

Documentary Art

Written by Alejandro Malo

There is an apparent contradiction amongst the documentary and artistic value of an art work. On one side, a photographic document aspires to be an instant's testimony—or a series of instants in the case of an essay—with a location, characters and precise elements, that lead to an exact interpretation; and, on the other side it is accepted without further questioning that any work of art, mostly in the photographic field subsequent to twentieth century's vanguards, must allow diverse interpretations that avoid it to be run down as a mere illustration or sample of technical mastery. If, besides what was previously said, we emphasize the distinction made by uncountable contests, as something almost obvious, among photojournalism and artistic photography, almost any attempt to conciliate both expressions seems destined to failure.

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