Project **WINKS**

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2. Background Research

2.1 Introduction

Digital cameras became smaller, lighter, cheaper and have more storage capacity since the year 2000. The photograph has been taken base, even in the mobile industry and belongs to the basic technical equipment of each new cell phone. As a result, more and more will be photographed. Photography is moving towards the area of amateurs. *(Santaella, 2009, p. 25ff)*

From a manufacturer standpoint, the difference which define the photograph in essence, are the camera position (directly on the eye through the viewfinder or on a display with outstretched arms) or the technical details of the camera (resolution, etc.). *(vgl. Sachsse, 2006, p. 15)* This matches with a slogan of Kodak: "You press the button, we do the rest" *(Köstlin, 2006, p. 19)*

An important, notable characteristic of digital snapshots compared to conventional photography, is that the shift between time and place of events and viewing the image has been significantly reduced. *(vgl. Santaella, 2009, p. 27ff)* You don't have to wait no longer to look at your pictures like it used to be with analog pictures. With digital cameras you can look at them on the camera display right after you shot them. The anticipation, the surprise effect, the temporal and spatial distance to the place and time you shot your image are therefore out.

2.2 Making Photos

2.2.1 General

Photography is always a communicative act, because the photographer doesen't make photos just for himself but also to present them to others or to communicate something. *(vgl. Schamberg, 2009, p. 120ff)* Julio Cortazar writes in his book "Las Babas del Diablo" that in the making of digital photography, the phenomenology of the photographic act in all its intensity of the reflection of the significant moment for the time of the shot is over. Other authors also report that photography has lost its ceremonial value and has been trivialized. A reflected act became a thoughtless act. *(vgl. Santaella, 2009, p. 27ff)* The process until the triggering of the camera is divided into two phases. First, the cultural view (scanning images) and second the construction of images (making images). *(vgl. Schamberg, 2009, p. 120ff)*

2.2.2 Scanning Images

Photography is always a conscious process. *(vgl. Moder, 2010)* In digital photography each moment became photographable, with the result that the idea got lost of what is worthwhile to register and what is not. *(vgl. Santaella, 2009, p. 29ff)* Pierre Bourdieu describes in his book "An illegitimate art" that the choice of motif for private photographers is "not everyday happenings!". *(vgl. Scharmberg, 2009, p. 120)*

In certain special occasions, there are expectation that photos must be shot. *(vgl. Köstlin, 2006, p. 20)* It seems like a pressure to take pictures anywhere, because you can take the camera anywhere. But at the moment of really strong emotions you might not think about your camera. *(vgl. Schuster, 2005, p. 233)* This is perhaps better, because intensively photographing people in urban areas seem to be less psychologically present, as they scour their environment only for possible motives. *(vgl. Santaella, 2009, p. 29ff)* The documenting of life starts with the creation of the photo. Therefore, photo and memory are closely related. *(vgl. Klaassen Nägeli, 2006, p. 238)* This raises the question whether one can simultaneously collect memories and take photographs.

Our brains filter by itself important, remarkable and memorable content. (*vgl. Metz, 2011*) During the process of taking photographs this function does not seem to work. Many photographers just shoot pictures of beautiful things which are attracting attention. Often they are missing, that ugly motives can be exciting too and that sometimes little things describe a mood better than hard facts. (*vgl. Moder, 2010*)

Photography is a male and female hobby but the approach may be different. Men are photographing rather to splurge with their technique, their experiences or possessions, while women shoot more emotionally driven. *(vgl. Schuster, 2005, p. 15)*

2.2.3 Making Images

"In all photographs, we have this same act of cutting off a piece of space and time, of keeping it unchanged while the world around continues to change, of making a compromise between conservation and death." (Metz, 2011, p. 85)

We perceive a situation with multiple views, the camera simply preserves a view. Through digital photography, the photographer does not looks at a situation any more before the shot. He just takes a few pictures and then takes the best of it. *(vgl. Schuster, 2005, p. 17ff)*

There is a tendency to photograph everything everywhere. This behavior is especially common in holiday photographs and children's pictures. *(vgl. Köstlin, 2006, p. 21ff)* The excessive detention of all experienced moments can appear stressful. *(vgl. Klaassen Nägeli, 2006, p. 237)* Searching for motifs seems to merge with the shooting of the image. The simplicity of storing an image makes some decisions no longer relevant, because a mistake does not bring consequences. *(vgl. Santaella, 2009, p. 29ff)* The shrinking size of digital cameras makes an unnoticed photographing much easier. *(vgl. Schuster, 2005, p. 244)* In the days, where everyone carries a camera with himself and photographs everywhere, you may be photographed unconsciously on many pictures. The line between public and private space is blurred and the behavior of the photographing people becomes more and more invasive. *(vgl. Santaella, 2009, p. 26ff)*



Fig. 2.1: The process of digital photography compared to the process of conventional photography

2.2.4 Camera

On the example of digital photography you can see that every change of the hardware brings consequences, because the behavior of the photographer is highly dependent on its equipment. *(vgl. Santaella, 2009, p. 28ff)*

