kind of photographic exploration, which in their opinion was "too radical". The ensuing debate, to a certain extent, shows the confusion of those who are used to examining photography from the standpoint of traditional photography about these "new photography" explorations. It also shows that there was a fundamental divide between the north and the south of China on issues such as ideology, the relationship between life and art, and attitudes towards art.

Those who are close to the political centre inevitably weigh photography from the standpoint of grand narratives, while those who are far away from the political centre are more willing to describe their own experiences by using their personal experiences and feelings brought by life as materials. In spite of the serious challenge from photographers in the political centre of the north, in the south, where the ideological atmosphere was relatively weak, especially in Guangdong and Shanghai, which were more urbanised and commercially developed, inward-looking private photography slowly grew in the area of the coastal consumer cities and eventually formed a certain climate, with this influence radiating and even expanding to other parts of the country.

The emergence of private photography dismantled the sanctity of photography as an art form. The popularity of private photography among some young people is in fact a process of dispelling the sanctity of photography. All organisational systems lose their validity and legitimacy in the face of private photography, and contribute to the formation of pluralistic questions. However, a paradox that we are bound to face is that, in today's advanced communication media, although private photography is labelled as private, it is unable to resist the temptation to share its privacy with more people, or in other words, from the very beginning, private photography actually has its own potential and imaginary object of appeal. Once private photography gains the possibility of sharing with others, private will not be private, and then the subcultural or even anti-mainstream cultural characteristics of private photography will disappear. From this point of view, the boundary between private and public has been moving and blurred from time to time since the beginning of private photography.

Photography has been private for a long time. And with the popularisation of photography, it is an unmistakable fact that the entry of photography into private life has also changed the relationship between the public and private spheres. As Roland Barthes (2011) puts it, "the age of photography coincides with the age of the extension of private life to the public, or even the creation of a new social value that publicises the private, where the private is consumed in public". It is often the case that a photographer is first applauded on the internet, thus gaining attention, and then moves through the institutional chain of galleries, festivals, etc., to some kind of institution, including the market. The process and means of transition from private images to various forms of public consumption are also much easier and faster. In China, although the popularisation of photography to the public was much later due to socio-political and economic constraints, from the above description, it seems that what Barthes described as happening in a capitalist consumer society has also

happened in China. The important question for "private photography" in China is how, as Barthes puts it, "I" can "reconstruct the distinction between 'public' and 'private' through the necessary resistance. How can I," as Barthes puts it, "through the necessary resistance, reconfigure the distinction between 'public' and 'private'" and "give voice to the heart without letting go of the private"?

Private photography's banishment of grand narratives and its avoidance of value judgements about reality (which of course is a value judgement) is to some extent a reaction to the emphasis on photography's social concerns, but the question remains as to how this reaction can maintain a lasting momentum of its own. What makes private photography appealing is the possibility of creating a personal breathing space between the private and the grimness of reality, a place where the ideology of the false and the empty idles to the point of malfunctioning. However, as a helpless expression of reality, this tendency to avoid interacting with reality and to confine oneself to egoistic emotional waves reflects society's tendency towards cynicism as it moves towards pluralistic values.

The debut of private photography in the Lianzhou Foto Festival marks the emergence of this form of photography in Chinese photographic art. With the continuous development of the festival, private photography has gradually become an important means of self-expression, attracting the attention of more and more photographers and audiences.

The rise and development of private photography in China has been gradually formed through the joint efforts of the media and photographers against the backdrop of intertwined globalisation and localisation. From the initial spontaneous exploration, to the promotion by the media, to the penetration of international influences, private photography has gradually become an important genre of photography. It not only reflects personal emotions and life, but also records social changes and cultural conflicts. Promoted by the Lianzhou Foto Festival and other platforms, private photography has continued to develop and mature, becoming an integral part of Chinese photographic art. Private photography, or private photography (or personal photography), is a form of photography that focuses on personal life, emotions and experiences. This form of photography is often centred on the individual, showing the photographer's personal inner world and emotional expression through his or her photographic works. Private photography is gradually gaining recognition in the field of art and culture globally, and has been featured in various photography festivals and exhibitions.

1.3 Works and Photographers in "Self-Private" Group Exhibition

In 2005, at the first Lianzhou Foto Festival, "Self-Private - Cenozoic Photography Group Exhibition" became the first thematic exhibition, marking an important milestone for private photography in China. The exhibition was meticulously curated by Zeng Han, whose outstanding contribution earned him the Outstanding Curator of the Year Award. The exhibition brings together a series of works created by young photographers, showcasing their novel understanding and expression of the art of photography.

The exhibition features a number of representative works by Cenozoic photographers, including Bai Chuan's Xu Zhu, Song Tao and Li Weiyu's Bird Head Life, Dai Mouyu's Two or Three Times, Tang Xiaoshuang's Self-Introduction, Liu Yicheng's Dirty Embryo, Yao Songxin's Touch of Love, and Su Weiguang's Floating

Sky. With their unique perspectives and expressions, these works explore personal emotions, social observations, and cultural commentaries, thus providing the audience with diverse visual and intellectual experiences.

The works of these young authors, some of whom may be relatively young, reflect how the Cenozoic in China explore and express their individual and collective identities through photography. The youngest photographer in this exhibition is only 18 years old, and the presentation of their works not only demonstrates their unique insights into the art of photography, but also signals the rise of a new force in Chinese photography.

Self-Private - Cenozoic Photography Group Exhibition reflects the attitude of Cenozoic photographers towards photography - exploring the possibilities of photography through self-expression, private experience and personalised language. These artists use photography as a tool to record their lives, express their individuality, and interact with society, establishing personal values and social identity through image narratives. This exhibition is both their individual expression and a platform for their extensive dialogue with society, demonstrating the important role and far-reaching influence of private photography in modern art.

At the 2005 Lianzhou Foto Festival, private photography works quickly attracted the attention of the audience and the media with their unique perspectives and profound emotional expressions. The debut of the private photography works mainly focused on the themes of personal life, family stories, daily details and so on. These works not only show the photographers' personal life experiences, but also record their inner emotions and their observations and thoughts on society through images.

Bai Chuan's photographic series Xu Zhu builds a rich narrative framework by capturing moments from 2000 to 2005 when he lived with his friends. Carefully arranged in the form of cinematographic film, the group creates a visual narrative flow similar to that of a film split-screen, allowing the viewer to follow the story through successive sequences of images. Each frame not only records a specific moment in time, but also captures the emotions and memories of the passage of time, showing the intimate relationship between Bai Chuan and Xu Zhu and the beautiful memories they share.





Figure 19 Xu Zhu

Source: Bai Chuan, 2005, the first Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 19 is one of Xu Zhu's series of works, a group photo of Xu Zhu and Shirakawa. In this visual narrative, memory, as the legacy of experience, not only forms part of reality, but also becomes a key factor in understanding individual existence. In his 2001 book *The Wisdom of Vision: An Interview with Rudolf Arnheim*, Rudolf Arnheim sees art as a means of exploring and expressing the meaning of our existence. Through these continuous images, Bai Chuan not only records external activities, but also digs deeper into the inner emotional dimension, allowing the viewer to experience and reflect on profound life themes through the artist's perspective. Because of this, the photographs are not only a medium for artistic expression, but also a bridge for the viewer and the artist to experience and interpret life experiences together. Each photograph invites the viewer to enter the photographer's personal world to feel, understand, and even resonate with the memories and emotions that the photographer has already visualised.

If Bai Chuan's photographic series *Xuzhu* aims to preserve fond memories shared with friends, then Lin Zhipeng's *Number 223* is clearly about expressing and venting complex emotions. Often dressed in t-shirts and jeans, the Guangzhou-based hipster's work focuses on capturing the personal details and everyday life around him. Interviews exploring everyday life, emotions and gender relations can be found in Lin Zhipeng's photographs, demonstrating a meticulous and undistanced observation and a mesmerising emotional engagement.



Figure 20 Number 223

Source: Lin Zhipeng, 2005, the first Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 20 is one of Lin Zhipeng's Number 223 series of works, the application of photographic narrative is reflected in how specific visual elements - such as light and shadow, composition, and symbols - are used to convey deeper emotional and psychological states. Lin Zhipeng's photographic narratives display a very personal perspective, and his works often capture seemingly inadvertent moments in life that are nonetheless full of profound meaning: a foot in stockings and heels, a tight-fitting ultra-short dress, a T-shirt over the head moment, or an ass next to a toy chicken. These moments reflect both fashion and beauty, as well as the ambiguities and sorrows of youth. Through these "personal" moments, Lin does not just let us "see" the image, but feels that we are experiencing and participating in it. His camera is like his hands and feet, playing with his life and shedding tears together, and it is the outlet for his free-spirited youthful emotions, completing the transition from a record of life that distinguishes him from ordinary people to an expression of the artist's own thoughts, feelings and emotions.





Figure 21 Bird's Head Life

Source: Song Tao and Li Weiyu, 2005, the first Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 21 is one of the works in the Birdhead Life series. Song Tao and Li Weiyu's photographic series *Bird's Head Life* explores personal interaction in the urban landscape. In Shanghai, a city that in its early days lacked modern consumer landmarks such as Starbucks, young people were left to wander aimlessly on the roads on many sunny days, a wandering that was imbued with raw energy and ferocity. Through their lens, Shanghai's urbanisation is driven by the pace and gaze of the young, and the city grows under this observation. The images they capture document the changes in the construction process, such as the repeated erection and dismantling of dark green scaffolding, and the shadows that form underneath the viaducts, which become silent witnesses to the city's development.

In *Bird's Head Life*, the city's buildings themselves become the protagonists of the narrative. These buildings are not only the material structure of the city, but also the core symbols of the narrative, representing the growth of the city and the free spirit of the youth. By choosing specific landscapes as their subjects, Song Tao and Li Weiyu construct a visual narrative that not only shows the physical changes of the city, but also reflects the evolution of its culture.

Dai Mouyu's work "Two or Three Times" reveals the fragmented reality of urban life and personal imagination in his unique narrative style. Dai Mouyu carefully chooses the local landscapes of his life as the objects of his creation, such as sculptures with only their eyes exposed behind shrubs, fallen railings, and friends lying drunk in the city at night. These seemingly fragmented images, when reassembled like a Rubik's Cube, form a new visual and emotional relationship, and their interaction builds a powerful narrative momentum.

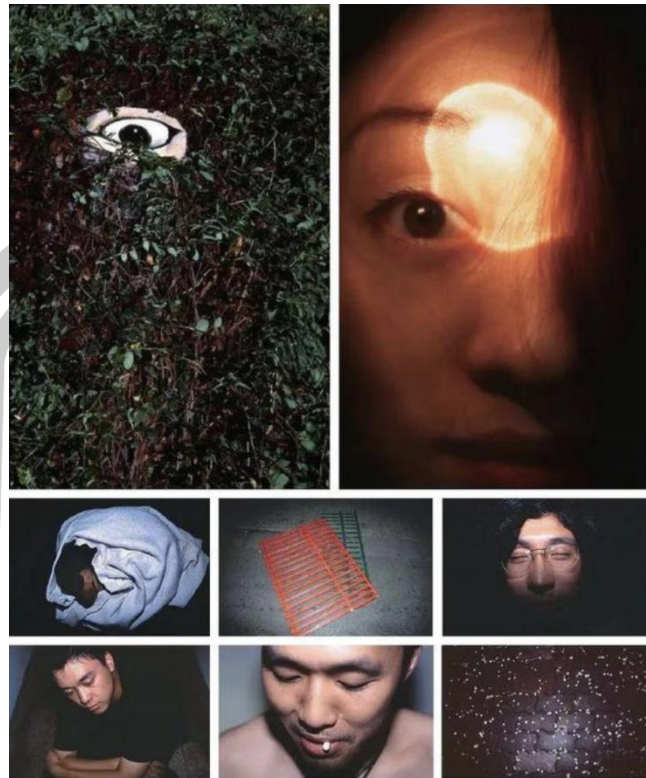


Figure 22 Two three times

Source: Dai Mouyu, 2005, the first Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 22 is Dai Mouyu's work, in his photographic narrative, the use of colour is particularly crucial. He uses flashy and bizarre hues to express the loneliness of young people in the city. These saturated colour blocks not only concisely and powerfully constitute the unique atmosphere of the city, but also profoundly convey the photographer's inner feelings about urban life. Especially in the clips taken at midnight and early morning, the city is depicted as a barren human landscape.

Tang Xiaoshuang's work "Self-Introduction" is an in-depth record of those moments in her personal history that she can never return to, such as small moments of excitement, joy and private desire. Photography was a serendipitous discovery for her, but soon became an expression of emotion and identity. Her work not only wows professional photographers, but also shows how women can explore and express themselves through the lens in an intimate space.

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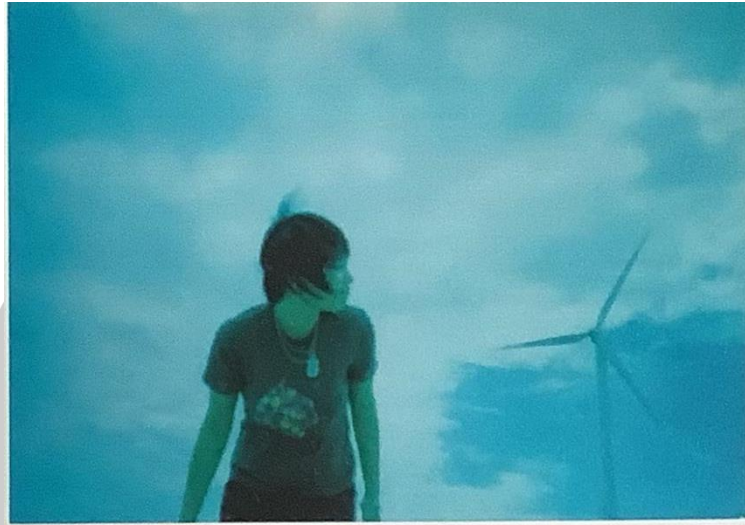


Figure 23 Self-introduction-1

Source: Tang Xiaoshuang, 2005, the first Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 23 is a self-timer of Tang Xiaoshuang, like Tang Xiaoshuang, many female photographers, such as Lei and Huang Ju, use photography to capture and express the subtle feelings in life. Figure 21 shows two of Tang Xiaoshuang's self-introduction series. They prefer to capture those fleeting emotions and details of life from an inward-looking perspective, rather than pursuing a broader exploration of the outside world. These photos become a form of self-talk, allowing these women to reveal their true selves in front of the camera, away from society's stereotypical expectations of female roles.

Gui Mei, the editor of *City Pictorial*, once said, "Their truest secret is themselves in their rooms." (Gui Mei, 2005) This statement profoundly reveals the essence of private photography - an emotional outpouring that comes directly from the heart. These works are not only a release of emotions, but also a declaration of women's self-identity and independence. In this visual space defined by themselves, female photographers reveal their self-confidence and complex layers of emotions, from anxiety to joy, all unreservedly revealed to the viewer.

Liu Yiqing's *Dirty Embryos* marks a breakthrough in Chinese photography, demonstrating the power and innovation of Cenozoic female photographers. Not only is this series of works known for its visual influence and bold expression, it is also presented in the *Selfish* exhibition as a gesture that challenges convention, particularly as a direct rebellion against male-dominated visual culture and a strong statement of female emancipation.

Liu Yiqing is adept at combining poetry and images to capture the free-spirited and indulgent emotions of young people, not only recording the moments of youth, but also gaining insight into the depth of emotions behind these moments. Her works have been exhibited at the Lianzhou Foto Festival several times, each time provoking the audience to think about youth culture and gender issues.

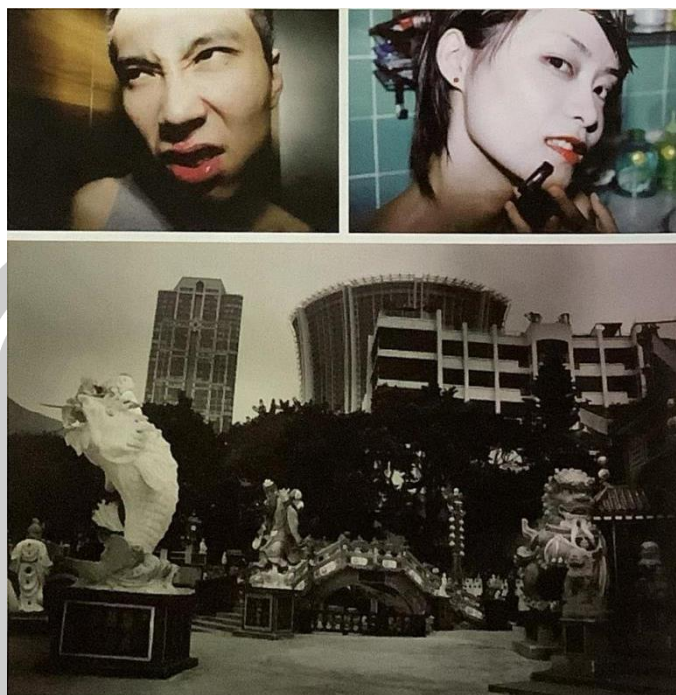


Figure 24 Qing Tou Yi-1

Source: Liu Yiqing, 2005, the Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 24 is part of the series of works *Qing Tou Yi*, Liu Yiqing's photographic style involves multiple dimensions. In the portrait on the left of Figure 24, a distorted expression is shown, expressing disgust or other strong emotions. The portrait on the right shows a woman applying makeup, exhibiting a state of self-decoration or self-awareness. The black and white urban landscape at the bottom, where traditional statues coexist with modern buildings, reflects the conflict and fusion of tradition and modernity in the process of modernization.

The visual language of her work is not just an object to be viewed, but a mapping of an inner world. In the context of private photography, this approach places special emphasis on women's feelings and emotions in intimate spaces that become sites of self-expression, where Liu Yiqing freely explores the relationship between the individual and society.

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Figure 25 Touch of Love

Source: Yao Songxin, 2005, the first Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 25 is one part of Yao Songxin's "Touch of Love" series, explores the function of photography as memory preservation by pointing the camera at her girlfriend. The series not only captures profound praise and empathy for a partner, but also serves as a channel for the photographer's emotional expression. Each photograph delicately records an emotional state interspersed with sadness, expressing a deep feeling and respect for the important other in life, while revealing through the lens the process of the photographer's emotional release.



Figure 26 Floating

Source: Su Hanguang, 2005, the first Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 26 is one part of Su Huanguang's Floating series, on the other hand, is an innovative experiment in form and theme. This series of works expresses the unique feeling of floating, instability and detachment from gravity that people got used to in the 70s and 80s. In the exhibition, Su Yukuang hangs these photos in mid-air, a display that not only intuitively conveys the concept of "levitation", but also resonates strongly with the theme on a visual and perceptual level, achieving a perfect unity of form and content. In addition, the photographs in the exhibition are differentiated according to their content, making full use of the form to enhance the expressive power of the content, and enabling the audience to experience and understand the multi-layered meaning of the works in a more in-depth manner.

2. Influence of Private Photography on Lianzhou Foto Festival

2.1 Enriching the artistic expression of the festival

2.1.1 Reciprocal Shooting - Dual Perspective

Private photography has enriched the artistic expression form of Lianzhou Foto Festival with its unique individual perspective and delicate emotional expression. In the 12th Lianzhou International Photography Exhibition in 2016, Chen Wenjun & Jiang Yanmei's work "Me and Me", a photobook co-created by Chen Wenjun and Jiang Yanmei, recorded their mutual photos and selfies taken over the past about seven years since they met in college. This is a rare form in photography exhibitions, where the works are not framed and hung on the wall one by one, but displayed together through a photography book and online platform. As a photographer and a couple, they show the development of their personal relationships with each other through the visual documentation of their daily lives.



Figure 27 Me and Me-1

Source: Chen Wenjun & Jiang Yanmei, 2016, the 12th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 27-30 is one part of Chen Wenjun & Jiang Yanmei's work "Me and Me" series. Figure 27 shows two people with their bodies close together, presenting a sense of intimacy. The person in front has their arms crossed to cover the private parts of their body, showing a protective or shy stance. The person in the back, on the other hand, is pressed up against the front, seemingly conveying a sense of support or dependence. The works contains a large number of photographs of each other. These images are not only a record of each other's living conditions, but also a process of constructing and understanding relationships with each other through the medium of photography.



Figure 28 Me and Me-2

Source: Chen Wenjun & Jiang Yanmei, 2016 the 12th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 28 this photograph successfully conveys the intimacy and emotional exchange between the two figures through clever composition and light treatment. Through delicate gestures and symbolic elements, the photographer explores the dependence, support, and contemplation of the future in an intimate relationship. A distinctive feature of Me and Me is the posting of private images on social media. This practice not only extends the dissemination of the work, but also makes photography a means of public interaction.



Figure 29 Me and Me-3

Source: Chen Wenjun & Jiang Yanmei, 2016, the 12th Lianzhou Foto Festival

In Figure 29, the figure's posture appears to be relaxed and natural, sitting on a stool, leaning slightly forward, holding a mobile phone, seemingly taking a selfie. This gesture gives a sense of casualness and self-absorption, demonstrating the everydayness and prevalence of the act of taking selfies in contemporary life. *Me and Me* is not only a work of photography, but also a part of life. The photographer closely combines art and life through the little records of daily life. The daily life scenes in the images, including eating, sleeping, working and relaxing, are the most realistic portrayal of life. This life-like artistic expression enables the audience to get closer to the photographer's life and feel the close connection between art and reality.



Figure 30 *Me and Me-4*

Source: Chen Wenjun & Jiang Yanmei, 2016, the 12th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 30 shows a female figure wearing a blue one-piece swimming costume in a sideways position facing the camera with her eyes slightly downward and an expression that appears calm and contemplative. *Me and Me* undergoes a process of transformation from the private to the public, a process that is reflected not only in the public presentation of the images, but also throughout the editing stage of the works. The pair of photographers chose a particular way of shooting - shooting each other. This approach not only breaks the traditional single perspective, but also demonstrates the complex and subtle relationship between the photographers through the dual lens perspective. Through this unique shooting technique, they not only recorded their respective inner worlds and emotional fluctuations, but also created a new way of artistic expression, further deepening the meaning and value of their work.

2.1.2 Virtual focussing

In the 10th Lianzhou Foto Festival 2014, Xu Yong's Portrait of Friends turns photography into a more subjective and emotional artistic practice through a unique form of artistic expression that breaks with traditional photography's pursuit of clarity and detail.

Figures 31-32 are part of Xu Yong's Portrait of a Friend series. The blur in the image can be interpreted as a metaphor for ambiguity, uncertainty, and the fluid nature of perception. In traditional photography, clarity and sharpness are often equated with truth and accuracy. However, Xu Yong's work suggests that reality is not always clear-cut and that the essence of a scene or subject might be better conveyed through abstraction and the removal of details.

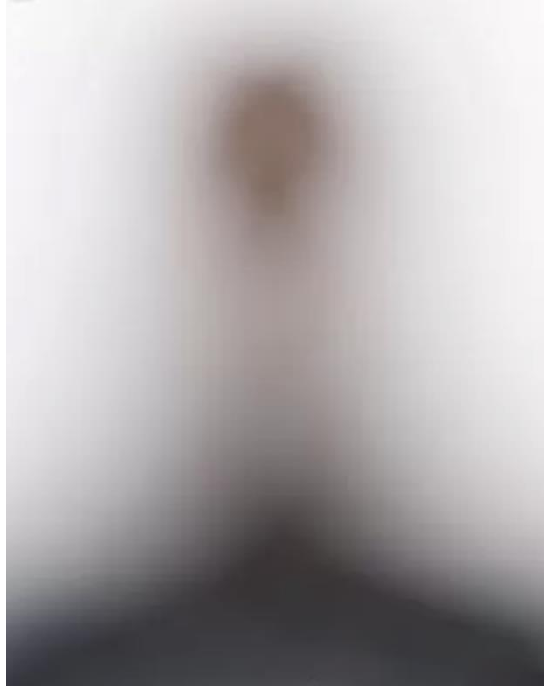


Figure 31 Portrait of Friends-1

Source: Xu Yong, 2014, in the 10th Lianzhou Foto Festival

This blurring photographic technique makes every photograph full of subjectivity and emotion. The specific features and details of the subjects are blurred out, leaving behind a hazy atmosphere and hints of emotion. This approach allows the viewer to focus more on the emotions and atmosphere conveyed by the photographs rather than the specific visual information. For example, in the series Portrait of a Friend, the specific appearance of the Friends becomes less important than the sense of intimacy and personal emotion created by the photograph.

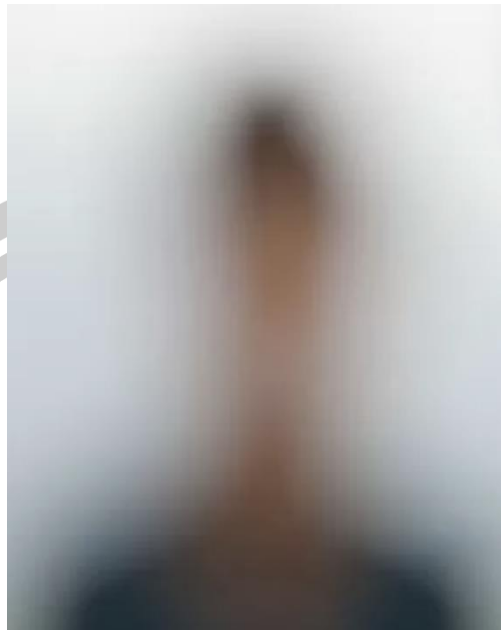


Figure 32 Portrait of Friends-2
Source: Xu Yong, 2014, in the 10th Lianzhou Foto Festival

This photographic approach of Xu Yong redefines the essence of photography. He no longer sees photography as a tool to record reality, but as a medium for subjective expression. This approach makes photography a freer art form, allowing the photographer to express personal emotions and perspectives by altering the technical means.

Xu Yong's Portrait of Friends creates a unique blurred photographic effect by altering the original design function of the camera. This form of artistic expression not only breaks the constraints of traditional photography in terms of clarity and detail, but also endows the photographs with a strong subjectivity and emotionality. In this way, Xu Yong redefines the essence of photography as a free and subjective artistic medium to express personal emotions and perspectives. The Portrait of Friends series is not only an artistic presentation of the emotional bond between friends, but also a bold exploration and innovation of the possibilities of photographic art.

2.1.3 Cross-media collaboration

In the 13th Lianzhou Foto Festival 2017, Yuki Naito's work "Mine, Yours, their ?" is a work that explores memory and self-knowledge through multiple forms of artistic expression. Using a variety of media, including projection, multimedia, and photographs, the work transitions from "me" to "us," inviting the viewer to participate in and reflect on this act of visual transformation. In "Mine, Yours, Theirs?" Naito abandons the usual means of expression and reproduces the process of generating memories in our subconscious, thus identifying the emotional colour of photography itself and its unconscious activation of memories. The following is a discussion of this work from the perspective of artistic expression.



Figure 34 Mine, Yours, their ?-2

Source: Yuki Naito, 2017, in the 13th Lianzhou Foto Festival

In the work, Naito combines drawings and notes with photographs, enriching the visual language and narrative techniques of the work. Drawings and notes, as handmade art forms, contrast sharply with the mechanical records of photographs. This contrast not only enhances the visual hierarchy of the work, but also makes it more personal and emotionally deep. Through this fusion, Naito has succeeded in combining the three art forms of photography, painting and writing, creating a new way of artistic expression.

Mine, Yours, their ? Through multimedia, projection, drawing and note taking, the work successfully reproduces the process of subconscious memory generation, and explores the uniqueness of photography as a memory carrier and activation tool. Through the transition from "I" to "we", the work invites the audience to participate in and reflect on this act of visual transformation, enhancing the emotional expression and artistic influence of the work. Through this unique way of artistic expression, Yuki Naito not only brought the audience a new visual experience, but also prompted them to think and explore deeply about memory, emotion and self-knowledge.

2.2 Enhanced cultural diversity of the festival

The introduction of private photography has significantly enhanced the cultural diversity of Lianzhou Foto Festival. By showcasing private photography from different cultural backgrounds and social environments, the festival is able to present a more comprehensive picture of lifestyles and cultural differences across the globe. This not only helps audiences to better understand and appreciate different cultures, but also promotes cross-cultural exchange and integration.

2.2.1 The daily life of a female photographer from Japan

In the 6th Lianzhou Foto Festival 2010, Renko Kawauchi's work CUI CUI is not only a collection of photographs, but also a delicate depiction of family life and a vivid presentation of cultural diversity. By documenting thirteen years of the Kawauchi family's life, this work shows the subtle relationship between individuals and families, tradition and modernity through a unique perspective and approach.

Figures 35-38 are excerpts from the work CUI CUI by Rinko Kawauchi. Renko Kawauchi's photographs are often dominated by soft light and natural tones, creating a serene, warm atmosphere. The light and shadows in the photos intertwine to give the images a soft texture, showing her attention and sensitivity to the smallest things in daily life.

CUI CUI records the life of Renko Kawauchi's family. The people and objects in the photographs, as well as natural elements such as flowers, trees and the sky, reflect her thoughts on family and the cycle of life.

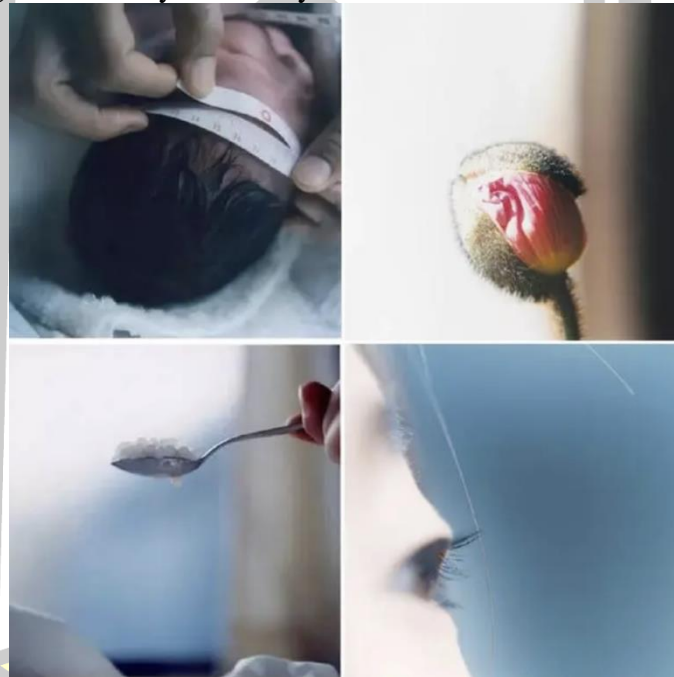


Figure 35 CUI CUI-1

Source: Renko Kawauchi, 2010, in the 6th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Renko Kawauchi's work is deeply rooted in her family and cultural background. CUI CUI records her family's daily life, demonstrating the warmth and delicacy unique to Japanese families. The light, watery style of the works not only reflects Kawauchi's personal aesthetics, but also the spirit of Japanese culture, which is "the sadness of things". Through these images, the viewer can feel the importance of details and moments in Japanese culture, a cultural value that demonstrates the unique charm and depth of Japanese culture in the context of globalisation.



Figure 36 CUI CUI-2

Source: Renko Kawauchi, 2010, in the 6th Lianzhou Foto Festival

The images in CUI CUI are not only a record of Renko Kawauchi's personal life, but also a cultural expression of the family as a collective. Through the lens, Renko Kawauchi captures the daily interactions and emotional changes of her family members, and these images contain both the private feelings of individuals and the presentation of the family's collective memory. This private way of recording makes the work intensely personal and at the same time reflects the diversity of the collective culture.

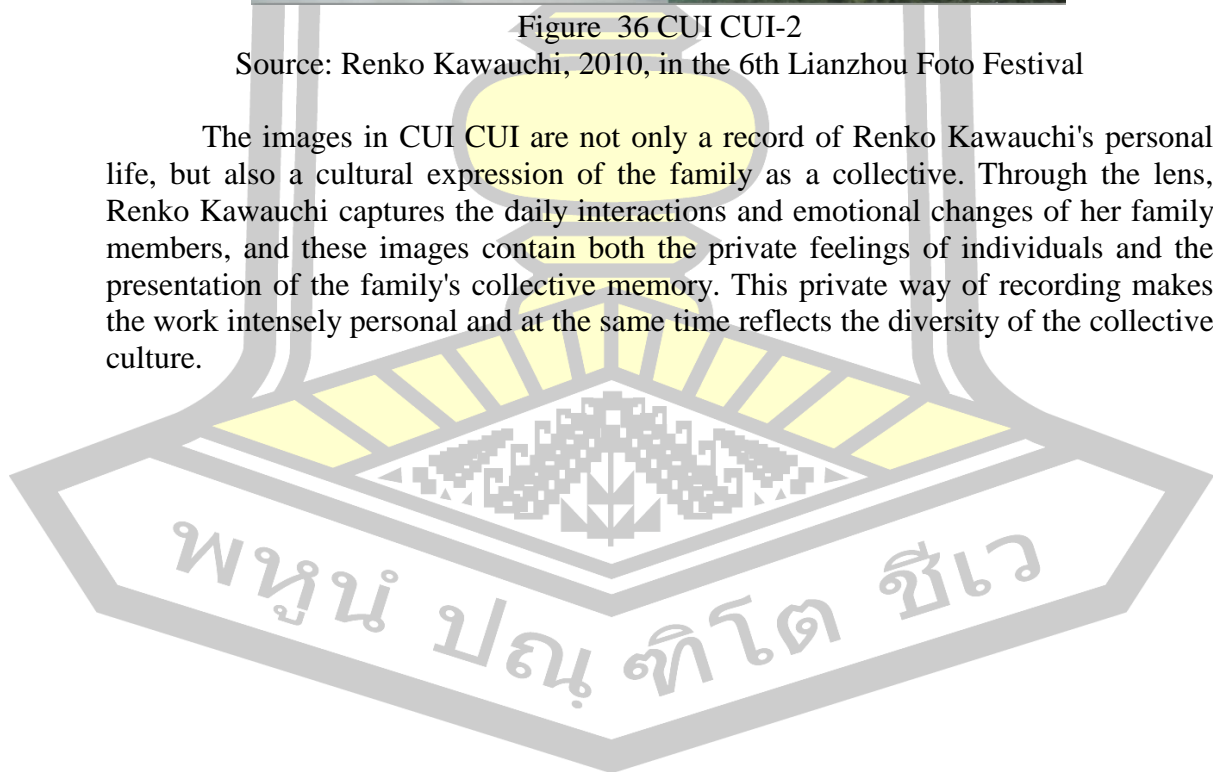




Figure 37 CUI CUI-3

Source: Renko Kawauchi, 2010, in the 6th Lianzhou Foto Festival

CUI CUI demonstrates how Renko Kawauchi maintains her identification with her local culture through photography while resonating with a global audience. She uses many universal and common elements in her work, such as family, kinship and daily life, which transcend cultural and national boundaries, making her work widely recognised and loved globally. This expression of cultural identity not only strengthens the position of Japanese culture in the context of globalisation, but also promotes communication and understanding between different cultures.





