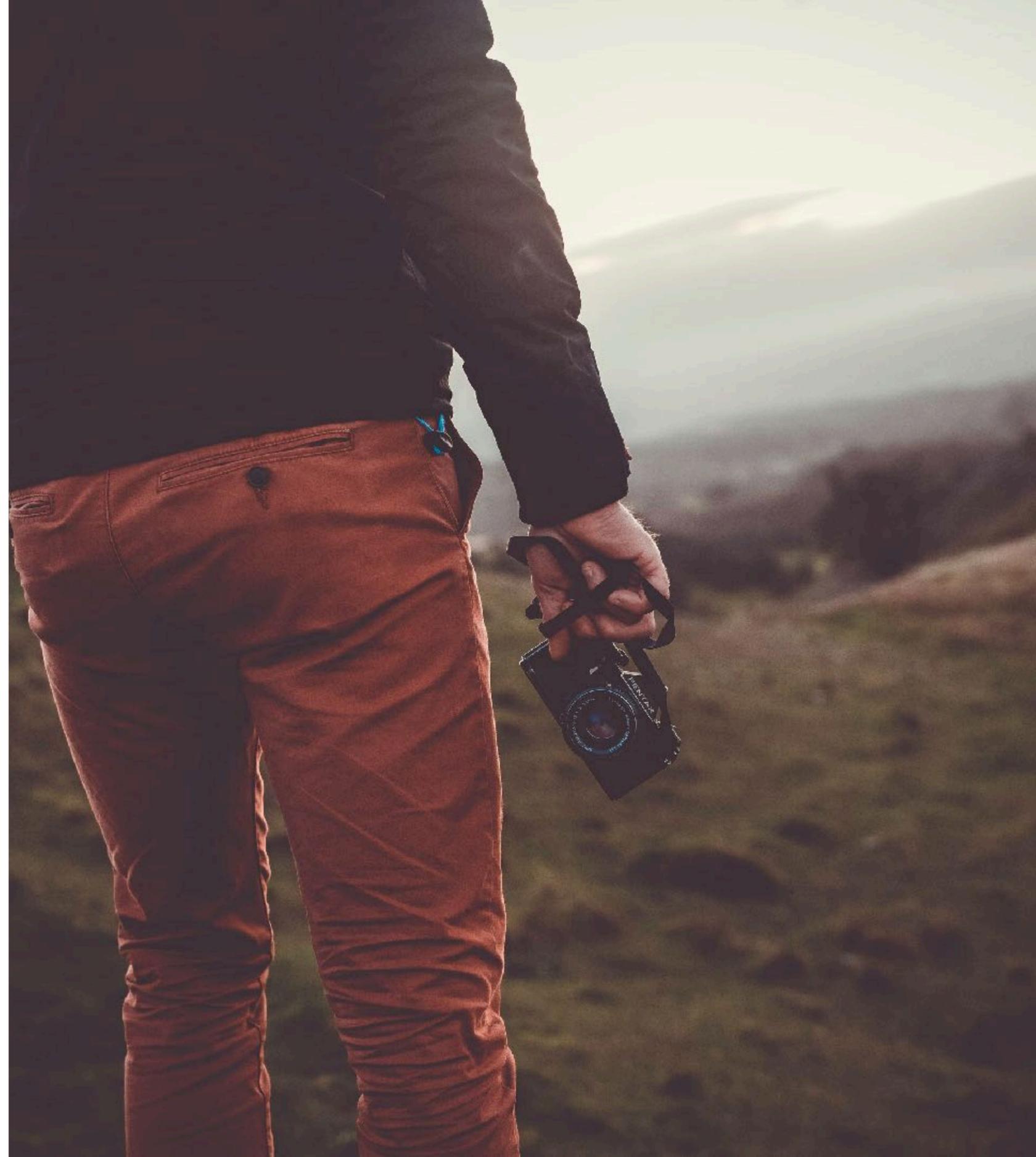


Understanding

PHOTOGRAPHY IN A SOCIAL MEDIA WORLD

PRESENTATION BY DON GIANNATTI:

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WHEN PHOTOGRAPHY WAS PRECIOUS

PHOTOGRAPHY WAS SPECIAL.

CHEMISTRY, SCIENCE, ART ALL MET IN A MIX OF TALENT THAT WAS ALSO AN EXPENSIVE UNDERTAKING. PHOTOGRAPHY WAS NOT AN ART FOR THE MASSES, ALTHOUGH IT HAD LOWERED THE BAR OF ENTRY AT SOME LEVELS.

