

**Exhibition Reviews Annual
2018—2019**

A Selection of Outstanding Entries from the Fifth International Awards for Art Criticism

**I nternational
A wards for
A rt
C riticism**

**第五届国际艺术评论奖作品精选集
年度展览评论2018—2019**

上海书画出版社

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to remodel themselves.

Leaving the main gallery, I went inside the PSA's chimney, where there was an installation in which a light flashed in time with Boltanski's own heartbeat. I have never been able to work out whether this was a case of some kind of narcissism on the part of an artist with a Creator complex, or whether he was using it as a subtle way of hinting at his respect for other individuals' perceptions of self. In the final analysis, the feeble flickering light bulb seemed to be imminently awaiting the moment of its final demise; so, should we start to worry about the weakness of the human life with which the light shares a common destiny? On the day I left *Storage Memory*, I suddenly felt as I caught sight of the thermometer-shaped symbol that has always adorned the top of the PSA's chimney, that this seemed particularly well suited to the exhibition.

Wang Huan

Wang Huan is a Beijing-based writer, curator and editor of *Jiazazhi Magazine*. He has tried practising a kind of anti-stylistic writing and has published a series of art reviews in various public media such as *LEAP Magazine*, *Art World Magazine*, *Art Shard* and *Ray Art Center's Reviews*. He has also curated a number of exhibitions, including *Objects That Have Been Intruded* (a project for the Jimei x Arles International Photo Festival, 2016), the *Finalists' Exhibition* of the 2016 New Talent Awards (Chronus Art Center [CAC], 2017) and *The Port and the Image: Documenting China's Harbor Cities* (China Port Museum, 2017). Projects he has initiated include the New Talent Awards (2014–16), the New Talent Photofairs Talk Series and the Artists' Studios Open Day Project.

二等奖获得者

中文投稿

董宇翔

摄影的疆域、人文精神与数字鸿沟 ——对《存在：新摄影 2018》的一点思考

存在：新摄影 2018

现代艺术博物馆，英国纽约

2018年3月18日—2018年8月19日

经历了2014年的停摆之后，纽约现代艺术博物馆的新晋摄影部主任昆汀·巴耶克在该系列展览迈入而立之年时为其带来了质的变化，由他领衔策划的《影像的海洋：新摄影 2015》直指摄影在互联网和数字技术时代所面临的新问题。然而，这一质变似乎毫无持续发酵之迹，在科技大踏步地介入艺术领域之时，以“存在”为题的第25届《新摄影》展览表面上试图回归人文——“在一个全世界聚焦权利、责任和威胁是如何被代表和代表他人的时代，探讨人类存在的意义是如何被摄影所描述和影响的。”¹实质上，担纲本届展览策划的露西·嘉伦又落入了格林伯格媒介特异性的窠臼。

自沃克·伊文思以来，“抒情式的纪实”已在其“诠释共同体”，即共享类似诠释价值和方式的“知情读者”的支持下成为了美国摄影的经典。毋庸置疑，这一经典是本届展览的中流砥柱：马修·康纳斯多次前往朝鲜，拍摄生活在强烈集体意识中的个体，14幅精心排列的画面共同质问了由媒介所塑造的国家概念与个体公民之间的摩擦。山姆·孔蒂来自“深泉”系列的一件双通道视频和6幅摄影作品深入深泉学院，一所位于沙漠深处的男性文理学院。青年男性的肖像和身体局部画面与学院周边的自然景观以及档案照片并置，试图展现环境对男性气质形成的影响。乔安娜·皮奥特罗斯卡的5幅来自两个不同系列的作品试图捕捉家庭中既亲密又疏离的关系。画面中所有的人和物都经过精心安排，呈现出臆想中如“黄梅天”般的湿热、黏腻和精疲力竭，隐喻亲密感背后的温柔与对抗。