Figure 38 CUI CUI-4

Source: Renko Kawauchi, 2010, in the 6th Lianzhou Foto Festival

CUI CUI shows how Renko Kawauchi blends diversity with universality through photography. She records moments in her family's life, and these seemingly ordinary moments become poetic and philosophical through her lens. Through her attention to detail and deep understanding of life, Renko Kawauchi combines unique elements of Japanese culture with universal human emotions, resulting in works that are both locally specific and globally orientated. This fusion not only enriches the connotation of the works, but also enhances their artistic value and cultural influence.

Renko Kawauchi's CUI CUI demonstrates the diversity and depth of Japanese culture through her delicate documentation of family life and unique photographic style. Each frame of the images in the work is both a faithful record of personal life and a profound expression of cultural values. In this way, Renko Kawauchi not only provides viewers with a unique visual experience, but also promotes communication and understanding between different cultures, demonstrating the importance of cultural diversity in the creation of contemporary art.

2.2.2 Multi-country daily photography curated by a curator from Hungary

In 2010, the 6th Lianzhou Foto Festival featured the 1DAY1PHOTO project, an international interactive photography programme initiated by Hungarian curator Tibor Várnagy at the end of 2006. Using an online platform, the project invites photographers from China, the United States and Hungary to take and upload photographs every day, showing their daily lives in different cultural contexts. The

project not only showcases the diversity of photographic art, but also explores artistic expression and understanding from different geographical, cultural and personal perspectives through multicultural interactions.



Figure 39 1DAY1PHOTO-1

Source: Tibor Várnagy , 2010, in the 6th Lianzhou Foto Festival

In the 1DAY1PHOTO project, most of the photos taken and uploaded by the photographers every day are fragments of their daily lives. These photos may seem mundane, but they give new meaning to daily life through an artistic perspective. For example, Lei BenBen's photos often capture moments on the streets of Beijing, displaying an oriental mood and serene beauty; while Eniko Hangay shows the fast pace of the city and the intersection of multiple cultures through the details of her life in New York.

The use of this online platform breaks the limitations of traditional exhibition formats, allowing for wider dissemination and exchange of artworks. Viewers can not only enjoy the works anytime and anywhere through the internet, but also communicate with the photographers through comments and interaction. This interactivity enhances the sense of participation and experience of the project, making the viewer not only a passive recipient, but also an active participant and interactor.

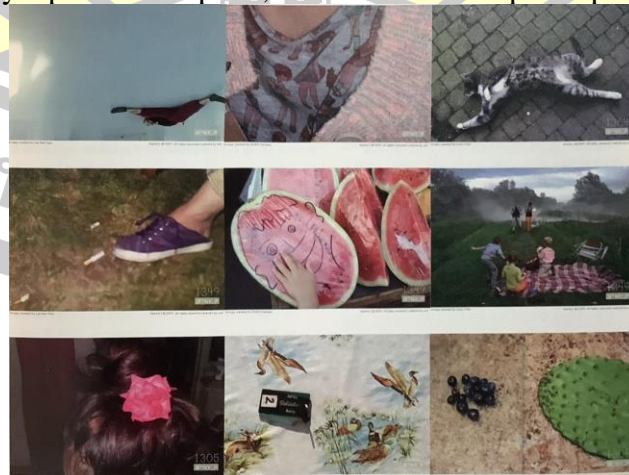


Figure 40 1DAY1PHOTO-2

The immediacy and portability of mobile phone photography allows for more rapid dissemination and sharing of photographic works. The photographers in the project transform moments in their lives into works of art through mobile phone photography. This immediacy of recording and sharing makes the photography work closer to life and enhances the authenticity and intimacy of the work. In the future, with the development of technology, the forms of photography and artistic expression will become more diverse and rich.

The 1DAY1PHOTO project showcases daily life in different countries and cultures through artistic collisions in a multicultural context, creating a global emotional resonance. The interactivity and immediacy of the online platform makes the project full of vigour and dynamism. Through the artistic expression of daily life, the project not only demonstrates the diversity of photographic art, but also explores the future forms of photography. This cross-cultural emotional resonance and exploration of the future makes the 1DAY1PHOTO project of significant artistic value and social significance on a global scale.

2.2.3 Life in Greenland captured by a photographer from Denmark

In the 11th Lianzhou Foto Festival 2015, Jacob Aue Sobol's photographic work Sabine demonstrates cultural diversity, revealing the unique humanities and lifestyles of different cultures through a delicate depiction of life in Greenland. The following is a discussion of the work 'Sabine' from the perspective of cultural diversity.

Figures 41-44 are part of the Sabine series, Sabine was shot in Greenland, a place with a social structure and way of life that is very different from the mainstream Western culture, and Sobol records the local fishing and hunting life through his camera, showing the primitive and real life condition in Greenland. This way of life not only reflects the survival skills and habits of the local people, but also reveals their close relationship with the natural environment, Sobol uses photography as a universal visual language to bring the daily life of this particular culture to a global audience, so that people from different cultures can understand and appreciate this unique culture.



Figure 41 Sabine-1

Source: Jacob Aue Sobol , 2015, in the 11th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 41 shows the hunter grasping the head of the polar bear he is hunting, such an image is very impactful and gives the viewer a blunt sense of the cultural differences around the world.



Figure 42 Sabine-2

Source: Jacob Aue Sobol , 2015, in the 11th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 42 shows the snowy mountain below, where a funeral is being held and the villagers go together to mourn, with the priest holding a huge cross in his hand as he prays. Sobol lived in Greenland for three years, an experience that enabled him to deeply understand the local culture and express his adaptation and identification with it through his photographs. In the process of shooting "Sabine", Sobol is not only an observer, but also a participant. He lives with the locals and experiences their daily activities, which makes his work highly authentic and relatable. Through this process of acculturation, Sobol demonstrates his identification with Greenlandic culture in his work and conveys a sense of respect and appreciation for cultural diversity.



Figure 43 Sabine-3

Source: Jacob Aue Sobol , 2015, in the 11th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 43 shows a penguin carcass, which is a very difficult image for people far from the Arctic. Through the exhibition of Sabine, the Lianzhou Foto Festival provides a platform for photographers and audiences from different cultural backgrounds to interact with each other, and Sobol's work not only showcases the cultural characteristics of Greenland, but also promotes understanding and empathy between different cultures through the universal art form of photography.



Figure 44 Sabine-4

Source: Jacob Aue Sobol , 2015, in the 11th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 44 is a rare and cosy looking image of Sabine's back, with her greasy hair, and a very ethnic floral cloth door curtain in the background. Sabine, as an important work of Jacob Aue Sobol, embodies cultural diversity by showing the life and culture of Greenland. The ambivalence of intimacy and alienation in the work, the process of cultural adaptation and identification, and the unique visual style of black and white photography make 'Sabine' profoundly significant in terms of cultural expression. Through the exhibition of Lianzhou Foto Festival, this work not only promotes the exchange and resonance between different cultures, but also further strengthens the audience's understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity.

2.2.4 Swedish photographer living in France for 20 years

In the 8th Lianzhou Foto Festival 2012, JH Engström, a photographer from Sweden, who has been living in Paris for 20 years, brought his work "Sketches of Paris". JH Engström's work Sketches is a complex and rich collection of photographs documenting his experiences during more than twenty years of living and working in Paris. Through this body of work, Engström demonstrates a unique personal perspective and an in-depth exploration of his own identity.



Figure 45 Sketches-1

Source: JH Engström ,2012, the 8th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figures 45-49 are part of a series of Paris Sketches, which includes many more selfies and pictures of him and his girlfriend. Figures 45 and 47 are his selfies, and Figures 46 and 49 are pictures of him with his girlfriend. Engström's 'Sketches' captures his interactions with his surroundings through the lens of his camera, revealing his unique perspective and feelings about the city of Paris. Each photograph is a reflection of his personal experiences and emotions, and Engström's personal perspective not only reveals his keen observation of the details of life, but also his deeper thoughts about his own emotions and identity.



Figure 46 Sketches-2

Source: JH Engström ,2012, the 8th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Through a wide range of self-portraits, portraits of lovers, friends and strangers, Engström reveals his emotional state in a variety of situations, from intimacy to loneliness, from joy to sadness.



Figure 47 Sketches-3

Source: JH Engström ,2012, the 8th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Sketches is not only a record of Engström's life experiences, but also an in-depth exploration of his identity. The works reflect Engström's constant search for and confirmation of his identity and the meaning of his existence at different stages of his life. Through private photography, Engström shows details and intimate moments from his daily life, images that reveal his personal inner world and emotional experiences.



Figure 48 Sketches-4

Source: JH Engström ,2012, the 8th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 48: This black-and-white photograph captures a moment that feels candid and intimate, showing two women in what appears to be a casual or relaxed setting, possibly at a social gathering or a private moment. The composition uses

strong contrasts between light and shadow, highlighting the textures of the women's clothing and the surrounding environment.

Although Sketches is predominantly personal, it also deals with the urban landscape and social environment of Paris, offering a unique observation and interpretation of the city. Engström's photographs are filled with interactions with loved ones, friends, and strangers, and these images demonstrate his network of relationships and his role in different relationships. By documenting these interactions, the work reveals his place and role in society, as well as his observations and understanding of the world around him.



Figure 49 Sketches-5

Source: JH Engström ,2012, the 8th Lianzhou Foto Festival

This social observation not only enriches the content of the work, but also enhances the depth and breadth of the work. Engström explores wider social and cultural issues while documenting his personal experiences, and through these images, the viewer is able to see how he constructs and affirms his own identity in different social contexts.

JH Engström's Sketches is a multi-layered photographic work that showcases his experiences during the twenty years he has lived and worked in Paris through a uniquely personal perspective and an in-depth exploration of his own identity. Each photograph in the work is not only a reflection of his personal experiences and emotions, but also reveals a deeper reflection on his identity and social relationships. Through these images, Engström shows how he searches for and affirms his identity in different social and cultural contexts, providing the viewer with a window of understanding and empathy.

2.3 Enhanced the social influence of the photography festival

Lianzhou Foto Festival invites many internationally acclaimed private photographs to exhibit, whose authors not only have extensive influence in the photography industry, but have also won several international awards. Their works cross geographical and cultural boundaries, reflecting the diversity and complexity of private photography in the context of globalisation. This initiative of Lianzhou Foto Festival not only presents the audience with a rich and colourful art form of private photography, but also promotes the exchange and collision of Chinese and foreign photographic art, further consolidating the important position of Lianzhou Foto Festival in the international photography community.

2.3.1 Child prodigy photographer Jacques-Henri Lartigue

In his camera, people are always flying: child prodigy photographer Jacques-Henri Lartigue. This is what Vicki Goldberg, a leading figure in Western photographic criticism, said of Lartigue.

In 2014, Lianzhou Foto Festival introduced "Lartigue in the Outdoors", an exhibition of works by Jacques Henri Lartigue, a master photographer known as "Mozart in the photography world". This exhibition not only demonstrates Lartigue's unique skills in capturing moments and visual art, but also brings higher international attention and social influence to the Lianzhou Foto Festival.



Figure 50 Lartigue outdoors-2

Source: Lartigue, 2014, the 10th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figures 50 and 53 are part of a series of works in which Lartigue is obsessed with fleeting moments and cannot bear to see time pass by. The cat leaps; the unsuspecting man sprints down a hill; the challenge of weightlessness: throwing a ball, sliding down a flight of stairs, jumping off a wall. He freezes those fleeting moments into eternity: the cat takes to the air; a runaway glider leaves the ground; a woman in a long dress runs on the beach, her veil and coat dancing in the wind. Lartigue enjoys this magical moment when photography departs from the laws of gravity.



Figure 51 Lartigue outdoors-3

Source: Lartigue, 2014, the 10th Lianzhou Foto Festival

In this photograph, the subject, dressed formally in a suit, hat, and sunglasses, is humorously juxtaposed against the setting of water and an inner tube, creating a surreal and slightly absurd scene. The formality of the attire contrasts sharply with the casual and somewhat incongruous setting, making the image both intriguing and playful.

The water's texture is captured beautifully, with ripples reflecting light, enhancing the visual appeal of the photograph. The inner tube, traditionally associated with relaxation and fun, contrasts with the serious demeanor of the subject, adding to the humor and irony of the image.



Figure 52 Lartigue outdoors-4

Source: Lartigue, 2014, the 10th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 52 captures a woman mid-jump on a tennis court, her racket swinging ready to hit the ball. The timing of the shot is impeccable, framing the action at the perfect moment when her body is suspended in mid-air, creating a sense of energy and movement.



Figure 53 Lartigue outdoors-5

Source: Lartigue, 2014, the 10th Lianzhou Foto Festival

The success of the exhibition "Lartigue in the Outdoors" not only enriched the cultural life of Lianzhou citizens, but also enhanced their cultural literacy. By visiting the exhibition, the public not only appreciated the high level of photographic art, but also gained a deeper understanding and consciousness of photography as an art form. This cultural inculcation enhances the public's cultural self-confidence and sense of identity with local culture.

2.3.2 Heba Khalifa's "Home Made" - AFAC's Arab Documentary Photography Programme

Heba Khalifa's "Home Made" produced through AFAC's Arab Documentary Photography programme, in collaboration with the Magnum Foundation and the Prince Claus Foundation.

In the 13th Lianzhou Foto Festival 2017, the work Home Made through a series of photographs that tell the personal stories of Egyptian women, the work explores issues of body image, gender inequality, domestic violence, parenting, and abortion in a poignant visual narrative. Working with anonymous women in a closed Facebook group, KHALIFA uses the practice of photography to express their struggles, fears, and dreams, creating a strong social influence and sparking a wide-ranging discussion about female identity issues.



Figure 54 Home Made-1

Source: Heba Khalifa, 2017, the 13th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figures 54-57 are images from the Home Made series, and Figure 54 shows a single mother. She and her daughter are one in the same, in a sort of acrobatic performance, which is the job of this mother, who works six days a week, travelling around and performing acrobatics so that she can provide a shelter for my daughter. Home Through the visual art form, the work shows the real situation of women in the family and society, and inspires the audience to pay attention to and think about women's issues. Khalifa gives the public a clearer view of the various challenges facing women in Egypt and elsewhere. Issues such as single mothers and prostitutes resonated with the audience and sparked discussion.



Figure 55 Home Made-2

Source: Heba Khalifa, 2017, the 13th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 55 shows a dark-skinned girl with a giant raven on her head, who has suffered from severe headaches since the age of seven, and whose classmates ostracise dark-skinned intruders who think differently. In a heartfelt and influential way, this work has brought greater awareness to these issues, prompting society to pay more attention to the protection of women's rights and gender equality.



Figure 56 Home Made-3

Source: Heba Khalifa, 2017, the 13th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 56 shows a teenage girl who has been subjected to domestic violence and whose father will always call her a bitch and beat her under the guise of doing what is best for her. The red handprints on her face are a metaphor for violence. Home Made expresses the difficulties faced by women in Egypt, and through co-operation and sharing, women are emotionally liberated and healed in the process of telling their own stories. This self-expression and healing through art-making not only strengthens women's self-confidence, but also encourages more women to bravely face and overcome difficulties in life.



Figure 57 Home Made-4

Source: Heba Khalifa, 2017, the 13th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 57 shows a woman with grey hair lying on a canvas with the womb of a woman carrying a foetus, a woman who has never had a child in her life due to infertility, but who is known as the "Mother of the Foetus". Home Made, a web-based project initiated from FACEbook, was awarded AFAC's Arab Documentary Photography Programme Production in 2016, in collaboration with the Magnum Foundation and the Prince Claus Foundation. And it was exhibited at the 13th

Lianzhou Foto Festival in 2017, winning the Photographer of the Year award for that year. The work expands public attention and discussion of women's issues, but also provides insight into the plight of women by showing their real-life experiences and inner strength.

2.3.3 Louis Quail's work "Old Brother"

Louis Quail's work 'Old Brother' documenting his brother's struggle with schizophrenia has received critical acclaim and has been shortlisted: Wellcome Prize for Photography 2019, 2018 Arles Book and Text Prize, 2018 Lianzhou Foto Festival - Photographer of the Year Award, and winner of the 2017 Renaissance Photography Award Series.

In the 14th Lianzhou Foto Festival in 2018, Louis Quail's work "Old Brother" is a private photographic work depicting Louis' brother Justin's struggle with schizophrenia. It shows his life from different perspectives; at the heart of this piece is a love story and a project that values and calls attention to the mental health crisis.

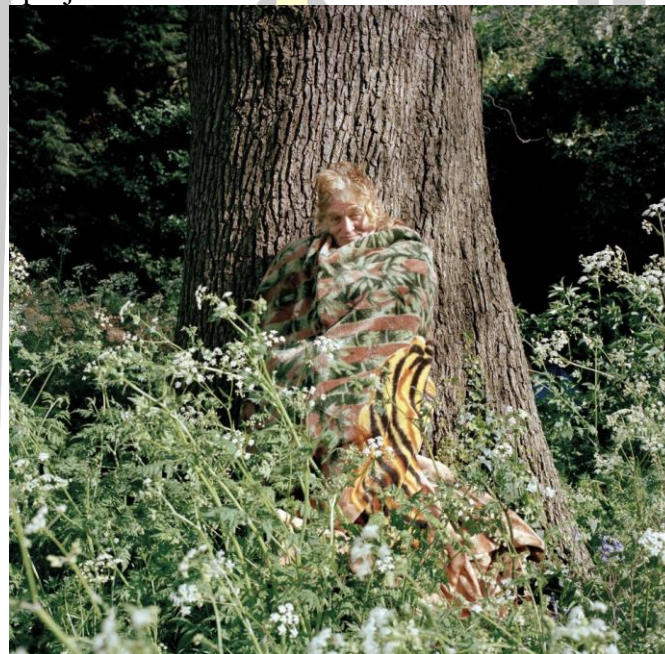


Figure 58 Old Brother -1

Source: Patricia Lay-Dorsey, 2018, the 14th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figures 58-62 are all from the Old Brother. Figure 58 shows Justin wrapped in a blanket leaning against a large tree, his hair is very dishevelled but he has a little smile on his face. The half-human-high grass shows his isolation from the outside world, and at the same time gives the viewer a sense of his efforts to find a moment of peace in the natural environment. Louis Quail's 'Old Brother' documents his brother's life with mental illness 'Old Brother' is the private photo of Louis Quail's brother, Justin, documenting his daily struggle with schizophrenia. Justin's condition was so severe that he was forcibly hospitalised three times in his life. However, as the book shows, he had a lot of other things going for him besides his illness. He had interests, hobbies (painting, poetry, and especially bird watching). He also has love; he has been with his girlfriend Jackie for over 20 years.



Figure 59 Old Brother -2

Source: Patricia Lay-Dorsey ,2018, the 14th Lianzhou Foto Festival

In Figure 59, Jackie, Justin's girlfriend, sits on the edge of the bed with her hand gently caressing Justin, who is lying on the floor. This emotionally charged image shows the love and care that Jackie has shown Justin, and how despite the chaos and challenges of their lives, the emotional connection between them remains deep.



Figure 60 Old Brother -3

Source: Patricia Lay-Dorsey ,2018, the 14th Lianzhou Foto Festival

In Figure60, Justin sits in a scene of an outdoor activity, his hair is dishevelled, his expression is dull and he seems to be isolated from the crowd around him. This scene highlights his isolation in society, even when he is in public he is still in a lonely situation.



Figure 61 Old Brother -4




Source: Patricia Lay-Dorsey ,2018, the 14th Lianzhou Foto Festival

In Figure 61, Sting and Jackie are sitting under a tree, kissing each other. This heartwarming moment demonstrates the love they have for each other and the comfort and support they find in each other even in the face of great challenges.

Louise Quayle's *The Old Brothers* explores the devastating influence of schizophrenia on individuals and their families, whilst also demonstrating the preciousness of Justin and Jackie's love story, which became central to the project's narrative.

By sharing Justin's story throughout the series, viewers can better understand and empathise with what he is going through. Inevitably, it also draws attention to the mental health crisis.

The Lianzhou Foto Festival has greatly enhanced its social influence by inviting private photographs that are renowned in the international photographic community to exhibit. The festival focuses on exhibiting folk photography with a global perspective, which not only demonstrates the diversity and complexity of this art form, but also promotes Chinese and foreign cultural exchanges.

Time	Develop	concrete example
The 1910s	Because of the advent of the Brownie camera introduced by Kodak, the general public was able to record their lives with ease.	 <p>Lartigue got the first camera of his life at the age of seven, and he went about taking pictures as if he were keeping track of days</p>
The 1950s, 1960s	Breaking the shackles of the decisive moment	 <p>Robert Frank's 'The Americans' not only visually challenged the photographic traditions of the time, but also broke with the optimistic narrative of the social mainstream in terms of content, and Frank blazed new trails for photography</p>
The 1970s, 1980s	Influenced by Western postmodernism, private photography became popular	 <p>In the 1970s and 1980s, private photography grew in popularity as a genre of photography, represented by Nan Goldin and Nobuyoshi Araki. Nan Goldin is known for his visual recordings</p>



		of the lives of his close friends and self
Early2000	Beginning to spread to China, the Chinese media ‘City Pictorial’ propaganda private photography	 <p>In the 16th issue of City Pictorial in 2004, photography and private life were linked together in the form of a special feature, "Photography Private Life".</p>
2005-2019	Naming Ceremony for Private Photography in China “私摄影”	 <p>In the first Lianzhou Foto Festival in 2005, Zeng Han curated "Self-Private - Cenozoic Photography Group Exhibition", in which the works of 11 young photographers were displayed. This exhibition marked an important moment for private photography in China and can be seen as its naming ceremony. (Gu Zheng, 2006).</p>

Table 7The Development of Private Photography



Source: Statistics by Yao Qiong, 2024

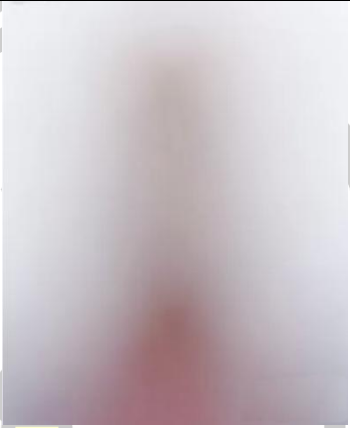


Through the comprehensive use of literature analysis, this study delves into the development of private photography. By systematically combing and analysing relevant literature, we reveal the evolution of private photography from its origins to contemporary times.


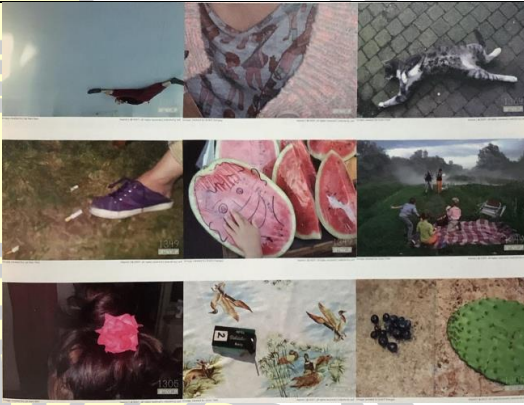
Through these initiatives, the Lianzhou Foto Festival has consolidated its important position in the international photography community and contributed to the dialogue on important social issues around the globe.



Figure 62 Lianzhou Foto Festival Field Trip
Source: 2018, Photo by Wang Ruoming

Sphere of influence	Description	concrete example
Artistic expression	Private photography has enriched the art forms and expressions of the Lianzhou Foto Festival	 <p>Chen Wenjun and Jiang Yanmei co-created the photo book 'Me and I' in the form of a duo taking photos of each other.</p>
		 <p>In the 13th Lianzhou Foto Festival 2017,</p>

		Yuki Naito's work "Mine, Yours, their ?" is a work that explores memory and self-knowledge through multiple forms of artistic expression.
		 <p>At the 10th Lianzhou Foto Festival in 2014, Xu Yong's Portrait of a Friend breaks away from traditional photography's pursuit of clarity and detail, making photography a more subjective and sensual artistic practice</p>
Cultural exchange	Promote integration of Chinese and foreign photographic culture	 <p>Jacob Aue Sobol's photographic work 'Sabine' demonstrates cultural diversity and reveals the unique humanity and lifestyles of different cultures through a delicate portrayal of life in Greenland.</p>
		 <p>Swedish photographer JH Engström, who has been living in Paris for 20</p>

		<p>years, brings his work ‘Paris Sketches’ . It documents his experience of living and working in Paris for more than twenty years.</p>
		 <p>Renko Kawauchi's work ‘Tsui Tsui’ chronicles thirteen years of the Kawauchi family's life, bringing to life Japan's unique culture of ‘object sorrow’ .</p>
		 <p>Launched by Hungarian curator Tibor Várnagy at the end of 2006, 1DAY1PHOTO is an international interactive photography project that uses an online platform to invite photographers from China, the United States, and Hungary to take and upload photographs every day of their daily lives in different cultures.</p>




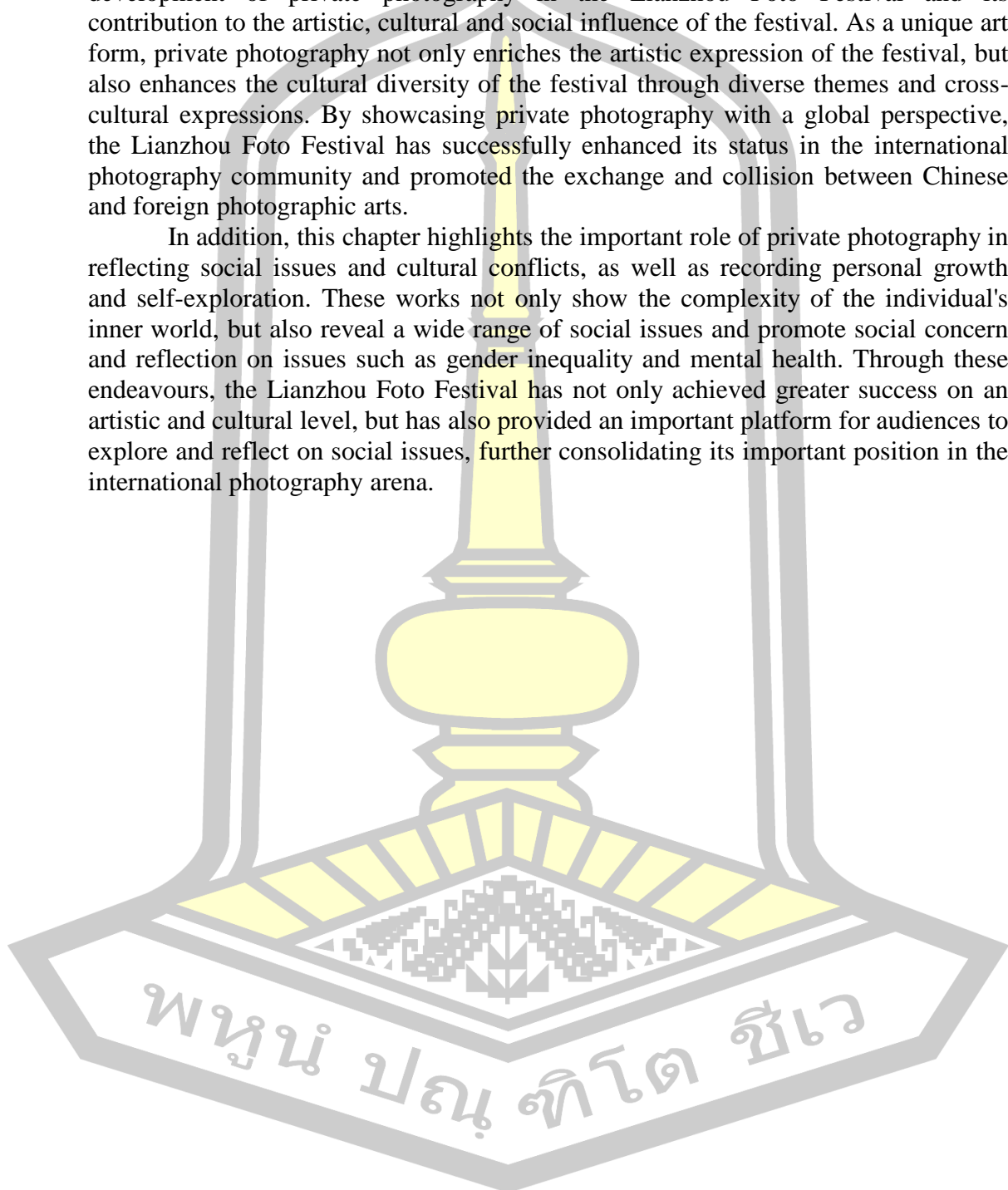
international influence	Exhibiting world-renowned works to enhance international influence	 <p>‘Lartigue Outdoors’ by Lartigue, known as the “Mozart” of photography festivals.</p>
		 <p>Heba Khalifa's "Home Made" produced through AFAC's Arab Documentary Photography programme, in collaboration with the Magnum Foundation and the Prince Claus Foundation.</p>
		 <p>Louis Quail's work 'Old Brother' documenting his brother's struggle with schizophrenia has received critical acclaim and has been shortlisted: Wellcome Prize for Photography 2019, 2018 Arles Book and Text Prize, 2018 Lianzhou Foto Festival - Photographer of the Year Award, and winner of the 2017 Renaissance Photography Award Series.</p>

Table 8 The influence of Private Photography in Lianzhou Foto Festival
Source: Statistics by Yao Qiong, 2024

3.Summary of this chapter

This chapter firstly introduces the introduction of private photography in China, and then, through detailed analysis and discussion, clearly points out the development of private photography in the Lianzhou Foto Festival and its contribution to the artistic, cultural and social influence of the festival. As a unique art form, private photography not only enriches the artistic expression of the festival, but also enhances the cultural diversity of the festival through diverse themes and cross-cultural expressions. By showcasing private photography with a global perspective, the Lianzhou Foto Festival has successfully enhanced its status in the international photography community and promoted the exchange and collision between Chinese and foreign photographic arts.

In addition, this chapter highlights the important role of private photography in reflecting social issues and cultural conflicts, as well as recording personal growth and self-exploration. These works not only show the complexity of the individual's inner world, but also reveal a wide range of social issues and promote social concern and reflection on issues such as gender inequality and mental health. Through these endeavours, the Lianzhou Foto Festival has not only achieved greater success on an artistic and cultural level, but has also provided an important platform for audiences to explore and reflect on social issues, further consolidating its important position in the international photography arena.



Chapter IV

Photographic Narrative in Private Photography

Introduction

Over the decades, photographic narratives have undergone significant changes in response to technological advances. Since its invention in 1839, photographic technology has evolved from silverplate photography, which required long exposures and was primarily used for still life and portraits, to digital photography, which allows for instantaneous capture and real-time sharing, and photography has become more relevant to everyday life as a tool for personal narrative. This chapter aims to explore the visual elements, narrative structures, and artistic expressions of private photographic narratives.

The development of photographic technology greatly expanded the scope and expression of photography. These advances have enabled photographers to move away from traditional narrative structures and adopt non-linear narratives to reflect the complexities of modern life. For example, the use of flashbacks, insertions and parallel narratives in private photography allows for the formation of multi-layered narrative networks that encourage the active participation of the viewer in the construction of the story.

In addition to temporal structure, the spatial dimension of the photographic narrative is crucial. The utilisation of space can be through private, closed scenes; it can also be through open, expansive scenes. This application of spatial structure in narrative enables private photography to express one's inner experience while increasing the complexity and multiplicity of the work, allowing the viewer to gain a deeper emotional experience while viewing.

This chapter also delves into the role of visual elements such as colour, composition, light and shadow in the narrative of private photography. For example, the use of black and white tones allows for the elimination of distractions and focuses attention on form, expression, and the interplay of light and shadow. Conversely, the use of vibrant colours can enhance visual appeal and narrative depth.

Symbolism and collage are key techniques that emerged during the development of private photography. Symbolic Expressionism transforms ordinary objects into symbols of deep emotional or psychological states, using visual metaphors to convey complex ideas and emotions. Collage, on the other hand, breaks the linear narrative by disassembling and reassembling visual elements, creating a multi-layered narrative structure that reflects the fragmented nature of modern existence.

In short, private photography has evolved into a complex medium for telling personal stories, capable of expressing complex emotions and psychological states. Narrative structures, visual elements, and innovations in art forms such as symbolic expressionism and collage have expanded the realm of what private photography can achieve.

1. Photography as Both a Tool for Recording and Expressing

Photography, as a unique medium, has the unique ability to tell personal stories and express self-consciousness through the narrative structure of images. In *The Bright Room*, Roland Barthes proposed the concept of punctum, which refers to those visual elements that can trigger a strong emotional response from the viewer. These punctums often originate from the most intimate and personal details of a photograph, and are able to penetrate the viewer's psychological defences and inspire deep emotional resonance. Barthes' viewpoint reveals the uniqueness of photography as a narrative tool: it is not only a reproduction of reality, but also a powerful means for photographers to express their inner world and self-consciousness through visual elements.

Susan Sontag further expands on this idea in *On Photography*, where she explores the multiple functions of photography as a cultural symbol, emphasising its ability to transcend its function as a simple record and become an important tool for communicating ideas, consciousness and personal identity. Through photographic narratives, works can acquire deeper meanings. Through the coherence and visual language of images, photographers weave personal stories that reflect their inner world and life experiences. Sontag points out that photography is not only a means of capturing moments, but also a way for photographers to express their self-existence and understanding of the world in a specific socio-cultural context.

In this context, photography is not only a tool for recording reality, but also an art form. Through the selection of images, composition and the use of visual elements, photographers are able to convey complex narrative content and emotional expression in still images. Photography, as an art of narrative and memory, records moments in the external world and also deeply reflects the inner psychology and emotional experience of the photographer. Specific photographs and artists, such as Cindy Sherman and Nan Goldin, have vividly demonstrated through their photographs how photographic narratives can be used to express self-consciousness and personal memory. This expression of self-consciousness through visual narrative makes photography a powerful tool for self-expression that can create a deep emotional connection between the individual and the viewer.