GATEKEEPERS

Gatekeepers kept the world of photography out of the hands of most people. Gatekeepers like chemistry, the need for a darkroom, the obscure mix of science and art, and the still (relatively) high price of the gear needed to make photography kept it a rich person's hobby at best.



Consumer Cameras

Even though they could be found in camera stores, and department stores, there were still a lot of reasons this was not a mass media market yet.

CAMERAS GROW IN POPULARITY SLOWLY AMONG A SMALL GROUP OF ARTISTS / JOURNALISTS

THE GATEKEEPERS GET EVEN MORE EXCLUSIVE IN THE 30'S AND 40'S AND DIVIDE THE MAKING OF PHOTOGRAPHS INTO A FEW CAMPS: JOURNALISTIC, ART, AND COMMERCIAL. IT STAYS EXPENSIVE, BUT IT BEGINS TO MAKE SMALL BREAKTHROUGHS AFTER WWII.



INTEREST CONTINUES TO GROW THROUGH THE SIXTIES

WITH THE GROWING STATUS OF ADVERTISING AND FASHION, AND THE PHENOMENAL SUCCESS OF THE MOVIE "BLOW UP" -ROUGHLY BASING THE PHOTOGRAPHER ON FASHION SHOOTER DAVID BAILEY, THE FLOODGATES WERE BEGINNING TO OPEN AND TENS OF THOUSANDS OF YOUNG PHOTOGRAPHERS ENTERED THE BUSINESS.

THE SOCIAL STATUS OF A PHOTOGRAPHER WAS VERY HIGH.





CAMERAS EXPLODE ACROSS THE PUBLIC

IT WAS THE CANON AE1 (1976) THAT INTRODUCED A LOT OF PEOPLE TO THE WORLD OF PHOTOGRAPHY. NIKON'S FM, AND THE PENTAX K-1000 WERE ALSO IN THAT GROUP OF SUPER EASY, INEXPENSIVE, AND YET PROFESSIONALLY EQUIPPED CAMERA BODIES THAT FOUND ITSELF ON THE SHELF OR IN THE SUITCASE OF MILLIONS OF PEOPLE.

CAMERAS ALLOWED MANY PEOPLE A WAY INTO A MEDIUM OF ART

STILL ONE OF MY FAVORITE CAMERAS, THE NIKON F3, THE WORLD OF PHOTOGRAPHY BECAME AFFORDABLE, MEASURABLE, REPETITIVE AND CAPTIVATING TO ANYONE WHO WANTED TO TAKE THE TIME TO LEARN IT.

AND IT DID REQUIRE TIME, COMMITMENT, AND MONEY.

