

— FOTOE小黑书·纪实经典 —

FOTOE Documentary Photography Classic

朱宪民

ZHU XIANMIN



CHRONOLOGICAL
I M A G E S

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执行主编: 邝锦琼

作 者: 朱宪民

责任编辑: 阮清钰

翻 译: 范婷婷

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摄影是艺术吗？也许是，也许不是；又或部分，部分不是。但是一直以来我们总被概括性地告知摄影当然是一门艺术，因而“艺术”天然蕴含的创作属性便成就了如今越发失去羁绊的眼花缭乱的摄影大杂耍，这也使摄影中“非艺术”的部分一直挥不去某种自困与疑惑，或者说，令摄影的本质受到相当程度的遮蔽。

作为一个比较边缘的门类，这些年来摄影一直在不停拓展自我表现空间。在观念实验化、技术傻瓜化甚或材质多元化的支撑下，在日益频繁的摄影节或综合影展的裹挟下，人们既有的摄影认知边界一再弯曲变幻——有太多深沉的、亢奋的、虔诚乃至近乎自虐的、梦游般的、无所不用其极的、百无聊赖的、诡异的或者精于商业利益算计的图像扑面而来，致使人们的感官不得不屡屡遭受“突破”。在看似越来越宽阔的摄影之河上，委实有着太多的水纹、浪花或者泡沫，而在这煞是壮观的欢腾之下，又是些什么呢？

也许就像一句老话所言：泡沫在河面上翻滚，河水在下面静静流淌。缭乱众象之下，是不是有着某些更为恒定、更加接近本质的存在？作为“艺术的摄影”的背面，“非艺术摄影”的存在又是何种景观？这也正是这套“FOTOE小黑书·纪实经典”指向的目标。所谓的“非艺术”摄影，也即是“非创作”的摄影，其外延并不费解，大致上，纪实摄影、新闻摄影、肖像摄影、记录摄影等，当都在其列。相对于河面上的

多姿多彩，“河面以下的场景”也许更有助于我们比较切实地靠近摄影的特质。

无疑，这套小型图录的选取规模远远不足以涵盖整个“非创作”摄影的全面景观；而同样无疑的还有，这些入选的作品与作者都是公认的最具标志性的当代中国纪实摄影的代表。但愿当我们被牵引、穿行于这些来自不同主体、不同视点而又都同样并不伴随喧嚣与尖叫的图像中间时，便能返回或直达一个无须争论就应豁然的质朴的视觉定义：真实乃摄影之本质，而被浓缩或被理解的真实，则是摄影质量之所系。

我们无意非将摄影截然区间成“创作的”与“非创作的”两个领域不可，换言之，借助这种多少难免粗略的划分，也只是有图表述的方便罢了。事实上，因认知、因环境、因情状等等而异，“创作”元素从来不可能完全绝迹于纪实摄影，这就像流水与泡沫无法断然分离开一样。被视为纪实摄影大师的卡帕，不也曾透过他的“杰作”《倒下的战士》暗地里的摆拍，自我式地戏弄了“非创作的”的信条？从本系列图录撷取的早期图像中，读者一点儿也不难窥见个别“创作”的痕迹，这恰好印证了“创作”与“非创作”偶有混淆，确是自然而然的不争之实；但一旦对这些图像形成“历史地观看”时，其整体的图注则就会变成纪实摄影的进程，还真的就是一个挣脱“创作”的进程。

Preface

Is photography a form of art? Perhaps yes, and perhaps no; perhaps partly yes, and partly no. Yet, we have been told for long that it is generally assumed to be undoubtedly a form of art since "art", by nature, implies creativity, which has given rise to the ongoing versatile unbounded bundles of today's photography. This has virtually resulted in the unwanted presence of the so-called "self-confinedness" and "perplexity" of its non-artistic facet, or, to a great extent, falsely characterized the nature of photography.