1.1 Photography: The Art of Narrative and Memory

Photography plays an important role in narrative and preservation of memory, both as a medium of expression and as a recording tool. According to Roland Barthes, any process of information transmission contains a narrative, and photography has its own unique form of narrative. Unlike textual narratives, photographic narratives are direct and immediate, capturing moments and conveying meaning without the need for accompanying text. Barthes' analysis of narrative structure emphasises how photography encapsulates and communicates complex stories and emotions through its instantaneous nature.

John Berger's exploration of photographic narrative in *Another Way of Telling* delves into the unique nature of photography as opposed to traditional literary narrative. Berger argues that photography is divorced from textual interpretation and essentially generates meaning, providing an alternative method of storytelling. This perspective emphasises the power of photography to create narratives through visual

elements, highlighting how the medium can evoke memories and emotions by capturing fleeting moments and transforming them into lasting memories.

In contemporary society, photography has become an integral part of creating, preserving and sharing memories. The proliferation of images in everyday life through a variety of media and platforms highlights the growing importance of visual narratives in the digital age. As images increasingly permeate all aspects of human culture, the narrative function of photography becomes more apparent, enabling it to shape collective memory and cultural identity. The ability of photographs to capture and convey stories transcends traditional boundaries, making visual narratives a powerful tool in the process of individual and collective memory.

1.2 Technology Changes the Narrative of Photography

Photography, as a means of visual narrative, has undergone many changes and innovations since its invention in 1839, and these changes are closely related to the advancement of photographic technology. Silverplate photography is one of the early forms of photography, invented by the Frenchman Louis Daguerre. The technique required long exposures and was therefore mainly used for still life and portraits. Due to technical limitations, early photographic works were mostly single scenes with weak narratives, mainly recording the appearance and state of the subjects.



Figure 63 Countess Castiglina
Source: Louis Pearson, 1860, History of world photography

Figure 63 is a circa 1860 Countess Castiglina by the photographer Louis Pierce, using the opalescent impression process, a process that allows only one photograph to be taken at a time and cannot be reproduced, which is cumbersome and expensive.

The advent of dry plate photography in 1871 made it easier for photographers to carry their cameras and shoot outdoors. Compared with wet plate photography, dry plate photography further shortened the exposure time, improved the shooting efficiency, and promoted the development of photojournalism and documentary photography. Improvements in dry plate photography allowed photographers to capture instantaneous events, such as street events and natural landscapes. During this period, photography began to be used more to record and narrate real-life events, presenting richer narratives.

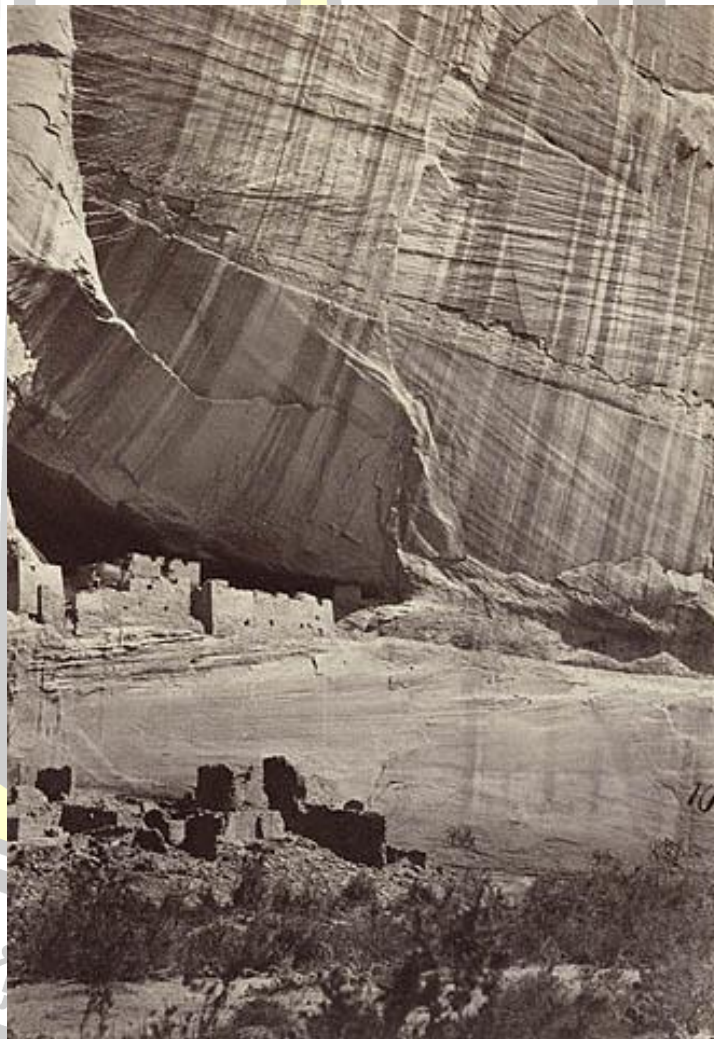


Figure 64 Cheli gorge

Source: O'Sullivan, 1873, History of world photography

Figure 64 shows O'Sullivan's work during his western expedition with the American Western Expedition, when he photographed Cherry Canyon, a time when filming would be dedicated to several wagons used to transport filming equipment

The invention of the Kodak Brownie camera by George Eastman in 1900 made photography cheap and easy to operate, and made it possible for the general public to use cameras to record their lives. This technological innovation allowed photographic narratives to expand from the exclusive domain of professional photographers to the everyday lives of the masses. With the popularity of the Kodak camera, family photography became possible, and people began to record bits and pieces of their daily lives. This form of personal narrative brought photography closer to life, presenting colourful family stories and personal experiences.



Figure 65 PARIS, 1911

Source: Jacques Henri Lartigue, 1986, History of world photography

Figure 65 shows Latigue's work at the age of 18. The camera he used was the Brown Camera, which was invented by Kodak with the slogan that you just take the picture and I'll do the rest. Such a camera was cheap and easy to use.

The maturity of colour photography in the 1930s enabled photographs to present more visual information and emotional colours. Colour photographs not only increased the beauty of the image, but also made the narrative more vivid and concrete, and viewers were able to perceive more details of the story through colour. The application of colour photography in photojournalism makes the recording of news events more realistic and intuitive. Through colour photographs, journalists are

able to more accurately convey the atmosphere and emotion of the event scene, making the photographic narrative more influential and infectious.



Figure 66 The world's first colour photograph of a landscape
Source: L.D. Duhaolong , 1877, History of world photography

Figure 66 is the world's first colour landscape photographs taken by L.D. Duhaolong in 1877, the colour photographs of this period, the colour is not yet perfect, so at this time the photographer still preferred to use black and white photography, until the 1970s and 1980s to the general use of colour photography

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the proliferation of digital photographic technology has made it easier and more efficient to take, store and edit photographs. The subsequent proliferation of smartphones allowed people to take and share photos anytime, anywhere. The convenience of mobile photography makes instant narratives possible, and individuals can record and share moments in their lives in real time through social media platforms. The rise of social media platforms (e.g., Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, etc.) has enabled photographic narratives to spread globally. Personal stories, social events, cultural phenomena, etc. are rapidly spread and shared through images and short videos, and the influence and coverage of photographic narratives have greatly increased.

The development of photographic narratives cannot be separated from the innovation of photographic technology. From silver-plate photography to digital photography to social networks, technological progress has continuously expanded the expressive power and influence of photographic narratives. Every technological innovation brings new possibilities for photographic narrative, making the art of photography record and express social reality in a more comprehensive and in-depth way, conveying humanistic care, and promoting photographic narrative to bring out new vitality in the new era.

1.3 Private Photography: A Unique Narrative Medium

As a form of photography, private photography initially focused on family albums and personal documentary photography, forming a unique photographic language by recording daily life, family gatherings and private moments. With social changes and advances in photographic technology, private photography gradually entered the public eye, and photographers began to focus on a wider range of personal life, recording social changes and personal growth. For example, Diane Arbus's works showed private and marginalised lives, breaking the traditional model of the family album.

In the late 20th and early 21st centuries, private photography was further developed and became an important form of artistic expression. Photographers reflected social realities through their personal perspectives, exploring complex issues such as identity, gender and culture. For example, the work of Japanese photographer Keisuke Araki is known for its strong personal emotions and bold intimate themes.

With the rise of postmodernism, the expression of photographic narrative has undergone a major shift, gradually abandoning the traditional single perspective and linear narrative in favour of a diverse and open mode of expression. Private photography, as a means of self-expression, records the complex relationship between individuals and society through diverse perspectives and techniques, and stimulates the viewer's thinking through metaphors and symbols, making the narrative more polysemous and open.

In addition, the advancement of photography technology and the development of new media have greatly promoted the development and dissemination of private photography. From the invention of the simple camera at the end of the 19th century to the popularity of modern digital photography, to the rise of social media platforms and the application of virtual reality technology, private photography has enriched the expression of photographic narratives and created new possibilities for interactions between photographers and viewers in its continuous innovation and evolution. This evolution not only reflects the influence of technological progress on artistic creation, but also demonstrates the unique position and wide application of private photography in narrative art.

2. Narrative Structure in Private Photography

2.1 Time structure

2.1.1 Linear narrative

Linear narratives organise photographs according to the passage of time so that the viewer can clearly see the progress of the story and the evolution of events. This method makes the relationship between photographs clearer and helps to establish a coherent story line.

Through a linear narrative, the photographer can show the process of emotional change and development. This narrative technique is often used to document personal growth, family life, and important life events such as birthdays, weddings, and travel. It helps the viewer to experience and feel the emotional journey that the photographer is going through.

Linear narrative allows the viewer to follow the time trail from the photographer's point of view and gain a deep understanding of the photographer's inner world and the events recorded. This clear perspective helps the viewer to better empathise with the work.

Advancing the story through the sequence and combination of images, so that the viewer has a coherent narrative experience both visually and psychologically. Zhao Gang's work "My University," showcased in the 9th Lianzhou Foto Festival in mid-2013, is a linear narrative that meticulously documents his life during his university years, capturing the experiences and emotions of college students in that era.

Beginning: Freshmen's Entrance and First Encounter with the Campus

The narrative starts with the first day of freshmen's enrolment and records the excitement and curiosity of freshmen when they first set foot on a university campus. The photographs show the freshmen just leaving their hometowns and starting their college life with the hope and anxiety of the future. The photographs at this stage mainly show the process of the freshmen's adaptation to the new environment, including the setting up of the dormitory, the first dance, and the military training, etc. These activities lay the foundation for the whole story.



Figure 67My University-1

Source: Zhao Gang , 2013, the 9th Lianzhou Foto Festival



Figure 68 My University-2

Source: Zhao Gang , 2013, the 9th Lianzhou Foto Festival



Figure 69 My University-3

Source: Zhao Gang , 2013, the 9th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figures 67-75 are all from Zhao Gang's My University. Figure 67 shows a scene from the beginning of the university year, when school representatives go to the train station to pick up new students, and the school representatives hold up signs from the school's colleges to meet and greet the new students. Figure 68 shows the greeting of new students at the university. When a large number of new students arrive at the university, they are then picked up by the individual colleges for recognition. Figure 69 shows a dance party held during the new student orientation.

Development: Daily Life and Friendship Building

As the narrative progresses, Zhao Gang's photographs delve into the daily routines and the development of friendships among students. The images capture the liveliness of dorm life, the focus in classrooms, and the camaraderie during after-school activities. These scenes emphasize the richness of university life, showing how students bond and support one another during their time on campus.



Figure 70My University-4

Source: Zhao Gang , 2013, the 9th Lianzhou Foto Festival



Figure 71My University-5

Source: Zhao Gang , 2013, the 9th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 70 shows university students washing dishes in the canteen sink after eating with their own utensils. Figure 71 is a scene of good friends gathering in the dormitory to cook and eat by themselves, these are all good memories

Climax: enjoying university life



Figure 72 My University-6
Source: Zhao Gang , 2013, the 9th Lianzhou Foto Festival



Figure 73 My University-7
Source: Zhao Gang , 2013, the 9th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 72 shows the hustle and bustle of the corridors in the boys' dormitory and Figure 73 shows the privacy of the girls' dormitory. As university life unfolds, Zhao Gang's camera begins to capture more scenes of daily life. Photographs from this phase show students living in their dormitories, and their after-school activities. The hustle and bustle of the male dormitories, the privacy and warmth of the female dormitories, and the mutual help and support between friends are details that demonstrate the richness of university life and the building of friendships. These records of daily life not only show the diversity of university life, but also provide viewers with a deep understanding of the lifestyles of university students in that era.

Ending: The Sadness of Graduation and Parting

The narrative concludes with the bittersweet moments of graduation and parting. Zhao Gang captures the tears, the signed T-shirts, and the farewells as students prepare to leave university life behind. These final images convey a deep sense of loss and nostalgia, marking the end of an era and the beginning of a new phase in life.



Figure 74 My University-8
Source: Zhao Gang , 2013, the 9th Lianzhou Foto Festival

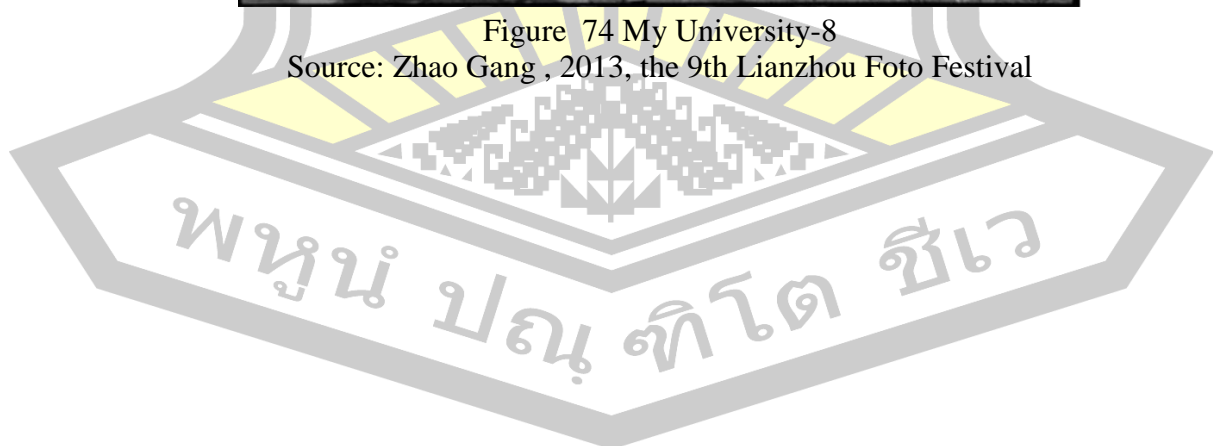




Figure 75 My University-9

Source: Zhao Gang, 2013, the 9th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 74 is the end of the university time, the school organised together to take a graduation group photo, Figure 75 is the end of graduation, everyone went their own way, classmates train station to see off the.

At the end of the work, Zhao Gang records the scenes of the graduation season, including the taking of the graduation group photo and the parting scenes of the students. The tears in the photos and the moment when the train leaves show the sadness and reluctance of the students at the time of parting.

Through a linear narrative structure, Zhao Gang's "My University" offers a detailed and emotionally resonant portrayal of university life, reflecting both the personal growth of individuals and the broader social context of the time. The work's progression from arrival to departure mirrors the typical journey of university students, making it a poignant and relatable depiction of this formative period.

2.1.2 Non-linear Narrative

In private photography, non-linear narratives often recombine fragments of stories from different points in time by breaking the traditional chronological order, giving the work a higher degree of complexity and diversity. Using techniques such as flashbacks, insertions and parallel narratives, photographers interweave photographs from different times to construct a multi-layered narrative network. When viewing these works, viewers need to jump through time to interpret and understand the emotions and stories that the photographers want to express, a process that not only deepens the viewers' engagement with the works, but also enhances their interaction with them.

The non-linear narrative of private photography also provides a multi-faceted way of presenting emotions. By showing scenes and emotions at different points in time, viewers are able to understand the photographer's intentions and inner thoughts more fully. Through this free-flowing time structure, the photographer is able to express complex emotional states more flexibly, giving the work a deeper sense of hierarchy both visually and emotionally. During the viewing process, the audience is not only receiving visual information, but also actively participating in the construction and reorganisation of the story, thus making the work a more interactive and resonant form of expression.

In the fourth Lianzhou Foto Festival in 2008, Lu Ning's *Daily life* is a typical private photographic work, showing the details and moments of daily life, and presenting the relationship between the individual and his family and society. Photographic narrative here is not just about recording events and scenes, but conveying emotions, memories and meanings through images.

Lu Ning's *Daily life* to a certain extent adopts a non-linear narrative by breaking the traditional chronological order, using flashbacks and interludes, etc. The first picture starts in the winter of 2002, and then uses flashbacks to go back to 1999, from winter to spring.

Lu Ning uses non-linear narrative to break the continuity of time through recollection and memory reenactment. This narrative technique adds layers to the work, allowing the audience to jump between different points in time and experience more complex emotions and memories.



Figure 76 *Daily life* -1

Source: Lu Ning , 2008, the 4th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 76 in Daily life is from the winter of 2002, in Geliang, Shanxi Province. Lu Ning and Xiao Xing had to take a long bus ride to visit each other, chatting about rock and roll, films, photography, and drinking hard.



Figure 77 Daily life -2

Source: Lu Ning , 2008, the 4th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Everyday Life -2 is the fifth photograph in the work, and here a flashback is used, from the winter of 2002 to the spring of 1999, as if it were a memory of friends chatting over a drink. The photo was taken at a friend's wedding in Ou Xi Yao Autonomous County. The happy moment of a friend carrying his wife to the car at the wedding, and his clothes were wet when he came down.

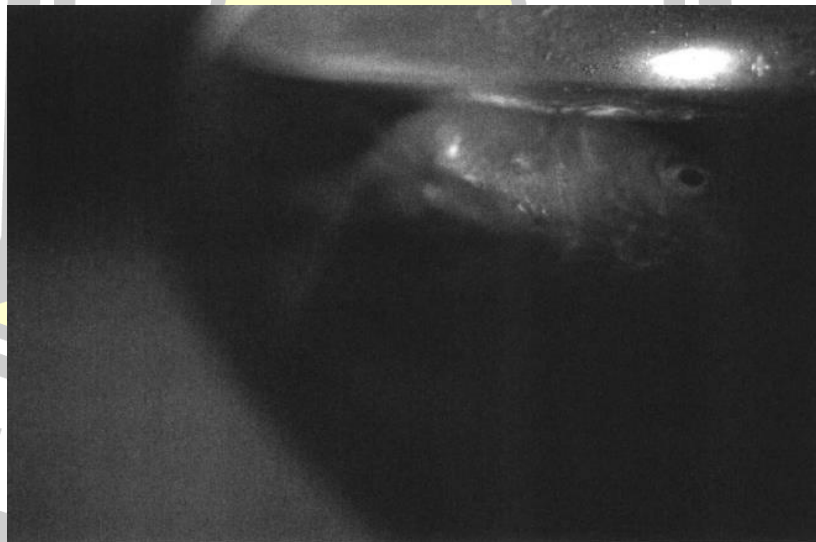


Figure 78 Daily life -3

Source: Lu Ning , 2008, the 4th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 78 is using an interpolation, from the first few pictures of a marriage in 1999, a small gathering of friends in 2001 and 2002 directly into a picture of 2005, a dead goldfish, a rented house in Beijing, where the fish always fails to live, making the house seem even colder. Here is a foreshadowing of the drinking and chatting with friends with a small conclusion



Figure 79 Daily life -4

Source: Lu Ning , 2008, the 4th Lianzhou Foto Festival

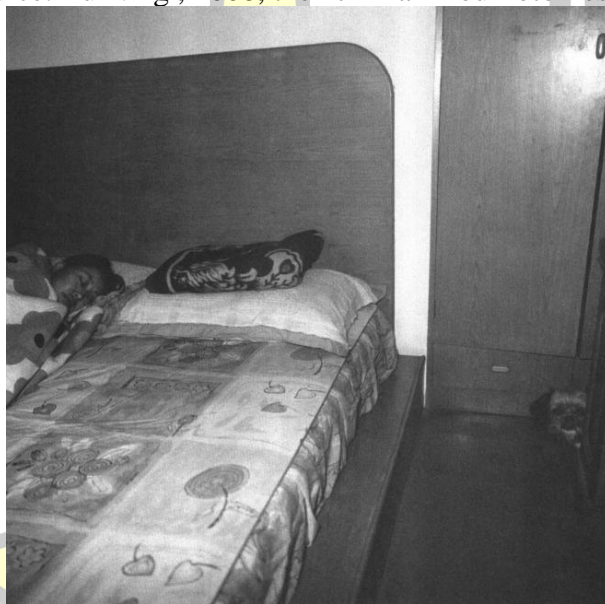


Figure 80 Daily life -5

Source: Lu Ning , 2008, the 4th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figures 79 and 80 are a parallel narrative, and these two photographs are placed together in *Everyday*. Figure 79 was taken in the winter of 2006, when his wife and Mao Zhuang were sleeping soundly. Figure 80 is a photo taken in the spring of 2001 of his wife and his dog Mao Zhuang sleeping soundly together. In these two photos, the time has changed, the place and situation have changed, but the people and pets remain the same, revealing a warm atmosphere.

Non-linear narratives in private photography, as exemplified by Lu Ning's *Daily Life* series, highlight the complexity and depth that can be achieved by breaking traditional chronological sequences. By employing techniques such as flashbacks, insertions, and parallel narratives, these works challenge the viewer to actively engage

In private photography, the structure of space plays a crucial role in conveying the psychological state and emotional world of the subject. The way space is utilized—whether it is intimate and enclosed like a bedroom or open and expansive like a street—serves as a narrative element that reflects the inner experiences of the individual being photographed. The private nature of certain spaces can evoke feelings of intimacy, vulnerability, or confinement, while more open spaces may suggest freedom, isolation, or exposure.

2.2.1 Private space

A 4x6 grid of 24 small images, each showing a different object. The objects include: a pair of glasses, a pinecone, a banana, a green frog figurine, a white mobile phone, a small white object, a pair of scissors, a small branch, a red apple, a small red object, a white flower, a pink heart, a small branch with leaves, a small ring, a small object, a bowl of food, a small mobile phone, a small object, a small ring, a small object, a bowl of food, a small white object, a small object, and a small object.

Source: Zhang Meng , 2006, the 2nd Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figures 81-84 are all from Zhang Meng's *Deep in the Family*. Figure 81 is a photograph of some trivial small objects in the family, such as, eyeglasses, scissors, strings and so on. The selection and display of these objects introduces the viewer to the artist's private space, which are very intimate and full of personal meaning in daily life. Through these objects, the viewer can feel the atmosphere of the artist's personal life. These objects are not only physical objects, but also a link between the artist's memory and emotion.

By photographing various corners of the home, such as drawers, under the bed, under the sofa, inside the refrigerator, bookshelves, shoe cabinets, etc., Zhang demonstrates the details of family life that are usually hidden from view. The items in these private spaces, such as small bottles and cans, clothes and books, are not only the necessities of family life, but also carry the personal habits, memories and emotions of the family members. This revelation of details allows the audience to feel the reality and simplicity of life.



Figure 82 *Deep in the Family-2*

Source: Zhang Meng, 2006, the 2nd Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 82 shows the corners of drawers, bonsai, table corners, ornaments and so on in the house, and all these objects show the interest of the family members. In this group of works, Zhang Meng, through meticulous observation and careful arrangement, presents the details of the private space artistically through photography. This form of private photography not only emphasises the privacy and uniqueness of the private space, but also tells the hidden stories and emotions of one's life through the display of these private objects, reflecting the artist's unique perspective and emotional projection of his own life.



Figure 83 Deep in the Family-3

Source: Zhang Meng , 2006, the 2nd Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 83 is a set of orange-tinted photographs containing several objects with elliptical curves, such as three of the pears, a gourd, round plates, and so on.

By photographing and displaying this intimate space, Zhang Mangan's works not only allow the viewer to get a glimpse of his life, but also explore in a wider sense the relationship between objects, memories and space, and how these relationships can be conveyed and amplified through photography. These spliced images reveal a complex private world in which objects are not just physical beings, but also symbols of emotions, memories and identities.



Figure 84 Deep in the Family-4

Source: Zhang Meng , 2006, the 2nd Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 84 is a group of photographs in grassy green tones, with more objects used for relaxation, such as books for recreation, bath towels, and so on. In Zhang's works, various corners inside the home, such as drawers, underneath the bed, and under the sofa, show the real details of family life. These spaces are not only the carriers of one's private life, but also reflect the status and function of the family in society through their physical existence.

As a group of private photographs, *Deep in the Family* presents the artist's personal inner world through the arrangement and combination of objects. The hidden story behind each object is closely connected to the artist's memory and identity. This expressive technique of private photography allows the works to go beyond simple documentation and become a profound exploration of personal life and emotions. In this way, Zhang Manganese explores the relationship between the individual and the family, memory and space.

Zhang Mangan's work "*Deep in the Family*" shows the hidden emotions and memories in the safe haven of the family through the shooting of private spaces. In this group of works, Zhang Mangan displays the personal objects in the family in a typological arrangement, so that these objects not only exist physically, but also become a medium for carrying emotions and memories.

It can be seen that Zhang Mangan is not only displaying the objects themselves, but also exploring how they become symbols of personal memories and emotions. These spliced images construct a complex private world through the meticulous presentation of the objects. When viewing these works, viewers are not only learning about the details of the artist's life, but also feeling the emotions and memories behind them. Through this kind of intimate space photography, Zhang Manganese has successfully transformed bits and pieces of his personal life into artistic expressions of universal significance, demonstrating the profound connotation of the family as a haven for personal life and emotions.

2.2.2 Open space

In the context of private photography, the use of open space plays a unique role in the narrative structure of photographic narratives. Unlike confined or private spaces, which usually emphasise personal and emotional connection, open space in private photography can symbolise freedom, solitude or the vastness of the subject's inner world.

Open spaces in private photography often reflect the photographer's relationship with the environment, serving as a metaphor for personal exploration or isolation. In private photography, these vast and desolate landscapes can reflect the inner state of the photographer, suggesting feelings of loneliness, contemplation or even existential reflection. The emptiness of the landscape contrasts with the more traditional intimate setting of private photography, where the focus is usually on close-up details of personal, everyday life.

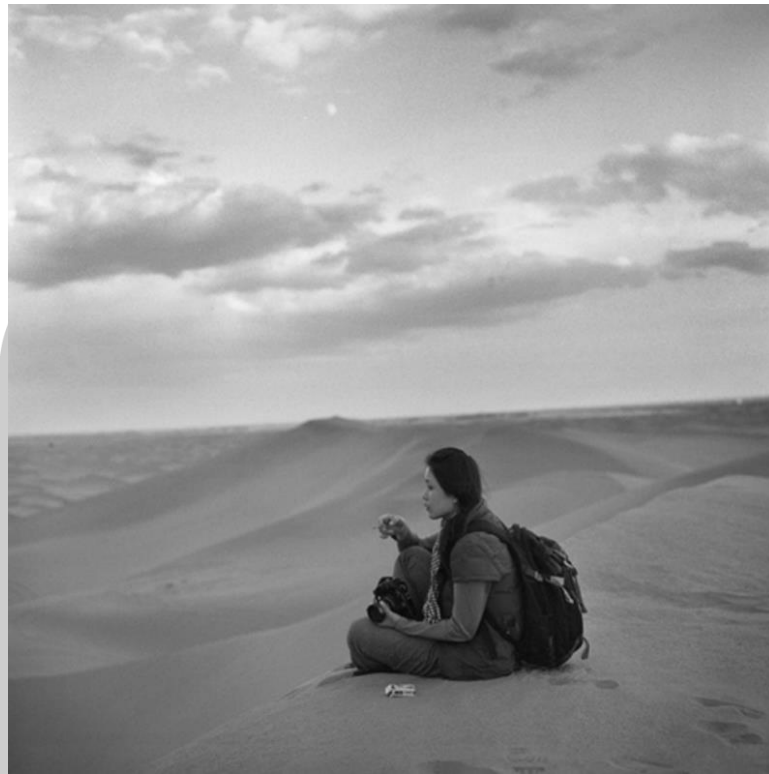


Figure 85 Silent Latitude-1

Source: You Li , 2010, the 6th Lianzhou Foto Festival

In the 6th Lianzhou Foto Festival in 2010, You Li's "Silent Latitude" uses open space to show the relationship, emotions and inner states between people and the environment by photographing the national border in northern China.

Figure 85-88 is from the work "Silent Latitude" by You Li. In Figure 85, photographer You Li is sitting in the vast desert, conveying a deep sense of loneliness and introspection. The choice of black and white photographs enhances the gravity of the picture, eliminates distractions, and focuses the viewer's attention on the essential elements: the people, the landscape, and the interplay between the two.

Galli's self-portrait in this desolate landscape draws the viewer to consider themes of loneliness, self-exploration, and the relationship between the individual and the wider, often overwhelming world. This image is a powerful example of how private photography can use space and environment to evoke emotional depth and narrative complexity.

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Figure 86 Silent Latitude-2

Source: You Li , 2010, the 6th Lianzhou Foto Festival

In Figure 86, we see four men walking on a high voltage power line in a remote and barren area. This photo captures a highly concentrated and dangerous moment for the workers as they maintain the electrical infrastructure. The desolate setting and towering power lines emphasise the isolation and danger of their task.

The composition of this photograph emphasises the line between safety and risk as the workers hang high above the ground. Their small figures contrast with the vast, empty landscape, emphasising the human effort required to maintain the infrastructure that connects modern life, even in the most remote areas.



Figure 87 Silent Latitude-3

Source: You Li , 2010, the 6th Lianzhou Foto Festival

In Figure 87, in this photograph, an isolated building is situated on a vast and empty wasteland, with a symbol resembling a pentagram and a torch on the building. The photograph demonstrates a sense of dislocation in time and space; the building is clearly a man-made mark, but the barren landscape surrounding it emphasises its isolation. This use of open space emphasises the isolation and abandonment of the building through the contrast between the vast wilderness and the building, which seems to suggest a sense of a historical relic being lost to time.

In the photographic narrative, this use of open space not only provides visual impact, but also reinforces the depth of the narrative in the photographs. The empty environment forces the viewer to focus more attention on the lone building, making it the centre of the narrative.



Figure 88 Silent Latitude-4

Source: You Li, 2010, the 6th Lianzhou Foto Festival

In Figure 88, the image is particularly evocative featuring a metal structure against a background of a vast sky at dusk. The minimalist composition, with the structure occupying a small part of the frame, emphasises the emptiness of the surrounding space. The structure appears to be part of something unfinished or abandoned, possibly symbolising unrealised potential or the remnants of human activity that once had a purpose but now exists in isolation, disconnected from its original environment.

You Li's "Silent Latitude" demonstrates the complex relationship between man and nature, and man and society through the use of open space along the northern border of China. She conveys the individual's emotional and psychological state through the vast natural landscape, the white space in the picture, and the fusion of people and scenery. At the same time, the historical and cultural imprints in these open spaces give the works a deeper social and cultural significance. Through these images, You Li not only expresses the beauty and solemnity of the natural

environment, but also reveals the insignificance and loneliness of human beings in front of nature, making the audience feel the emotional depth and ideological connotation of the works.

The use of open space in these photographs is integral to the narrative structure, as it not only lays the groundwork for exploring the relationship between people and their environment, but also allows for profound reflection on the emotional and psychological states evoked by such vast and empty spaces. The desolation and isolation depicted in these images invites the viewer to reflect on broader themes of existence, memory and the transient nature of human presence in the world. The absence of crowds or busy scenes creates a contemplative atmosphere, making the viewer more acutely aware of the solitude and silence that these spaces embody.

When incorporated into private photography, Open Space shifts the focus from detailed, intimate portraits to broader, more abstract expressions of identity and emotion. This shift in focus leads to a narrative that is more about the relationship between the individual and their environment than about the individual themselves. It encourages the viewer to think about the subject's place in the world, their emotional state, and the broader context of their life experiences.

The use of open space in private photography enhances the narrative by providing a wider, more interpretive context, in contrast to the more focussed, detailed narrative of the intimate space. This combination allows the photographer to explore complex themes of identity, emotion and presence in a visually and emotionally powerful way.

2.2.3 Spatial narrative combining privacy and openness

Through the conversion of private and open space, photographers can create strong emotional contrasts and narrative effects. In private photography, the privacy and openness of space are important narrative elements, and through the symbolism of these spaces, the photographer is able to express his or her personal psychological state and emotional world. Private space conveys the subject's inner emotion and identity through its hidden and personalised characteristics; open space shows social relationship and cultural background through its public and open characteristics. By combining private and open space narratives, photographers are able to create rich narrative layers and emotional depth, making their works have stronger visual influence and emotional resonance.

By interweaving private and open spaces, photographers are able to show the emotional state and psychological changes of their subjects in different environments. In the 15th Lianzhou Foto Festival 2019, TARATINE (Drooping Breast Roots), a work by Japanese photographer Daisuke Yokota (Japan), blends personal emotions, childhood memories, and celebrations of the important women in his life. The work was created by two unpublished photographers. The work consists of two unpublished series, shot in a Tokyo hotel room in 2014 and during a road trip to Aomori in 2007. By photographing his girlfriend and mother, Yokota combines personal memories with traditional culture to create a photographic work full of personal emotion.



Figure 90 TARATINE -2

Source: Daisuke Yokota , 2019, the 15th Lianzhou Foto Festival

The hotel room, as an intimate space, symbolises the emotional world between two people, and Daisuke conveys a strong emotional atmosphere by photographing the details of the room, such as the bed, the curtains, and the lighting. These details not only show the privacy of the space, but also symbolise their emotions and relationship.

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Aomori section: open space during a road trip



Figure 91: TARATINE -3

Source: Daisuke Yokota , 2019, the 15th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figures 91 and 92 are photographs from a 2007 trip to Tohoku. The Tohoku photographs were inspired by Yokota's chance discovery of an ancient ginkgo tree in Aomori Prefecture. Known as Taratine, the tree has been worshipped by generations of women for its legendary fertility-enhancing properties. Yokota was reminded of the traditions and lingering associations of Tohoku's reverence for nature spirits (an influence of animism from the Jomon era), as well as memories from his own childhood.

In Aomori, Daisuke was influenced by the traditional culture of the Tohoku region, particularly the animism of the Jomon era. By photographing natural landscapes and cultural symbols, he conveys reverence for nature and life. This kind of open space photography not only shows the outer landscape, but also symbolises the inner admiration for the mother and the contemplation of life.

Daisuke reproduces his personal memories and emotions through these two series of photographs. In the Tokyo section, he expresses the intimacy and emotions of the moment by photographing his girlfriend. In the Aomori section, he recalls his childhood relationship and memories with his mother by photographing natural landscapes and cultural symbols. Through the combination of these two sections, Yokota creates a complete emotional narrative by linking personal memories to real life.

