

## Aesthetic Analysis of Photography in the Context of Fine Arts With an Approach to Bourdieu's Cultural Capital Theory

### Abstract:

Fine Art is an artistic genre that employs aesthetic traditions to define foundations of new objects. This type of art intends to express a sense of aesthetics, establish communication or encourage thinking and further aims to address aesthetic goals, rather than using it for practical purposes. Fine art photography means the creation of impossibles through personification of imaginary and fanciful objects in the form of images with the help of skills and tools (mainly Photoshop) and of course creativity. Photography is one of the most significant mediums of communication reproduced in number more than other forms of creations and as an artistic-cultural work, influences the taste and visual identity of the audiences. As an outlet of mass media, photography could thus communicate and interact with dissimilar classes of audiences. That is why in order to successfully create pieces of art using this medium; one must identify the audience and appraise their taste more than any other art discipline. Since the audiences of cultural works, as recipients and consumers, play key roles in the development and reception of an artwork, understanding their taste is fundamental for the production process. In this respect, the study of the act of photography and understanding what a photograph is provides unique prospects of applying novel approaches to entirely appreciate the rules of behavior and the individual's experiences of such behavior. The paper at hand is an analysis of the works of realistic and interactive socialist photography with the aim of studying the impact of media on the aesthetic perception and the way of presenting art in contemporary era. It investigates the relationship between the cultural capital of the audiences and their aesthetic taste in the field of photography. The research is theoretically based on the definition of the Pierre Bourdieu's institutionalized cultural capital. This research intends to rebuild and establish the ratios of symbolic (cultural, economic, and social) capitals in different strata of contemporary Iranian society and answer the following questions: What role does the individuals' cultural capital play in the artistic taste and selection process of the audiences of the artworks?

What position does beauty hold in the process of audiences' decision making and selection?

Recording these ratios based on the accurate statistical information obtained from field studies and corroborated statistical analysis, provides the basis for conducting all-encompassing researches. Having examined the features of Fine Art as a novel art style and photography as an artistic medium, the present study seeks to make an aesthetical analysis and identify audiences' taste and further inspect how these two art categories are associated with the cultural capital of the members of the society. To assess the visual taste of the audiences with their cultural and economic capital, a visual questionnaire, comprising of comparative questions, was prepared. The questions include 4 sample images with similar subjects yet different employment approaches. Having consulted with the relevant professors of the field in order to authenticate the research evaluation methods, the qualitative indexes for samples' selection have been determined based on the level of genuine and folk aesthetic works. Collected from the internet, the set of photos presented have been shot by well-known local photographers in different contexts. Likewise, having evaluated the audiences'

### Zahra Rahbarnia

(Corresponding Author)  
Associate Professor, Alzahra (s)  
University  
Email: z.rahbarnia@alzahra.ac.ir

### Sepideh Yaghooti

Ph.D student, Art Studies,  
Alzahra (s) University  
Email: sep.yaghooti@gmail.com

### Fatemeh Morsali Tohidi

Ph.D. Student, Art Studies,  
Alzahra (s) University  
Email: Fa.morsali@yahoo.com



tastes based on their cultural capital, the necessity of achieving important parameters in the field of photography from the audiences' perspective has been examined. In this regard, questions with spectral and multiple choice responses have been set up in order to get the audiences acquainted with the topic of the Fine Art photography, encourage them to participate as a dynamic art audience, record audience expectations and opinions about the current conditions governing the production and representation of photographs. Employing a descriptive-analytical approach and desk study of library resources, the study examines the audience's approach towards the artistic medium of photography and analyzes the features affecting the differences in comprehension of the message of the art of photography. The research findings suggest that most audiences, regardless of their diverse cultural backgrounds, select photos that fit into the criteria of genuine aesthetic as top priority. The theoretical framework provided by intellectuals in the field of social sciences, such as Bourdieu, provides an appropriate framework for examining the relationships between art producer and consumer. It is suggested that scholars apply Bourdieu's theory to other areas of studies of art in future.