Being a relatively marginal discipline, photography has been exploring its self-expressiveness over the past decades. However, under the current streams of conceptual experimentation, operational automation and material diversification in photography, and under the influence of increasingly frequent photography festivals or large-scale exhibitions, the original borderline of people's cognition has been undergoing constant changes and been revolutionized, with much diversified photographic works of various sorts, ranging from serious, excited, pious, almost self-tortured, dream-hovering, unscrupulous, totally-exhausted to the mysterious or commercial-benefit-oriented types, which have actually created great challenges to our sense of the world. Over the seemingly great water of photography, there exist lots of ripples, waves or foams, but what on earth underlies such a scene of jubilation?

Perhaps an old saying provides a witty answer: over the water tosses the rolling foam, while underneath silently runs the deep water. Out of a scene of kaleidoscope, is there anything more constant, invariable, and closer to the existing truth? What is the wonder of the non-artistic photography – the counterpart of artistic photography? This is also what the present "FOTOE Documentary Photography Classic" focuses. The so-called non-artistic photography, i.e. non-creative photography – such as documentary, photo-journalism, portrait photography and chrono-photography – is not hard to define. Compared with the colorful scenes over the

surface, perhaps "the scene underneath" may be more helpful for us to access the nature of photography.

Unquestionably, photos in such a small series are far from enough to present a panoramic view of the non-artistic photography, and, by the same token, these works of art along with their authors have been generally recognized as the most important representatives of the contemporary Chinese documentary photography. When we are attracted, roaming through all these images pertaining to various viewpoints from distinct photographers as well as free from the hustle and bustle, we could possibly return or direct to a crystal clear and plain visual definition: the nature of photography lies in its truthfulness while its quality depends upon the facts that have been condensed or comprehended.

However, we have no intention here to classify photography into two distinctive categories: the creative and non-creative. By adopting such (more or less) sketchy labels, we are only aiming at the general convenience of explanation. In fact, subject to the differences in understanding, context and circumstance, the elements of creativity can never be dissociated from documentary photography, just as the foams on the great water can not be utterly separated from the flowing river. Even Robert Capa, the master of documentary photography, once deliberately played tricks on the non-creative belief of documentary photography by secretly posing for his master piece *Fallen Soldier*. In the same way, it is not difficult for viewers to perceive original creativities from the photo-series, especially those taken in the earlier years. It thus proves that creative and non-creative elements can sometimes co-exist naturally within the same piece of works. But only when these images are perceived from "historical perspectives", their overall explanatory text will be a chronological process of the development in documentary photography --- the actual process of breaking away from the creativity.

序

朱宪民

作为一个摄影者，以纪实的手法表现作品的内容，诠释对生命、对生活的理解，这是我多年来对摄影艺术的追求。如果我的作品能够给人带来“苦涩后的回味、焦灼后的会心、冥思后的放松、苍老后的年轻”就足矣。

摄影为人间目击，要传达人性的课题。它将生活解剖给人们看，看一个孩子脸上显示出的忧喜，看百姓眼睛里的不屈与渴望，看人类历史走过的每一个深深浅浅的脚印。

大力士安泰的神力来自坚实的大地。同样，摄影的力量来源于生活。1932—1936年，美国历史上著名的农庄安全管理处，30名摄影者齐刷刷地将镜头对准那些公路上的难民，那些受挫折、被遗忘和得不到援助的家庭，那些怀着最大的同情心和尊敬心所摄取的、丝毫不矫揉造作的纪实图片给了公众强烈的震撼，也给了我强烈的震撼。从看到这些作品的那天开始，我知道了我的摄影之路应该怎样前行。

从事摄影已有几十年，我背着行装由黄河岸边走来，又背着相机向黄河岸边走去，走入中原儿女、父老乡亲。在那里，我看到了沉积在岁月当中的苦中有乐、怨中有爱的真实生活，感受到一种朴实淳厚的美。当我一路走来、满载而归的时候，我虽不能说完全领悟到摄影之真谛，却也走上了一条属于自己的路。

