

Smartphone Photography in Urban China

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Abstract : The smartphone plays a significant role in media convergence, and smartphone photography is reconstructing the way we communicate and think. This article aims to explore the smartphone photography practices of urban Chinese smartphone users and images produced by smartphones from a techno-cultural perspective. The analysis consists of two types of data: One is a semi-structured interview of 21 participants, and the other consists of the images created by the participants. The findings are organised in two parts. The first part summarises the current tendencies of capturing, editing, sharing and archiving digital images via smartphones. The second part shows that food and selfie/anti-selfie are the preferred subjects of smartphone photographic images from a technical and multi-purpose perspective and demonstrates that screenshots and image texts are new genres of non-photographic images that are frequently made by smartphones, which contributes to improving operational efficiency, disseminating information and sharing knowledge. The analyses illustrate the positive impacts between smartphones and photography enthusiasm and practices based on the diffusion of innovation theory, which also makes us rethink the value of photographs and the practice of ‘photographic seeing’ from the screen itself.

Keywords : digital photography, image-text, media convergence, photographic- seeing, selfie/anti-selfie, smartphone, technological innovation

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