

## Photography in the Media

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Photography is one of the major technological phenomena of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, it is often viewed as a type of visual content that can be misused or interpreted contrary to ethical standards. Due to the fact that today's scientific world does not devote enough attention to resistance to manipulation and to "reading between the lines," photography, whether as an artistic or amateur work, or as a contribution to contemporary journalism, is often perceived in opposition to the author's intention. This leads to misinterpretations, criminal misuse, violations of copyright, and endangerment through *deepfake* technology and artificial intelligence. For this reason, it is essential to be information-literate in order to handle modern information and communication systems skillfully, to recognize various types of manipulation, and to remain immune to the deceptions that are increasingly common in the media.

*Photography in the Media* by Marija Vujović, a PhD holder and a professor at the Department of Communicology and Journalism, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Niš, is a scholarly work that, in addition to serving as required reading for students of this department, introduces readers to a deeper analysis and representation of photography disseminated across various types of media platforms. The work comprises 158 pages and 46 chapters. Some of these chapters present different types of photography, such as war, fashion, and sports photography, framing its historical development and contemporary context, while also addressing issues of ethics and copyright. The book also discusses prominent Serbian photojournalists, featuring their interviews and professional experiences. The work concludes with a biography of Professor Vujović.

The work begins with a concise history and development of the media through the centuries. One should not forget that printed newspapers also belong

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to the media, since today younger generations often identify the term “media” solely with television and radio. The book presents the first cameras, the process of creating photographs, and the procedure developed for producing a photographic image. Since this book is also about media and advertising, it includes examples of advertisements from print media that promoted photography. Photography is presented as a visual text that possesses communicative power, often provoking strong emotions in the observer. With the development of technology and the Internet, anyone can quickly and easily take and publish a photograph, leading to an enormous production of images. The author emphasizes the changes in communication brought by the Internet, the convergence of media, and the equal participation of all communicators in the process. People began to recognize the importance of creating content that visually reflects reality, and the technology evolved to the point where, for instance, in upper-class households, painted portraits were replaced by photographs. Photography was then regarded as something that could best represent the real image of what we see. If we look back at the history of art and the ethics of various paintings, we can agree that many portraits of historical figures were often merely “embellishments.” The importance of photography is also presented in the essence of this work, namely the media. Certain print media such as magazines and newspapers are analyzed, as well as artistic photographs which, in the author’s words, photojournalists viewed as critiques of society, because authors could highlight their dissatisfaction in photographs that were difficult to censor.

In the chapter on the development of news photography, the discussion focuses on the press as a mass medium and the manner in which photography replaced the engravings and drawings that had been visible in print. News photography developed as documentary photography. There is a discussion of news photography during the Second World War, and how, during Hitler’s dominance in occupied Europe, photography as a craft and art lost its liberal significance; as a result, many photographers were tempted to emigrate to the USA.

Photojournalism is yet another chapter mentioned in this work. Here it is stated that photography in journalism has a primary purpose, namely, to inform and convey a message. There are considered to be six steps for every photojournalist: idea, assignment, good cooperation with colleagues from the editorial section, shooting, selection, graphic design, and production. The forms of news photography are also discussed: photo-news, photo-interview, photo-reportage, and photo-essay.

As this trend developed worldwide, it did not bypass the Balkans or Serbia, so there is a rich history of photography in Serbia, on its media scene, which is described in this work. Photojournalism developed in Serbia at the beginning of the 20th century. At first, photojournalism in Serbia served the purpose of entertainment and pastime, but with the advent of wartime on the territory of the Kingdom of Serbia, photography came to serve to inform about war events on the fronts and in other parts of Europe and Serbia. Photojournalism was initially present in the weekly *Nedelja*. The most prominent photojournalists in Yugoslavia at that time are highlighted, for instance, Tomislav Peternek. There is a discussion of famous photographers of the Principality of Serbia and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia who, in

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addition to writing their first scholarly theories of photography, opened photographic studios where various photographic services were provided. Portraits, landscapes, architecture, people on the streets and their everyday life were photographed with ease, and such photographs would soon be found on the pages of various newspapers.