Daisuke's Aomori portion of the shoot was influenced by the animism of the Jomon era, fusing personal memories with traditional culture. This fusion of the cultural and the personal gives the work not only a depth of personal emotion but also a breadth of culture. In this way, he not only displays his personal emotions and memories, but also conveys his admiration and reflection on traditional culture.

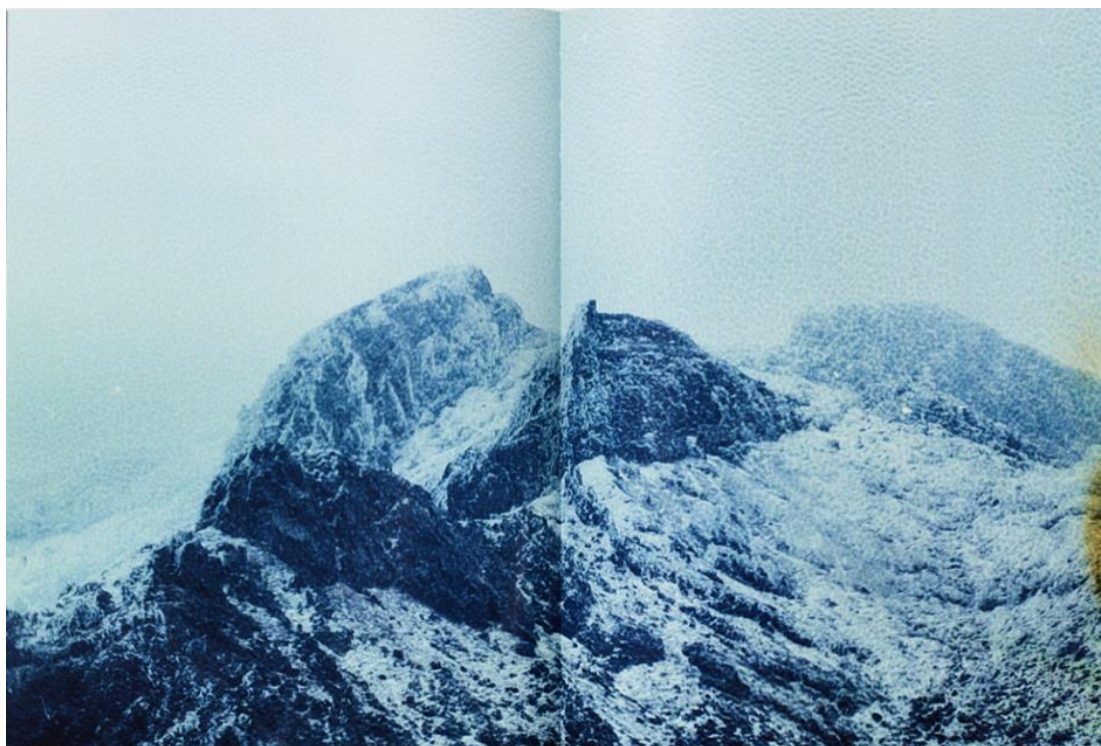


Figure 91TARATINE -4

Source: Daisuke Yokota , 2019, the 15th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Daisuke's TARATINE can be compared with Keisuke Araki's Sentimental Journey and My Beloved Yoko, and Masahisa Fukase's Crow and Yoko. All of these works record personal emotions and relationships through photography, with deep emotional expression and narrative depth.

Daisuke's TARATINE shows his emotional expression of two important women in his life through a combination of private and open spaces. By photographing both Tokyo and Aomori, Yokota fuses his personal memories with traditional culture to create a photographic work of deep emotion and cultural breadth. This narrative approach not only showcases his personal emotions and memories, but also gives the work a broader cultural and social significance. In this way, Yokota not only demonstrates his personal photographic skills and creative style, but also conveys a profound reflection on life, nature and human relationships.

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3. Visual elements in private photography narrative

3.1 Black and white tone

In the 7th Lianzhou Foto Festival in 2011, Xie Qiongzi's work Qian Qian subtly presents the deep emotion between her and her cousin Qian Qian through black and white photography style, and at the same time reveals her complex emotions about her childhood, family and growth. This style of photography not only strengthens the narrative of the work, but also provides the viewer with a deeper emotional resonance and visual experience.



Figure 92 Qian Qian-1

Source: Xie Qiongzi , 2011, the 7th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figures 93-95 are all photographs of Qian Qian, Figures 93-94 are separate photographs of Qian Qian, all shot in close-up compositions, highlighting Qian Qian's round face, cute and innocent. This series of photographs focuses on Qian Qian, capturing her innocence and playful moments in black and white. The use of black and white photography strips away the colour images and focuses attention on the form, expression and interplay between light and shadow. This choice amplifies the emotional influence of the photograph, allowing the viewer to focus on the subject's expression and the subtleties of their movements without the distraction of colour.

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Figure 93 Qian Qian-2

Source: Xie Qiongzhi, 2011, the 7th Lianzhou Foto Festival

The composition of each photograph is thoughtfully arranged, with the subjects usually placed prominently in the frame to ensure that their expressions and movements are the focus of the image. The close-up nature of these shots puts the viewer in close contact with the subject and enhances the sense of personal connection.

The interplay of light and shadow is crucial in these images, creating dramatic contrasts that enhance the emotional depth of the photograph. The stark contrast between the bright background and the darker tones emphasises the children's features and expressions, adding an immediacy and intensity to the narrative. The shadows are not merely incidental, but are deliberately used to shape the image, creating a sense of depth and dimension that draws the viewer deeper into the scene.



Figure 94 Qian Qian-3

Source: Xie Qiongzhi, 2011, the 7th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 95 is a photograph that uses multiple exposures. In the photograph we can see that there are two Qian Qian's who are leaning closely together, in fact, multiple exposures were used to capture Qian Qian at play, and it looks as if Qian Qian is playing with the children.

These photographs are important examples of private photography, focussing on capturing personal, intimate moments. The spontaneous nature of these photographs suggests a narrative that is both personal and universal-the fleeting moments of childhood are filled with emotion and meaning.

Through her photographs of Qian Qian, Qiongzi Xie expresses in her work a longing for childhood and a reflection on family relationships. Qian Qian's happiness and freedom seem to make the audience find some kind of emotional resonance.

The intimate relationship between Qiongzi Xie and Qian Qian is delicately expressed in black and white. Qian Qian's natural relaxed state shows the trust and understanding between them. Qiongzi Xie did not interfere or disturb Qian Qian during the shooting process, but recorded these moments in a natural way. This natural and clean way of shooting, together with the emphasis on black and white photography, allows the viewer to feel the silent understanding and deep emotional bond between them.

By using black and white images, the photographer effectively exploits the interplay of colour, composition and light to create a powerful narrative in the realm of intimate photography. These images evoke a strong emotional response, transporting the viewer into the world of the subject and allowing them to experience these moments of innocence and simplicity. The careful consideration of visual elements in these photographs highlights the photographer's ability to convey complex emotions and stories through the lens of intimate personal moments.

3.2 Color tone

Using the richness and diversity of colours to increase the visual appeal and narrative level of the work, showing more vivid scenes of life.

In the 8th Lianzhou Foto Festival 2012, Feng Li's work "White Night" creates a unique visual influence and narrative effect through the use of highly saturated colours and flash. This colourful style is not only an important part of his personal style, but also a key medium to express his keen insight and deep understanding of the real world.

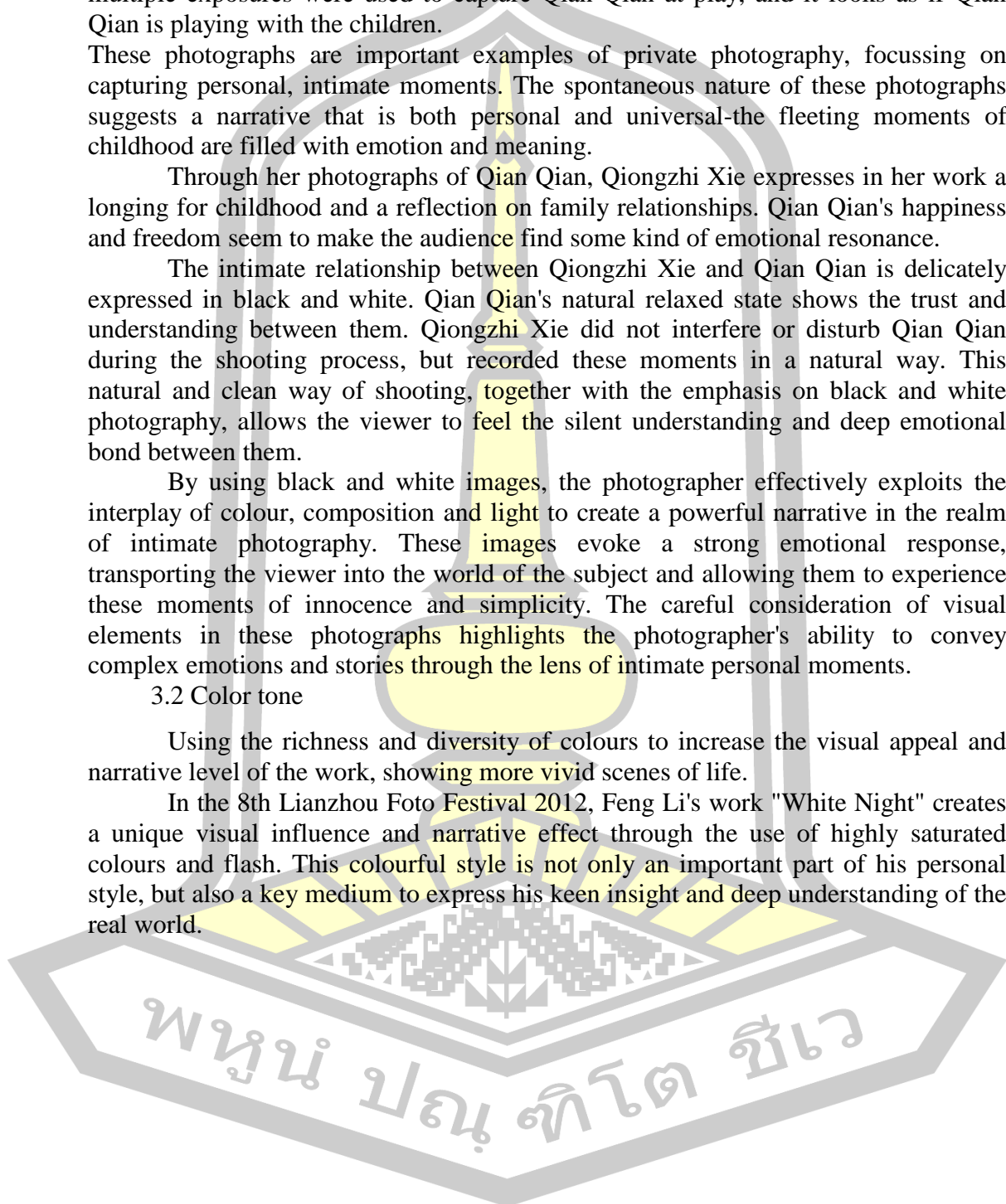




Figure 95 White Night-1

Source: Feng Li , 2012, the 8th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figures 96-99 are part of Feng Li's work *White Nights*. Figure 96 shows a very brightly coloured parrot, the vivid colours of the parrot contrast with the quiet, almost blank background, immediately drawing attention to the bird. The use of flash highlights the parrot's feathers, making them appear more vivid and almost artificial, which enhances the surreal quality of the image. Compositionally, the parrot sits at the intersection of the roof lines, adding a sense of symmetry and balance that gives the image a structured and mysterious feel.

This photograph, like others in the *White Nights* series, fits into the broader context of intimate photography that explores personal spaces and moments in unexpected ways. Feng Li's work captures these private and surreal moments, creating a narrative that is both personal and universal, inviting the viewer to find meaning in the randomness of life. Rather than telling a linear story, the photograph presents a moment frozen in time, full of potential interpretations, a hallmark of Feng Li's narrative style.

The photograph is a striking piece that combines compelling visual elements with a deeper, possibly symbolic, narrative. It exemplifies Feng Li's method of finding the extraordinary in the ordinary, using colour, composition and light to create images that linger in the viewer's mind.



Figure 97 White Night-2

Source: Feng Li , 2012, the 8th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 97 presents a woman in a blue cheongsam whose head is obscured by a tree branch in front of her, creating an eerie and interesting visual effect. This visual technique blurs the identity of the figure, making the viewer focus more on the symbolism and overall composition of the image rather than the specific face of the figure.

In this photograph, the photographer cleverly uses colour, composition and light to convey a unique visual experience. The blue colour of the cheongsam stands out in the light, contrasting with the green plants in the background. This colour choice not only enhances the visual impact, but also makes the figure the focal point of the image. And the shading of the tree branches breaks the viewer's expectation of traditional portrait photography, adding to the mystery and interest of the image.

From the perspective of private photography, this photograph challenges the traditional way of personal expression, exploring the complexity and multifaceted nature of individual identity through incomplete display and abstract composition. The woman with her head covered symbolises the concealment and ambiguity of identity. In this way, the photographer combines the private emotions of the individual with the public visual experience to form a unique photographic narrative.

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Figure 98 White Night-3

Source: Feng Li , 2012, the 8th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 98 shows a figure dressed in a rabbit doll costume, on crutches and with a missing foot, and the doll costume is torn.

The overall colour palette is cold, dominated by grey and blue, which gives a sense of loneliness and alienation. The main figure in the image is wearing a grey doll's suit, while the modern city buildings in the background are also in cool tones, reinforcing this lonely atmosphere.

The figure in the rabbit doll suit is in the middle of the picture, with his back to the camera, his left hand on a crutch, and his body slightly tilted, a composition that directs the viewer's attention to the figure's own tattered and mutilated features.

The light is soft and there is no strong contrast, which makes it seem extraordinarily calm, but it also makes it seem a little cold, echoing the character's situation. The use of light and shadow makes the figure's back stand out, while the background appears somewhat blurred, reinforcing the figure's sense of isolation.

The private photographic quality of this work lies in its direct presentation of the individual's situation, rather than a typical social critique or historical narrative. Through the torn and mutilated limbs of the doll's clothes, and the urban landscape in the backdrop, the work tells a story about disability, marginalisation and urban loneliness. The viewer is able to feel the loneliness and helplessness of the characters through these details, which in turn triggers thoughts about social inclusion and modern urban life.



Figure 96 White Night-4

Source: Feng Li , 2012, the 8th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 99 depicts a winged figure with wings composed of pixelated images that look like a large butterfly. The background of the figure is a vast open field with a slightly ominous sky above.

The focal point of the image is the pixelated wings, which dominate the entire composition and draw the viewer's attention. The wings, although made up of small pixel-like squares, form a pattern reminiscent of a butterfly, symbolising metamorphosis and freedom.

The vibrant blue hue of the wings contrasts with the understated, almost monotonous background. This contrast accentuates the wings and makes them stand out against the soft setting. The light is soft and the natural light source casts slight shadows that add depth to the image.

In modern society, the digital realm is increasingly intersecting with and influencing the physical world, and how individuals are navigating these mixed realities.

Feng Li's work captures moments in public and private spaces, and the narratives in the work are fragmented and open to interpretation. Each image can be viewed as a stand-alone piece, but when viewed together, a larger story emerges about the surreal aspects of urban life, identity, and everyday experience.

Feng Li's White Nights series invites viewers to explore the bizarre and surreal aspects of everyday life, using vibrant colours, strong compositions and unique narrative methods to challenge conventional perceptions of reality.

4.The Art of Private Photographic Narrative

4.1Symbolic expressionism in private photography narrative

In *New Art History and Visual Narrative*, Zhu Qi (2013) analyses in depth the process of photography's transformation from a traditional tool for reproducing reality to an independent form of visual narrative through the lens of art history. Zhu Qi points out that with the development of the times, photography is not only limited to an objective means of recording reality, but it has gradually become an art form capable of conveying deeper emotions and thoughts. Especially in postmodern art, photography has broken the traditional narrative structure and challenged the norms of classical art through innovative techniques such as non-linear narrative, expressionist style and collage.

Symbolic Expressionism, a branch of Expressionism, transforms ordinary things into symbols of emotional or psychological states through the use of symbols and metaphors. This approach allows the work to go beyond a simple reproduction of reality and convey deeper emotions or thoughts through visual metaphors. Symbolic Expressionism often juxtaposes unusual elements through contrast and contrast, provoking the viewer to think deeply about the inner meaning of the work.

At the 14th Lianzhou Foto Festival 2018, the work *Everyday Writing* transforms fragmented scenes from daily life into images with deep symbolic meaning through the technique of symbolic narrative. These works use the technique of symbolic expressionism to give new meaning to ordinary life objects through a unique perspective, making them not only material existences, but also carriers of emotions and thoughts.



Figure 97 Everyday Writing -1
Source: Qiu , 2018, the 14th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 97 shows the skull of a dead sparrow and a dry tree branch, the whole image is presented in black and white, giving a cold and silent feeling. From an image analysis point of view, this image uses a lot of negative space, making the skull and the branch the main focus of the image. The shape and details of the skull stand out, while the curved and elongated form of the branch enhances the dynamism of the

image. The composition of the whole image is very simple, but it also has a strong visual impact as a result.

Symbolically, skulls are often associated with death, passing life and the passage of time, while the dry branches may symbolise the fragility and impermanence of life.

Through the technique of Symbolic Expressionism, this work cleverly combines the images of skulls and dry branches to form a strong metaphorical expression. Through minimalist composition, this work not only visually emphasises the isolation and silence of these symbols, but also deepens the emotional tension through the contrasting black and white tones. The form of the skull and the curved lines of the withered branches together form a visual dialogue, suggesting the intrinsic connection between life and death, existence and nothingness.

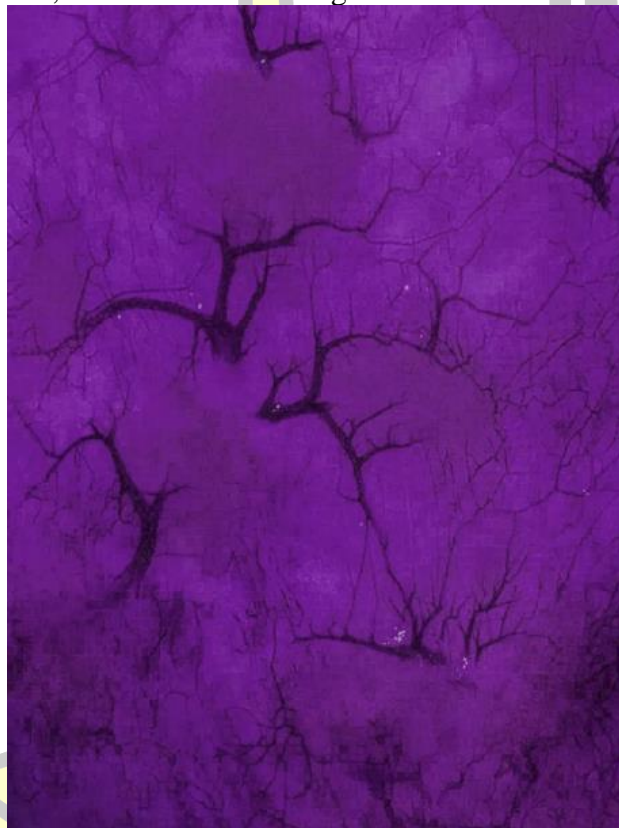


Figure 98 Everyday Writing -2
Source: Qiu , 2018, the 14th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 98 presents an abstract visual effect, which at first glance seems to be a peach branch pattern common in Chinese paintings, but in fact it originates from the blood filaments in the mouth. This dislocation of expression can be seen as a typical application of symbolic expressionism.

The image creates a visual metaphor by associating the common filament of blood with the image of the peach branch in traditional culture. Peach branches usually symbolise vitality, prosperity and longevity, and when they are shown in such a distorted form, the viewer naturally associates them with the fragility of the body and the physiological changes brought about by illness. In this way, the author succeeds in transforming a mundane physical phenomenon into a visual symbol with deep symbolic meaning.

Expressionism is concerned with the expression of emotional and psychological states rather than the objective reproduction of reality. In this work, the strong contrast of colours and the simplification of the composition intensify the visual impact, enabling the viewer to feel the emotional tension embedded in it. The dominant colour purple, often associated with mystery, introspection and contemplation, further enhances the symbolic expression of the work.



Figure 99 Everyday Writing -3

Source: Qiu , 2018, the 14th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 99 shows a crescent moon at the top of a utility pole, which is simple and symbolic. The entire piece conveys a serene and deeply emotional atmosphere through its minimalist composition and contrasting elements. The black utility pole presents a straight line, forming a strong visual contrast with the soft grey sky in the background. The crescent moon is suspended at the top of the pole, as if guiding or symbolising some kind of hope or revelation.

From the point of view of symbolic expressionism, this image transforms the ordinary utility poles and the crescent moon into symbols through a simplified visual language. While the pole symbolises the traces of human civilisation and industry, the crescent moon may symbolise the power of nature, hope or cycles. This contrast not only triggers a reflection on the relationship between modern life and nature, but also expresses a certain inner state of mind or philosophical reflection through symbolism. Qiu's work "Everyday Writing" is a masterpiece of private photography created using symbolic expressionism. In this work, he transforms ordinary moments of life into symbolic images by reinterpreting and metaphorising everyday objects. This expressionist approach not only gives the work a deeper cultural and philosophical

connotation, but also enables the viewer to feel the artist's thoughts on life and existence beyond the visual.

Symbolic expressionism is fully embodied in *Everyday Writing*. By choosing symbolic elements, such as the scene of a car accident, the crescent moon on a pole, and the skull of a dead sparrow, Qiu gives new life and meaning to these common everyday objects. For example, the scratches of a car tyre are transformed into a long scroll of landscape in a Chinese landscape painting, while a human hair symbolises a tree trunk in the desert. This symbolism not only reflects the illusory nature of the material world, but also conveys a deep understanding of the passage of time and the fragility of life.

In the work's caption, Qiu expresses his sense of the world's change and the illusory nature of appearances through Zen-like language: "Like the boiling water for making tea, last night it was still snowing on the mountain tops." This metaphor not only makes viewers think between the surface images and their inner meanings, but also prompts them to re-examine the subtle phenomena in daily life. Just as the image of what appears to be a peach blossom is actually blood in an inflamed throat, this visual reversal provokes the audience to think deeply about the relationship between reality and illusion.

Through the narrative approach of symbolic expressionism, *Everyday Writing* demonstrates the unique charm of private photography. Through symbolism and metaphor, multiple interpretations and an open narrative approach, Qiu enables the viewers to have different associations and resonances during the viewing process, further deepening the connotation of the work. This narrative approach not only enriches the layers of the photographs, but also enhances the audience's sense of participation and empathy, enabling the works to trigger deeper emotional experiences and philosophical reflections in the viewers.

In conclusion, Qiu's *Everyday Writing* demonstrates the great potential of symbolic narrative in private photography by transforming mundane scenes of life into images rich in philosophical and cultural meanings through the use of symbolic expressionism. This kind of narrative not only helps the photographer to express his inner world more deeply, but also enables the viewer to experience more complex emotions and thoughts through his works.

4.2 Collage in private photography narrative

In the narrative of private photography in postmodern art, collage plays an important role as a unique means of expression. While private photography emphasises the photographer's personal perspective and inner world, collage creates a complex, multi-layered narrative structure by fusing together different images, text and textures. This narrative technique not only challenges the traditional single image and linear narrative mode, but also injects more expressiveness and thoughtfulness into the photographic works.

In collage, different visual elements are disassembled and recombined to form a new whole. These elements can be different photo fragments, words, symbols or other visual elements, and through their reorganisation the photographer is able to create a complex and polysemous narrative structure.

The collage narrative in private photography is a break with tradition and full of innovative expression techniques. It creates a complex and profound narrative structure by redefining and combining visual elements, so that photography does not

just stay on the record of reality, but becomes an expressive art form. This technique has been widely used in postmodern art, opening up a new path for the development of photographic art.

In 2007, in the Third Lianzhou Foto Festival, Liu Yi Qing Liu's work Yi Qing Liu adopted a more special art form. Liu Yiqing's private photography has taken its place in contemporary photography art with its unique personal perspective and strong emotional expression. Her works not only show the bodies and emotions of young women, but also construct a complex and profound art world through the form of collage photos and text descriptions.



Figure 100 Yi Qing Liu-1

Source: Liu Yi Qing, 2007, in the Third Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figures 100-103 are part of Liu Yi Qing Liu's work Yi Qing Liu series. Figure 103 adopts the creative technique of collage. Tearing out parts of several photographs and assembling them onto a single one, and writing down textual descriptions, thus composing a new content. As an art form, photo collage allows the artist to create a rich and multi-layered visual effect through the combination of multiple images. Liu Yiqing skilfully utilises this form to fuse together fragments of different times, places and emotions to form a unique visual narrative. This collage not only breaks the time and space limitations of traditional photography, but also enhances the artistic expression and emotional influence of the work.

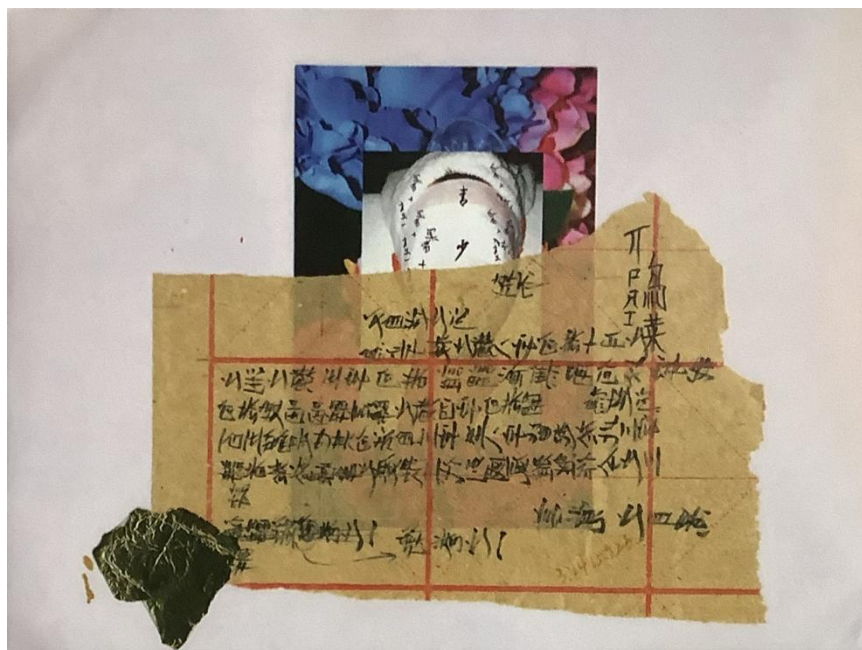


Figure 101Yi Qing Liu-2

Source: Liu Yi Qing, 2007, in the Third Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 101 is an expression of the inner world of the individual through a mixture of visuals and text, exploring themes of memory, emotion and time. The combination of collage and handwritten text expresses a somewhat personal narrative, but also allows the viewer to connect to broader themes and emotions through these fragmented elements. In Liu Yiqing's works, collage photos often present an effect of intertwining dream and reality. Through capturing and reorganising daily life scenes, she shows the inner world and living condition of modern women. These works are not only visually beautiful, but also full of emotional complexity and depth. The use of collage photographs enables her to express multiple meanings and emotional layers in a single image, thus enhancing the infectiousness and expressiveness of her works.

Liu Yiqing often supplements her photographic works with textual descriptions, further enriching the connotation and meaning of her works. The combination of text and image enables the viewer not only to feel the beauty of the work through vision, but also to understand the artist's thoughts and emotions through text. This combination of forms not only enhances the expressive power of the work, but also provides the viewer with a more comprehensive understanding and experience.

Textual descriptions often appear in Liu Yiqing's works in the third person, a narrative that gives her works an objective and calm aesthetic. Through words, she shows her observation and thinking about the world, revealing the psychological state and emotional experience of modern women in society. The mutual complementarity of words and images makes her works more full and three-dimensional, demonstrating the unique value and significance of women in contemporary society.

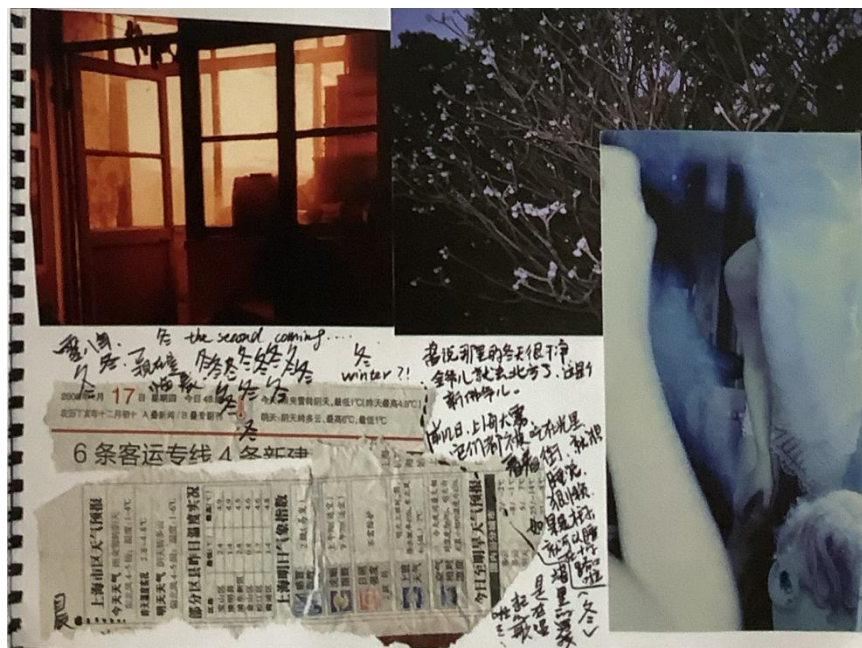


Figure 102 Yi Qing Liu-3

Source: Liu Yi Qing, 2007, in the Third Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 105 is a looser composition, symbolising a casual but carefully arranged state, which may reflect the complex, trivial but real emotions of the author's heart. The collage between different elements makes the viewer feel a flow of time, the intertwining of past and present. Liu Yiqing's private photographic works, often featuring the female body, show the psychological state and emotional experience of women in contemporary society. Through her delicate depiction of the body, she reveals women's confusion, doubt and resentment in real life, and at the same time expresses their critical attitude towards reality. This attention to women's bodies is not only a depiction of individual bodies, but also a profound exploration of women's psychology and emotions.

In Liu Yiqing's works, the female body is not only an aesthetic object, but also a carrier of emotions and thoughts. Through her meticulous depiction of the body, she shows the confusion and struggle of women in contemporary society, and at the same time expresses their pursuit of self-identity and value. Her works not only have strong personal colours, but also have broad social significance, reflecting the special status and value of modern women in society.

Liu Yiqing's private photographic works, through the collage of photographs and textual descriptions, successfully integrate art and reality. Through her delicate depiction and artistic treatment of real life, she shows the inner world and living condition of modern women. Her works not only have the beauty of art, but also have profound practical significance, reflecting various problems and phenomena in contemporary society.

Through this fusion of art forms, Liu Yiqing's works not only have strong personal colours, but also have a wide social influence. She expresses reality through art, revealing the confusion and struggle of modern women in society, as well as their pursuit of self-identity and value. Her works are not only expressions of personal

emotions, but also profound reflections on social reality, with important social and cultural significance.

Liu Yiqing's private photography shows the inner world and living condition of modern women through the art form of collage photos and text descriptions. Her works not only have strong personal colours, but also have broad social significance, reflecting the special status and value of modern women in society. Through her delicate portrayal of body and psychology, Liu Yiqing successfully integrates art and reality to create artworks with profound connotations and wide influence. Her private photography is not only an expression of personal emotion, but also a profound reflection on social reality, with important social and cultural significance.

This series of works breaks the time and space limitations of traditional photography through the art form of collage, creating rich, multi-layered visual effects. Liu Yiqing skilfully uses collage as a form to fuse together fragments of different times, places and emotions to form a unique visual narrative. Her works are not only visually beautiful, but also full of emotional complexity and depth, successfully integrating art and reality.

5.In-depth interviews with photographers

Through an in-depth interview with photographer Duan Yueheng, I combined his insights with my own research findings to arrive at several key conclusions about photographic narrative in private photography. According to Duan Yueheng, the photographic narrative in private photography is not only a record of personal experiences and emotions, but also an art form with depth of expression. Through the skilful use of time, space, and visual elements and artistic techniques, the photographer is able to incorporate the complexity of his inner emotions and socio-cultural context into his work. This narrative approach makes private photography go beyond mere recording and become a unique form of self-expression, which can trigger the viewer's resonance and deep thoughts. Through analysing the private photographs in the Lianzhou Foto Festival, I have found a similar trend, that is, the photographers have successfully intertwined individual identity with social background through multi-layered narrative structure and rich visual elements, forming a unique visual narrative.