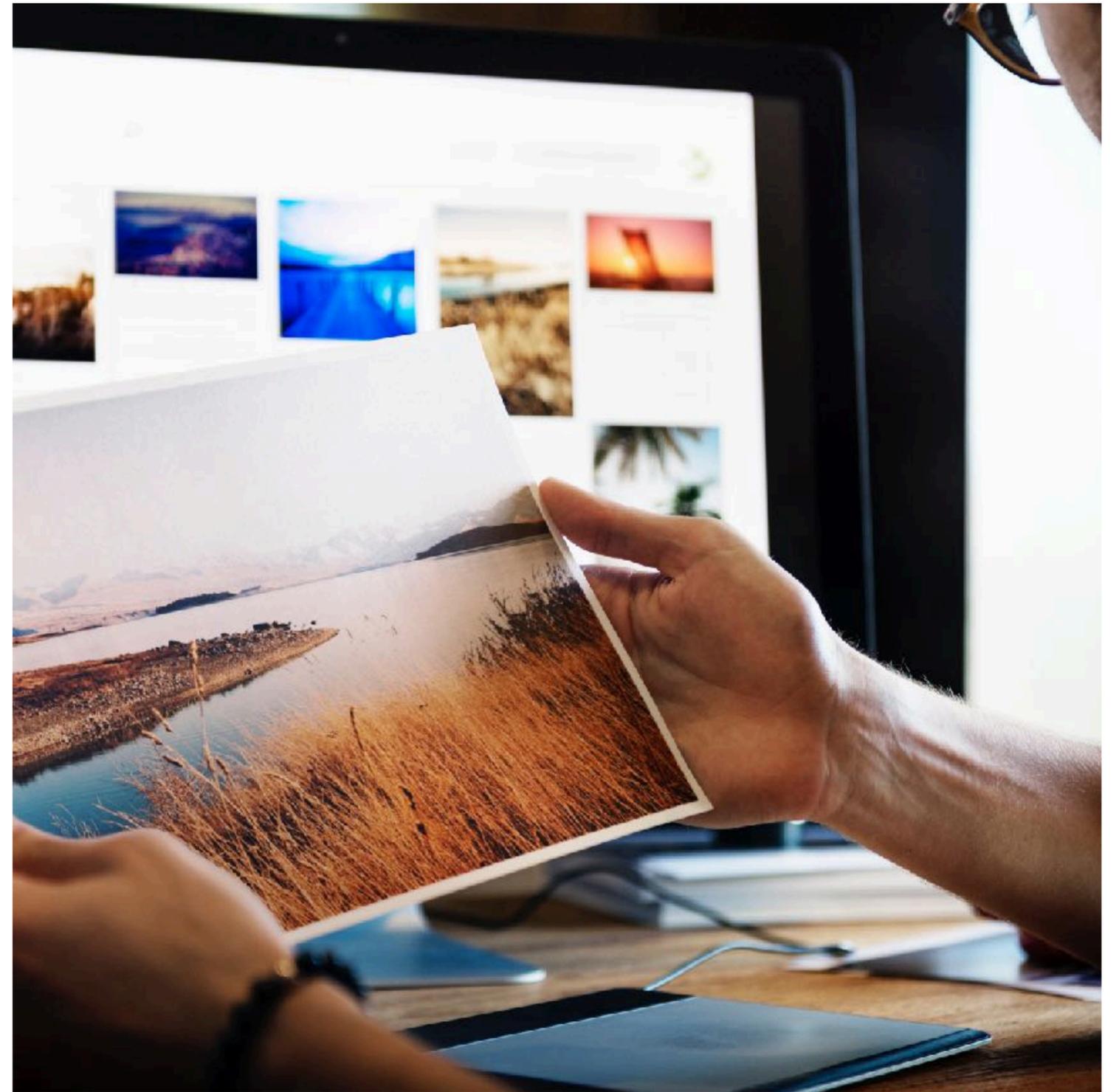


THE GOAL WAS: ARCHIVAL

PHOTOGRAPHERS MADE PRINTS.

THE PRINTS WERE CULMINATIONS OF HUNDREDS, POSSIBLY THOUSANDS OF IMAGES EDITED DOWN, AND COMMITTED TO PAPER AS A WAY OF CREATING AN ARCHIVE, PORTFOLIO, COLLECTION, OR STORY.

THE ARCHIVE WAS THE THING. TO NOT MAKE A PRINT WAS TO NOT BE A PHOTOGRAPHER.



ARCHIVAL STILL CONTROLLED BY THE GATEKEEPERS

NOW THE GATEKEEPERS WERE THE GALLERIES, SHOWS, EXHIBITIONS, AND DISPLAYS OF PHOTOGRAPHY THAT REQUIRED ONE TO BE SELECTED BY SOMEONE ELSE TO BE CONSIDERED.

IF YOU WERE UNABLE TO FIND ANYONE TO PUBLISH YOUR WORK, OR SHOW YOUR WORK, NOT VERY MANY PEOPLE WOULD HAVE EVER SEEN WHAT YOU WERE DOING. THERE WAS NO ENGAGEMENT OTHER THAN WHAT WAS PERMITTED BY THE GATEKEEPERS.





DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY

CHANGED EVERYTHING.

EVERYTHING.

NO MORE SCIENCE.

NO MORE CHEMISTRY.

NO WASTED MONEY ON FILM THAT DIDN'T TURN OUT.

NO POLLUTION OF ANALOG MATERIALS.

INSTANT FEEDBACK.

THE DIGITAL CAMERA TOOK PHOTOGRAPHY FROM WHERE IT HAD BEEN SLOWLY GROWING INTO A QUASI-SCIENTIFIC, ELITIST FORM OF CREATING ARCHIVAL ART AND SMASHED IT INTO THE BIG GLASS DOOR OF HUMANITY WHO NO LONGER NEEDED TO BE INTIMIDATED BY THE PROCESS.

WITH THE INTRODUCTION OF THE CANON 10-D THE EVOLUTION WAS FIXED, AND DIGITAL NOW REIGNED SUPREME.

THE UBIQUITOUS CAMERA

THE INVENTION OF THE CAMERA PHONE AT APPROXIMATELY THE SAME TIME AS SOCIAL MEDIA WAS A MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN.