The chapter *The Profession of the Photojournalist* discusses the difficulties and history of photo-reporters and photojournalists. Earlier, their job was harder - the cameras were overly weighty, and it was a challenge to bring them to an event. It is interesting to note how the beginning of this profession was received negatively. A division of photojournalists according to Veselinović is emphasized: staffers, freelancers, and stringers.

After the history of the media and photography, news photography is also discussed, since newspapers are the first example of mass media. Moreover, throughout history, they have undergone various reforms - from two pages of cheap paper to digital editions available at any time. News photography is divided into photographs in the areas of sports, war, and citizen reporting, as well as photography in award competitions. From here, one can extract from the context of historical photography what is most important to capture with the lens in order for a message to be conveyed successfully to a wider audience through the media.

The chapter *War Photography* speaks of the horrors of reporting and photographing from war zones. An example is given of a harrowing photograph from the Vietnam War, where American soldiers and naked children with terrified faces are seen fleeing the horrors of war and potential death. Photographers became aware of the devastating consequences of war and began to publish disturbing photographs, awakening the conscience of the public (page 46).

*Sports Photography* is the chapter on photographs from sports fields. Here the greatest focus is on movement, facial expression, the reactions of athletes and the audience, and the atmosphere. Within this type of photography there are several sequences.

Portrait Photography could be classified among the most studied forms of photography, which quickly replaced painted portraits. Portrait photography aims to capture the moment; as such, it can be intentional or spontaneous. Through given examples, Vujović shows how, within the sphere of art, intentional portrait photography is more present; its aim is to convey a deep message of aesthetics, beauty, something profound that only the author may know, leaving us to discover what is hidden. In the media today, spontaneous photography is increasingly present, whose goal, as already mentioned, is to capture the moment. Among the faces in portrait photography one can find everyone - from ordinary citizens to politicians and distinguished figures whose presence is recorded regularly.

Citizen photojournalism is classified among the phenomena of the twenty-first century, precisely because of the greater development of modern technologies and information-communication technologies. Today anyone can photograph and document contemporary events. Examples are given of some global events, such as the 9/11 terrorist attack, and natural disasters in Indonesia, when citizens took the opportunity to photograph and document the moment. Today, citizen

photojournalism is becoming increasingly popular. The media encourage people to send their work through various artistic competitions, but also aim to point out certain problems visible to ordinary citizens. In this way, creativity is encouraged, as well as raising awareness. As journalism, together with other forms of mass media, began to develop, so too did the great demand for recognition and awards in the fields of reporting, reportage, and photography. A photographer from our region, Goran Tomašević, is mentioned, who in 2019 received the prestigious Pulitzer Prize working for the Reuters agency, becoming the first photojournalist from our region to receive this award.

Advertising Photography has the goal of attracting the buyer - in this case, the consumer and the recipient of the message, and compelling them first to consider the purchase or service of the product, and then to actually do so. Advertising photography has different forms of promoting services, but it is one of the most frequent manipulative techniques, even if that is not evident at first glance. It often promoted values that today are almost unimaginable, and even sharply condemned by various social groups. With the development and growth of feminist groups, advertising changed, and with it advertising photography, which today strives to promote diversity, gender equality, and respect. Advertising photographs are often carriers of ideological messages, for the understanding of which it is important to know the context of production, the context in which they are displayed, and the context of reception (page 59).

Fashion Photography is a subtype of advertising photography, the context of the photograph is considered much more important than the model or the clothing being worn. Fashion photography first appeared in fashion magazines, for instance, in the famous *Vogue*, which still operates successfully in many countries of the world.

Stock Photography represents photographs that are available in the digital archives of photographers or photographic agencies and can be borrowed for reproduction by various clients, including media that use them to illustrate articles or sections. These photographs encompass diverse content and categories, collected from numerous authors, and are often used for marketing purposes or to illustrate print and digital media. There are various websites that offer stock photographs, such as *Getty Images*<sup>3</sup>, *Shutterstock*<sup>4</sup>, *iStockphoto*, *Dreamstime*, *Fotolia*, and *Bigstockphoto*.