我拍的大都是系列照片，很少一张一张地发表。我也拍特写，但更多的是注重环境的衬托，尽可能把有时代特点、地域特色的背景拍进去，让观者能清楚地看到他们吃什么、穿什么、摆设什么……我很少逛庙会、赶热闹，拍的都是普普通通的人，平平常常的生活场景。我希望100年后的人们看到我的摄影后了解。原来100年前人们是这样生活的。

我也接触到一些如“无思想创作”、“朦胧意识”等等摄影观念，有的作品追求形式的奇特，而忽视了内涵。正所谓虚的东西多了，而真正实实在在、深沉博大的东西却缺乏得很，从而得不到广泛接受，最终只能孤芳自赏，成为过眼烟云。

中国摄影从起步到现在，经过一个又一个的曲折。作为一个在这些曲折中沉浮过来的人，我深深意识到：真正长存下来的是那些对生活、对历史有深刻把握的作品。

印度诗人泰戈尔说：在人生的道路上，所有的人并不站在同一场所。有的在山前，有的在海边，有的在平原边上；但是没有一个人能够站着不动，所有的人都得朝前走。身为摄影者，让我们按着各自对人生的理解去撷取每时每刻都在变化着的大千世界和这个世界中的人。不管起点在哪儿，不管是否已名气在身，只要踏踏实实向前走，我相信定会有收获。

Preface Zhu Xiannin

Being a photographer, I have been continuously in quest of my goal in the field of photography for years — to unfold the photographic works of art, to manifest my understanding of life and everyday events by means of documentary manipulation. So long as my works of art could possibly provide people with "a nice thought out of bitterness, an insightful understanding out of anxiety, a released mind out of meditation, and youth out of oldness", I will then feel satisfied.

Since photography presents a witness of the reality, hence to explore human nature should be its everlasting target. It will exemplify life for viewers to see joys and sorrows on children's face, unyieldingness and eagerness in ordinary people's eyes, and every footprint of distinct depth in the human history.

As the great Giant Antaeus gained his strength from the solid mother earth, the power of photography derives from life. In the years between 1932 and 1936, at the America's historically well-known Farm Security Administration, 30 photographers gathered in the spot and, with their cameras, documented the plight of the poor refugees on the way and the frustrated, abandoned and helpless families. All these natural documentary images, taken with greatest sympathy, compassion and esteem, imposed a strong impact upon both the public and the author. On the very day of seeing those images, I came to realize where my own orientation towards photography should direct.

It has been dozens of years since I first took up my camera, backpacked with my luggage, coming from the Yellow river areas. Then with my camera, I went back and walked into the lives of my fellow countrymen in the central plain of China. There I observed the true aspects of life, well-deposited in years: the people enjoying their hardly-earned happiness out of hardship and love out of aggrievedness, from the in-depth of which I could feel a kind of plain and sheer beauty. When coming back fully-loaded with those wonderful images, I did virtually

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open a road of my own though unable to talk about having gained a real understanding of photography myself.