NO LONGER WAS SCIENCE, CHEMISTRY, OR A GATEKEEPER STANDING IN THE WAY OF NEARLY ANYONE WHO WANTED TO MAKE - AND SHARE - A PHOTOGRAPH.





SOCIAL MEDIA IS JUST A SIMPLE CONVERSATION NOT A BROADWAY SHOW

THE HARDEST THING OLDER PHOTOGRAPHERS HAD TO UNDERSTAND IS THAT THE FACEBOOK AND THE TWITTER WERE NOT LETTERS WRITTEN IN INK, THEY WERE CONVERSATIONS OVER A NEW PLATFORM, AND WERE MEANT STRICTLY AS THAT. THIS WAS NOT ARCHIVAL STUFF MEANT TO BE SAVED AND BROUGHT OUT ON BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES OR TO BE CELEBRATED EVEN A DAY OR TWO LATER. IT HAPPENS.

DONE.

PHOTOGRAPHY MORPHED FROM ARCHIVAL ART TO CONVERSATIONAL UTILITY

TO MILLIONS OF YOUNG PHOTOGRAPHERS, THERE IS NO NEED TO ARCHIVE ANYTHING. THE IMAGES LIVE ON THEIR PHONE, OR ON THEIR FACEBOOK / INSTAGRAM PAGES AND THEY ARE HAPPY TO GO BACK AND LOOK AT THEM - IF THEY EVEN WANT TO - ON THOSE PLATFORMS.





THE UTILITY USE OF PHOTOGRAPHY BECOMES PERHAPS ITS BIGGEST PLAY

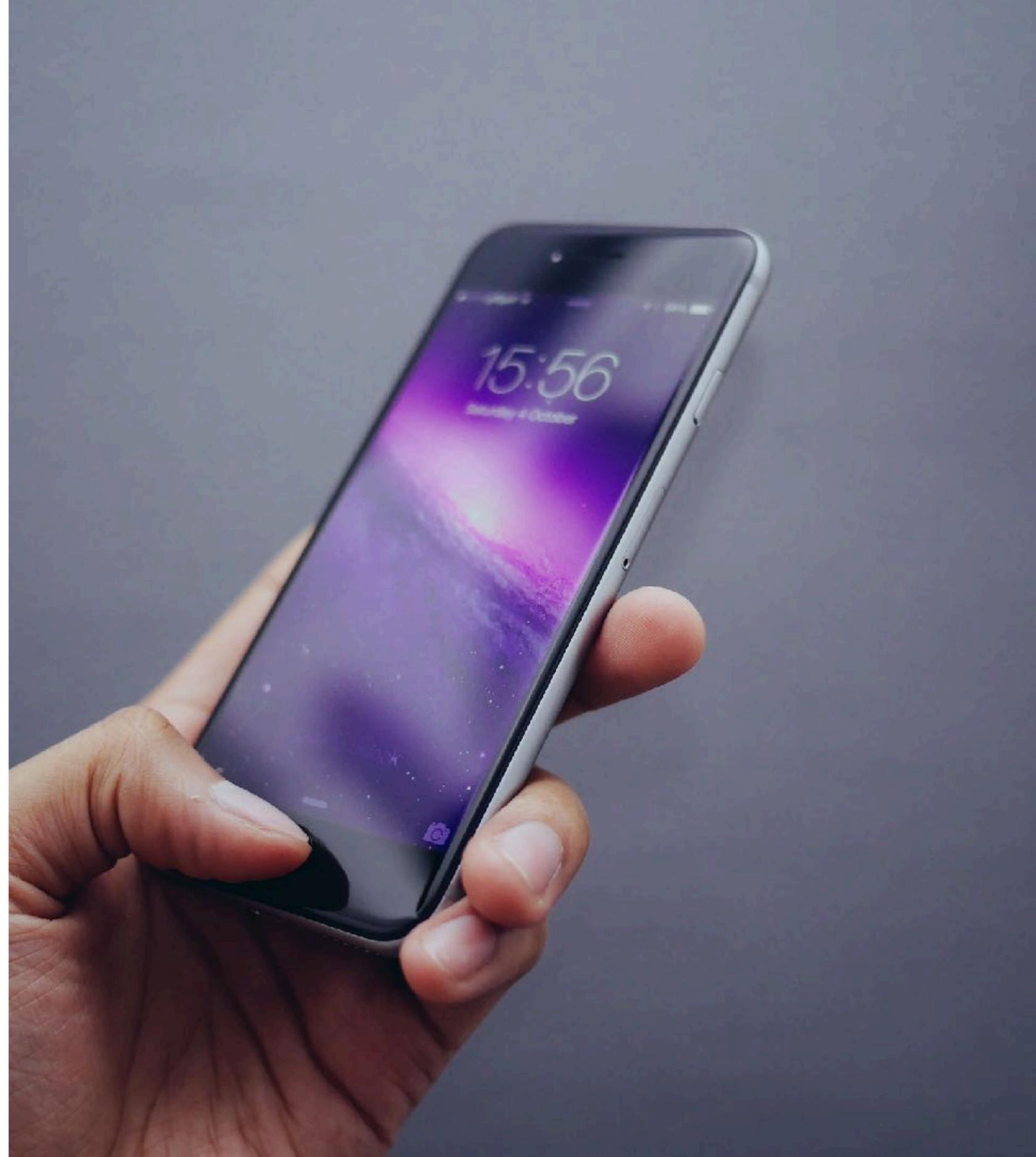
PHOTOGRAPHY ON THE PHONE BECAME A WAY OF COMMUNICATING WHERE SOMEONE WAS, SHARING A DRESS COLOR, BRAGGING ABOUT LUNCH, SHOWING OFF IN A RENTAL CAR, OR JUST LETTING FRIENDS AND FAMILY KNOW WHERE YOU WERE AND WHAT YOU WERE DOING.