Undoubtedly, one of the most interesting parts of this book is censorship of photography and its legal aspect, explained through the chapters *Photography and Legal Regulations*, *Photography and Manipulations*, *Photography and Copyright*, *Verification of Photography*, as well as *Ethics of Photography in the Media*. It can be stated with certainty that, with the development of multimedia technologies, the authenticity of photographs has lost in significance because censorship and manipulation are all around us, and photography is thus prone to alterations and to the transmission of false information. With the emergence of social networking platforms and tools for image editing, it is easier than ever to change or falsify photographs. This

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<sup>3</sup> More on this: <https://www.gettyimages.com/>

<sup>4</sup> More on this: <https://www.shutterstock.com/>

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can have serious consequences for the authenticity of the information transmitted through the media. Nevertheless, manipulation in photography and censorship had their beginnings long before social networks began to develop. It is a well-known fact that Joseph Stalin, the president of the USSR, together with his team, removed all undesirable people from his photographs. Let us say that Stalin was photographed one day with some influential figure from the world of politics. Knowing history, especially Stalin as a figure at that time, a large number of his friends would soon turn into enemies, so he sought, in every possible way, to erase the trace of his meeting with them<sup>5</sup>.

In order to better understand manipulation and recognize it in a photograph, reliable websites for checking the authenticity of photographs are listed. The legal part is also mentioned, i.e., the copyright of photographers and their works, about which there is a section in the law<sup>6</sup>. It is of exceptional importance to verify the authenticity of a photograph whether it has been altered, i.e., photoshopped, who the author is, when and where it was created, whether it can be freely used for scholarly and other purposes, provided that the reliable source is cited. For the verification of photographs, the website *Photo Forensics* is very useful; by entering a URL address or uploading a photograph, it is possible to determine information about the photograph, which includes the technical characteristics of the photograph.

The work does not shift entirely to the historical development of photography, but also touches on more contemporary topics. Photography on social networks, selfie photography, and composition of photography are highlighted, which will be most useful to photo-reporters and those engaged in photography. Photographs on social networks, i.e., digital photographs, emphasize the importance of disseminating information on social networks in order to convey an adequate message. In Serbia, when it comes to the use of the Internet and social networks, statistics show high results that change from year to year; an increasing number of Serbian citizens have access to the Internet and social networks, where digital photography is disseminated. Statistical data are given for the two largest social networks at the time of the publication of this work, Instagram and Facebook.

Selfie photographs have become an indispensable part of the culture of social networks, transforming the way we present ourselves and communicate on the Internet. These photographs, in which we often photograph ourselves, have different purposes and meanings in the digital environment. First, selfie photographs represent a way of expressing and presenting one's own personality and identity. Users of social networks often use selfies to show their appearance, mood, activities, or places they visit. In addition, selfie photographs are also a way to build one's own image and brand on social networks. Many users use selfies to create a certain image of themselves - be it as a person who is always smiling, adventure-oriented, or devoted to certain interests. These images often become part of a user's digital reputation

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<sup>5</sup> If you would like to see more: <https://www.historynet.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Image-1.jpeg>

<sup>6</sup> Law on Copyright and Related Rights: [https://www.paragraf.rs/propisi/zakon\\_o\\_autorskom\\_i\\_srodnim\\_pravima.html](https://www.paragraf.rs/propisi/zakon_o_autorskom_i_srodnim_pravima.html)

and influence how others perceive them. Selfie photographs have also become a means for expressing self-confidence. Publishing selfies can be a way to affirm one's appearance and identity, as well as to receive validation and support from other users of social networks.

*Photography and Archives* is the chapter that discusses how photographs are stored and protected from oblivion and aging (page 91). The most significant global and Serbian archives for preserving old material historical sources, primarily photographs, are listed, such as the Archives of Yugoslavia, the National Library of Serbia, and the Photo Museum in Belgrade, but the Stevan Sremac National Library in Niš is also mentioned, which preserves a multitude of photographs from the 19th century and the early decades of the previous century.