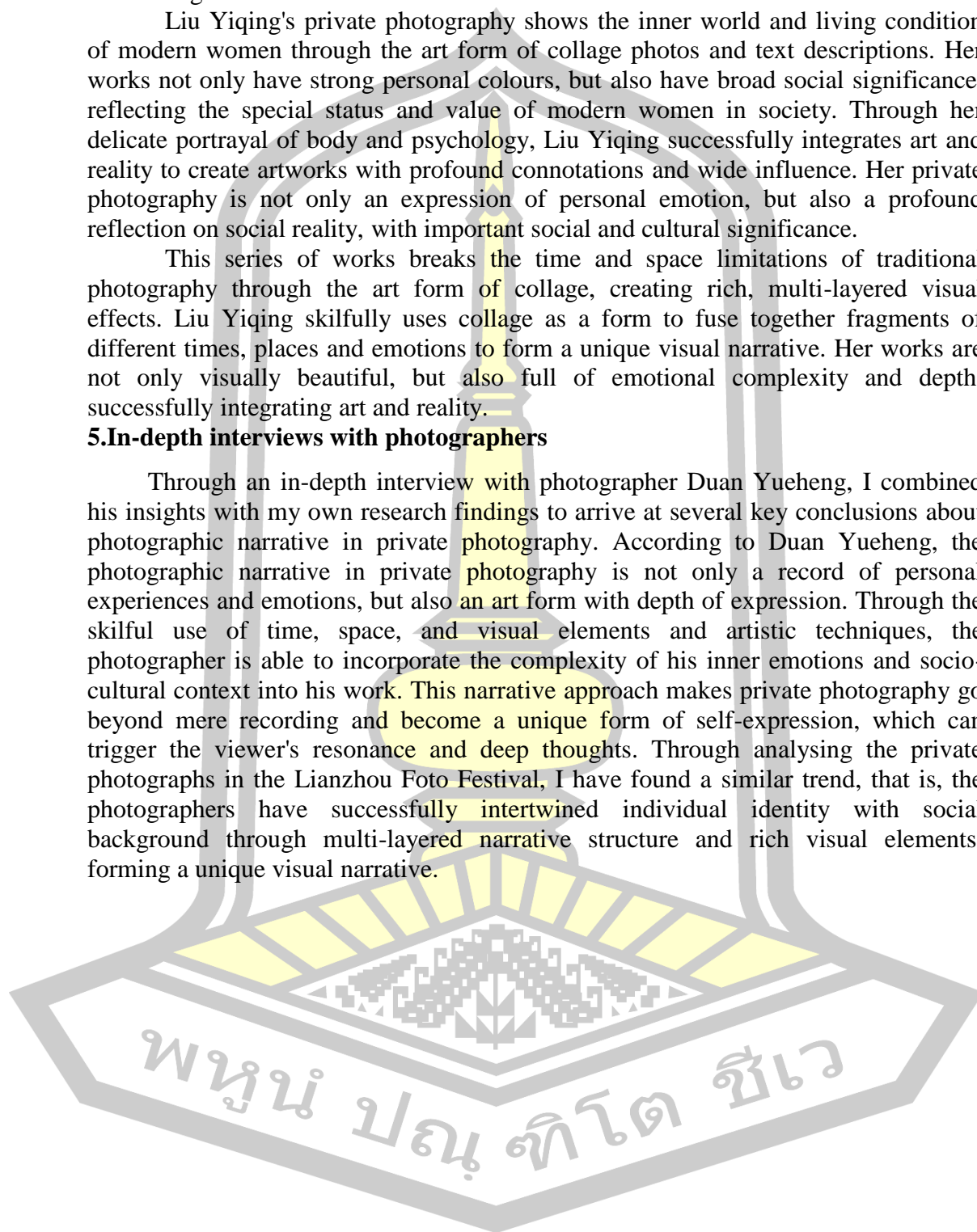











Figure 103 Group photo after the interview
Source: 2023, Shot by Chen Xin



	Element	Description	Application in private photography
Narrative structure	Linear structure	Tell a story in linear time	 <p>Zhao Gang's My University tells four years of college life through a linear narrative, enabling the audience to follow the photographer's perspective and feel the emotional changes and personal growth as time passes.</p>
	Nonlinear structure	Through jumping, flashback, episodic narration, parallel narrative and other ways to break the traditional time order	 <p>Through nonlinear narration, Lu Yan's work Daily transcends the limitation of a single time line, enabling the audience to experience rich and multi-dimensional emotional connotations in their perception.</p>
	Private space	A space that is exclusive to an individual or shared only with an intimate relationship	 <p>Through Zhang Meng's shooting of private Spaces in "The Depths of the Family", the presentation of these private Spaces conveys a</p>

			sense of security and belonging, highlights the symbolic significance of home as a harbor, and shows the core position of family in the personal emotional and spiritual world.
	Open space	A public place or environment	 <p>You Li's <i>Silent Latitude</i>, through the shooting of the open space, expresses that after the principle of the homeland, the sense of alienation permeates in many details, intersecting with memory, which is a private homesickness.</p>
	A mix of private and open Spaces	Both private and open Spaces	 <p>Daisuke Yokota's homage to the legendary fertility-enhancing ginkgo tree in Aomori through his indoor shots of the open spaces and girlfriends of Aomori spawned his photographic ode to tradition and memory, as well as his strong admiration for the important women in his life</p>

Visual element	Black and white series	Use black and white images to tell the story	 <p>Xie Qiongzhi's QianQian uses black and white images to enhance the drama and emotional expression of the work by removing color and focusing the audience's attention on the emotions of the characters and the texture of the images.</p>
	Color series	Use color images to tell the story	 <p>Feng Li's "White Night" uses color images to enhance the visual impact and narrative tension of the work through bright color contrast and rich tones, making ordinary scenes and characters show unique emotional levels and stories under the background of colors.</p>
Artistic skill	Symbolic expressionism	Symbolic Expressionism is an artistic movement and style that combines elements of symbolism and expressionism.	 <p>Qiu's Everyday Writing uses symbolic expressionism to give deeper meaning to ordinary things in daily life through the use of metaphor and symbolism, expressing</p>


			thoughts on the complex emotions and social phenomena hidden behind everyday life.
	collage	Use different elements to collage together	 <p>Yi Qing Liu's Yi Qing Liu uses the artistic technique of collage to create a multi-layered visual narrative that expresses complex emotions and ideas by combining different video elements together. This collage technique breaks the traditional single perspective and enables the viewer to interpret the connotation of the work in multiple dimensions.</p>

Table 9 Photography narrative in private photography
Source: Statistics by Yao Qiong, 2024

6.Summary of this chapter

This chapter delves into the narrative shifts that have occurred with technological advances in private photography as a medium for personal storytelling and self-consciousness expression. Through analyses of temporal and spatial structures, it reveals how non-linear narratives and the interaction between personal and open spaces shape the complexity of photographic narratives. Private photography is no longer confined to traditional boundaries, but expresses more profound emotional and psychological states through innovative narrative structures.

It also analyses the visual elements in private photographic narratives, such as colour, composition, light and shadow, which play a crucial role in the narratives. Through the skilful use of these visual elements, private photography is not only more visually appealing, but also conveys emotions and ideas in a more profound way.

In addition, techniques such as symbolic expressionism and collage were established as important tools in the evolution of private photography. These techniques allowed photographers to challenge traditional norms through multi-layered narratives, creating richer and more multifaceted visual narratives. These innovations not only enhanced the artistic expression of the work, but also provided

the viewer with space for multiple interpretations, further deepening the emotional and intellectual content of the work.

Studies have shown that private photography has broken through the boundaries of tradition through these advanced narrative techniques and visual representations. Innovative narrative structures, symbolic expressionism and collage techniques have become important tools in the evolution of private photography, enabling it to express complex emotional and psychological states in greater depth. These techniques have not only enhanced the artistic expression of the work, but have also made private photography a powerful means of exploring personal identity and memory, as well as providing avenues for deep reflection and broad social commentary in contemporary society.



Chapter V

Self-Consciousness in Private Photography

Introduction

This chapter delves into the complex relationship between self-awareness and private photography, exploring how this medium can be a powerful tool for self-exploration and identity formation. Private photography, often very personal and introspective, provides a unique space for individuals to record, examine and express their inner selves. This chapter seeks to understand the multifaceted ways in which memory, social interaction and identity intersect with a sense of self in the context of private photography.

The discussion begins by analysing the role of memory in shaping a sense of self, examining how the fluidity and reconstruction of memory affects an individual's ongoing process of self-definition. It then goes on to explore how self-awareness is shaped and deepened through social interactions, in particular how individuals perceive themselves in relation to others and receive feedback from their social environment. The chapter also examines the intersection of self-consciousness and identity, focussing on the complexities that arise when these concepts intersect, particularly at moments of identity crisis and self-exploration.

Finally, the chapter discusses how private photography can be used as a medium for the expression of self-consciousness through a variety of methods, such as self-portraits, personal narratives and explorations of emotional landscapes. These explorations highlight the many ways in which private photography can express and communicate the complex dimensions of self-consciousness, making it a valuable tool for personal reflection and identity formation.

By examining these themes, this chapter provides a comprehensive understanding of how private photography not only documents external reality, but also serves as a profound vehicle for internal exploration and self-awareness.

1. Memories shape our sense of self

The relationship between memory and self-perception is complex and multilayered, and together they shape our self-consciousness and our understanding of our state of being.

Memory is not only a passive record of past events; it also plays an active role in shaping self-perception. Memory helps us form our understanding of self by constantly filtering, selecting, and reinterpreting our experiences. It not only preserves our impressions of the past, but also adds personal feelings and evaluations to the process, thus constructing our perception of our own identity. The subjective nature of this memory makes it a key tool for self-identity.

We define who we are and how we perceive our place in time through remembered events. Memory helps us to organise and interpret our personal experiences, which in turn creates an ongoing understanding and awareness of our self-identity. Over time, memories also adjust to new experiences and emotions, and this dynamism makes self-perception an evolving process.

Overall, memory and self-knowledge are interdependent. Memory provides the basis for self-consciousness, which in turn continues to develop self-consciousness by reflecting on and reinterpreting memories. This process reflects how we understand ourselves and how we continually shape and redefine ourselves in the flow of time.

1.1 The fluidity of memory and experience

Memory and experience together form the basis of how we understand ourselves and perceive the world. Memory is more than a simple recollection of past events; it is an ongoing and continuous process.

As we experience the world, these sensory experiences are processed and stored through the brain, and these memories act as the basis for our understanding of the present moment. So, memories are not fixed, but are a dynamic process that changes over time and as we continue to gain new experiences. By accumulating and rearranging these memories, our consciousness gradually takes shape; and our self-consciousness is built through the process of repeatedly reviewing and reshaping these memories.

Experience is the core content of memory and the starting point of our self-consciousness. As we experience more things, the dynamic nature of memory prompts us to continually rethink and reconceptualise these experiences, which in turn influences how we see ourselves and how we see the world. Just as we recognise ourselves by looking at ourselves in the mirror, remembering our life experiences is an important part of how we develop a deeper sense of self-consciousness.

Memory therefore allows us to continually reinterpret our past experiences and use them to look to the future. This not only allows us to develop a deeper understanding of ourselves, but also allows our self-consciousness to evolve and change over time and with the accumulation of new experiences.

In the 12th Lianzhou Foto Festival 2016, Yusuke Yamatani's (Japan) "Rama Lama Ding Dong" provides a compelling exploration of memory, experience, and self-consciousness, weaving these elements into a deeply personal narrative that resonates with universal emotions. The work, which documents his newlywed travels across Japan with his wife, is not just a simple chronicle of events; it is a reflection of how Yamatani's memories and experiences shape his understanding of himself and his relationship with the world.

In this photographic series, memory plays a crucial role in capturing and preserving the fleeting moments of Yamatani's journey with his wife. The black and white images create a timeless quality, allowing the viewer to focus on the emotional depth and texture of the experiences rather than being distracted by the colors of the present moment. Each photograph acts as a memory, freezing a moment in time that Yamatani and his wife shared during their travels. These memories are not static; they are infused with the emotions of love, intimacy, and the transient nature of their experiences.



Figure 104 Rama Lama Ding Dong-1

Source: Yusuke Yamatani , 2016, the 12th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 107 captures the wife lying in the bucket of a moving pickup truck. The blurred background indicates the speed of the vehicle in contrast to the stillness of the reclining figure, which creates a dynamic sense of movement. The subject is positioned in the lower portion of the frame, drawing the viewer's eye first to her relaxed pose and then to the expansive road ahead.

Famous Japanese photographers Hisamasa Fukiyori and Keisuke Araki have both taken similar subjects of marital honeymoons. The photograph in Figure 107 is very similar to a photograph of his wife, Yoko, taken by Araki Keidan in Araki's *Sentimental Journey*.



Figure 105 Rama Lama Ding Dong-2

Source: Yusuke Yamatani , 2016, the 12th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Fig. 108 This black-and-white photograph captures an intimate moment in which the wife sits on the bed in a stark-looking, dimly lit room. A window is behind her, and this backlighting creates a dramatic contrast between the light and the shadows, emphasising the contours of her body and the texture of the room. The light highlights the wall, revealing a pattern that adds texture and depth to the composition.

The unmade bed, scattered pillows and crumpled sheets reinforce the personal and casual nature of this scene. The simplicity of this photograph makes it a striking example of how everyday moments can be transformed into art.



Figure 106 Rama Lama Ding Dong-3

Source: Yusuke Yamatani , 2016, the 12th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 109 shows a forest he and his wife were driving through on their honeymoon, which had some families camping in it.

The series captures more than just the physical journey; it also portrays the emotional landscape that Yamatani navigates as he embarks on this new chapter of his life. His self-consciousness is expressed in the way he uses photography to connect with his wife and to document their shared experiences. The images convey a sense of introspection, as if Yamatani is using the camera to explore his own emotions and to understand the complexities of his relationship with his wife. This exploration is a reflection of his growing self-awareness and his desire to capture the essence of his identity within the context of his marriage.



Figure 107 Rama Lama Ding Dong-4

Source: Yusuke Yamatani , 2016, the 12th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 110 shows it's getting late and the wife, dressed in a sexy outfit, is reinforcing the tent for camping. Here, because of the low light, Yamatani used a flash to enhance the black and white contrast.

Yamatani's work demonstrates the interplay between memory, experience, and self-consciousness. As he revisits the places he has been and the moments he has captured, these memories are reshaped by his evolving experiences and self-perception. The black and white images, with their emphasis on contrast and texture, serve as a metaphor for the way memories are layered with emotions and subjective interpretations. Yamatani's self-consciousness allows him to be both a participant in and an observer of his life, giving him the ability to reflect on his experiences and how they shape his understanding of himself.

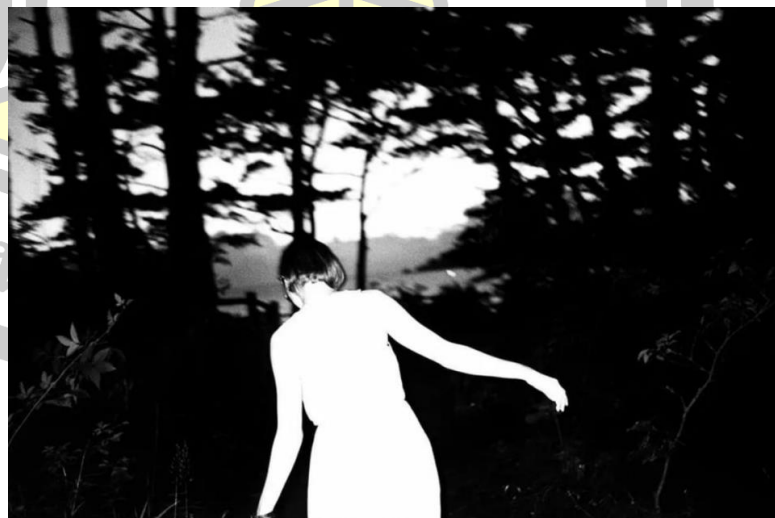


Figure 108 Rama Lama Ding Dong-5

Source: Yusuke Yamatani , 2016, the 12th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Yusuke's sincere and direct expression of emotions allows the viewer to feel the real emotions in the images. The viewer is not just a passive observer but a participant in the emotional experience when viewing these images, and this empathetic experience makes the emotional communication more effective. Although many of the images in "Rama Lama Ding Dong" are personal, the emotions they express, such as love, affection, loneliness, and reflection, are universal. Such universal emotions allow the viewer to find resonance in their personal emotional experience, enhancing the emotional communication of the images.

In "Rama Lama Ding Dong," memory and experience are not just records of the past; they are active elements in the construction of Yamatani's identity. The act of photographing these moments is itself an expression of self-consciousness, as Yamatani seeks to preserve and interpret the significance of his experiences. The work invites viewers to engage with their own memories and experiences, prompting them to consider how these elements contribute to their own sense of self.

In conclusion, Yusuke Yamatani's "Rama Lama Ding Dong" is a powerful exploration of how memory, experience, and self-consciousness intersect in the creation of personal narrative. Through his photographs, Yamatani not only documents his travels but also delves into the deeper emotional and psychological aspects of his journey, offering a nuanced and introspective look at the process of self-discovery. The series is a testament to the fluidity of memory and the role of experience in shaping our understanding of ourselves and our place in the world.

1.2 Reconstruction of memories in private photography

In private photography, memory reconstruction is the process of revisiting, recreating and re-understanding past memories through the taking of photographs. Unlike simply capturing a moment in time, memory reconstruction focuses more on in-depth reflection and emotional expression through photographs. Photographers don't just record a moment, they explore and express their personal emotions, life experiences and identity through these photographs.

Photographers often demonstrate changes in memory by comparing photos from different times. For example, putting scenes from childhood together with scenes from growing up, or showing how the same place has changed over time. Such comparisons can make viewers feel the passage of time and provoke them to rethink past memories.

In short, memory reconstruction in private photography is a way of reinterpreting and expressing personal experiences and emotions through photographs. This not only helps the photographer to better understand his or her past, but also allows the viewer to feel the stories and emotions behind them through these photographs.

At the 13th Lianzhou Foto Festival 2017, Akihito Yoshida's work "Falling Leaves" tells a touching story of affection, love and loss. Akihito Yoshida's photographs illustrate the process of memory reconstruction, capturing not only the daily interactions between his cousin and his grandmother, but also how time changes our memories and understanding of past events by comparing images from different time periods.



Figure 109 Falling Leaves-1

Source: Akihito Yoshida , 2017, the 13th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 109 visualises how time changes our memories of past events by juxtaposing scenes from two different time periods. The top half of the photograph shows a cousin as a child with his grandmother, while the bottom half shows the same place many years later, where the cousin has grown up and the grandmother has become older. This contrast is not only a testimony to the passage of time, but also a reinterpretation of past memories. Through this visual contrast, the audience can clearly feel the influence of time on people and the environment, and this change makes the original memories endowed with new emotions and meanings

Cousin says that his grandmother brought him up, and now that she is old, I come to take care of her, which I think is a normal thing to do. Grandma was born in 1928 and cousin was born in 1990, a difference of 62 years between them. Perhaps in order to take better care of his grandmother, he specialised in nursing, and since childhood, he and his grandmother have hardly been separated.



Figure 110 Falling Leaves-2

Source: Akihito Yoshida , 2017, the 13th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 110 shows Akihito Yoshida meticulously documenting his cousin's daily life while caring for his grandmother. Capturing his cousin's daily chores, from feeding to bathing and washing, these small scenes demonstrate how his cousin and his grandmother interacted in their daily lives, documenting the days they spent together.

Memory is not static; past memories are no longer just snippets of childhood, but are incorporated into a larger time frame and given new meaning.

As the cousin grows into adulthood, the grandmother's old age is a reminder of the irreversibility of time, and how time spent with loved ones becomes increasingly precious. This visual contrast not only makes the viewer revisit the scenes in the photographs, but also prompts a rethinking of the precious moments with loved ones on an emotional level. In the process, memories are reworked, giving them new emotional depth and layers.



Figure 111 Falling Leaves-3

Source: Akihito Yoshida , 2017, the 13th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 111 is presenting a cousin going out on his motorbike, with his grandmother at the door to see him off on his journey. The grandmother sees off her grandson every day and expects him to return as usual, a behaviour that not only reflects the inertia of their lives but also marks the cycle of time.

When one day no one expected that it would be goodbye forever, no one answered his phone calls, no one answered his emails, it was as if he had disappeared. The family searched for him and Grandma watched from her front window every day. A few months later, she waited for a phone call: he was gone. The family found his body on a hillside near their home; he had committed suicide lying under fallen leaves.

พหุ ประเด็น ชีว



Figure 112 Falling Leaves-4

Source: Akihito Yoshida , 2017, the 13th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 112 is a photograph of the back of a grandmother standing in the middle of a vast field. The overall colour tone of the image is black and white, giving it a feeling of silence and loneliness. The grandmother is standing alone on the path in the field, as if she is looking into the distance, and the whole image is filled with a faint sense of sadness and despondency.

The cousin is only 23 years old, and the grandmother seems to have lost her soul as well when she realises that the cousin will never come back, and a year later the grandmother is also gone.

By documenting her cousin's journey from childhood to adulthood and her grandmother's from youth to old age, Yoshida shows how time redefines and reshapes our memories. Over time, these memories become more than simple recollections of the past; they are reconstructed with emotional depth and complexity.

In private photography, the reconstruction of memory is not only the reproduction of an image, but also the reworking of emotions, and Yoshida's work reflects the influence of time on relationships and memories through the subtle capture of everyday life between loved ones. This reconstruction of memory allows the viewer not only to look back at the past, but also to deeply feel the emotional layers embedded within. In this way, photography becomes a powerful tool for recording and reinterpreting memories, making them not only echoes of the past, but also a continuation of present and future emotions.

1.3 Evolving Self-Consciousness through Memory and Experience

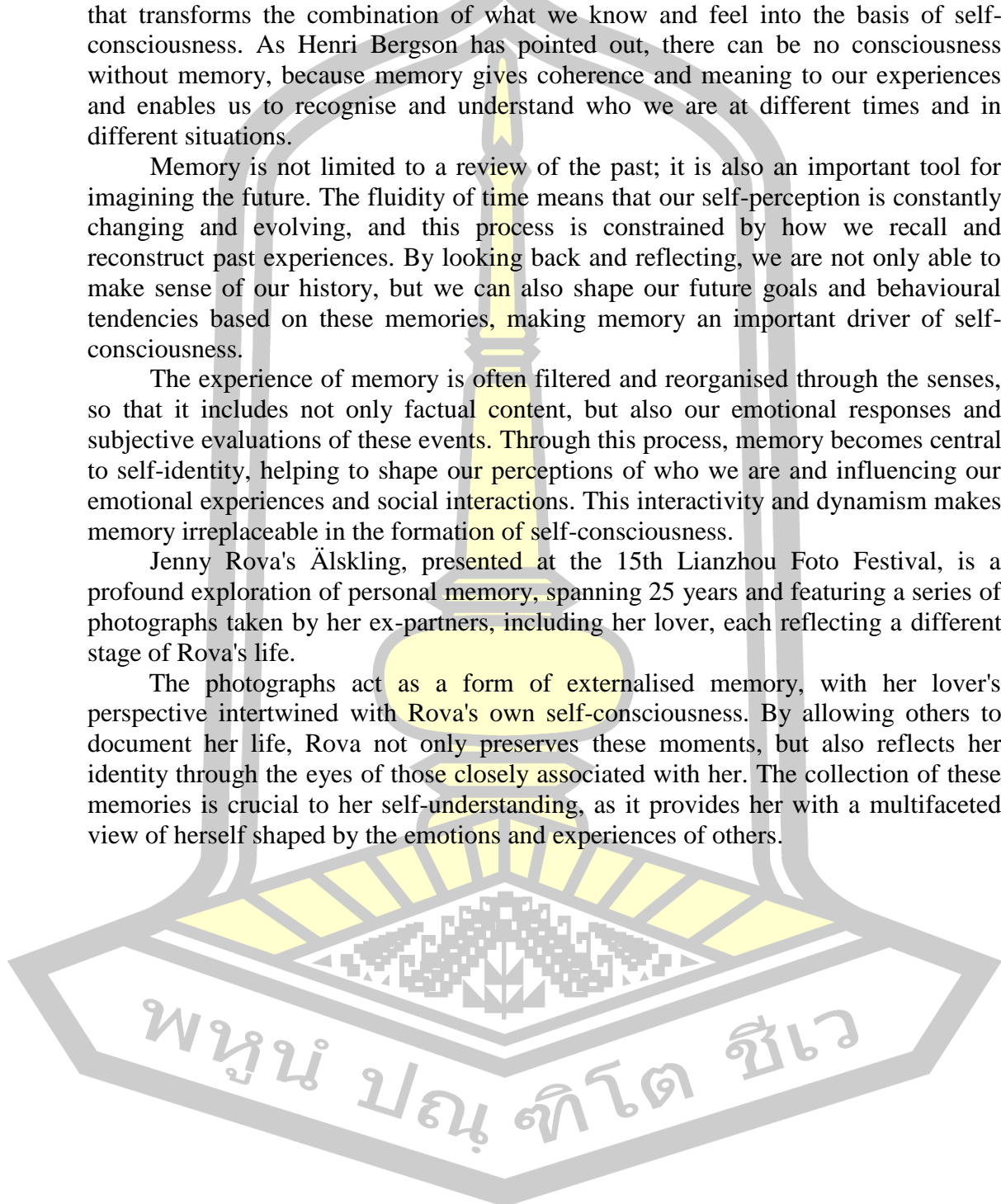
Memory plays a multi-layered and critical role in shaping self-consciousness. More than a simple record of past experiences, memory is a dynamic lived experience that transforms the combination of what we know and feel into the basis of self-consciousness. As Henri Bergson has pointed out, there can be no consciousness without memory, because memory gives coherence and meaning to our experiences and enables us to recognise and understand who we are at different times and in different situations.

Memory is not limited to a review of the past; it is also an important tool for imagining the future. The fluidity of time means that our self-perception is constantly changing and evolving, and this process is constrained by how we recall and reconstruct past experiences. By looking back and reflecting, we are not only able to make sense of our history, but we can also shape our future goals and behavioural tendencies based on these memories, making memory an important driver of self-consciousness.

The experience of memory is often filtered and reorganised through the senses, so that it includes not only factual content, but also our emotional responses and subjective evaluations of these events. Through this process, memory becomes central to self-identity, helping to shape our perceptions of who we are and influencing our emotional experiences and social interactions. This interactivity and dynamism makes memory irreplaceable in the formation of self-consciousness.

Jenny Rova's *Älskling*, presented at the 15th Lianzhou Foto Festival, is a profound exploration of personal memory, spanning 25 years and featuring a series of photographs taken by her ex-partners, including her lover, each reflecting a different stage of Rova's life.

The photographs act as a form of externalised memory, with her lover's perspective intertwined with Rova's own self-consciousness. By allowing others to document her life, Rova not only preserves these moments, but also reflects her identity through the eyes of those closely associated with her. The collection of these memories is crucial to her self-understanding, as it provides her with a multifaceted view of herself shaped by the emotions and experiences of others.



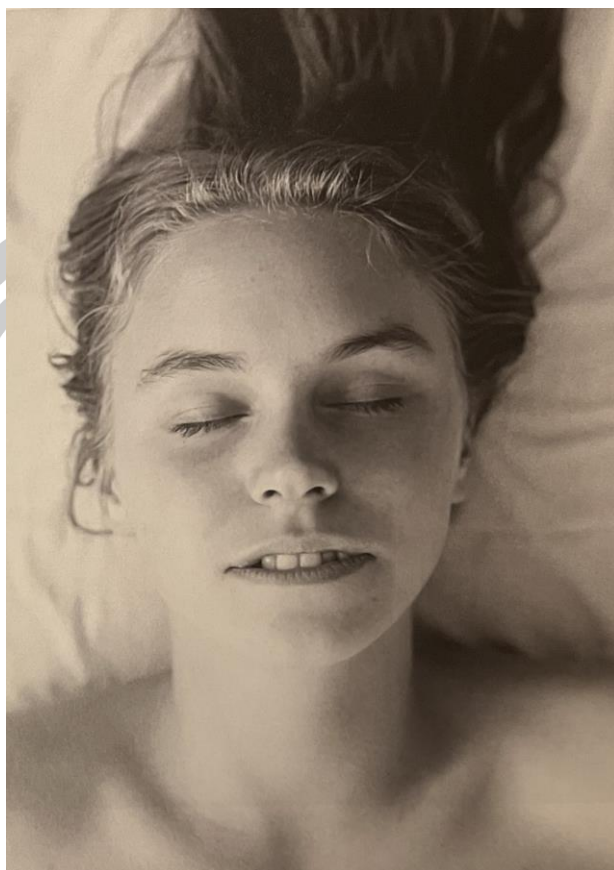


Figure 113 Älskling-1

Source: Jenny Rova , 2019, the 15th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 113 is a black and white close-up photograph of a young woman lying, possibly on a bed, with her eyes closed and her head resting on a pillow. The lighting is soft, creating a serene and peaceful atmosphere. The composition emphasises the woman's face, capturing her expression in moments of calm or reflection. The details of her hair and the subtle textures of her skin are highlighted by the monochrome palette, which adds to the timeless and intimate quality of the image.





Figure 114 Älskling-2

Source: Jenny Rova , 2019, the 15th Lianzhou Foto Festival

In the colourful image in Fig. 117, the subject is partially hidden under a blanket, with only her face visible, and Rova is smiling at her lover from under the blanket, creating a fun and intimate atmosphere. The warm colours of the blanket and the soft surroundings enhance the sense of comfort and security. This image may reflect the theme of warmth and security, or perhaps a fun or teasing interaction that suggests an intimate moment in a private space.

Figures 116-117 Together, these two images suggest a narrative of a private moment, where the subject is in a space of comfort and introspection, possibly related to memories or personal thoughts. These visual elements are often used in photography to explore self-identity, memory and emotional states, inviting the viewer to connect with the subject's inner world.



Figure 115 Älskling-3

Source: Jenny Rova , 2019, the 15th Lianzhou Foto Festival

In this image, Figure 118, Rova is standing on the beach, wearing a bikini and an interesting frog-shaped wreath around her waist. The weather is clear and cloudless with bright natural light, an open background, and a blue sky. Her confident, slightly humorous pose with one arm raised, combined with the carefree beach setting, conveys a sense of freedom, youthfulness, and perhaps a desire for fun and frolic in life.



Figure 116 Älskling-4

Source: Jenny Rova , 2019, the 15th Lianzhou Foto Festival

In this image, Figure 119, Rova is sitting in the sun-dappled shade of a tree, holding a baby, and the intimacy between mother and child and the sense of natural serenity is present throughout the image. She has covered her head and upper body with a cloth, an action that could be for privacy or simple shade. This hazy representation keeps the viewer interested and speculating about her identity and emotional state.

The photograph captures a maternal moment that reflects a mother at a particular stage in her life through this intimate and private record. This image not only preserves the intimacy between mother and child, but also forms part of her perception of her own identity at this stage. This memory may become an important element in her reflection and understanding of her self-consciousness in the future - by recalling these everyday, heart-warming moments, she is able to gain a deeper understanding of her self-identity as a mother.

In addition, the way the faces are hidden in the photographs symbolises a certain hiddenness or uncertainty of selfhood, a representation that emphasises the fact that self-consciousness is not always clear and unambiguous, but is gradually

formed and developed through different stages of experience and memory. Whenever these images are reviewed, the memories somehow reshape her self-consciousness, giving her a deeper understanding of her identity and role at different stages of her life.

The memories captured in "Älskling" are more than just a record of past events; they are an active part of Rova's ongoing journey of self-discovery. Each photograph is imbued with the feelings and interpretations of the person behind the camera, making the images highly personal and reflective of how Rova's identity is influenced by her relationships. The project emphasises the dynamic nature of memory and how it constantly informs and reshapes our understanding of who we are. Through Älskling, Rova demonstrates that memory is not a static repository of the past, but an evolving narrative that plays a key role in self-consciousness. The memories created by her lover's photographs help Rova engage with her identity on a deeper level, revealing how personal history and emotional connections contribute to the ongoing formation of the self.

2. Self-expression is an externalisation of self-consciousness

Self-consciousness in private photography is a profound self-exploration that involves a multi-layered expression of identity, emotion and personal history. Through this form of photography, the photographer does not just record the external world, but turns the camera on himself and digs deep into the inner emotional and psychological state. In this way, photographers are able to capture the subtle emotions of everyday life and convey a complex sense of individuality in their images. Private photography provides a platform for photographers to express themselves and examine their inner world, enabling them to gain a deeper understanding of their own identity and place in the world.

Firstly, self-portraits play a crucial role in private photography. Through self-portraits, photographers can directly confront their own image and explore the changes and development of self-perception. This self-observation is not only a record of the external image, but also a reflection on the internal self. Through self-portraits, photographers are able to capture those self-perceptions that change with the passage of time and record the evolution of personal identity. This introspective approach makes self-portrait an important way of self-awareness expression, helping the photographer to understand and present the diversity of self-identity.

Secondly, personal narrative in private photography is also an important means of expressing self-awareness. By recording personal life experiences, emotional relationships and key moments, photographers weave these images into a personal narrative. These narratives are not only a simple record of past experiences, but also a reflection of the photographer's emotional response and psychological changes when facing the past. In this way, the photographer is able to delve deeper into the formation and change of self-identity, revealing the complex relationship between the individual and society. The personal narrative in private photography often contains the photographer's deep understanding of and reflection on his own life, and becomes an important form of expression of self-consciousness.

Finally, the exploration of emotional landscapes is another key aspect of self-awareness expressed in private photography. By capturing emotional moments, the photographer shows the deep emotional state of the heart. This emotional expression

not only reflects the photographer's psychological state at the moment, but also reveals their deep feelings about their life experiences. By exploring these emotional landscapes, photographers are able to externalise their inner world and form an emotional resonance with their audience. This deep emotional expression makes private photography an important tool for understanding and exploring self-awareness, helping both photographers and viewers to better understand the complexity of human emotions.

2.1 Self-Portraits as Mirrors of the Self

Self-portraits are a powerful tool in private photography for exploring and expressing self-consciousness. By turning the camera on themselves, photographers engage in a process of self-exploration and self-reflection. This act allows them to confront their own image, identity, and emotions directly, creating a visual dialogue between their internal and external selves. Through self-portraits, photographers can explore their evolving sense of self, document changes in their identity over time, and reveal aspects of themselves that may not be visible to others.

In the 6th Lianzhou Photography Festival 2010, Tang Wenjing's 'My World' series captures the world from her personal perspective through a spontaneous and free-spirited approach. Her works are full of youthfulness, fantasy, narcissism and pie-in-the-sky elements, showcasing her unique artistic expression.



Figure 117 My World -1

Source: Liu Bozhi, 2010, the 6th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figures 120-123 are all selfie portraits of Tang Wenzheng. Figure 120 is a selfie in the bedroom, the figure in the picture is presented as being slanted upside down in the picture, Tang Wenzheng is wearing only pyjamas and looks childish and young

Tang Wenjing emphasises the randomness and spontaneity of the photographic process in her work. She compares her photography to a bee flying among the flowers and bumping into something by chance. This way of photographing reflects her intuitive response and immediate feelings towards the world, without careful consideration or pre-arrangement. As a result, her works have a

natural and authentic quality, showing her immediate reaction to life and her true inner feelings. (Tang, W., 2010)



Figure 118 My World -2

Source:Liu Bozhi ,2010, the 6th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 118 is a black-and-white photo of Tang Wenjing wearing heavy make-up and a high bun, looking like an adult.

Tang Wenjing's work reflects her exploration of self-awareness. Self-portraits in her works are not only a record of her appearance, but also a way for her to dialogue with her inner world. Through these self-mirrors, she is able to reflect on her emotional state, psychological changes, and various experiences in her life at a given moment. This inner dialogue makes self-portraits an important way for her to explore her self-awareness, and the camera becomes a mirror for her to examine herself, reflecting her current emotions and thoughts.