这些摄影师都有意或无意地强调摄影的媒介特异性：不否认“纪实性”，而是融入“抒情性”以赋予作品更为复杂的维度。譬如，将强烈的主观感受注入到对“朝鲜”“深泉学院”和“家庭”等客体的观看之中，并注重照片的编辑和排序以构成独特的艺术表达。康纳斯、孔蒂和皮奥特罗斯卡三位摄影师的作品处于同一展览空间中，是主导美国摄影界的“诠释共同体”对其疆域的一

次强力声索。遗憾的是，对摄影媒介特异性的过度着墨使整个展览与这个时代的人文精神渐行渐远。

摄影术将历史一分为二，数字技术又将摄影史一分为二。人，何以为人？影响当前对人的定义和理解最深刻的因素之一就是数字技术。然而，展览中只有一件作品直接讨论了这一议题。雅赞·卡里里的《像舞动的风一样隐藏我们的面孔》由一台电脑屏幕呈现，时长7分半钟的多窗口视频。位于屏幕中央的窗口记录了智能手机在拍摄肖像时启用的人脸识别功能，与此同时，一系列用相同人脸识别功能拍摄远古时期面具的静态图片被逐一打开，并在一个文本框内打出了一段关于面具、祖先、相机与面部识别的文字。

在殖民史中，摄影曾是居于“技术强势”地位的西方人物化“技术弱势”的“他者”的工具。吴玉香和张宏安的作品《观看的对立面不是隐形，黄色的对立面不是黄金》构成美国主流意识形态中个体移民经历的缩影。菲律宾裔艺术家斯蒂芬妮·苏约克的黑白系列作品《货物崇拜》重温了19世纪民族志肖像摄影。显然，数字技术的发展没能弭平这些不公，因为比卡里里的作品更引人注目的依旧是他的身份：出生在叙利亚的巴勒斯坦人，两个深陷战争泥潭却给当代艺术界带来无尽话题的国家，“技术强势”群体仍在“技术弱势”者身上寻求媒介奇观。诚如达纳赫·博伊德与凯特·克劳福德所观察，现今围绕大数据的生态系统形成了一种新的“数字鸿沟”：“有大数据”和“没大数据”²。信息资本的逻辑之下，终究还是存在相对的“剥削”与“被剥削”。

20世纪上半叶，科技带来了现代性的曙光。二战后，科技常被认为是军备竞赛的工具而饱受批评。21世纪初见证了另一个拐点，技术乐观主义再度盛行，艺术、历史和文学等泛人文学科经历了一个大规模数字化的过程，催生了数字人文学。如今，任何一件重要的艺术作品几乎都可以在网上找到图片、视频甚至是多媒体形式的数字版本。但当我们开始观看、研究和消费数字文件时，这些垄断在极少数“技术强势”机构手中的数据是否就能等同于作品本身及其承载的人文价值呢？丹尼尔·阿林顿、莎拉·布鲁伊莱特和大卫·哥伦比亚尖锐地批评数字人文学为“新自由主义的工具”³，在数字人文学为数字化项目用之如泥沙之时，却忽视了人文学科的基本价值和研究方法。我们已经深染赫伯特·马尔库塞所言的“技术性无能”，在一个“单向度的社会”之中动辄得咎。

如果上届展览有陷入了技术的唯我主义之嫌，那么，本届展览则泛泛地选择了“存在”为主题，固守“抒情式的纪实”，回避了本应深刻探究的问题。无疑，如此保守的策展策略加剧了技术与人文的二元对立，使信者恒信，不信者恒不信。无力反省和突破苍白的修辞却垄断摄影的创作和解读，反衬出对技术的省思是摄影回归人文精神的必经之路。摄影一直与人文、社会和自然科学等领域都纠葛甚深，而对人的关注更是摄影和任何技术发展

