

## The Connotation Interpretation of Typology Photography

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**Abstract.** Typology photography has an obvious formal language, and this formal "appearance" makes it easy for people to get a single understanding of the form, thus forming the understanding that typology photography is only a combination of photographic function and formal language, while ignoring the basic criterion of evaluation of photographic expression. It shall be realized that typology photography is just wraps the connection between itself and the essence of photography in formal language and hide its expression under formal language. Therefore, the connotation of photography itself must be used as a clue to uncover these presentative tools. Typology photography must be established under the background of the essence of photography to acquire its meaning.

### Introduction

Understanding the complete features of typology photography is the purpose of studying typology photography. In the process of understanding the history of photography, we can realize that typology photography has always maintained a close connection with the essence of photography. This is shown in the fact that typology photography follows the thoughts and attitude of photography as description and observation. This is a kind of agreement with the essence of photography, and this agreement is the fundamental reason why photography has finally contributed to the formation of typology photography after more than a century of gestation and precipitation. Therefore, the understanding of typology photography needs to be based on the understanding of photography itself. To understand typology photography needs a photography concept that can support this understanding. Photography concept determines the way and scale of understanding typology photography.

### The Photography Concept for Supporting the Typology Photography

**When did People Establish Their Photography Concept.** If the person who answered the question set up a photography concept when photography came into being, then the answer may not be exact enough. Because if people do not have a knowledge of photography, how can people invent photography? When we look at Neanderthal records on the rock wall, we can know that people already had an understanding of the description at that time. It can be sure that people's understanding of the description can be traced back to earlier times, but the problem that people always face is how to complete the description. Since the rock wall painting tens of thousands of years ago, people's pursuit of description has never changed. Until photography appeared, people have created various forms of description, such as words, paintings, music, etc. All forms of expressions created by human beings are subject to description, and so is photography. In fact, it can be said that human beings define the essence of all media in the process of understanding the value of "description", so as to continuously improve these media to meet the requirements of description. This is true of words, paintings, music and even photography. Description is the essence of photography. As the inventors of photography, Talbot and Daguerre found the "noumenon" in the combination of machinery and chemistry and named it "photography" after they understood people's requirements for description and recognized "description" as an essence.

"Description" shall be the purest understanding of photography. To understand photography itself, you need to understand what "description" is.

**Why do People Need Description.** The value of description for human beings lies in the fact that human beings need to understand the connection between themselves and the world. The only way for human beings to confirm their connection with the world is description. As a description, photography meets the requirement of corroborating the relationship between man and the world. Then take a closer look, why shall people confirm their relationship with the world? The corroboration of human beings is because human beings are always facing the objective - time, which cannot be grasped in the objective world. People regard themselves as "life", and time is the "fate" of "life". Time has defined the direction and destination of "life". Time is the basic direction of people's immutable life and end, and is the "destiny" of people. The fate of human beings in time points to the end, even the common fate of "human beings". The end is a part that people can bear, but if people's end will vanish together with people's value and people's connection with the world, then people cannot bear it. People need to confirm that the purpose of the connection with the world is to reserve the value of people and the connection between people and the world. Even if time can erase people from the world, the value of people and the connection between people and the world will still be preserved in the description. Keeping their own value and the connection with the world in the description is the basic requirement for people to face the world. But what exactly can the description retain? The description itself is still in time, and all the contents reserved by human beings through the description may be broken and disintegrated in time. Therefore, the most important reservation in the description is only the reservation of "existence". The "existence" is the only thing that human beings can reserve in the description. All the values and connections of human beings except "existence" will be erased by time. The "existence" is regarded by human beings as "immortality" that can be opposed to time. It is human beings' reliance and comfort in time. In the eyes of man the "existence" preserved by the description stands in time. As a description, photography carries such a mission. In time, the values and connections of people and things depicted in the photos will gradually disappear. In essence, the anthropological images of Indians are called anthropological photography [1], because time has erased the clues for viewers to understand the values and connections of these characters, but the description of the images retains the "existence" of the characters themselves, which makes people resonate with the fate of the characters in the images in time. Viewers feel their common destiny in time when watching these photos. The existence of all things is waiting for a description of "existence", and the photograph is just such a description. Photograph is waiting for the viewer to recognize this existence. Photograph shows the value of separating the existence of people or things from time. Therefore, as the end of description opposite to time, even though everything is gone in time, photo still adheres to "existence" itself. This is the care that photos give people. The aesthetic basis of photography is based on the description of "existence". Photography describes "existence" and photography has the most fundamental value.

**Photography as a Descriptive Attitude.** For example, Susan Sontag stated in "On Photography" that "today, all things exist to end in one photo." [1] Sontag's statement essentially emphasizes the attitude of photography as a description. In terms of time, the value of all things is only "existence", then the existence of all things has always formed a corresponding relationship with the description of existence, and the existence of all things is waiting for the description to protect, because this description seems to have the right to determine the existence of things in the end. Therefore, the description obtained by things goes beyond the fate of "end". Facing the end, "description" can be equated with the "life" of things. Description constructs the confrontation between life and time. Photography, as a description, has this attitude. Description is the essence of photography. Photography shall face the present world at this scale.