Figure 119 My World -3

Source:Liu Bozhi ,2010, the 6th Lianzhou Foto Festival

In Figure 119, Tang Wenjing is reclining in a chair, her whole body slanting in the picture, with a very bright lamp in the corner of the wall near her, and the picture is filled with light spots, just like the starry sky, which is dreamy.

Tang Wenjing's works are full of fantasy and pie-in-the-sky elements, showing how she externalises her inner world through self-portraits to create a unique artistic space. The self-portrait, as a mirror of the self, is not only a reflection of the real world, but also an artistic attempt to combine fantasy with reality. In her works, mirrors do not just reflect appearances, but visually express inner fantasies and emotions through the lens. She breaks the boundaries of the traditional self-portrait and explores the new possibilities of image expression by using the mirror image of herself, thus revealing the complexity of her inner feelings and multiple identities.



Figure 120 My World -4

Source: Liu Bozhi, 2010, the 6th Lianzhou Foto Festival

In Figure 123, Tang Wenjing uses a slow shutter to take a picture, and the light drags out a long track in the picture, which looks futuristic.

Through her photography, Tang Wenjing redefines the ordinary things in daily life. Her works demonstrate her keen observation and unique interpretation of the details in life. Whether it is a table, a bed or other daily objects, they all gain new meaning and life under her lens. Through these ordinary things, she expresses her deep thinking and emotional experience of life, showing her unique perspective on the world.

Tang Wenjing's works are full of youthfulness and narcissistic emotions, which is another manifestation of the self-portrait's function as a mirror of the self. Through the lens, she demonstrates her concern and contemplation of the self, recording her enthusiasm and spirit of exploration during her youth. This narcissism is not pejorative, but a way for her to explore and express her self-identity through the form of self-portrait. The dual identity of herself in front of the camera as both the photographer and the photographed allows her to examine and understand herself in a more objective and profound way.

To sum up, Tang Wenjing's My World series deeply expresses her self-consciousness, emotional experience and fantasy world through the form of self-portrait. As a mirror of the self, the self-portrait not only reflects her external image, but more importantly reveals her inner emotional and psychological world, showing how she explores and understands herself through photography. This expression of

self-mirroring not only enhances the personal style of the work, but also provides the viewer with a unique perspective to understand her inner world.

2.2 Visualization of inner emotion

In private photography, the visualisation of inner emotions is an important form of expression. By conveying deep emotional states such as loneliness, joy, fear or introspection through images, the photographer creates a visual representation of the inner world with the help of subtle emotional expressions in the photographs. This exploration of psychological depth allows the photographer to confront his or her own emotions and express personal experiences in a way that resonates with him or her and the viewer. The resulting images become a bridge between the photographers' inner emotions and the external world, providing a window into their psychological and emotional state.

The visualisation of inner emotions is a powerful expression in personal photography. Photographers not only record moments in the lives of individuals and families, but also reveal deep-seated emotional experiences. A typical example is Dai Jianyong's work *Zhu Fengjuan* at the 15th Lianzhou Foto Festival in 2019. Through a delicate emotional narrative, he profoundly portrays the emotional bond with his wife and conveys this emotion to the audience through the lens.



Figure 121 Zhu Fengjuan -1

Source: Dai Jianyong, 2019, the 15th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 121 shows a moment of great emotional depth. The two figures in the picture present a strong emotional contrast. The older woman on the left is lying on the bed, looking tired or weak, while Zhu Fengjuan on the right is stroking the pregnancy with an expression that carries a feeling of surprise and relief.

This image captures the contrast and connection between the two life stages. The state of the older woman may symbolise the decline or imminent end of life, while the pregnant young woman symbolises the continuation and renewal of life. This contrast conveys visually strong themes about the cycle of life and family legacy. The young woman's gesture of gently stroking her pregnant belly may also reflect her anticipation and unease about the impending arrival of a new life, while contrasting with the calmness of the older woman beside her.

The composition of the image reinforces this expression of emotion, with the two women close together, suggesting a close family relationship. Through this photograph, the photographer succeeds in bringing out the personal and familial aspects of the relationship, and the viewer is able to feel a deep empathy for the emotional ups and downs of life and the complexities of human relationships.



Figure 122 Zhu Fengjuan -2

Source: Dai Jianyong, 2019, the 15th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Zhu Fengjuan looks very fragile in the picture of Figure 125, with tears in her eyes, and there are no excessive distracting elements in the background, with the aim of focusing all the attention on the character's emotional expression. This direct transmission of emotion makes the photo highly infectious and can trigger the audience's empathy and emotional recognition. This kind of real and strong emotional expression is very typical in private photography, reflecting the fact that photography, as a medium of emotional expression, can bring the distance between the photographer and the viewer closer, and establish a deep emotional communication through images.

Dai Jianyong focuses on capturing those real moments that can convey strong emotions during the shooting process. Throughout the process of meeting and falling in love, getting married and giving birth, Zhu Fengjuan gradually transformed from a playful teenager into a mature wife. But not all of these photos are beautiful - she was pregnant, nursing, bringing up a child, breaking down and crying - but they later proved to be extremely valuable emotional records.



Figure 123 Zhu Fengjuan -3

Source:Dai Jianyong ,2019, the 15th Lianzhou Foto Festival

By capturing the real emotional state of the mother, this photo shows how complex emotions can be expressed through simple life scenes in private photography. Through this delicate observation of daily life, the photographer is able to guide the viewer to feel and understand the inner world of the subject, which is one of the unique charms of private photography.

This visualisation is achieved by capturing real and natural emotional moments. By capturing Zhu Fengjuan's facial expressions and body language in her daily life, Dai Jianyong truly reveals her inner world. This unadorned naturalness makes the expression of emotion more pure and intense, and the viewer is able to feel the unprocessed real emotion and deeply empathise with it.

Dai Jianyong focuses on capturing those real moments that can convey strong emotions during the shooting process. In the process of meeting, falling in love, getting married and giving birth, Zhu Fengjuan gradually changed from a playful girl to a mature wife. These photos, though not always beautiful, are extremely precious records of emotions.



Figure 124 Zhu Fengjuan -4

Source:Dai Jianyong ,2019, the 15th Lianzhou Foto Festival

The scene in Figure 127 is very intimate and private, with Zhu Fengjuan lying on a bed with a roll of toilet paper clutched in her hand, looking somewhat sheepish. Her posture and facial expression convey a rich emotional state, which is further enhanced by her body language, indicating what she may be experiencing.

By capturing the details of life, Dai Jianyong demonstrates the deep emotions between him and his wife and the little moments in their lives. These photos are not only a record of personal emotions, but also a deep reflection on the relationship between husband and wife. When viewing these photographs, viewers are able to experience the authenticity and complexity of emotions through these details, thus triggering reflection on their own lives and emotions.

This visualisation of inner emotions is not only the unique charm of private photography, but also challenges the traditional concept of aesthetics. Through the expression of emotion in Zhu Fengjuan, Dai Jianyong transcends the pursuit of external beauty in traditional photography, and instead emphasises the depth and authenticity of emotion. This approach allows the audience to re-examine the value of images and understand that photography is not only the pursuit of external beauty, but also a profound exploration of inner emotions.

Through the visualisation of inner emotions, private photography is not only visually appealing, but also touches the viewer on an emotional level, bringing a deeper emotional experience. This exploration makes photography a medium for deeper understanding and expression of emotions, and establishes a deep emotional connection between the photographer and the viewer.

2.3 Self-expression in cultural context

Self-expression is the process by which individuals externalise their inner feelings, thoughts and identity through behaviour, language and art. However, the form and content of self-expression are often deeply influenced by the cultural context. The cultural context provides a framework for individuals to understand and experience the world, which not only shapes the way individuals perceive the world, but also influences how they choose to express themselves.

Eriko Koga(Japan)'s work "TRYADHVAN", exhibited at the 12th Lianzhou Photography Festival 2016, Within the context of Japanese Buddhist culture, Eriko Koga's work TRYADHVAN explores the complexity of self-expression through intimate photography. Her photographs profoundly reflect the evolution of an individual's self-consciousness within Buddhist philosophy and culture, tying self-expression to traditional culture and spirituality. Through these works, Eriko Koga intertwines personal narratives with notions of the past, present, and future, exploring the change and continuity of identity through different dimensions of time.



Figure 125 TRYADHVAN -1
Source:Eriko Koga ,2016, the 12th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 125 depicts a serene mountain scene with a temple in the trees. The image is in black and white, creating a timeless and serene atmosphere. Streaks of mist or light visible in the foreground add an ethereal quality to the scene.

In the TRYADHVAN series, Eriko Koga takes the life of a Buddhist temple as her backdrop, and by capturing quiet natural scenes, daily life in the temple, and scenes from Buddhist rituals, she shows her self-expression in this unique cultural environment.



Figure 126 TRYADHVAN -2
Source:Eriko Koga ,2016, the 12th Lianzhou Foto Festival

The use of black-and-white photographs further emphasises the timeless and contemplative nature of the scene in Figure 129, in which a group of monks are engaged in religious or meditative activities in a temple, with slightly blurred figures. The Sanskrit term "TRYADHVAN" refers to the three worlds: the past, the present and the future. Through this concept, Eriko Koga explores the influence of the cycle of time and karma on personal identity. In her work, she has divided it into three main



Source:Eriko Koga ,2016, the 12th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Koga's approach to photography is very personal, and she uses the medium as a tool to document her life within the temple - a site rich in cultural and spiritual significance. Her photographs are more than just snapshots of daily life; they reflect her journey of self-discovery and how her environment has shaped her identity. By capturing moments that blend the sacred and the secular, Koga weaves a personal narrative that reveals how her identity is constructed within her immediate environment and the spirituality that governs it.



Figure 128 TRYADHVAN -4
Source:Eriko Koga ,2016, the 12th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 128 captures a tender moment between Eriko Koga's monk husband and their baby, the soft light and monochromatic colour palette adding to the serenity and emotional depth of the image, creating a sense of peace and purity. The monk, wearing glasses, carefully cradles the child in his arms, suggesting a deep connection and a fusion of traditional spirituality with the human experience of nurturing and parenting.

Eriko Koga captures the interactions between her monk husband and her children to show the continuation of self-expression in a future dimension. These photographs symbolise how her cultural and spiritual legacy influences the next generation, reflecting an understanding of identity that is not limited to an individual's lifetime, but extends to a wider cultural and temporal context.

In TRYADHVAN, Eriko Koga uses Buddhist culture as a framework to subtly demonstrate the depth and complexity of self-expression through intimate photography. Her work not only demonstrates the close connection between the individual and the cultural environment, but also captures the evolution and continuity of self-expression within this context, thus giving it a deeper philosophical and spiritual connotation. Through these images, she demonstrates the fluidity and multidimensionality of identity in Buddhist culture, emphasising the important influence of cultural context on self-expression.

3.Mirror Me : Self-consciousness and social interaction

‘Mirror Me’ is a concept developed by sociologist Charles Horton Cooley. It means that we understand ourselves through the eyes of others. Simply put, it is as if we look in the mirror in the eyes of others and form our opinions and perceptions of ourselves from their reactions and comments. For example, if others often praise you for being smart, you will feel that you are indeed smart; on the contrary, if others always criticise you, you may start to doubt your own abilities.

When we combine the ‘Mirror Me’ theory with private photography, we can understand that the photographer observes, records and expresses his inner

feelings from his own point of view, and then shows these photos to other people, from which he receives feedback and evaluation. This feedback is like a mirror that helps the photographer to further understand himself and form a perception of his own self.

3.1 Self-perception in the perspective of others

Self-perception refers to how we feel and perceive ourselves, such as what we think we are like and what our strengths and weaknesses are. This perception of ourselves is dependent on the social environment in which we live.

In social interactions, we form our self-perception by communicating and interacting with others. For example, when we spend time with friends, family, and co-workers, their reactions and feedback influence how we perceive ourselves. If others often praise us for being smart or kind, we may be more likely to believe that we really are. In addition, society's cultural norms and people's expectations also influence our self-perception. For example, society usually expects males and females to behave differently in certain aspects, which also influences how we see ourselves.

In short, self-perception is formed slowly through interactions with others and society and is influenced by our surroundings, culture and feedback from others. Together, these factors shape how we see and evaluate ourselves.

In the 13th Lianzhou Foto Festival in 2017, Liang's work *One Thousand Selfies* began in 2012, may have started out as a way to record his external appearance and internal state, in an attempt to leave evidence of his existence in the world. However, over time, this selfie behaviour has gradually evolved into a profound process of self-knowledge and exploration. In this process, social interaction plays an important role in the development of negotiated self-perception and self-consciousness.



Figure 129 *One Thousand Selfies* -1

Source:Shang Liang ,2017, the 13th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 132 demonstrates the effect of multiple reflections and layers of elements layered on top of each other. In the figure, reflections of an iron fence, a bicycle, and a glass window can be seen, and these elements intertwine with each other to give the image a complexity and depth.

Specifically, there is a piece of transparent glass in the centre of the image, which reflects a bicycle and some of the surrounding environmental scenery. In addition, the photographer's figure can be seen on the glass, as well as some logos and signs, such as the opening hours of '9:00 to 22:00'. These visual elements are superimposed by the reflective effect of the glass, creating a unique 'superimposed shadow' composition that enhances the visual hierarchy of the image.

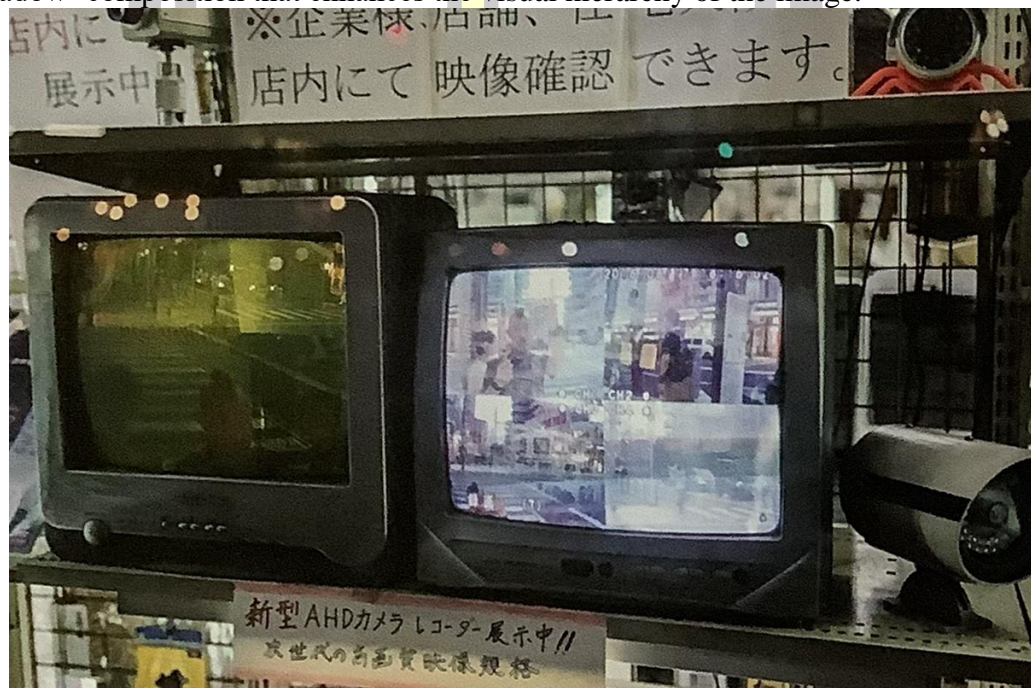


Figure 130 One Thousand Selfies -2

Source: Shang Liang, 2017, the 13th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 130 shows two monitors with different scene images displayed on the screen, and Shang Liang takes a selfie by shooting the monitor. The multi-layered reflections vividly illustrate Shang Liang's complex exploration of self-perception. In the image, Shang Liang's silhouette is intertwined with his surroundings through the reflection of the glass window, creating a complex visual effect. This visual 'superimposed shadow' not only blurs the boundaries of physical space, but also symbolically reflects the interaction between the self and society.

In social interaction, self-perception is often influenced by feedback from others, environmental contexts and cultural norms. Shang Liang's selfie documents through the lens how these external factors are intertwined with the image of the self. The reflection of the glass window acts as a 'social mirror' in this photograph, showing how Shang Liang sees himself in the context of his surroundings. This reflective effect symbolises the process of self-perception in his social interactions - he sees a complex, multi-layered self through the eyes of others, through the social 'mirror'.

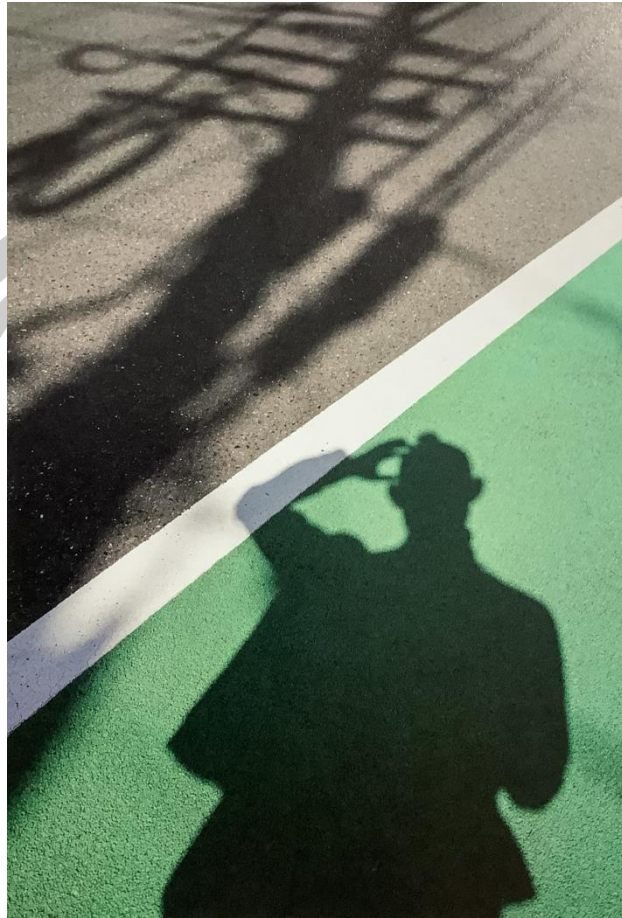


Figure 131 One Thousand Selfies -3

Source:Shang Liang ,2017, the 13th Lianzhou Foto Festival

A shadow on the ground is shown in Figure 134; the shadow clearly depicts a person, while other shadows are cast next to the shadow. The shadow symbolically represents the projection of the self in society. The shadow, as a visual symbol of the self, is no longer a direct reproduction of the body, but an image that has been influenced by the environment. This can be understood as the image of the self as perceived by the individual in social interaction. The shadow is intertwined with the shadows of objects next to it, suggesting that self-perception does not exist in isolation, but is influenced by the surrounding environment and the perspectives of others.

In discussions of self-perception, the shadow is often used to symbolise an indirect, reflective projection of personality. It is no longer the direct self that we see, but an image shaped by social, cultural, and environmental factors. The ambiguity and uncertainty of the shadow reflects the complexity of the individual's perception of self in social interactions.

The presence of the shadow also indicates an 'other' perspective in self-perception. Through the eyes of others, our image is projected and interpreted, just as shadows are formed in the light. How individuals perceive themselves in social interactions and how they adjust their image in response to the feedback of others can be reflected in this symbolism of the shadow.



Figure 132 One Thousand Selfies -4
Source:Shang Liang ,2017, the 13th Lianzhou Foto Festival

On his 30th birthday, Shang Liang decided to make selfies an ongoing art project until the end of his life. This decision gave the selfies more artistic and life-giving significance. Making selfies an ongoing project means Shang Liang's determination and persistence in exploring and documenting himself. This continuity makes the selfie not just a record of moments, but a process of self-observation and reflection over a long period of time. This continuous act of taking selfies will become a record of Shang Liang's life, and through these photographs, viewers can see the changes and growth of a person over time.

Figure 135 shows a work made up of many small photographs, each of which is a selfie of Shang Liang, forming a huge visual puzzle. The photographs show Shang Liang's various self-images in different scenarios, ranging from everyday life to more creative and artistic expressions, and each photograph is part of Shang Liang's process of self-exploration.

A Thousand Selfies' shows how Shang Liang's self-perception is constantly formed and reshaped in social interactions through a large number of selfies. Each selfie is a capture and presentation of his self-image in different situations, which themselves reflect the social environment he is in and the feedback from others. These photos not only record the changes in his appearance, but more importantly they capture his self-perception formed in the process of interacting with society.

Each selfie is a form of self-expression and also a dialogue between Shang Liang and society. By sharing these photos, Shang Liang puts himself in a public view and accepts the view and evaluation of others. This process of social interaction influences his self-perception, prompting him to constantly reflect on and adjust his image.

One Thousand Selfies is not only a record of his personal life, it is also a visual representation of Shang Liang's self-awareness through social interaction. These photographs demonstrate how he has engaged in a continuous dialogue with society through constant self-pictures and displays, thus continuously forming and redefining his identity and self-perception. This artistic practice reveals the complex process of developing an individual's identity and self-consciousness in society.

3.2 Expectations of evaluation by others

'The Mirror' Me theory helps us to understand the influence of feedback from others on self-perception, while private photography is a tool for documenting and expressing oneself. The interaction between the two is a process of continuous self-exploration and reflection. Through photography and feedback from others, the photographer not only understands himself better, but also finds new creative inspirations and ways of expression.

In the 8th Lianzhou Foto Festival in 2012, Murong Slipper's work 'Drifting Desire' shows his honest expression of life's desires and his profound exploration of self-identity. However, his work triggered a variety of reactions in the society.

The series 'Drifting Desire' is full of raw and direct images, in which both women and men appear, full of intertwined desires and emotions. Through these images, Murong Slippers expresses his honest confrontation with the desires of life and his complex experience of emotions. He believes that desire is a human instinct, as integral to life as eating, sex and breathing. This honest attitude towards desire reflects his deep understanding and acceptance of his own emotions.



Figure 133 Drifting Desire -1

Source: Murong Slipper, 2012, the 8th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 136 presents a rainy day scene with a black and white colour palette that adds to the overall emotional and atmospheric tension. The image is taken through the perspective of the front window window of a car with a curvaceous woman, the perspective of the shot looks like the voyeurism of a demented man, and the glass is covered with raindrops, further blurring the image and making the whole scene appear hazy.



Figure 134 Drifting Desire -2

Source: Murong Slipper, 2012, the 8th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 137 presents five women lying side by side on a bed, their heads exposed outside the quilt, with different looks. The bedding is similar to that of a hotel or express hotel, and the women are lying side by side on the hotel bed as if waiting for some subterfuge.

Murong slippers used to have a decent 'good job', since it is decent, it is inevitably mixed with wine red flowers green. He will from time to time to 'click' a bit. In these 'click' images, always inseparable from the woman, fierce and direct; appear from time to time men, so that the whole picture has a more specific 'unpleasant' description, these images reveal Murong slippers in the wine in the shuttle erotic, some people think that the slippers' Some people think that Slippers' works are pornographic.

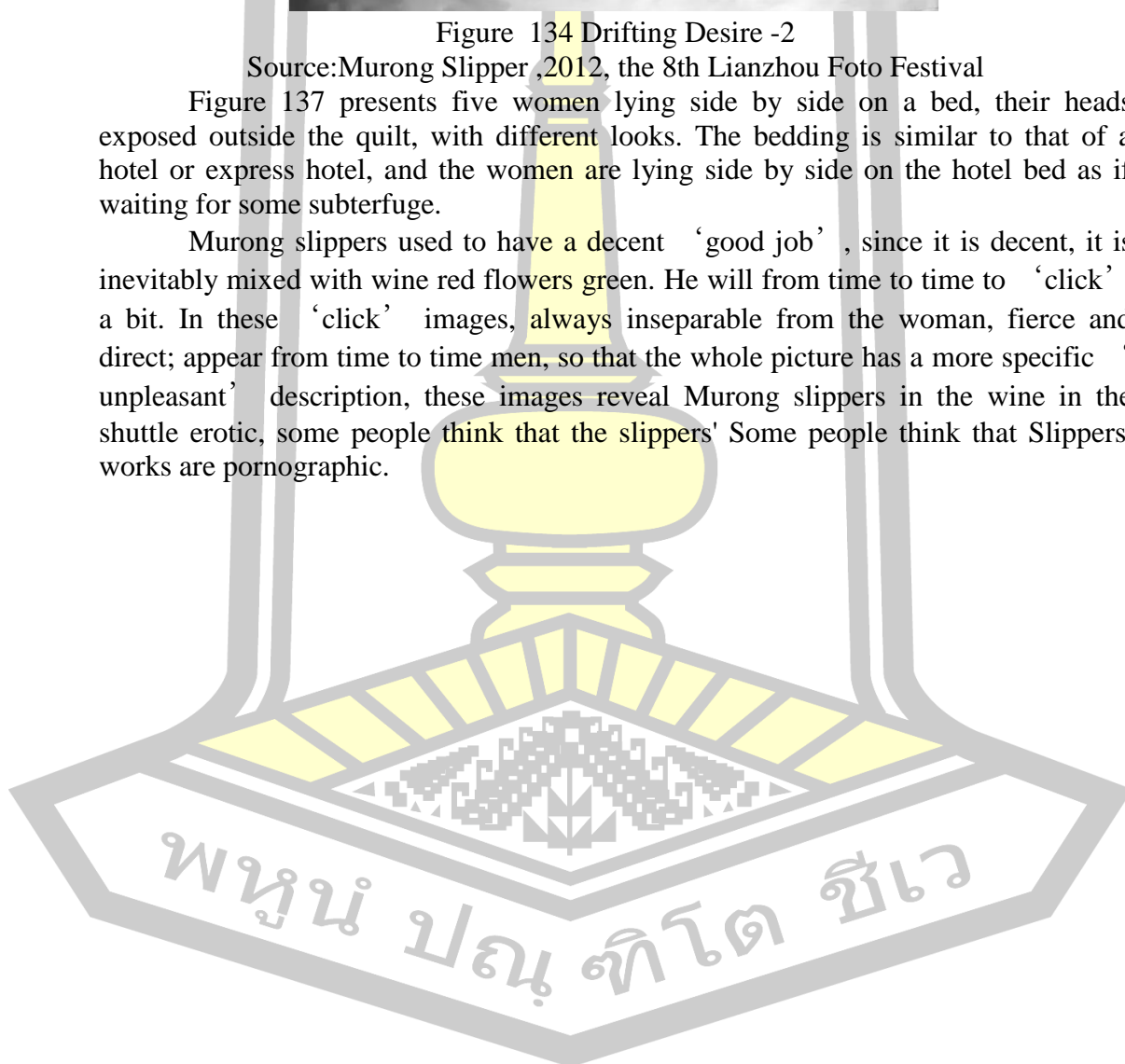




Figure 135 Drifting Desire -3

Source: Murong Slipper, 2012, the 8th Lianzhou Foto Festival

In Figure 138 is a section of a woman's exquisite body, wrapped in a leather skirt with a thin waist, thighs and ample buttocks. At the bottom of the image is the front of a large-bellied male. That is, the viewer gets a glimpse of the delicate body, but also finds a hint of the underlying suggestion when they think about it more carefully

Murong Slippers also admits that his work is full of desires, just living itself is a desire. Desire is a human instinct, just like eating, sex and breathing. Without desire to live, there is no need to stay in the chaotic world. In everyday scenes, Murong Slippers photographs emotions that he cannot describe in words, and as soon as he picks up the camera, he wants to record them, or he doesn't know why he wants to record them, or maybe it's because after recording them that he can dissolve some kind of inner turmoil and uneasiness. He has been waiting for nearly ten years for 'Drifting' to be exhibited at the Lianzhou Foto Festival in 2012. With the help of Lianzhou Foto Festival founder and artistic director Duan Yuting, artist Yan Ming, and curator Da Men, his work was exhibited with dignity and regularity. Although a few of them were eventually taken down, Mr Duan Yuting protected Murong Slippers' works to the maximum extent possible.

Regarding pornography or not, he believes that photography lags far behind other artistic vehicles such as film, literature and painting. Slippers does not find his work pornographic either, because these images are deeply emotional and only relate to him personally. Murong Slippers says he doesn't care about any labels, and when he can't help it, he still fights back with sharp words.

As someone who has always taken photos, Slippers, who used to feel uneasy when he went out without a camera, stopped taking photos after *Drifting Desire*, and began to doubt whether photography was the closest way to express himself. He began to doubt whether photography was the closest way to express himself. He also doubted himself for a while, although he didn't think that the limitations of the medium itself could really influence the essence of the expression of his works.



Figure 136 Severance
Source: Murong Slipper, 2013

After a period of doubt and reflection, Murong Slipper picked up his camera again and began working on the *Broken Chapter* series. This determination reflected his emotional and intellectual growth. He realised that photography is still his most important form of expression and decided to continue exploring and recording his inner world through photography. Figure 138 is part of the *Broken Chapter* series.

The various evaluations of Murong Slippers' works by the society forced him to face and reflect on his creative direction and expression. These feedbacks are not only evaluations of his works, but also reflect the society's perception and positioning of his personal identity, which inadvertently influences his view of his Self-evaluation.

After these reflections and doubts, Murong Slippers eventually chose to continue picking up the camera and created *Broken Chapter*. This shift reflects his internal struggle and growth in the face of social interaction. He realised that although society may have different interpretations of his works, he still needs to insist on self-expression and return to the essence of 'watching and being watched'.

Through the theory of 'Mirror Me', we can see that the perspective of others and social interaction play an important role in private photography. Photographers constantly adjust and shape their self-expression through the reactions of others. For Murong Slippers, the various reactions of society to his works become part of his self-knowledge, pushing him to explore and reflect on his creations. Thus, private photography is not only a tool of expression for individual photographers, but also part of their ongoing interaction with society. Social interaction influences the photographers' self-perception and creative direction in the process, making their works acquire new meanings as they continue to adjust and deepen.

3.3 Shaping self-consciousness in social interaction

Self-consciousness refers to an individual's awareness of themselves, their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. It's how we see ourselves and understand our place in the world. social interaction plays a crucial role in shaping this self-awareness. When we interact with others, their reactions, opinions, and feedback provide us with information about how we are perceived. This feedback influences how we view ourselves, helping us refine or adjust our self-concept over time.

In essence, self-consciousness is our internal view of who we are, while social interaction is the external input that helps shape and sometimes change that view. The interaction between the two is a continuous process that contributes to personal growth and self-understanding.

In the 10th Lianzhou Foto Festival in 2014, Patricia Lay-Dorsey's work *Falling into Place* shows Patricia Lay-Dorsey's daily life in the face of multiple sclerosis, a work that has won multiple awards for its emotional depth and honest documentation, and has been widely covered by multiple media outlets around the world. This social interaction not only confirms the artistic value of her work, but also expresses society's empathy and respect for her personal story. Patricia Lay-Dorsey's *'Falling into Place'* is a photographic representation of her daily life as a person with multiple sclerosis. It is not only a record of her personal experience, but also a candid and accepting look at her disease and her life situation.



Figure 137 *Falling into Place* -1

Source: Patricia Lay-Dorsey, 2014, the 10th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 140 shows Patricia Lay-Dorsey sitting in a wheelchair with half of her face covered by shadows. The light hits her face from the side, creating a strong contrast between light and dark. She is wearing a blue jumper, the colour of which contrasts with the warm tones of her face, and this contrast of warm and cool tones further enriches the image. The texture of the jumper is clearly visible, and the soft plush creates a visual contrast with her stoic expression.

This portrait photography successfully conveys deep emotions and a complex inner world through the clever use of light and shadow, colour contrast and the character's expression. The picture not only shows the character's external appearance, but also hints at her rich inner world and emotional experiences through light and shadow and colours. Viewers can feel a calm and thoughtful atmosphere when enjoying this photo, and at the same time, it inspires curiosity and imagination about the story behind the character.



Figure 138 Falling into Place -3

Source: Patricia Lay-Dorsey ,2014, the 10th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 141 shows a pair of bare legs and feet with parts of a wheelchair looming in the background. The figure is standing on a wooden floor in one spot, and the most obvious element in the image is these bare feet and legs. Her toes are gripping the ground as if she is struggling to keep her balance or is trying to take a step.

The warm tones of the image and the texture of the wooden floor and walls are clearly visible, adding to the intimacy and realism of the image. Details on the character's feet-such as the tension in her muscles and the grip of her toes-further reinforce the physical challenges she faces. This nuanced display allows the viewer to feel her resilience and hard work.

The presence of the wheelchair combined with the character's tense body posture depicts a difficult moment. The viewer is not only able to see the physical struggles, but also feel the resilience and determination she displays in the face of these difficulties. This visual narrative makes the image not only visually appealing, but also resonates on an emotional level.



Figure 139 Falling into Place -2

Source: Patricia Lay-Dorsey ,2014, the 10th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figures 142 and 143 both show Patricia Lay-Dorsey showing details of her life, Figure 142 presents a quiet, slightly contemplative scene. In the centre of the image is an outstretched hand with fingers gently touching a pair of spectacles resting on a table. There is also a piece of paper on the table with a blurred background that appears to be in a park or outdoor scene. Figure 143 is the shadow of the carer pushing her wheelchair, reflected in the grass.

Through these details of her life, the viewer is able to gain a greater understanding and respect for the lives of people with multiple sclerosis. Her photography is not only a tool for self-expression, but also a bridge to the outside world. By sharing her story, she gained more social support and care.



Figure 140 Falling into Place -4

Source: Patricia Lay-Dorsey ,2014, the 10th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Patricia Lay-Dorsey's *Falling into Place* won first prize in the Emotion category of the Prague Photography of the Year Award 2013 and third prize in the FotoVisura Award for Outstanding Individual Photography Project 2010. The work has appeared in *Newsweek Japan*, *Huffington Post Arts*, *ABC News Online*, *CBS News Online*, *The New York Times Lens Blog*, *Vogue Italia*, *The Daily Mail Online*, *New Manoeuvre Magazine*, *Feature Shoot*, *Burm Magazine*, *Slate Magazine's Behold Blog*, and on the website of the China International Photographers Association, among others. website, among others.

The high level of social recognition and wide dissemination of Patricia's work has led to the positive development of her self-consciousness. As a multiple sclerosis patient, her works not only show her personal resilience and optimism, but also arouse the attention and discussion of the society.

Patricia interacts with the community through her photography and receives a great deal of positive feedback from it, which in turn inspires her to be more positive about life. Her active involvement in music festivals and the publication of her new photography book '*Techno Grandma*' demonstrate her expanding interests and attitude towards life.