的应有之意。

1. 纽约现代艺术博物馆新闻稿，“MoMA 新摄影系列3月18日再度回归，探索当代摄影中的人格与表征” http://press.moma.org/wp-content/files_mf/expandedrelease_newphoto2018_final78.pdf
2. 达纳·博伊德、凯特·克劳福德《大数据的关键问题》，《信息、传播与社会》期刊，15:5（2012）
3. 丹尼尔·阿林顿、莎拉·布鲁耶特、大卫·哥伦比亚《新自由主义工具（及档案）：数字人文的政治史》，《洛杉矶书评》2016年5月1日 <https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/neoliberal-tools-archives-political-history-digital-humanities/>

董宇翔

董宇翔，先后毕业于北京电影学院和罗切斯特理工学院，获艺术学士和艺术硕士学位。现在弗吉尼亚联邦大学攻读博士学位，专业为媒介、艺术和文本。他的研究旨在探索艺术、技术和社会的关系。

Joint Second Prize
Entry in Chinese

Being: New Photography 2018
Museum of Modern Art, New York
18.03.18 – 19.08.18

Translated by Bridget Noetzel

Dong Yuxiang Territory, the Humanities and the Digital Divide in Photography

After the *New Photography* exhibition series was suspended in 2014, Quentin Bajac, the new Chief Curator of the Photography Department at New York's Museum of Modern Art, made qualitative changes to the series, which had been running for thirty years. He headed the curation of *Ocean of Images: New Photography 2015*, which directly referenced the new issues that photography faces in the era of internet and digital technologies. Even so, this qualitative change seems not to have continued; despite the major technological innovations in art, the twenty-fifth edition of *New Photography*, which takes 'Being' as its theme, attempts to return to the humanities. 'At a time when questions about the rights, responsibilities, and dangers inherent in being represented – and in representing others – are being debated around the world, the works in *Being* call attention to assumptions about how individuals are depicted and perceived.¹ In essence, exhibition curator Lucy Gallun has once again engaged with stereotypical Greenbergian characteristics of the media.

Since Walker Evans, the 'lyric documentary' has become a classic of American photography, through the support of an interpretative community, a group of informed observers sharing similar critical values and methods. The idea that this is a form of classicism is clearly at the core of this exhibition. Matthew Connors made several trips to North Korea to photograph individuals living in a society with a strong collective consciousness. These fourteen carefully arranged images question the friction between the concept of a nation shaped by the media and its individual citizens. Through a two-channel video and six photographs from her *Deep Springs* series, Sam Contis probes Deep Springs College, a liberal arts college located deep in the desert, which had until very recently been an all-male preserve. Portraits of young men and details of their bodies are juxtaposed with the natural

landscape around the college and archival photographs, in an attempt to present the influence that this environment has had on the temperaments of these men. Joanna Piotrowska's five works from two different series attempt to capture intimate and estranged relationships within the family. All the people and objects in the images are carefully arranged to present a subjective impression of tropical humidity, stickiness and exhaustion as a metaphor for the gentleness and antagonism that underpin the sense of intimacy.

These photographers, intentionally or unintentionally, emphasise the idiosyncrasies of the photographic medium. While not negating the documentary aspect, they incorporate the lyrical element in order to give their work more complex dimensions. For example, they infuse intense subjective emotion into the viewing of subjects such as North Korea, Deep Springs College and the family, and stress the editing and sequencing of the images to construct a distinctive artistic expression. The works of Connors, Contis and Piotrowska are presented in the same exhibition space, a powerful claim on this territory made by the dominant interpretative community of the American photography world. Sadly, the excessive elaboration of the idiosyncrasies of the photographic medium take the exhibition further from the spirit of the humanities in our times.

Photographic technology divides history in two; then digital technology divides the history of photography in two. How are people considered people? One of the elements most deeply influencing the current definition and understanding of people is digital technology. However, there is only one work in the exhibition that directly addresses this subject. Yazan Khalili's *Hiding Our Faces Like a Dancing Wind* is a 7½-minute video, presented in a window on a computer screen. The window in the centre of the screen calls to mind the facial recognition function employed by smartphones to take portraits; at the same time a series of still photographs of masks from distant antiquity, photographed using this same recognition function, is gradually revealed. In an adjacent text box, someone types a text relating the masks, ancestors, photography and facial recognition to each other.