## **The Connotation of Typology Photography**

With the understanding of the photography concept mentioned above, the connotation constructed by the Bernd and Hilla Becher in typology photography can be considered along this understanding. In fact, it seems that the general outline of the connotation of typology photography can already be felt by connecting this photography concept with typology photography. Here, we may as well think about several issues of typology photography, clarify the appearance of this connotation, and then verify it through the linguistic logic in typology photography, so as to form an understanding of the complete appearance of typology photography.

**Deduction of Basic Problems in Typology Photography.** First of all, what does typology photography describe? The direct objects recorded in the typology photography of the Bernd and Hilla Becher is buildings, and even industrial buildings. Many categories of industrial buildings can be found in these images, such as lifting towers, water towers, cooling towers, etc. So why do you need to photograph these buildings? (figure. 1 steam tower) if it is because these buildings have the aesthetic feeling of architectural form, then the question is why shall the aesthetic feeling of this form be repeated? If only the formal aesthetic feeling of architecture is reflected, and the aesthetic feeling of so-called minimalism or industrialism is reflected, repetition is futile. Only a delicate image is enough to show this aesthetic feeling through photography. The repetition of the aesthetic feeling of architectural form will only make this "beauty" appear bloated and boring. To capture the aesthetic feeling of architectural form, we can build the photography on the basis of rich objects, to collect more classical formal beauty in architecture, and to make the aesthetic feeling of architectural form the widest and most fully reflected. In fact, when asked about this, the formal beauty of architecture is contrary to the expression of "type" and is not sufficient to support the logic of "type".

**Description of Typology Photography.** What exactly does typology photography describe? In essence, only starting from the "type" itself can the logic supporting the "type" be obtained, and the establishment of the "type" is to obtain the overall observation. Then whether typology photography can be understood as an overall observation of industrial buildings seems to be a logical possibility. But the question is, if this is an overall observation of industrial buildings, which will evaluate and judge this observation? Photography itself obviously does not have this ability. Architecture evaluation negates the typology concept of photography, and Becher's photos face viewers. These photos have never served a certain discipline, so obviously these images are not architectural observation. The Bernd and Hilla Becher have made it absolutely clear that these photos constitute the meaning and value of photography itself. Becher has made it clear that these photos are the observation of photography itself. To understand photography as the concept of typology, this kind of photography can only be the observation of photography itself. The observation of photography can be traced back to Thornton's understanding that photography is aimed at the observation of "people". In essence, only by putting typology photography into this scale can one get a reasonable understanding: the Bernd and Hilla Becher's typology photography forms an observation of people through the records of buildings. Typology photography is an overall observation of human beings, so the result of its observation is that the whole of "human beings" is "human beings". The purpose of typology photography is to describe the world of human beings and the appearance of human beings. This is the description logic of typology photography.

## **Why does the Description of "Human" Need to be Completed Through "Things"**

**Relate to Human Beings.** As a description, photography does not have the ability to directly describe people as "classes". The description of people as "classes" can only be relayed to people through objects related to people. Architecture is the "embodiment" of human beings. Even if human beings disappear in this world, architecture can still be recognized as traces of human beings and can still embody "human beings". Secondly, the Bernd and Hilla Becher chose architecture as the object of observation for the sake of expression. Architecture is symbolic as the "boundary" between man and the world. For example, Becher photography includes a tower with various

functions. As a form of architecture, the tower has a history of tens of thousands of years, and this form of architecture has been developed till now. People have given various functions to the tower's form of architecture. This form of architecture has multiple connections with people from form to culture to function. It is enough to constitute a symbol for people and it is accurate to regard it as a way to describe human beings.

## Summary

Typological photography describes the "face of human existence" in the understanding of photography. Photography is a kind of description. People's requirement for description is to keep "existence" in the description corresponding to the end brought by time. The purpose of typology photography to describe "human existence" is also the same. In essence, the preservation of human "existence" from the establishment of typology photography has become the fundamental purpose of typology photography. Typology photography describes and preserves the human existence and face the common destiny that human beings will eventually face with photos. Typology photography essentially confirms that human beings will meet for "end". However, this is not a negative understanding. In fact, it is the most positive understanding of human beings. Since end is the background of human future, then there is no need for human beings to fear anything. People shall face it fearlessly and record the human face with photography. This is to preserve the dignity of human beings in the world. Maybe human beings will finally face the end at some time. Then people can make a final memory of the human face in the image and cherish the dignity of human beings in this world. Typology photography does not obey the fate contained in time, but places the human face and fearlessness in the photos. Typology photography faces the "common destiny" of human beings through the description of the photos. This is the fundamental evaluation and judgment made by the nature of photography on the "face of human existence" described by typology photography: human value lies in existence, and human destiny is facing the end. Therefore, the connotation of typology photography shall be understood as: typology photography constructs the appearance of human existence to face the end of human beings.

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