Not only is she recognised in the world of photography, but she is also affectionately known as '*Techno Grandma*' for her active acceptance and use of new technology in her old age. This shift in identity reflects a more positive and confident self-perception, fuelled by social interaction.

As a '*Techno Grandma*', she has not only adapted to modern technology, but also actively participated in social activities, all of which indicate that she has found a new identity and meaning in her life through social interactions.

Social recognition and support not only helped her find a new direction in creation and expression, but also enriched and diversified her self-identity. Her experience demonstrates the important role of social interaction in the development of self-consciousness and how to achieve self-breakthrough and growth through art and technology.

4. Self-consciousness and identity are intertwined

In psychology, researchers often associate the self with 'sameness' and explore the question of 'who am I'. Freud further developed identity theory in his writings, explaining the types, characteristics and forms of identity and their influence on self-consciousness. According to him, identity is a complex psychological process that helps a person to identify who they are and to feel which group they belong to, leading to appropriate emotions and behaviours.

Self-consciousness is your awareness of yourself as an individual; you know who you are, how you think and how you feel. Identity, on the other hand, is how you see and define yourself, including your personality, beliefs, and the various roles you play in life.

When we discuss self-consciousness and identity together, we are really exploring how our awareness of ourselves helps us to form our identity and how we find our place in the world and fit into society.

4.1 Mutual Influence of Self-Consciousness and Identity

The interplay between self-consciousness and identity determines how we understand ourselves and our role in society. Self-consciousness involves an individual's awareness and control of himself/herself and is a reflection of internal feelings, thoughts and beliefs, while identity is gradually formed through interactions with society and culture, and represents how we perceive our role in social groups and our sense of belonging.

In this interaction, self-consciousness helps us to interpret and define our social identity. Exhibited at the 10th Lianzhou Foto Festival in 2014, Sima Yuan's work 'Secondary nature' explores her gender identity through three interconnected sections - 'A Woman's Fable', 'SMA' and 'Questions in the Box' - explores her gender identity. The work demonstrates the complex interaction between self-consciousness and identity.



Figure 141 The Secondary nature-1

Source: Sima Yuan, 2014, the 10th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Part one: Women's Spiritual Life and Inner World

Figure 144 depicts a domestic scene in which a female person is lying in bed, dressed in black, with another person sitting next to her, wrapped in newspaper. The background of the scene is a bedroom or similar personal space with bookshelves filled with books and objects in the background.

The background of the image is a familiar domestic setting, but the presence of the newspaper-covered figure brings an element of strangeness or discomfort. The newspaper-covered figures represent the blurring or domination of an individual's self-consciousness by societal expectations disseminated through the media, especially in the context of female identity.

The domestic scene depicted in Figure 144 shows how a woman constructs her self-consciousness through her inner spiritual life and personal space. The female figure in the work reflects her self-awareness of social expectations and through this awareness her gender identity as a woman. Self-consciousness plays a key role here, helping her to understand and deal with the influence of society on her identity.



Figure 142 The Secondary nature-2

Source: Sima Yuan , 2014, the 10th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 142 depicts a female huddled on the ground covered in dirt, leaves, and other natural debris. The woman's body is very white skinned, contrasting with the dark ground and surroundings.

In *The Parable of the Woman*, Sima Yuan instructs women to perform a variety of acts that symbolise the inner and outer conflicts they experience. These performances reflect the contradictions that women face, such as the struggle between freedom and social constraints, and the tension between self-focus and alienation. Through her portrayal of these challenges, Szabuchi delves into the complex reality of being a woman and the constant negotiation between personal desires and societal expectations. This exploration is key to her understanding of her own gender identity, as it reveals what it means to be a woman in a culturally conditioned world.

Part two: The SMA

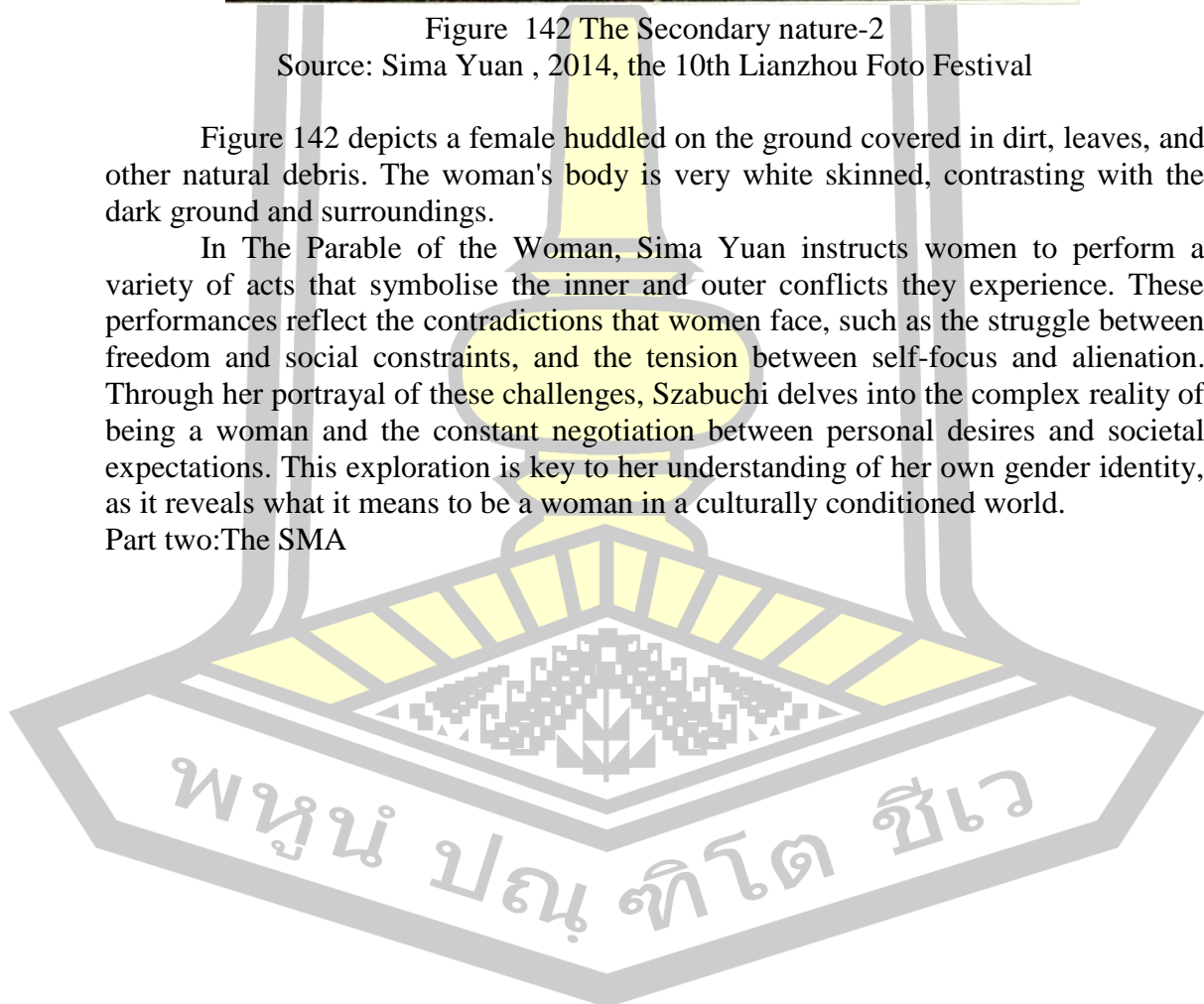




Figure 143 The Secondary nature-3

Source: Sima Yuan , 2014, the 10th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 143 is a selfie aimed at one's own reflection in a mirror. The photographer has his back to the camera, with his back and body partially exposed, and is using his smartphone to capture his own reflection.

In the 'SMA' section, Sima Yuan explores the relationship between self-consciousness and identity through the use of selfies and mirrors. The selfie in Figure 146 is not only a display of appearance, but also an exploration of the inner world. Through self-reflection, Sima Yuan is able to understand and express her gender identity more deeply, combining her inner self-consciousness with her outer identity.





Figure 144 The Secondary nature-4
Source: Sima Yuan , 2014, the 10th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 144 has a figure silhouetted against a background of contrasting colours, particularly red and black. The composition seems to evoke a sense of mystery or introspection, with the shadows creating a focal point in the image.

The work uses shadows, silhouettes and colour contrasts to create a strong visual effect that draws the viewer into thinking about themes of identity, emotion and introspection. The ambiguity in the image allows for multiple interpretations, making it a work that invites reflection and analysis.

In the 'SMA' section, Sima Yuan turns the camera on herself and takes selfies as a form of self-reflection. This section of the work emphasises the use of photography as a mirror that not only captures her exterior but also explores her interior. The relaxed, introspective nature of these selfies allows her to confront and express her true emotions and thoughts. This personal, inner journey is a key aspect of her gender identity, as it provides a private space in which she can reconcile her public image with her private feelings. Through this process, Sima Yuan recognises and accepts her identity as a woman and all the emotions and experiences associated with it.

Part three: The Question in the Box

Interaction and Dialogue of Gender Identity

The 'Questions in a Box' section involves direct interaction with the audience, where they ask questions and engage in discussion with Sima Yuchi. This interactive approach allows her to explore gender identity from multiple perspectives, incorporating the views and questions of others into her understanding. Through these dialogues, Sima Yuan further examines the roles and expectations that society imposes on women and how these roles and expectations shape women's identities.

Feedback and interactions with the audience helped her to place her personal experiences within a broader social framework and strengthened her understanding of her gender identity.



Figure 145 The Secondary nature-5
Source: Sima Yuan , 2014, the 10th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Fig. 145 This image focuses on a large number of women with long, black hair, which dominates the image and creates a striking visual effect by contrasting strongly with the lighter areas of the skin.

Hair is rich in symbolism in many cultures, often associated with female beauty, strength, and even vitality. This image explores these cultural symbols by focusing on long hair as a sort of metaphorical expression of female self-identity.

In the section 'Questions in the Box', Sima Yuan demonstrates the intertwining of self-consciousness and social identity through interaction with the audience. The audience's feedback and discussion helped her to further examine and understand society's expectations of women's identities, and this interaction not only shaped her self-consciousness, but also contributed to a better understanding and acceptance of her own identity.

Through these works, Sima Yuan demonstrates how self-consciousness and identity influence and shape each other through introspection, social interaction and self-expression. Her artistic explorations show that an individual's self-consciousness is not only influenced by the social environment, but is also able to counteract social identity, contributing to the continuous evolution and deepening of identity.

4.2 Identity Formation through Cultural and Social Interactions

In private photography, identity is often viewed as a dynamic, multifaceted phenomenon that develops gradually through interaction with culture and society and is intertwined with self-consciousness. Whereas in public or traditional forms of photography, identity may be presented in a more singular or direct manner, in private photography it allows for a deeper and more nuanced exploration of the multiple dimensions of personal identity. Through photography, the diversity of identity can be expressed through a variety of themes, techniques and personal narratives, highlighting the complexity of self-consciousness.

Private photography often combines personal narratives and memories to convey the diversity of identity. More than just a record of personal experiences, these works are visual diaries that reflect the evolving nature of identity through time and experience. By documenting significant moments, relationships and emotions in an individual's life, the photographer demonstrates the interconnections between the past, present and future, revealing how identities are constantly shaped and reshaped at these points in time.

Liu Bozhi's work *Redream Golden Mountain* is a profound exploration of multiple identities in private photography, particularly in the context of migration, acculturation and personal history. His photographs present a deeply personal view of the complex identities that arise from the immigrant experience, showing the process of shaping self-consciousness as it interacts with culture and society.



Figure 146 *Redream Golden Mountain* -4
Source: Liu Bozhi, 2005, the first Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 149 is a group photo of Liu Zhi Bo's extended family in Hong Kong. Liu Zhi Bo's family migrated to Hong Kong from Guangdong starting with his grandfather when Hong Kong was still a British Concession area. Redream Golden Mountain again contains the story of Liu Bozhi's family, as well as his experiences of studying in the United States and immigrating to the United States.

During Liu Bozhi's childhood, the dream of Gold Mountain (USA) was an idealised status symbol for him. From his uncle's story, he got an idealised picture of 'Uncle Jinshan' returning with wealth and success, which planted the vision of Jinshan in the young Liu Bozhi's mind. The diversity of identities at this stage is reflected in the gap between the ideal and the reality: his uncle returns, but instead of bringing back the expected success, he experiences hardship and disappointment. This initial identity is an image of identity with idealisation, transmitted by others.



Figure 147 Redream Golden Mountain -5
Source: Liu Bozhi, 2005, the first Lianzhou Foto Festival

Liu Bozhi himself also went to the 'Golden Mountain', the family borrowed money to put together the air tickets, tuition fees and money to buy a camera, and used all sorts of ways to let him go to Canada to study photography. When he arrived, he did not start his planned study life smoothly, but had to find a job so that he could have a real Chinese meal. For the first time in his life, he felt that he no longer had a family to provide for him, and that he had to rely on himself for everything. Because he was so homesick, he deliberately passed through Chinatown every day after school, hoping to find a bit of familiarity in the unfamiliar Canada.

This environment allowed Liu Bozhi to interact with lower-middle class people on a daily basis. People like them were often scared for being caught, but everyone would support and take care of each other in a foreign country. Some of the older Chinese have even been in hiding for decades, making a living in secret. In these neighbourhoods I witnessed first-hand the poverty and resilience of the people, and learnt that the 'Jinshan dream' is not so simple.



Figure 148 Redream Golden Mountain -6

Source: Liu Bozhi, 2005, the first Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 148, taken in San Francisco, shows Lambert sitting in his small room with a map of China and various immigration bills on the wall.



Figure 149 Redream Golden Mountain -7

Source: Liu Bozhi, 2005, the first Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 149 shows another wall of Lin Bo's single room in San Francisco, which is covered with information about U.S. immigration policies, photos of family members, contact information of loved ones, and some Chinese religious items. The whole room is very compactly arranged with items densely arranged, and it seems that every space is fully utilised.

By displaying Lin Bo's living space, this picture vividly reveals the challenges of identity, the struggle for cultural heritage, and the hardships of life that immigrants face in a foreign land. The detailed arrangement of these richly detailed objects and the dense presentation of information enable the viewer to gain a deeper understanding of the complex emotions and realities experienced by the immigrant community.



Figure 150 Redream Golden Mountain -8
Source:Liu Bozhi ,2005, the first Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 150 shows a simple altar with a couple of apples, incense and some ash in a French fry cup, and a simple wallpaper with a memorial photograph in the background. The altar is simple and is used to pay tribute to a friend who has passed away.

This kind of simplicity shows that Chinese in a foreign country hold on to their traditional culture, and even though living conditions may be very difficult, they still retain this sense of rituals to pay tribute to their deceased friends. The simplicity of the altar and the peeling wooden surface of the tabletop tell a silent story of the hardships of life.

In short, through a simple altar, this photograph vividly expresses the immigrants' nostalgia for their deceased relatives and friends, and at the same time reflects their adherence to cultural traditions and their identity in the midst of a difficult environment.

During the days of mutual support with the immigrants, Liu Bozhi began to search for his roots, trying to reconnect himself with the culture of his ancestors. His photographs began to focus more on cultural symbols and traditions, and how these symbols are preserved and passed on in the lives of immigrants.

In the process of interacting with the immigrant community, Liu Bozhi gradually searches for his roots and tries to reconnect with the culture of his ancestors. During this process, his self-consciousness also underwent a profound transformation:

from an ordinary immigrant, he gradually evolved into a person dedicated to preserving and passing on his cultural roots. His photographs have become carriers of cultural identity, showing how self-consciousness is formed through interaction with culture and society, and how identity is constantly interwoven and reshaped.

In short, Liu Bozhi's photographic journey demonstrates the diversity and dynamism of identity and how it is gradually formed through interaction with culture and society, and intertwined with self-consciousness. This exploration gives his private photographs profound cultural and social significance and helps viewers gain a deeper understanding of the complexity and fluidity of identity.

4.3 The Role of Self-Consciousness in Navigating Identity Crisis

Through the lens, people are often confronted with questions about their true selves, and photography can capture the tensions between different aspects of a person's identity; these images often reveal the struggle between who we are, who we want to be, and the roles that society expects us to play.

Private photography is a common photographic practice that enables individuals to explore their own identity. By turning the camera on themselves, photographers can experiment with different aspects of their personalities, roles, and even imagined identities, providing a visual narrative of their inner journey.

In summary, this section explores how photography can be used as a tool for reflection and expression during identity crises, providing a visual avenue for individuals to explore and understand their evolving sense of self.

Ren Hang's work, presented at the 9th Lianzhou Foto Festival in 2013, is a vivid exploration of identity crisis and self-exploration within the context of photography. His de-gendered approach to the human body challenges traditional, rigid concepts of gender and identity, prompting viewers to confront their own understanding of these concepts. This process of challenging and questioning social norms is at the heart of the identity crisis, in which individuals struggle with their sense of self in the face of conflicting social expectations and personal experiences. Visual self-recognition is often considered one of the earliest forms of self-consciousness, where individuals recognize themselves in reflections or images. This foundational level of self-awareness is crucial in private photography, where individuals use self-portraits or curated images to externalize their internal identity. In Ren Hang's work, this process is evident as he uses the camera not merely to capture appearances but to explore and challenge the deeper aspects of self-identity. His photography serves as a mirror, reflecting both the external and internal states of being, and enabling a dialogue between self-perception and social expectations.



Figure 151 Ren Hang-1

Source: Ren Hang , 2013, the 9th Lianzhou Foto Festival

One of the most striking aspects of Ren Hang's photography is his approach to de-gendering the human body. By removing or obscuring gendered features, Ren Hang challenges traditional notions of identity that are often tied to gender. For instance, in Figure 154, the image of two nude figures embracing emphasizes the emotional connection between the individuals rather than their gender.



Figure 152 Ren Hang-2

Source: Ren Hang , 2013, the 9th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 152 is full of visual impact and strong symbolism. At the centre of the image is a naked upper body with the head covered by a transparent plastic bag filled with black liquid and goldfish. This highly experimental visual element is disturbing.

Symbolically, the photograph may explore the relationship between the individual and the environment, particularly the sense of suffocation felt when an individual is oppressed by a social or cultural environment. The plastic bag may symbolise the bondage of society to the individual, while the black liquid and goldfish may represent chaos, confusion or subconscious struggle. The nudity of the figures demonstrates vulnerability and helplessness, and the wrapping of the head further reinforces this theme, as if to emphasise the loss or distortion of the individual's identity.

Goldfish are often associated with freedom and mobility, but in such a closed environment they may also symbolise a state of confinement, mapping the figure's spiritual or psychological predicament. The entire composition is both visually expressive and profoundly meaningful, stimulating the viewer to reflect on the relationship between the individual and society.

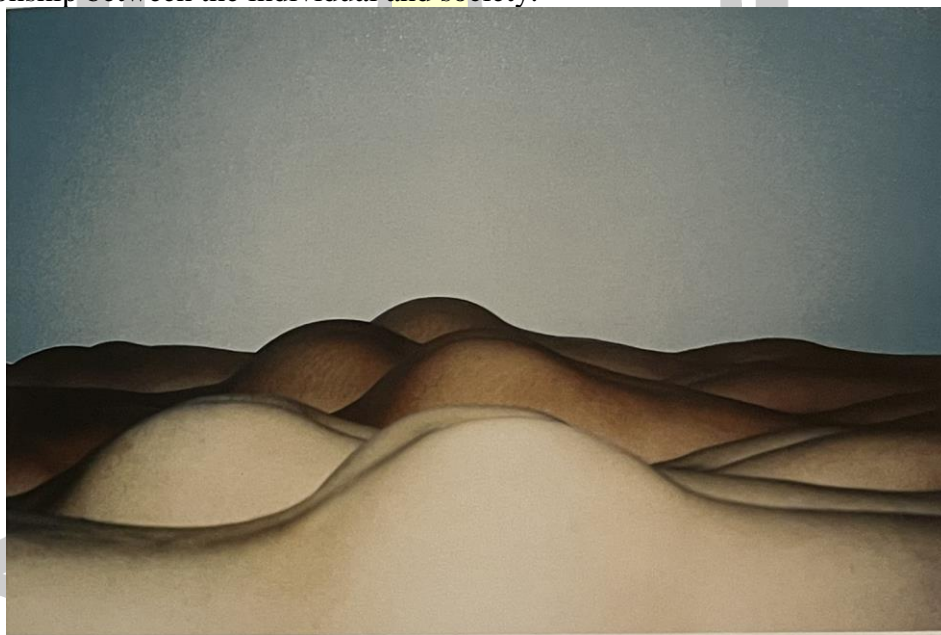


Figure 153 Ren Hang-3

Source: Ren Hang , 2013, the 9th Lianzhou Foto Festival

Figure 156 illustrates a unique set of forms that superficially appear to be the undulations of a sand dune or hill, but closer inspection reveals that this is actually made up of the curves of the human body, a composition that skilfully relates the natural form of the human body to the natural landscape.

The de-gendering and unique treatment of the body in Renhang's photographs breaks down traditional notions of gender and identity. This artistic treatment is not only a display of external physical characteristics, but also a deep exploration of identity. By de-gendering the body, Renhang challenges the audience's

preconceptions of gender, making identity no longer dependent on the traditional gender dichotomy, but a more complex and diverse personal experience.



Figure 154 Ren Hang-4

Source: Ren Hang , 2013, the 9th Lianzhou Foto Festival

This de-gendering approach is further exemplified in Figure 157 where a nude figure with a white dove on her head is shown with her back to the camera. The absence of identifiable gender features in the image underscores Ren Hang's intention to detach identity from gender, prompting viewers to explore identity as a more complex, internal process. The presence of the dove, symbolizing purity or freedom, suggests that identity is not confined by societal gender roles but is shaped by a broader range of personal experiences and self-perceptions.

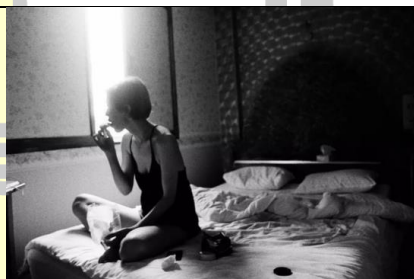

This work challenges traditional notions of gender and social norms. By presenting the body as gender-neutral, the photographer emphasises that identity is not determined solely by physical or external features, but is a more complex and internal process. The figures in the images are freed from the constraints of gender and physical characteristics, thus expressing a wider range of identity possibilities. This de-gendered representation prompts the viewer to consider how identity can transcend traditional gender and societal expectations to become a freer and more personal expression.





Renhang's images often depict anonymous, de-gendered bodies, stripped of the immediate identifiers of gender. This deliberate blurring of gender helps to shake the viewer's preconceived notions of identity. In this way, Renhang illustrates how identity crises emerge when social norms are challenged. The characters in his work appear vulnerable and detached from the social structures that usually define identity, reflecting the confusion and disorientation often felt during an identity crisis. This

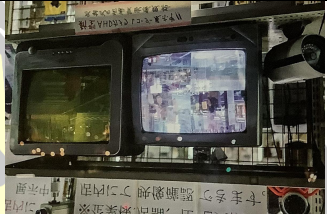


sense of crisis is not only related to gender, but also to a broader sense of self, which is questioned when traditional markers of identity are removed or blurred.

Photography, in Renhang's hands, becomes a powerful tool for navigating the complexities of identity. By showing bodies without gender labels, Renhang allows his subjects - and by extension, his viewers - to explore identity as a fluid and evolving concept. This exploration is crucial to addressing the identity crisis, as it allows for a more nuanced understanding of the self that is not constrained by traditional social roles. The anonymity and universality of the characters in his work emphasises that identity is not static, but a dynamic and personal journey of self-discovery.

All in all, Ren Hang's photographs provide a profound commentary on the crisis of identity and the journey of self-discovery. His works challenge social norms, prompting viewers to confront and reconsider their own perceptions of identity. In the process, photography is no longer merely a medium of artistic expression, but a means of navigating and resolving the complexities of self-identity.

Dimension	Definition and description	Representative work
1. Memories shape our sense of self	Fluidity of memory	 <p>Yusuke Yamatani's (Japan) Rama Lama Tinker records his travels around Japan with his wife as a newlywed.</p>
	Reconstructed memory	 <p>Akihito Yoshida's Fallen Leaves tells a moving story of kinship, love and loss. Akihito Yoshida's photographs capture daily interactions between his cousin and grandmother, showing the process of memory reconstruction.</p>

	Evolving Self-Consciousness through Memory and Experience	 <p>Jenny Rova's <i>Älskling</i> is a profound exploration of personal memory spanning 25 years, featuring a series of photographs taken by her former partners, including her lover</p>
2. Self-expression is an externalisation of self-consciousness	Self-Portraits as Mirrors of the Self	 <p>Tang Wenjing's 'My World' captures the world from her personal perspective. Her works show her unique artistic expression.</p>
	Visualization of inner emotion	 <p>Dai Jianyong's work 'Zhu Fengjuan' visualises intrinsic emotions, and through his delicate emotional narrative, he deeply portrays the emotional bond with his wife</p>
	Self-expression in cultural context	 <p>Eriko Koga's work TRYADHVAN explores the complexities of self-expression through intimate</p>

		photography, and her photographs deeply reflect the evolution of an individual's self-consciousness within Buddhist philosophy and culture.
3.Mirror Me : Self-consciousness and social interaction	Self-perception in the perspective of others	 <p>Shang Liang's work, One Thousand Selfies, started in 2012, began as an attempt to document and gradually evolved into a profound process of self-perception and exploration.</p>
	Expectations of evaluation by others	 <p>Murong Slipper's work 'Drifting Desire' demonstrates his sincere expression of life's desires and his profound exploration of self-identity. However, his work triggered various reactions in the society.</p>
	Shaping self-consciousness in social interaction	 <p>Patricia Lay-Dorsey's work 'Falling into Place' shows her daily life in the face of Multiple Sclerosis, Patricia interacts with society through her photography and receives a great deal of positive feedback from it, which in turn inspires her to take a more positive approach to life.</p>

4. Self-consciousness and identity are intertwined	Mutual Influence of Self-Consciousness and Identity	 <p>Sima Yuan's work, 'Secondary nature', through three interrelated parts - 'Parable of a Woman', 'SMA' and 'Inside the Box' - explores her gender identity. Question' - explores her gender identity. The work demonstrates the complex interaction between self-consciousness and identity.</p>
	Identity Formation through Cultural and Social Interactions	 <p>Liu Bozhi's Redream Golden Mountain goes from hearing about the 'Golden Mountain Dream', to pursuing it, to supporting each other with immigrant groups, to searching for one's roots. Redream Golden Mountain' shows the diversity and dynamics of identity. His work reveals that identity is not fixed but changes with time, experience and environment.</p>
	The Role of Self-Consciousness in Navigating Identity Crisis	 <p>Ren Hang's eponymous work, Ren Hang, challenges societal norms by de-gendering and prompting viewers to confront and reconsider their own perceptions of identity.</p>

Table 10 Self-consciousness in private photography

Source: Statistics by Yao Qiong, 2024

In 2021, this researcher was invited to participate in a photography forum at the Nanjing Arts Institute. After the forum, I invited Jia Fang, head of the Photography Department of the Nanjing Arts Institute (who was the curator of the Lianzhou Foto Festival), photography scholar Cao Kunping, and photographer Xu Ying to have an in-depth discussion on private photography.



Figure 155 Private Photography Interview Party
Source: 2021, Photo by Guo Ming

Through the Photo Talks, we had an in-depth discussion with curator Jia Fang, photography scholar and critic Cao Kunping, photographer Xu Ying, and a number of photography enthusiasts on the issue of self-consciousness in private photography. During the discussion, Jia Fang emphasised how private photography, as a unique form of individual expression, reflects the photographer's exploration of self-identity in his work. Cao Kunping analysed the multi-layered expression of self-consciousness in private photography from the perspective of art theory, pointing out that photographers capture moments while invisibly recording their own psychological state and emotional fluctuations. Xu Ying shared her creative experience and talked about how private photography became a tool for her to explore her inner world and express her emotions. The photography enthusiasts, on the other hand, further verified the universality and influence of private photography as a form of self-consciousness expression through their own viewing experience. Through this discussion, we gained a deeper understanding of the complexity and diversity of self-consciousness in private photography.

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This study combines interviews, documentary research, and content analysis to draw the following conclusions

Aspects	Private photography	Self-consciousness	Social and cultural influences
Photographic narrative	Photographers construct personal narratives through their work, blending memory, experience and imagination.	Self-consciousness is closely related to the personal narratives that individuals continue to create through their photographs.	Influence social narratives and enrich collective social memory by introducing new narrative structures and techniques.
Memory	Photographers capture and preserve personal memories, creating a visual diary that reflects their experiences and emotions.	Self-consciousness is shaped by how individuals recall and reinterpret their memories through photography.	Reinforce cultural memory and contribute to the preservation and reinterpretation of collective historical events.
self-expression	Photographers use private photography as a means of expressing their inner thoughts, emotions, and experiences.	Self-consciousness is externalized through the act of self-expression in photography, allowing individuals to explore and communicate their inner worlds.	Encourage social discourse on self-expression and emotional authenticity, promoting acceptance of diverse emotional landscapes.
Identity	Photographers explore and document their personal identity through private photography, revealing themselves through intimate images.	Through self-reflection in private photography, individuals become clearer about their identity and personal values.	Encourage broader discussion of identity and individuality in society, strengthen the role of social interaction in identity formation, and promote social understanding and support of the

			individual identity process
social interaction	Private photography often involves sharing images with a social audience, inviting interaction and feedback that shapes the photographer's work.	Self-consciousness is influenced by social feedback and interaction, which help individuals refine their self-image and identity.	Promote social bonding and understanding through the exchange of personal images, contributing to the formation of social norms and collective identity.
cultural reflection	Photographers reflect on cultural norms and values through their work, often questioning or challenging societal expectations.	Self-consciousness evolves as individuals reflect on their cultural environment and its influence on their identity.	Stimulate cultural critique and reflection, encouraging society to re-evaluate and potentially transform cultural norms and values.

Table 11 private photography, self-consciousness, and socio-cultural influences
Source: Statistics by Yao Qiong, 2024

This table demonstrates the interaction between private photography, self-consciousness, and social-cultural influences. The following is a detailed analysis of each section of the table:

1. Photographic narrative

Private Photography: Photographers construct personal narratives through private photography, merging memory, experience and imagination. This narrative is not only a record of life, but also a deep expression that reflects the inner world of the photographer.

Self-Consciousness: Self-consciousness is closely related to personal narrative. Individuals create narratives through photography, a process that helps them better understand and define themselves.

Social and Cultural Influences: The introduction of new narrative structures and technologies influences social narratives and enriches collective social memory. This influence helps society to better understand the connection between individual experience and collective history.

2. Memory

Private Photography: Private photography captures and preserves personal memories, creating a visual diary that reflects the photographer's experiences and emotions. These images become the physical embodiment of the photographer's memory.

Self-Consciousness: Self-consciousness shapes and influences an individual's self-perception by recalling and reinterpreting memories through photography. Through this process, individuals become more aware of the influence of the past on their present.

Social and Cultural Influences: Private photography reinforces cultural memory and contributes to the preservation and reinterpretation of collective historical events. This visualisation of memory provides society with new perspectives for understanding and reflecting on history.

3. Self-Expression

Private Photography: Private photography serves as a tool for expressing inner thoughts, emotions and experiences, helping the photographer to externalise the inner world and communicate it to the viewer.

Self-Consciousness: Self-expression is the process of externalising self-consciousness, allowing individuals to explore and communicate their inner world through photography. This process not only contributes to an individual's self-understanding, but also facilitates a deepening of self-awareness.

Social and Cultural Influences: Self-expression generates discussion in society about self-expression and emotional authenticity, and promotes acceptance and understanding of diverse emotional expressions.

4. Identity

Private Photography: Private photography allows the photographer to explore and document personal identity, revealing it through intimate images. Through this process, photographers not only reflect their self-perception, but also demonstrate how they position themselves in society.

Self-Consciousness: In reflecting on private photography, individuals develop a clearer sense of their identity and values. Through photography, individuals can examine and consolidate their identity.

Social and Cultural Influences: This exploration stimulates a broader discussion of identity and individuality, reinforces the role of social interaction in identity formation, and fosters social understanding and support for the individual identity process.

5. Social Interaction

Private Photography: Private photography often involves interaction with a social audience, where the photographer receives feedback through the sharing of images that shape their work. Social feedback not only influences the direction of the photographer's work, but also inadvertently changes their perception of themselves.

Self-Consciousness: Social feedback and interactions have a significant influence on self-consciousness, helping individuals to continually adjust their self-image and identity. Through such interactions, photographers gradually shape and refine their self-consciousness.

Social and Cultural Influences: The exchange of private images fosters social understanding and connection, contributes to the formation of social norms, and reinforces the shaping of collective identities.

6. Cultural Reflection

Private Photography: Photographers reflect on cultural norms and values through their work, often questioning or challenging social expectations. This reflection is not only a response to culture, but also a profound exploration of personal identity.

Self-Consciousness: Self-consciousness evolves through reflection on the cultural environment and its influence on identity. Through photography, individuals can better understand and question the shaping of their self-perception by their cultural context.

Social and Cultural Influences: This reflection stimulates cultural criticism and introspection in society, encouraging society to re-evaluate and possibly change existing cultural norms and values.

This table synthesises how private photography interacts with social and cultural influences through the expression of self-consciousness. Private photography is not only an individual creative activity; it reflects the complexity of social culture by constructing narratives, expressing emotions and exploring identities. At the same time, private photography also contributes to the social understanding and discussion of identity, memory and self-expression through these processes.

5. Summary of this chapter

Focusing on self-consciousness in private photography, this chapter reveals the unique role of private photography in expressing and shaping self-consciousness through a multi-layered exploration of memory, social interaction, identity and self-consciousness expression.

Firstly, memory, as the foundation of self-consciousness, helps individuals to continuously shape and adjust their self-perception through time and experience through its fluidity and reconfigurability.

Second, the diversity of expressions of self-consciousness in private photography is summarised through images of self-portraits, visualisations of internal emotions and cultural expressions of self.

Third, self-consciousness in social interactions is shaped and deepened through interactions and feedback with others, a process that demonstrates the role of the social environment in shaping an individual's self-consciousness.

Furthermore, the exploration of identity reveals the intersection of self-consciousness and social identity, as well as self-exploration in the midst of an identity crisis. In these cases, photography is not only a recording tool, but also becomes an important medium for self-reflection and expression of identity diversity. In conclusion:

research suggests that in exploring and presenting the complexity of human emotions and identities, private photography highlights its unique value of self-expression and becomes an indispensable medium for understanding and deepening an individual's self-consciousness.