NOT A SNAPSHOT, A SNAP OF LIFE. IMPORTANT NOW,
NOT LATER

FACEBOOK HAS ALWAYS BEEN PHOTOGRAPHY FIRST. THEY KNOW THE POWER OF THE IMAGE

WHILE TEXT MESSAGES STILL DOMINATE AT FACEBOOK, THE MOST POWERFUL ENGAGEMENT ALMOST ALWAYS INCLUDES A VISUAL OF SOME KIND - MOSTLY PHOTOGRAPHY.

VISUAL BRANDING IS THE CLEAR WINNER, ALTHOUGH IT MAY TAKE MARKETERS A WHILE TO CATCH UP.



FACEBOOK EVEN ALLOWS YOU TO SHARE IMAGES YOU DO NOT OWN

SO IMPORTANT IS THE SHARING OF IMAGERY IN A SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM THAT FACEBOOK HAS MADE THE SHARING OF IMAGES NEARLY UBIQUITOUS.

SOME PHOTOGRAPHERS FEAR THE LOSS OF CONTROL OVER THEIR IMAGE (ARCHIVE?), BUT MOST PEOPLE ARE NOT STEALING IT, RATHER THEY ARE SAYING 'ISN'T THIS COOL? DID YOU SEE THIS?'

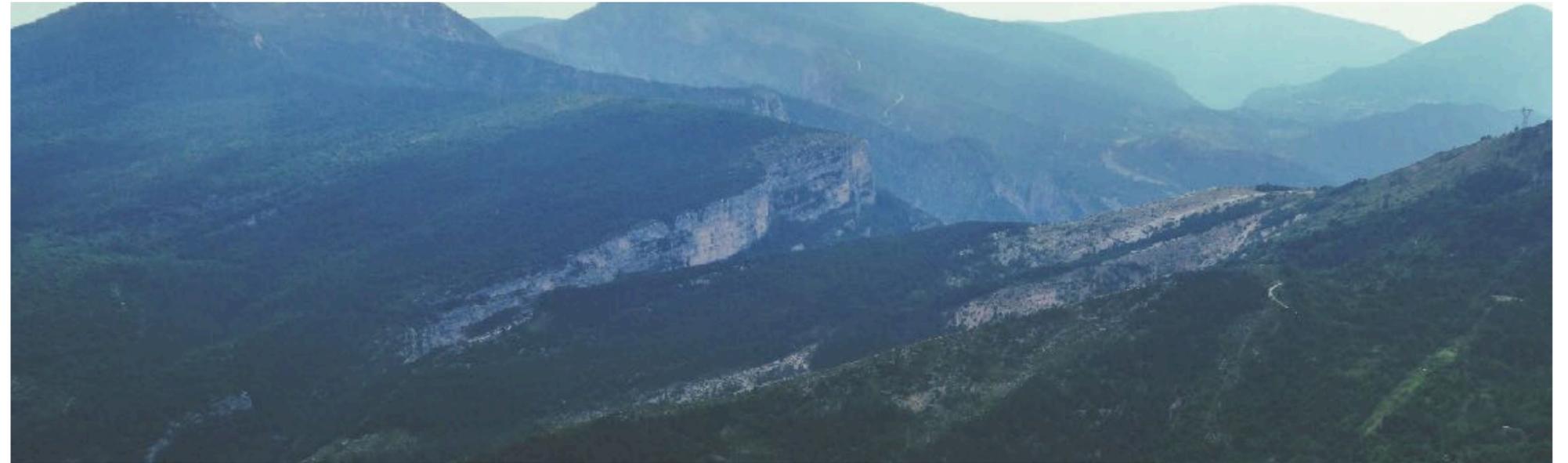
THEY ARE SIMPLY COMMUNICATING WITH THE IMAGE.