According to Bourdieu, the technique has not to be complex. In the first place it should work. Inhibitions were not technical or economic, but rooted in personal standards. (vgl. Schamberg, 2009, p. 121) This is also confirmed by Timm Starl with his statement: "The analog Clippers wants a device that is easy to use. He wants to point the lens to the selected item and press the shutter button. Whatever the photo industry presents in this direction is accepted by the customers willingly." (Starl, 1995, p. 24) One of the co-founder of Flicker thinks he has seen pretty excellent images, shot with a \$30,000 Hasselblatt, and such taken with a cheap camera. He also believes that the technology does not restrict the creativity of the photographer. (vgl. Hawk, 2008)

2.3 The Photo as an Object

2.3.1 Content

The photography allows the photographer to visualize fast processes, to focus on inconspicuous things, to change distances and brightness's and preserve memories. Despite these advantages, photographs have no spatial representation, are unable to make additional and preliminary information and can not reflect the cultural context. Reality can not be stated objective. *(vgl. Moder, 2010)* Therefore, the quality of the photo depends on what the observer experienced at this moment. If there is no experience the photo can be boring and the viewer has to interpret. (vgl. Schuster, 2005, p. 266) Depending on the detail of the photos he has more or less room for interpretation. This flexibility allows the photographer to play with tension. *(vgl. Helck & Riewe, 2006, p. 131)* The motif of a photograph has not to be an object or person. Images can also reflect factors such as relationships with animals or humans. *(vgl. Klaassen Nägeli, 2006, p. 244)*

2.3.2 Materiality

Material images can be charged with emotions. You can them take in your hand, put them in a box or crumple and throw them in the bin, if you can't stand them. (*Ziehe & Hägele, Vorab: Objekt Fotografie, 2006, p. 1*) These pictures often take a determined physical place in their environment. Digital images, however, are more of liquid kind. By the click of a button they flicker and by the click of a button they disappear. (*vgl. Santaella, 2009, p. 32*)

Because the digital image is virtually free, it has become so widespread and is hard to catch. Digital images can be edited quickly, are easy to distribute in a very short time and can be scaled to all possible screen sizes. The process of archiving and the process of deletion of a photograph are with the same effort, by the click of a button. The digital images are liquid and volatile, because the are not catchable anymore. *(vgl. Santaella, 2009, p. 32ff)*

Another feature of digital photography is that they can be reproduced indefinitely. In relation to photography, this is also a contradiction, because uniqueness makes a photography valuable, even if the image is bad. *(vgl. Klaassen Nägeli, 2006, p. 246)*

2.4 Archive Photos

2.4.1 Social Communities

In public archives such as social communities we publish photos to share your life with the world. Through these networks, the exchange of photographs is made much easier. The most common motif on these portals is the self-representation. *(vgl. Scharnberg, 2009, p. 119ff)* The user has the option to present himself through photos how he wants to be seen.

2.4.2 The Photo in an Archive

Photo documentation of today have the claim of individuality and authenticity, sometimes even sensationality. *(Helck & Riewe, 2006, p. 129)* Situation is as important as the motif. *(vgl. Klaassen Nägeli, 2006, p. 240)* In photo albums we write a description of the situation in addition to the picture. In this way the viewer gets important information to read the image. With digital technology, these notes get lost more and more as the pictures are lying around on a hard disc. Our life will be viewed in a less historical way, because the generations after us are missing the important textual notes of the photographer. *(vgl. Schuster, 2005, p. 246)* The information on the photographer gets lost too. In a photo album the information about the photographer and collector, is not just defined through the content of the picture but also the notes to them, or the way the pictures are pasted into the album. *(vgl. Helck & Riewe, 2006, p. 150)*

2.4.3 Photo vs. Memory

A self-experiment by Martin Schuster *(2006, p. 63ff)* has shown that photos can't awake memories over long time. He looked at vacation photos, which were one, five or eight years old. He tried to remember the moment of taking the photo (a), the location (b), his feelings (c), events before and after the photography was taken (d) and his reasons why he took the photo at this moment (e). The conclusion of the self-experiment was that all the memories were vague, but he could still remember most of locations. The paradox thing in photography today is that current preservation programs support exactly these memories with GPS.



Fig. 2.2: Result of the self-experiment

2.4.4 The Problem of an Archive

In a photo album or archive just the best photos will be pasted. Because photos and memories are closely linked, one tends only to archive photos of beautiful memories. This behavior is the result that the support an illusion-based photo libraries from positive view. *(vgl. Schuster, 2005, p. 75)* The photographic history contains only photos of beautiful moments.