Chapter VI

Conclusion , Discussion and Suggestions

Research Summary

The title of this paper is 'Private Photography in the Lianzhou Foto Festival (2005-2019): Photographic Narratives and Self-Consciousness'. This research is qualitative in nature. In the course of this research, I collected and analysed 41 groups of private photographs from the Lianzhou Foto Festival, and collected comments from the audience, as well as information on the Internet. At the same time, I consulted a large number of relevant historical documents and related literature, and conducted in-depth research.

Interviews with relevant photography practitioners and audiences were collected. This paper utilises first-hand information to carry out the research work, and the main findings are.

1. Conclusion on the development and influence of the Lianzhou Foto Festival on Lianzhou City

The Lianzhou Foto Festival has become a major cultural event that has had a profound influence on both the culture and economy of Lianzhou. Since its inception in 2005, the festival has grown from a local initiative to an internationally recognised platform for contemporary photography. This development has been characterised by a strategic combination of academic rigour and international collaboration, which has helped raise the profile of the festival on the global stage.

The diversity of themes and the constant innovation of curatorial practices are key factors in the festival's success. Every year, the festival introduces new ideas and perspectives, attracting photographers, curators and academics from all over the world. This not only enriches the cultural fabric of the festival, but also enhances its academic significance, making it an important hub of photographic discourse.

Economically, the Lianzhou Foto Festival has played a crucial role in promoting local development. The large number of visitors, including artists, critics and tourists, has stimulated the local economy, especially in the hospitality and service sectors. The festival has also created a brand image for Lianzhou as the 'Capital of Photography', which has had lasting benefits for Lianzhou's cultural and economic positioning.

Furthermore, the influence of the festival goes beyond the economic sphere. It has made a significant contribution to the social and cultural renaissance of Lianzhou. By fostering a dialogue between local traditions and contemporary art, the festival promotes a deeper engagement with cultural heritage while fostering new forms of artistic expression. This has enhanced the sense of community and identity of Lianzhou residents, who have become more actively involved in the cultural life of the city.

In short, the Lianzhou Foto Festival has not only established itself as a premier event on the global photographic calendar, but has also profoundly influenced the cultural, social and economic landscape of Lianzhou. Its continued growth and

influence underscores the importance of cultural events in fostering urban development and increasing the global visibility of local communities.

2. Conclusion on Private Photography in Lianzhou Foto Festival

Since its early introduction, private photography has evolved from a niche form of artistic expression to an important genre of photography known to the general public, greatly enriching the artistic expression of the Lianzhou Foto Festival. The Lianzhou Foto Festival provides an important platform for private photography to explore its unique experience of self, personal observation and documentation, and to present it to the public.

The inclusion and importance of private photography makes the Lianzhou Foto Festival stand out on the global photographic stage. By showcasing private photography, the festival has managed to establish an international influence. The genre has struck a strong chord with artists and audiences alike with its ability to capture delicate, hidden personal identities, emotions and social issues.

In addition, private photography has made a significant contribution to the academic and cultural significance of the Lianzhou Foto Festival. The festival has not only been praised for its aesthetic value, but also widely analysed and discussed by academics for its profound influence in cultural and social discourse. Private photography has gradually become a highly respected and influential genre in contemporary photographic practice.

In terms of cultural influence, the introduction and development of private photography has greatly enhanced the diversity of artistic expression at the Lianzhou Foto Festival. By emphasising personal narratives and perspectives, the festival has broadened the scope of photographic expression, encouraging a more inclusive and multifaceted approach to visual narrative. This also makes the Lianzhou Foto Festival an important venue for cultural exchange and dialogue, where different experiences and perspectives are shared and explored.

In summary, private photography has become a distinctive feature of the Lianzhou Foto Festival, not only contributing significantly to its uniqueness, but also expanding its influence in the global photography community. Private Photography's focus on personal and intimate relationships not only enriches the artistic landscape of the festival, but also deepens its cultural and social relevance, making it a key component of the festival's continued success and growth.

3. Conclusion on photography narration in private photography

An exploration of photographic narrative in private photography demonstrates that private photography is a complex and dynamic process that intricately weaves together narrative structures, visual elements, and artistic techniques to create compelling and insightful stories. This study concludes that the narrative power of private photography goes beyond mere documentation and is an important medium for expressing the multifaceted nature of human experience and self-consciousness.

Photography as an art form of narrative and memory is well represented in private photography, and technological developments have dramatically changed the way stories are told. These technological advances have expanded the creativity and depth of narrative expression, enabling private photographers to engage with memory and self-expression in more innovative and profound ways.

The narrative structures employed in private photography, particularly the treatment of time and space, reflect the fluidity of memory and experience. Time is presented in both linear and non-linear ways, capturing the complex interplay between past, present and future in the photographer's consciousness. On the other hand, the spatial structure provides the necessary context and setting for these narratives, enhancing their depth and enabling the viewer to engage more deeply with the emotional content of the images.

The use of visual elements, especially black and white and colour tones, plays a crucial role in shaping the atmosphere and emotional expression of the photographic narratives. These choices are not only aesthetically pleasing, but they are powerful tools for reinforcing narrative themes, making the work more impactful and resonant for the viewer.

In addition, the use of symbolic expressionism, collage and other artistic techniques enriches the multidimensionality of private photographic narratives. These approaches challenge traditional forms of storytelling and push the boundaries of photography as an art form, making private photography a highly expressive and intellectually appealing medium.

In short, photographic narrative in private photography is a complex and evolving process that combines narrative structure, visual elements and artistic techniques to create powerful, personal and often profound stories. Through this narrative approach, private photography transcends its role as a tool for recording moments and becomes an important medium for communicating the complexity of the human experience. This makes private photography an important form of contemporary visual narrative with enduring relevance and influence.

4. Conclusion on self-consciousness in private photography

An exploration of self-consciousness in the realm of private photography reveals its profound complexity, which is deeply rooted in the interplay of memory, social interaction and identity formation. This study concludes that self-consciousness in private photography is not merely a reflection of the self, but an active, dynamic process in which individuals interact with their past, present and social environments to construct and express their evolving identities.

Memory is recognised as a fundamental component of this process, acting as both a repository and a lens through which individuals can reinterpret and reconstruct their experiences. The fluidity of memory enables photographers to reconstruct their personal histories, thereby continually shaping and redefining their self-identity through their work.

This study highlights the expressive power of private photography in communicating self-consciousness. Through self-portraiture, the visualisation of inner emotions and the influence of cultural context on self-expression, the photographer goes beyond mere documentation to create work that profoundly expresses his or her inner world. This feature of private photography emphasises its importance as a medium for exploring and communicating complex emotional and psychological states in depth.

Social interaction becomes another important factor influencing private photographic self-consciousness. Feedback and perceptions received from others act as a mirror reflecting aspects of the self that may not be apparent to the individual. This social dimension of self-consciousness is crucial to the ongoing development of

subtle and multifaceted self-perceptions, which in turn are further refined through ongoing interaction and contact with the external world.

This study also highlights the dynamic relationship between self-consciousness and social identity. Identity is often viewed as a dynamic and multifaceted phenomenon that develops progressively through interaction with culture and society and is intertwined with self-consciousness.

In short, self-consciousness in private photography is a multifaceted phenomenon, closely related to memory, social interaction and identity formation. Research has shown that private photography is not only a means of capturing the self, but also a powerful tool for self-exploration, reflection and expression. This makes private photography a valuable form of contemporary visual art, offering unique insights into the evolution of self-identity and consciousness.

Discussion

Private Photography in this study: revolves around private photography in the Lianzhou Foto Festival, the development of private photography and its introduction to China, its development and influence in the Lianzhou Foto Festival, and explores how private photography, as a unique art form, plays a key role in narrative structure, self-consciousness expression, and the exploration of personal and social identity. By analysing the private photography exhibited at the Lianzhou Foto Festival, this study reveals how photographers use this medium to record personal memories, self-expression, and explore the dynamic relationship between self-consciousness, identity and social interaction.

1. Private Photography

According to Michel Frizot's *History of World Photography*, there is no concept of private photography in the study of private photography, but in the later period of time, it is considered to be the representative work of private photography, Nan Goldin's *Narrative of Sexual Dependency*, which is called 'new photography' in the history of world photography (Michel Frizot, 1994). In Susan Bright's *Why Art Photography?*, she describes Nan Goldin's style as personalised images (Susan Bright, 2010). (Susie Lute, 2010). In Kotaro Iizawa's *Theory of Private Photography*, he mentioned the concept of private portraiture for the first time, using the examples of four photographers, Takuma Nakahira, Masahisa Fukase, Keisuke Araki, and Shigeo Ushiguchi. (Kotaro Iizawa, 2000). In China, Gu Zheng first introduced the concept of private photography in his *Essay on Private Photography in China*, and considered the eleven-member group exhibition *Self-Private*, shown at the first Lianzhou Foto Festival, to be the naming ceremony for private photography in China. (Gu Zheng, 2006)

As of August 2024, according to the data of China Knowledge, there are 75 papers with the keyword 'private photography'. Among them, Gu Zheng's 'Essay on Private Photography in China' outlines the history and concept of private photography (Gu Zheng, 2006). Lin Lu's 'Contemporary Photography Handbook No. 3 - Private Photography' mentions the artistic techniques of private photography (Lin Lu, 2015). Tang Lingjie's 'Private Photography and China's New Era' analyses the reasons for the rise of private photography in China (Tang Lingjie, 2010). Lin Ye's 'The Discovery of Privateness' discusses the concept of privateness in private photography (Lin Ye, 2010). Wang Yanzhe's 'The Performance and Advancement of the Value of Private Photography in Contemporary Art' analyses the value of private photography

in the digital age (Wang Yanzhe, 2015) Guo Chen, in 'The Awakening of Subjectivity - Contemporary Contexts of Women's Private Photography' discusses the problems of women's private photography in contemporary culture (Guo Chen, 2021) Shi Yili discusses the current situation of private photography in China in *A Study of the Current Situation of Private Photography in China* (Shi Yili, 2019) Zhou Fang's *The Subcultural Pavilion of Contemporary Private Photography and Its Narrative Explanation* discusses the importance of the discourse of private photography as a subcultural voice. (Zhou Fang, 2014)

Most of these studies of private photography in China are one-dimensional and not in-depth, and the published papers are a mixed bag.

This study agrees with some of these studies on the concept of private photography, and at the same time, it points out that private photography, as a unique art form, is not only a tool for recording moments, but also an important medium for conveying the complexity of the human experience occupies an important position in contemporary visual narratives.

2. Lianzhou Foto Festival

Most studies on Lianzhou Foto Festival have focused on the exhibitions of a particular Lianzhou Foto Festival and the influence of Lianzhou Foto Festival. As of August 2024, there are 1606 articles with the keyword 'Lianzhou' on the China Knowledge Network (CNK). As of August 2024, a total of 1,606 articles have been published using the keyword 'Lianzhou'. 69 articles have been published using the keyword 'Lianzhou photography'. There are 20 documents with the keyword 'Lianzhou Foto Festival'. At present, most of the literature on Lianzhou Foto Festival in China is in the form of press releases, except for the Lianzhou Foto Festival catalogue published by the Lianzhou Foto Festival director. This study takes the annually published Lianzhou Foto Festival album as the main focus and the official press releases as the reference for the study. Based on the news and data released by the official office, this study extracts the importance of Lianzhou Foto Festival to the city of Lianzhou.

The study on Lianzhou Foto Festival is partly about the press releases on the development of Lianzhou Foto Festival and partly about the development and influence of Lianzhou Foto Festival in Lianzhou City, the studies on the description of the development and influence of Lianzhou Foto Festival include Yu Hongyang's *Lianzhou, a Beautiful Encounter between a Small Mountainous City and Light and Shadow* which points out that the Lianzhou Foto Festival has shaped the cultural brand, and Jin Lin's *An International Photography Exhibition in a Chinese County-Level City* which states that the Lianzhou Foto Festival studies big problems in a small place, Chen Yuanpeng points out that the Lianzhou Foto Festival improves the international influence of Lianzhou City, Zhou Dongmei's 'Marketing Strategy of Lianzhou Foto Festival' mentions that the Lianzhou Foto Festival has had a great influence on Lianzhou City's tourism economy, and Sheng Luting mentions the main structural design of the Lianzhou Foto Festival in 'Lianzhou Foto Festival 2023: A New Start'. Han Jing's 'Film Festivals Drive the Economy - Tourism Benefits the Most' mentions that the Lianzhou Foto Festival drives the local economy and culture, and He Jianxiang's 'Silent Celebration - Lianzhou Museum of Photography' mentions that the Lianzhou Museum of Photography was reconstructed from the Fruit

Warehouse, which is the main exhibition area of the Lianzhou Foto Festival. converted and also assumed the task of the Lianzhou Foto Festival exhibition area.

This study is mainly based on the official data from the Lianzhou Municipal People's Government to analyse and research, create tables, and analyse the framework about the influence of the Lianzhou Foto Festival on Lianzhou Municipality from the existing studies.

3. Photographic Narrative

Regarding the study of photographic narrative, Roland Barthes' analysis of the nature of photographic narrative in *The Chamber of Light* laid the foundation of photography as a narrative medium. He pointed out that photography's unique referentiality makes it not only a tool for reproducing reality, but also a means of deep expression capable of conveying complex emotions and information. In *Narratology: An Introduction to Narrative Theory* (Roland Barthes, 1980), Mick Barr suggests that the critical role of time and space in narrative allows photography to influence the viewer's understanding of the story of the image by adjusting these elements. Zhu Qi (2013) points out in *New Art History and Visual Narrative* that photographic narrative in postmodern art is not merely a continuation of traditional reality reproduction, but breaks with traditional narrative patterns through innovations in forms such as non-linear narrative, expressionist style, and collage

As of August 2024, for example, with the data of China Knowledge Network, with the keyword 'photographic narrative', the total number of related papers is 147, and with the keyword 'private photography, photographic narrative', the total number of related papers is 11 pieces. Guo Hongfang's 'Research on Private Photography Based on Image Narratology' mentions the structure of image narrative (Guo Hongfang, 2022). Wang Qihui and Fan Yifei's 'Recording and Expression: Narrative Art in Photography' mentions the history of photographic narrative and the influence of technological advancement on photographic narrative (Wang Qihui and Fan Yifei, 2024). 'Exploration of Black and White Photography and Narrative Strategy in the Film 'Lanxin' Theatre' analyses the visual elements of photographic narrative (Wang Ru, 2022). The theoretical origins of photographic narrative are discussed in Bao Buqing's 'Study on the Instantaneousness of Photography' (Zheng Jialun, 2022), which analyses the documentary nature of photography. (Zheng Jialun, 2023)

The research on photographic narrative is actually an interdisciplinary research, and the existing research on photographic narrative is derived from narratology and image narrative research, so there are fewer existing theories on photographic narrative. The research on photographic narrative in this study mainly focuses on the visual elements, narrative structure and artistic techniques of photographic narrative within the scope of private photography.

4. Self-consciousness

In the research on self-consciousness, this study finds that the research on self-consciousness spans a variety of fields such as psychology, sociology and cultural studies, and different scholars have explored the connotation and formation mechanism of self-consciousness in depth from their own perspectives.

Veronica O'Keane (2010) explored in detail the role of memory in shaping self-consciousness in *Self-Consciousness: Memory, the Brain, and Our Being*. She points out that memory is not just a passive record of events, but an active process of constructing self-identity. Memory is closely linked to self-consciousness, and

memory forms the basis of self-consciousness and self-perception. Charles Horton Cooley (1902) vividly described the social dimension of self-consciousness in *Human Nature and the Social Order* through the concept of the 'mirror-ego'. He suggested that an individual's self-perception is largely formed through interactions with others. Individuals develop a sense of self-consciousness through this social interaction and reflection, using the reactions of others to their behaviour as a 'mirror'. Kim and Sherman's (2007) study delved deeper into the notion of self-expression, highlighting the importance of culture in this process. They found that self-expression is not only an outward presentation of an individual's internal emotions, but is also strongly influenced by cultural context. In addition, in the field of psychology, researchers usually link the self with identity and explore the question of 'who am I'. Sigmund Freud further developed the theory of identity in works such as *The Ego and the Self* (1923) and *Group Psychology and Self-Analysis* (1921), detailing the types and characteristics of identity and its influence on self-consciousness. He argued that identity is an integrated psychological process through which individuals identify with the self, perceive the group to which they belong, and develop adaptive emotional experiences and behavioural patterns as a result.

According to the data of China Knowledge Network, there are 20,000 articles with the keyword 'self-consciousness', of which 2,031 are only on the topic of 'self-consciousness'. Some of these articles focus on the development of adolescents' self-consciousness, while others focus on women's self-consciousness. Most of the studies focus on the manifestation of self-consciousness.

The expression of self-consciousness, for example, is mentioned in Wang Luyao's 'Study of Contemporary Rural Women's Self-Consciousness in the Field of Communication Semiotics--Taking Longjin Village in Guizhou as an Example', which refers to the mirror-me theory (Wang Luyao, 2022), and in Jin Yang's 'The Expression of Self-Consciousness and Emotional Expression in Wheeled Women's Subject Matter Paintings', which refers to the way of expression of self-consciousness (Jin Yang, 2022). The connotation and generation of teachers' self-consciousness is mentioned in Li Yuhuan and Wang Peng's 'The connotation and generation of teachers' self-consciousness', which refers to self-consciousness and social feedback (Li Yuhuan and Wang Peng, 2024). The relationship between self-consciousness and identity is analysed in Zhou Weipu's 'Identity scrutiny and rational expression: self-proclaiming and its new changes in self-consciousness writing in Lu Tong's poems' (Zhou Weipu, 2022). The presentation of self-consciousness and incomplete shaping of self-consciousness is analysed in Zhou Xiaoli's 'Self-consciousness Presentation and Incomplete Shaping of Self-Consciousness The shaping of self-consciousness is analysed in (Zhou Xiaoli, 2021)'. The formation of self-consciousness in social interactions is discussed in Wang Taohua and Zhang Daoshu's *From Self-Deception to Self-Consciousness Awakening*. (Wang Taohua and Zhang Daoshu, 2024). The establishment and expression of self-consciousness is mentioned in Qin Zhe, Zhang Zhe, and Wang Chao's *Study on the Application of Photo Art Therapy in the Improvement and Development of Self-Consciousness of Higher Education College Students*. Freud's theories are mentioned in Zhang Shanfu's *Study on Identity Construction of Rural Youths under Discourse Perspective* (Zhang Shanfu, 2023).

There are more studies on self-consciousness though, in which I used Veronica O'Keane's memory and self-consciousness, Kim and Sherman's concept of self-consciousness expression, Mirror Me Theory, and Freud's Identity Theory. This study agrees and follows the relevant perspectives.

In conclusion, this study provides an in-depth analysis of the structure of photographic narratives through 41 groups of private photographs from the Lianzhou Foto Festival, revealing the embodiment of self-consciousness in these works. Unlike traditional single-case or historical conceptual studies, this study comprehensively examines memory, narrative and self-consciousness in private photography, providing a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of private photography. The study extends the theoretical understanding of the narrative structure and expression of private photography, particularly revealing the use of complex narratives of time and space in private photography. At the same time, the study explores the key role of visual elements in private photography narratives, demonstrating how these elements enhance the narrative and express self-consciousness. In addition, by applying narrative theory to private photography, the study promotes the intersection of photography and other disciplines and broadens the boundaries of academic research on private photography. The study also delves into how self-consciousness in private photography is expressed and shaped through social interactions and feedback, and demonstrates its dynamic interplay with social identity. Finally, in a specific cultural context, this study reveals how private photography expresses and reinforces an individual's self-consciousness through unique narrative structures and visual elements, thus enriching the academic understanding of private photography.

Suggestions

1. Strengthen international cooperation

Lianzhou Foto Festival should continue to strengthen its cooperation with international photography organisations, art colleges and cultural institutions, expand the international cooperation network and enhance the international influence of the festival. By inviting more internationally renowned photographers and scholars to participate, the festival will promote exchanges and co-operation between Chinese and foreign photographic arts.

2. Deepening theme exploration

Lianzhou Foto Festival should continue to deepen and innovate its annual theme, combining contemporary social and cultural hotspots and showcasing diverse photographic works. This will inject new vigour and creativity into the festival and attract more audiences and photographers to participate.

3. Promote the development of private photography

Lianzhou Foto Festival should continue to support and promote the development of private photography and encourage photographers to express their personal life and inner world through private photography. Through the organisation of private photography exhibitions and related lectures, the audience's knowledge and appreciation of private photography can be enhanced.

4. Strengthening Academic Exchange and Education

The festival should further strengthen academic exchange and education by providing more lectures, seminars and masterclasses to provide a platform for photographers and photography enthusiasts to communicate and learn. Through

photographic educational activities, the professional level and artistic cultivation of photographers will be enhanced.

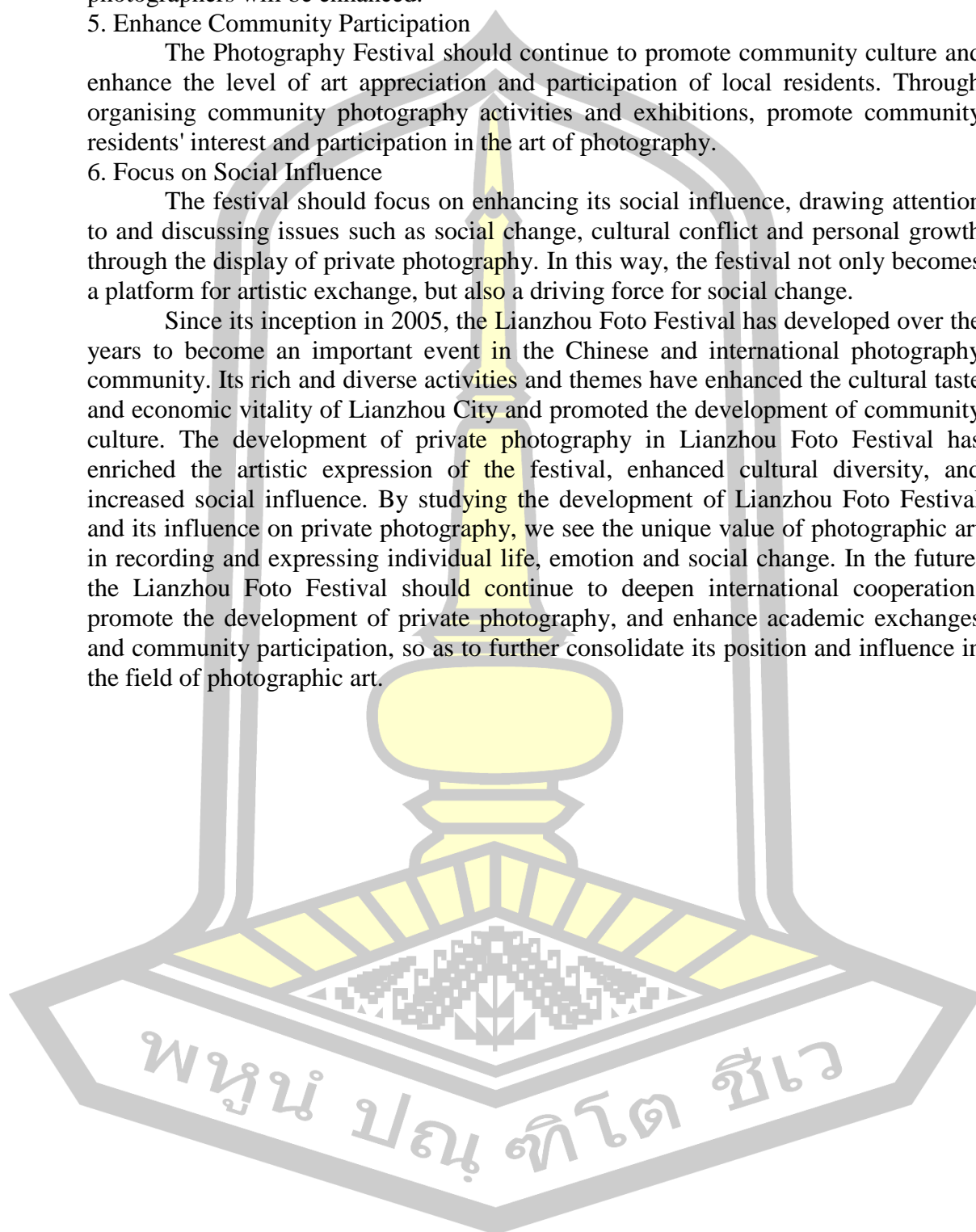
5. Enhance Community Participation

The Photography Festival should continue to promote community culture and enhance the level of art appreciation and participation of local residents. Through organising community photography activities and exhibitions, promote community residents' interest and participation in the art of photography.

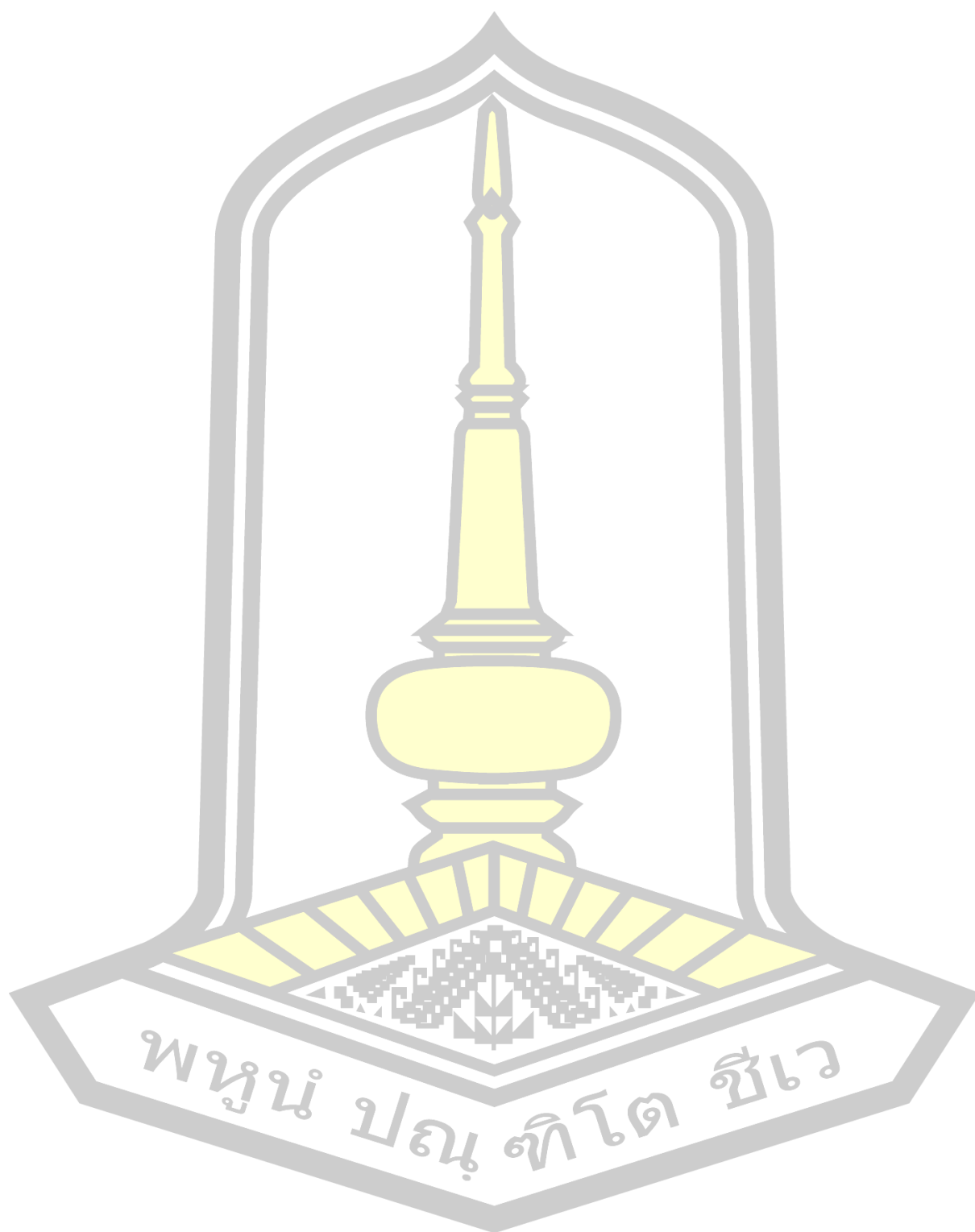
6. Focus on Social Influence

The festival should focus on enhancing its social influence, drawing attention to and discussing issues such as social change, cultural conflict and personal growth through the display of private photography. In this way, the festival not only becomes a platform for artistic exchange, but also a driving force for social change.

Since its inception in 2005, the Lianzhou Foto Festival has developed over the years to become an important event in the Chinese and international photography community. Its rich and diverse activities and themes have enhanced the cultural taste and economic vitality of Lianzhou City and promoted the development of community culture. The development of private photography in Lianzhou Foto Festival has enriched the artistic expression of the festival, enhanced cultural diversity, and increased social influence. By studying the development of Lianzhou Foto Festival and its influence on private photography, we see the unique value of photographic art in recording and expressing individual life, emotion and social change. In the future, the Lianzhou Foto Festival should continue to deepen international cooperation, promote the development of private photography, and enhance academic exchanges and community participation, so as to further consolidate its position and influence in the field of photographic art.



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APPENDIX

Interview Outline

(Adaptation of questions based on interviewees)

1. How did you get started in photography?
2. How do you define your style of photography?
3. What do you know about private photography?
4. What do you think is unique about the narrative structure of private photography?
5. how do you use visual elements (e.g. colour, light, composition) to enhance the narrative in your work?
6. how have advances in technology influenced your work in private photography?
7. how does your private photography reflect self-consciousness?
8. How do social interactions and feedback influence your self-consciousness and its expression in your work?
9. What do you think about private photography in Lianzhou Foto Festival?
10. What do you think of the Lianzhou Foto Festival?
11. What do you think about the future development of private photography?

Interviewees

Mayor of Lianzhou : Huang Yutuan 2019

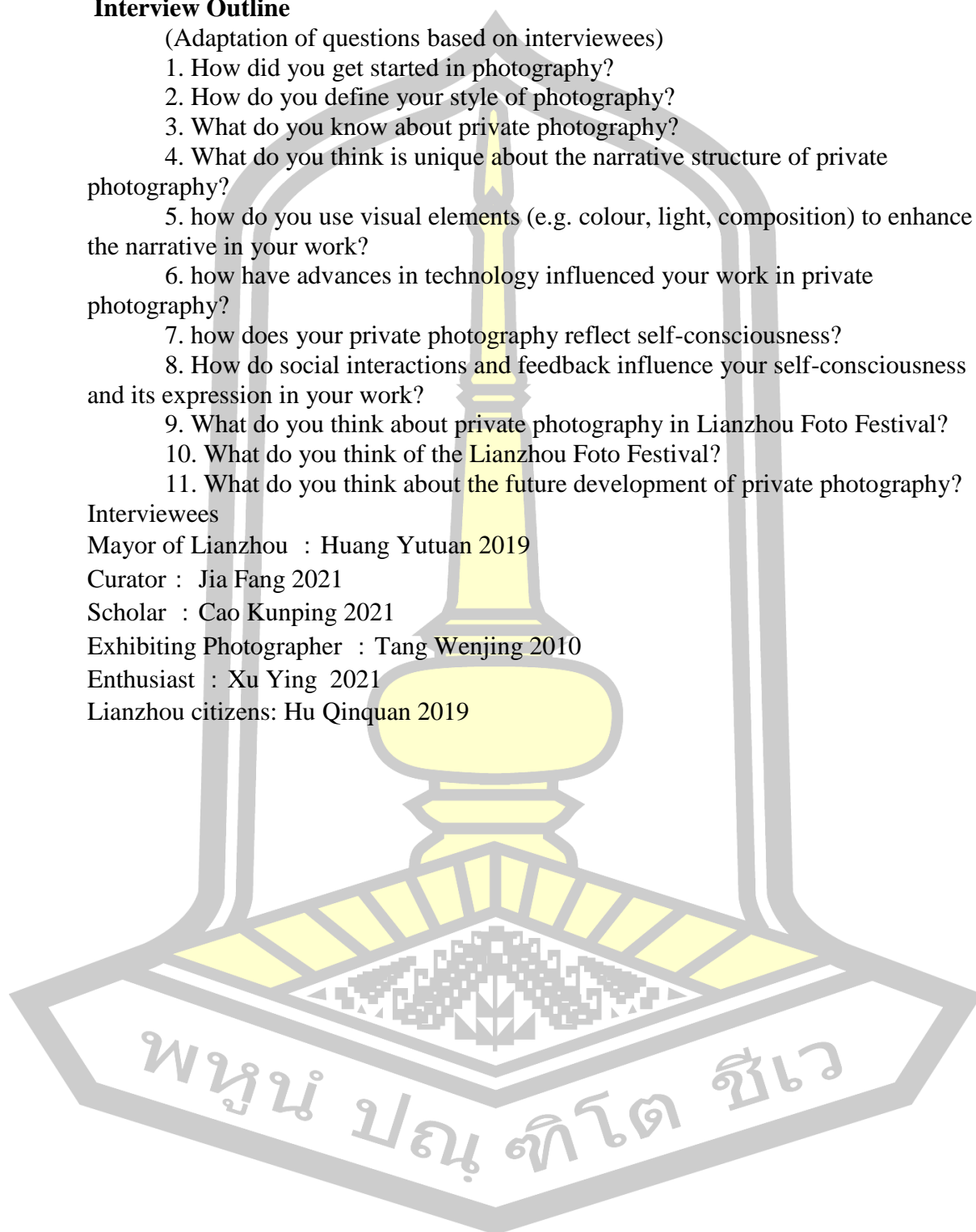
Curator : Jia Fang 2021

Scholar : Cao Kunping 2021

Exhibiting Photographer : Tang Wenjing 2010

Enthusiast : Xu Ying 2021

Lianzhou citizens: Hu Qinquan 2019



BIOGRAPHY

NAME	Ms. Yao Qiong
DATE OF BIRTH	June 13, 1989
PLACE OF BIRTH	Nanjing, Jiangsu, China
ADDRESS	Lukou Street, Jiangning District, Nanjing City, Jiangsu Province, China
POSITION	Student
EDUCATION	2013 Bachelor of Fine Arts (Photography Art), Nanjing University of the Arts 2017 Master (Radio and Television), Nanjing University of the Arts 2021-2024 Doctor of Philosophy (Fine and Applied Arts Research), Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts, Mahasarakham University