In colonial history, photography was once a tool that Westerners, coming from a place of technological strength, would use to objectify 'Others' they considered technologically weaker. Hương Ngô and Hồng-Ân Trương's work *The opposite of looking is not invisibility. The opposite of yellow is not gold* (2016) constructs a microcosm of the individual immigrants' experiences within American mainstream ideology. Philippines-born Stephanie Syjuco's black and white series, *Cargo Cults*, revives nineteenth-century ethnographic portrait photography. Obviously, the development of digital technologies has not removed these

injustices, because what is more eye-catching than the work of Khalili is his identity as a Palestinian born in Syria. These two war-torn places have given the contemporary art world endless fodder for discussion: the technologically strong group is still searching for novelty among the technologically weak. As Danah Boyd and Kate Crawford have observed, today's Big Data has created a new 'digital divide' between those with Big Data and those without.² In the logic of information capital, there exists an opposition between the exploiters and the exploited.

In the first half of the twentieth century, technology brought the light of modernisation. After the Second World War, technology was often criticised as a tool in the arms race. The early twenty-first century witnessed another shift, and technological optimism rose again. Art, history, literature and other humanities disciplines embarked upon large-scale digitisation projects, which gave birth to the Digital Humanities. Today, any important work of art can be found online in a digital version, whether picture, video or even multimedia. But when we begin viewing, researching and consuming digital files, can the data monopolised by a very small number of technologically strong institutions be equivalent to the works themselves and the human value they embody? Daniel Allington, Sarah Brouillette and David Golumbia sharply criticise the Digital Humanities as 'neoliberal tools'.³ They believe that the worthless digitisation projects of the Digital Humanities ignore the essential values and research methods of the humanities. We have already internalised the notion that technological impotence can be faulted at every turn in a 'one-dimensional society' as articulated by Herbert Marcuse.

If the previous edition of the exhibition fell into the trap of technological solipsism, then choosing for this one the title *Being*, which firmly defends the lyric documentary, avoids issues that still require deep research. Undoubtedly, conservative curatorial strategies such as these intensify the binary opposition between technology and the humanities: you trust the one you always trusted and distrust the one you always distrusted. The rhetoric of helpless introspection and pallid breakthroughs dominates the creation and interpretation of photography, highlighting the fact that reflections on technology are necessary if photography is to be restored to the human spirit. Photography has always been deeply entwined with the humanities, society and the natural sciences: the focus on people is essential for photography and, indeed, any technological development.

content/files_mf/expandedrelease_newphoto2018_final78.pdf>.

2. Danah Boyd and Kate Crawford, 'Critical Questions for Big Data: Provocations for a Cultural, Technological, and Scholarly Phenomenon', *Information, Communication & Society*, vol. 15, no. 5 (2012), pp. 662-79.

3. Daniel Allington, Sarah Brouillette and David Golumbia, 'Neoliberal Tools (and Archives): A Political History of Digital Humanities', *Los Angeles Review of Books*, 1 May 2016 <<https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/neoliberal-tools-archives-political-history-digital-humanities/>>.

Dong Yuxiang

Dong Yuxiang completed his bachelor's degree at the Department of Fine Arts, Beijing Film Academy. He then went on to earn his MA in Fine Arts at Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT). He is currently a PhD candidate, majoring in the Media, Art and Text programme at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). His research focus is on the interrelationship between art, technology and society.

1. Museum of Modern Art press release, 'MoMA's Celebrated *New Photography* Series Returns on March 18, Exploring Ideas of Personhood and Representation in Contemporary Photography' <<http://press.moma.org/wp->