2.5 Projects and Products

2.5.1 The Photo machine

The main motives for booth pictures are cliques, couples and portrait images. These images are mostly visual representations of relationships between people. The success of the booth pictures doesn't lie in the photos themselves but in the cultural practices such as arrange, discuss and exchange of photos. At the same time this oversized camera is also a meeting place for young people. The process of shooting the pictures, waiting for them and exchange them, creates a community. Booth photos are made for the fun of self-presentation during the shooting. These photos are different from the classic "Clipper pictures" through the deliberate choice of time and people to be shown in the pictures. These pictures are of daily use. They are exchanged, carried in your wallet or made into stacks with rubber bands. All these actions leave traces, such as scratches and wrinkles. The order of the images is created by itself. Beloved people are supported in their wallets less important down in the stack. In the stack, the hierarchy is refined by the position of the photo in the stack. Despite the heavy restrictions on mobility, light, space, size, color, technology and price, this type of photography is very popular, across generations and timeless. Also of interest to us is that the act of photography process is still celebrated despite the many restrictions.

2.5.2 Cameras

Basically, the appearance of photo cameras are divided into two categories. The cameras with a large bulky lenses and the mobile phone cameras. All these cameras have a display and a lot of buttons which are used for the camera settings. Some buttons are also covered with double functions. The labeling of the camera controls is always solved with icons. Over the time the industry has developed an icon standard. Although photography exists for some time, the interaction hasn't changed much. The technical features of the camera reduces the interaction of the user almost to only pressing the shutter button. Since the company is conscious that a higher mega-pixel number doesn't get better pictures, the camera industry attracts the consumers with new features.



Fig. 2.3: Two Examples of current digital Cameras



2.5.3 Software and Albums

For photo software we can essentially distinguish between professional software and software for home use. The main differences between the two categories are mainly in the set of functions. So the more expensive professional software, is an extension of the amateur software. In all the examined programs the organizing principle are based on the folder structure of the operating system. Today there is an incorporated face detection algorithm in all archive programs. In some programs the GPS coordinates are displayed, in others, a link directly to Google maps.

The photo album is not only a repository of photos. In children's albums there are often textual information such as weight, first words, date, walking for the first time or even hair from the first haircut. In some there are also documents of birth and baptism. These notes describe additional context on a different level. In the albums of the later years there are additional contents like train, flight or skiing tickets next to the photos and the relevant text. These documents of time reflect the technical progress very nicely. In discussions people said that photos have to been unseen for a while after archiving them to become considered exciting again. In the photo software that does not happen because when you start the software, a link to an event is already visible.



Fig. 2.4: Picasa Application to archive photos

2.5.4 Designing for Rich Interaction

The theme of this thesis is the interaction between human and consumer product. Previously, the shape of an object was defined by technology. Since the technology became incredibly small, the shape can be re-definable. Joep Frens enters here with the concept of rich interaction. He tries to shape the objects in a way, that their form express what can be done with them. He combines

the technical components with the affordance. As a concrete example, he tries to make the photography process more haptical again. It is interesting as he tries to break habits of photography and tries to integrate the photographer more into the process again. *(Frens, 2006)*

2.5.5 Polaroid

Polaroid Corporation is a U.S. company, which is due to its instant cameras. It became so well known, that the term became a generic name for instant photography. The company had stopped then the production of instant cameras and films to fully concentrate on products for digital photography. In early May 2010 with the Polaroid300 a new analog instant camera was introduced again. Polaroid cameras are of interest to us, because the process of photography is different than in the traditional analog and digital photography. The functions of the old cameras are extremely reduced and limited to a flash and a shutter button. The materiality and visual aesthetics are different from the usual photographs. The images obtained no film or other protection. The pictures can not be further duplicated and are unique. *(Wikipedia, 2011)*

2.5.6 Lomografie

Lomography is a style within the snapshot photography. It has nothing to With professional photography. The term derives from the St.Petersburg company Lomo, but is now used for a whole style that promotes a "casual" snapshot photography. Because of unreliability and poor image quality, Lomo cameras were not very popular in the eastern bloc. Lomography was never considered As an art direction there. The "art form" of Lomography had its origin in Vienna, where students organized various exhibitions with colorful images on large partitions (so-called "Lomowalls") in the early 1990s. Today, new Lomo cameras are made with fish-eye and multiple lenses. The focus of the Lomo camera is on their special visual aesthetic. Again, the camera functions are limited to flash and shutter button. *(Wikipedia, 2011)*

2.6 Conclusion Background Search

During our research we found, that the process of photographing can essentially be reduced to three areas: the camera, the photograph as object and the photo archive. We found texts with interesting thoughts in each of these three areas. Many of these approaches centered on the theme "enriching photos with Context" and the "the act of photography". To summarize the research visually, we created a graphic from our findings (*Fig 2.5*). When analyzing the graphic, we realized that we need to work on the camera. This approach allows us to influence all three areas. We summarized our results in a question: How can we make the act of photography a real experience again? This question was too general and imprecise us! Therefore, we defined a new question, but their impact also relates to the first question:

"How can the user capture the situation while taking the photo?"



Fig. 2.5: The diagram where we visualized the three sectors, the important topics and its conections



Fig. 2.6: Dependency of each sector and where we set our focus

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