

Exploring iPhoneography

Talking about photography in general, things have drastically changed since the 19th century, the time when photography began to evolve. You have probably seen those huge cameras on a tripod people used long time ago. They also cost a fortune and you needed special skills and training to use them right. By the way, you also had to go to a darkroom to develop and print your images. Of course, it took some time, but you also had to know chemistry a little bit to know how to work with photographic materials.

Time has passed and cameras barely resemble those ones which people used a long time ago. Cameras have become way smaller, allowing you to carry them in your backpack. Due to the development of digital technologies, you don't have to worry about how much film you've got, taking as many shots as your memory card can contain. And then one day somebody got a great idea: why not combine a cell-phone and a camera? There's a strong argument that the first real camera phone was produced by Sharp and released in Japan by J-Phone (now SoftBank Mobile) in November of 2000. The J-SH04 could take photos at 110,000-pixel or 0.11-megapixels¹ resolution. And so the era of camera phones began.

There are almost as many cell-phone subscriptions (6.8 billion) as there are people on this earth (seven billion) — and it took a little more than 20 years for that to happen. In 2013, there were some 96 cell-phone service subscriptions for every 100 people in the world². Perhaps, for most of them taking pictures using their phone is quite a usual thing. John Davenport describes a turning point in photography this way: “There's this crazy thing happening in the world of photography – it's becoming mobile! The iPhone and other smartphones not only have the ability to create unique

¹ Hill, Simon (2013) *From J-Phone to Lumia 1020: A complete history of the camera phone*. Web. 12 June, 2014.
<<http://www.digitaltrends.com/mobile/camera-phone-history/>>

² Fernholz, Tim (2014) *More people around the world have cell phones than ever had land-lines*. Web. 11 June, 2014.
<<http://qz.com/229800/the-us-military-is-already-using-facebook-to-track-your-mood/>>

looking photographs, but they can instantly share them to the world with a few taps on the screen”³.

There is even a term coined specifically to describe such kind of photography – iPhoneography.

Despite its popularity, people are still using film cameras, as well as professional DSLRs, or compact point-and-shoot cameras. So, if you want to take pictures with your smartphone, consider all the pros and cons, as seen by Nicholas Donner in his article: “It certainly has advantages over many other cameras. They include (but are not limited to) the following: you typically always have it available and powered on; it’s compact and easy to pack; images are easily shareable through cellular connections; image editing is available right on the device through a ton of photography specific apps, etc. It also has disadvantages, like limited resolution and lack of RAW processing and digital zoom as well as limited compatibility with off-camera flash and lower lens quality”⁴.

Some consider iPhoneography a kind of art, some do not. There are even particular events that are aimed at solving such a problem, trying to find a common ground. One of such exhibitions happened in 2012 and was called “Diverging Mediums: Photography vs. iPhoneography”. The exhibition “Diverging Mediums: Photography vs. iPhoneography,” which pairs images shot on iPhones with ones from more traditional cameras, raises a couple of interesting questions: What makes a photograph art? When is a camera not a camera? And what is the definition of “artist”?⁵. These questions are still unanswered and there is some doubt that there are right or wrong ones. All things considered, iPhoneography is a thing worth trying.

³ Davenport, John (2012) *What Exactly is iPhoneography Anyway?* Web. 11 June, 2014.

<<http://www.phogropathy.com/what-exactly-is-iphoneography-anyway/>>

⁴ Donner, Nicholas (2014) *iPhoneography: Is it Photography?* Web. 11 June, 2014.

<<http://www.craftsy.com/blog/2014/03/iphoneography-is-it-photography/>>

⁵ O’Sullivan, Michael (2012) *Some artists can just phone it in.* Web. 11 June, 2014.

<<http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P2-31392300.html>>

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