**Keywords:** Cultural Capital, Realistic Photography, Interactive photography, Audience Tastes, Pierre Bourdieu

#### References:

- Ahmadi, Babak. (2004). *From Symbols to Text*, 4th edition, Tehran: Markaz.
- Baccarat, Robert. (2002). *Consumption*, translated by Khosrow Sabri, 1st edition, Tehran: Shirazeh.
- Battersby, Christine. (1991). *Situating the Aesthetic, in Thinking Art: Beyond Traditional Aesthetics*, ed. Andrew Benjamin and Peter Osborne, London: Institute of Contemporary Arts, pp. 31-43.
- Bon Vets, Patrice. (2012). *Lessons from Bourdieu's Sociology*, translated by Jahangir Jahangiri & Hasan Poursafir, 2nd edition, Tehran: Agah.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. (2015). *Photography: The Medieval Art*, translated by Keyhan Vali-Nezhad, Tehran: Payam Emrooz.
- ----- (2011). *Differentiation, Social Criticism, Natural Judgments*, translated by Hassan Chavoshian, 1st edition, Tehran: Ney.
- ----- (2001). *Theory of Action, Practical Reasons & Rational Choice*, translated by Morteza Mardiha, 1st edition, Tehran: Naghshonegar.
- ----- (1980). *The Aristocracy of Culture*, Media, Culture and Society, 2(3): 225-254.
- ----- (1979). *La distinction: Critique Sociable du Jugement*, Paris: Editions de Minuit.
- Grenfel, Michael. (2010). *Key Concepts of Bourdieu*, translated by Mohammad Mehdi Labibi, 1st edition, Tehran: Afkar.
- Hafez Nia, Mohammad Reza. (2010). *Introduction to Research Method in Humanities*, 17th edition, Tehran: Samt.
- Hinick, Natalie. (2008). *Sociology of Art*, translated by Abdolhossein Nik Gohar, 2nd edition, Tehran: Agah.
- Jenkins, Richard. (2006). *Pierre Bourdieu*, translated by Leila Jouafshani & Hassan Chavoshian, 1st edition, Tehran: Ney.
- Khan, Naseem. (1981). *Britain's New Arts*, Journal of Aesthetic Education, 15(3): 59-65.
- Kosari, Masoud. (2007). *Understanding Artwork in Society*, Proceedings of the First Contemplation of the Sociology of Art, By Sirous Yeganeh, Tehran: Art Academy, pp. 217-229.
- McCoyle, Denis. (2001). *Audience*, translated by Mehdi Montazar-e-ghaem, 1st edition, Tehran: Center for Media Studies and Research.
- Moghimi-Nejad, Mehdi. (2014). *Photography & Theory*, Tehran: Islamic Art and Culture Institute.
- Momayyez, Morteza. (2003). *Experiences*, 1st edition, Tehran: Did.
- Mushturi, Antigone. (2007). *Sociology of the Audience in the Field of Culture & Art*, translated by Hossein Mirzaee, 2nd edition, Tehran: Ney.
- R. Lemman, Michael. (2009). *The Cultural and Aesthetic Value of Publishing: Money, Power and History of Art*, translated by Bahareh Rahadoost, Zibashenakht, Tenth year (21):17-27.
- Ramin, Ali. (2008). *Fundamentals of Sociology of Art*, 4th edition, Tehran: Ney.
- ----- (2011). *Philosophical and Sociological Theories in Art*, 2nd edition, Tehran: Ney.
- Ravdarad, Azam. (2013). *The Characteristics of Audiences of Modern & Popular Painting in Iran*, Sociology of Arts and Literature, First Year (1): 39-64.
- ----- (2011). *Theories of Sociology of Art and Literature*, 1st edition, Tehran: Tehran University.

- ----- (2005). *The Position of Economics in the Art of Sociology*, Binab Monthly, First Year (8): 48-63.
- Reed, Herbert. (1973). *Art and Society*, translated by Soroush Habibi, 1st edition, Tehran: Amir Kabir.
- Ritzer, George. (2010). *Theories of Sociology in Contemporary Times*, translated by Mohsen Solasi, 15th edition, Tehran: Elmi.
- Salehi, Sudabeh. (2013). *A Look at the Concept of Graphic Design in Iran*, Herfeh-ye Honarmand, (46):26-46.
- Salehi Amiri, Seyed Reza. (2013). *Cultural Pathology in Iran*, 2nd edition, Tehran: Ghoghnoos.
- Seidman, Steven. (2007). *Controversy in Sociology, Today's Theories of Sociology*, translated by Hadi Jalili's, 2nd edition, Tehran: Ney.
- Schubert, Christine & Fontaine, Olivier. (2003). *Bourdieu's Vocabulary*, translated by Morteza Katbi, 1st edition, Tehran: Ney.
- Seyyed Abadi, Ali Asghar. (2006). *Crossing Traditional Audience*, 1st Edition, Tehran: Farhange Ma.
- Shariati, Sara; Hashemi, Raheleh & Salari, Maryam (2015). *Generalizing Art or Exacerbating Artistic Behavior (Case Study: Tehran Museum of Contemporary Arts)*, Art and Literature Sociology, 7(2):141-165.
- Sonson, Goran. (2008). *Semiotics of Photography*, translated by Mehdi Moghimi-Nezhad, Tehran: Elm.
- Wolf, Janet. (2010). *Aesthetics and Sociology of Art*, translated by Babak Mohaghegh, Tehran: Institute for the Translation and Publishing of Works of Art (text).

**URLs:**

- <http://www.lenzak.com/tags->[Accessed 12 August 2017]
- <http://jennamar.tinphotography.com>[Accessed 11 August 2017]
- [www.shahrefarang.com](http://www.shahrefarang.com) [Accessed 5 July 2017]