In the chapter *Photography and Composition*, the author emphasizes the importance of composition in photography. To some extent, the way the message in the photograph will be conveyed depends on its composition, that is, the way in which the recipient of the message will be attracted. Some of the basic elements of every photograph are: contrast, leading lines, depth, shooting angle, symmetry, cropping, and framing. In addition, the rule of thirds and negative space are listed. All of this is very important to follow when creating photographic content if we want to convey a message in an adequate way to the audience that observes our work.

*Plans and Angles of Shooting* are a continuation of the previous chapter, in which the basic elements of photographic angles and shooting are listed. The author emphasizes: long shot (total plan), which encompasses a wide space and provides information about the space being filmed; medium shot, which shows a person from head to toe; American shot, which focuses on the area from the knees to the head; close-up, which shows the person being photographed; as well as near shot, which highlights the photographer. Angles of shooting are also indispensable in professional photography. Here one can distinguish the high angle, which records the surroundings from a certain height, above the person or object; the low angle, which, as the very term suggests, photographs a person or object from a lower vantage point, i.e., from below; and eye-level view, which photographs a person or object from the same height, i.e., proportionally. In order to have a better insight into the appearance of each of these angles, the author did not omit photographs.

*Digital Processing of Photographs* is something that tickles the imagination of all artists and journalists, and this chapter is useful because it provides an exact list of programs that may be of use when editing photographs. These are *Gimp*, *Adobe Photoshop*, *PicsArt*, *Pixlr*, *BeFunky*, and others. Through these programs, it is possible to change the dimension, detail, object and other elements.

The end of this work is marked by interviews with some of the more prominent figures of Serbian photography, such as Vanja Keser, Aleksandar Kelić, Igor Čoko, Zvezdan Mančić, Nemanja Pančić, Irfan Ličina, and Saša Čolić. They spoke about what is important in photography, its elements, personal anecdotes from their careers, the relationship between the public and the photographer, as well as the rights that every photograph has along with its creator. The photographers in this chapter are clearly connected by a love of photography; thus, to Marija Vujović's question of



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whether they would choose the photographic vocation again, every photographer answered in the affirmative. In addition to the interviews, since the book is at the same time a textbook for students who follow the course *Photography in the Media* in the study programs Communication and PR and Journalism at the Faculty of Philosophy in Niš, the professor included worksheets for students.

This work can teach readers about the history of photography and the media in Serbia and worldwide, all the way to the contemporary photography we see every day while scrolling through social networks in our free time. This book offers a different approach to photography. After reading, the next time we scroll through a newspaper article and see an author's photograph or a photograph not subject to copyright we might have a different perspective. At that moment we will know what process stands behind the visual content, and we will value the journalistic and photographic profession more than we have until now. Besides recognizing fake news and refusing to accept tabloid news as valid, it is also important to recognize the role of photography in the media and potential deception. I would note that the chapter in which professional photographers are interviewed is very useful - it provides insight into a deeper picture and analysis of photography and the work of a photographer. A subsequent edition of this work would benefit from a discussion of the development of artificial intelligence in photography, since it has advanced so much that it is difficult to distinguish the real one from what a computer system has created. Moreover, the chapter on social networks and photography could be slightly expanded, as in recent years TikTok has become one of the key platforms for sharing visual content alongside Facebook and Instagram.

Overall, *Photography in the Media* offers a critical overview of the importance of photography in various forms of media, as well as how photographs are created, what types exist, and why it is essential to pay special attention to them when analyzing media discourse. It can serve as an introduction to the basics of photography for anyone interested in the field: students, photography course participants, and those involved in general journalistic work. Both journalists and photojournalists can benefit from the book's content to gain a better understanding of their craft and to avoid potential legal issues, since, in addition to discussing the purpose, types, history, and characteristics of photography, the work also explains copyright and legal aspects, which are often overlooked in today's media landscape.

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