

# The Future of Photography

Every 2 minutes, we take more photographs than the whole of humanity in the 1800's. New technologies are constantly bombarding us, making it easier than ever before to take images. Over seventy percent of the UK now own a smart phone, over 350 million snapchats are sent daily, and many of the great press photographs of 2013 were taken not by professional photographers, but by the general public instead. These frighteningly striking statistic show just how far photography has come in recent years, and perhaps reflects where photography might be heading in the future .It would be easy to assume that photography is no longer art of the professional and is instead a tool of the masses. As such, photographers are having to think carefully about where image making is going, and how they can adapt to what the future holds.

By no means am I a mind reader, but for the extents and purposes of this article I will explain where I think photography is heading, and how we can evolve as photographers to meet these future changes. We all know that our images are been recorded day in and day out by CCTV cameras and the smartphones of strangers, but the fact that soon we might be able to take a photograph of someone simply by saying 'take a picture' raises questions about the intrusion of photography in our lives. Imagine how street photography could change if people are been photographed without any inkling that a camera is present? Google Glass has thrust this question of privacy once more into the news.

The way in which professional's costs are managed will also have to change. Gone are the days where to upgrade your image quality you simply switched to the latest type of film, or a sharper lens. I own a Nikon D200, a camera that was only bought out in 2005. Now this camera is almost redundant in use. The rate at which new technology is coming out is staggering, and we have to think very carefully about how we keep up with it. I'm not saying that the flashiest new camera makes for the best images; of course it's in the skill of you, the photographer. However when the newest cameras cost upwards of £2000, how can we be expected to afford to upgrade every 4 or 5 years? Add on to this the price of lenses, flashguns, and so on then the overheads for photographers are growing and growing. Adobe hasn't helped this situation with the move to the cloud either. For most photographers Photoshop CS4 had all the tools we needed, we didn't particularly need to spend a huge lump of money upgrading to CS6. Now we have the Adobe's Creative Cloud, a subscription service that brings some benefits, but seems another attempt to scam us out of our hard earned cash.

The power of digital cameras is also something that raises new possibilities for the future of photography. The first digital camera came in 1975, and had a resolution of just 0.01 megapixels. Now, we have smartphones that have up to 41 megapixels (Nokia Lumia 1020). Gigapixel photography allows us to take images with a resolution of over 1,000,000,000 pixels. It's quite hard to think how much better these images can get. If history has taught us anything, it is that when technology reaches a limit, it shrinks in size. In a couple of decade's time we could see smartphones having the capability to take gigapixel images. Imagine taking a photo on the iPhone 12 and been able to zoom in to a tiny window in the distance and see in pin sharp clarity the inside of a strangers home. Scary stuff to think about!

Again with the mind-blowing expansion of new technology, should we start thinking about shooting more images in 3D? The first experimental stereoscopic images were created in the 1890's. Now, 3D TV seems to be creeping into our lives, perhaps with this so will the lust for images that jump out at us and literally protrude into our living rooms like never before. You can already buy digital stereoscopic cameras such as the Fujifilm FinePix 3D W3 for as little as £120. A small price to pay for the opportunities it could open up.

But how do we show our work in this day in age? Of course we can't talk about the future of photography without talking about that strange thing 'the world wide web'. We can now access the internet from more places than anywhere before, and with the increase in wireless communication

and satellite technology we might soon see a way in which photographers can take the most beautiful wildlife images of the Sahara, whilst sat at their laptop with a cup of tea in their living room. Is it even too farfetched to think of a day where computers replace photographers? – Okay, perhaps we don't quite need to worry about that. The Internet allows new possibilities for us to display our images as well. Photography can now be an interactive experience, mediation between the viewer and the photographer rather than just a snapshot of something. Jonathan Harris's 'The Whale Hunt' is a brilliant example of how the Internet has allowed us to find new and exciting ways to explore narrative within photographic pieces. These are still in their infant days, but I wonder if the physical print will disappear in favor of the digital display? After all, many people already own a digital photo frame.

In conclusion, photography is a malleable subject matter, constantly shifting and evolving to new ideas and technologies. As such, photographers must find some way in which to intertwine with these changes, keeping pace with the world as it shifts. Personally I believe that there will come a point where we say 'enough is enough' to the ever more complex methods of image making, and the artisanal craft of analogue image making and the physical artifact will become cherished again inside a world saturated with pixels and file names. So whilst I can't predict where the future is heading with any certainty, I would say this. Any photographer who doesn't already have a website in the pipeline, and knows how to shoot digital as well as analogue will quite probably struggle in the future. We are no longer photographers; we are also video makers, audio recorders, web designers, and a whole host of other things. The way to move forward with photography is to converge it with the other things we know, and rather than adapting ourselves to stay in pace with it, we should perhaps adapt our own photography to match our own skill sets. As Lewis Bush (@LewisKayBush) commented, Photography will be everywhere in the future. At least that means that we have a lot of opportunities we can capitalize on!

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