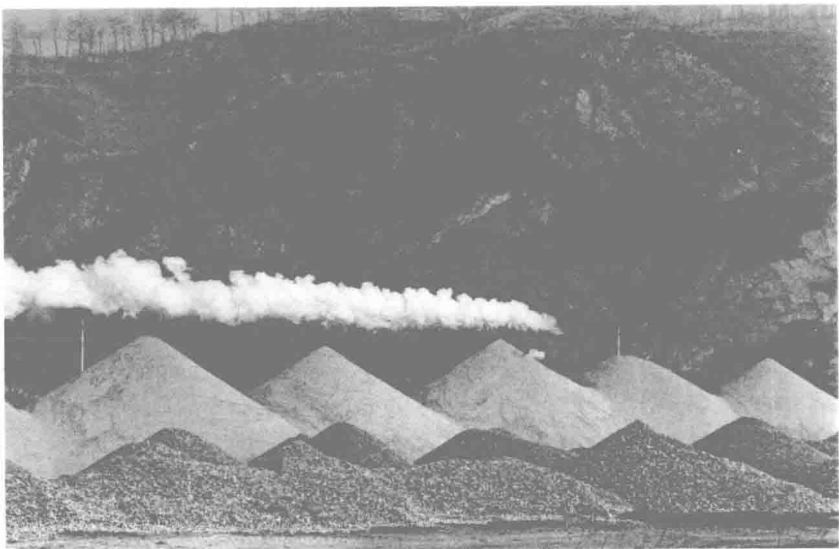
What I took are usually series photos, rarely having them published piece by piece. I also took close-up pictures, catering more to the framing of the backgrounds --- such as the features of the era and peculiarities of the scenes --- so as to present a real world of what people eat, how they dress and furnish --- I myself seldom went to temple fairs, roaming in the hustle and bustle. Yet, what I took are the photos of common people and ordinary scenes. I was hoping that 100 years later people are still able to know "the life of the people a century ago" through these photos.

In the past, I also learned about the concepts of "unconscious creation" and "blurry photography". Some of these are just in pursuit of uniqueness in forms but poor in contents. As a result, there seems to be too much emptiness inside, lacking things substantial and profound, which eventually turns out to be narcissistically transient and unpopular.

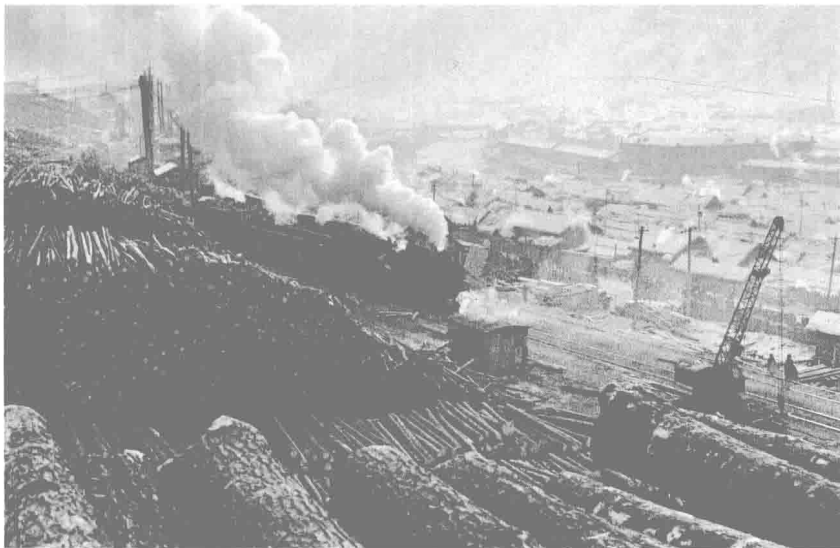
Chinese photography, from its beginning up to now, has gone all the way through ups and downs. As a man who has gone all the way throughout, I have been fully awake to the fact: what has been remained long will be the works of art with deep insights into life and history.

Once the Indian poet Tagore remarked: through the whole journey of life, people rarely position themselves in the same spot, some at the feet of mountains, some by seashores, and still many others on the vast plain. Everyone is going ahead and no one stands still. As a photographer, I will set my camera towards the ever-changing world and its people based on my understanding of life. No matter where the starting point lies, and no matter whether you are already known, I firmly believe that the future is promising as long as you are working steadily towards it.

I



1970 · 辽宁抚顺 露天矿场。
1970 Fushun, Liaoning Open-pit mine.



1968 · 吉林临江 储木场。
1968 Linjiang, Jilin Lumberyard.



2006·陕西延安 闹元宵。
2006 Yan'an, Shaanxi Lantern Festival.