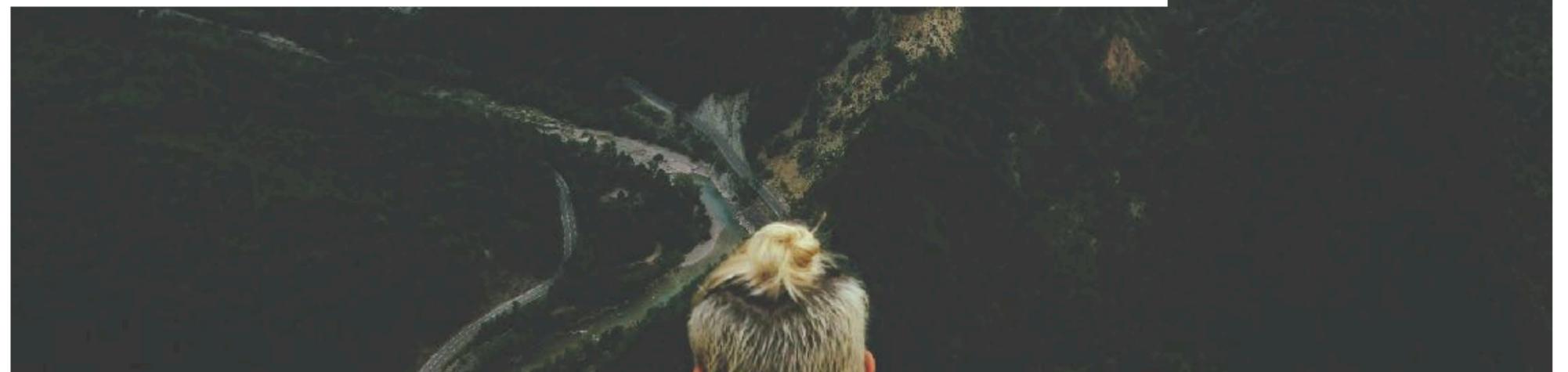
PHOTOGRAPHER'S DILEMMA ONE

NOPE... NOT TO EVERYONE, AND
NOT EVERY PICTURE TO ANYONE,
AND MAYBE YOURS IS TO YOU, BUT
THAT 'SPECIALNESS' DOESN'T GET
PASSED ALONG AUTOMATICALLY.

TO CREATE VALUE IN AN
ECOSPHERE THAT DOESN'T
AUTOMATICALLY CONFER IT IS
HARD AND CHALLENGING, BUT IT IS
BEING DONE.



“BUT... PHOTOS ARE SPECIAL.”





THE ECOSPHERE OF SOCIAL MEDIA PHOTOGRAPHY

THE CHANGE HAPPENED SO QUICK.

PHOTOGRAPHY HAD VALUE BECAUSE OF THE AMOUNT OF WORK IT TOOK TO BECOME PROFICIENT IN IT, HOW MUCH EXPERTISE IT TOOK TO CONTROL THE MYRIAD DEVICES IT TOOK TO CREATE AN IMAGE, THE COSTS INVOLVED IN BECOMING PROFICIENT, AND THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE CRAFTSMAN TO ENDURE THE ENTIRE PROCESS.

THEN DIGITAL.

THEN CAMERA PHONES.

AND ALONG THE WAY SOFTWARE WAS MAKING THE PROCESS OF MAKING A GOOD, TECHNICAL IMAGE SO DEAD SIMPLE THAT EVEN MIDDLE SCHOOLERS AND GRAMMA'S COULD MAKE A PRETTY DECENT IMAGE ON THEIR SAMSUNG OR IPHONE.

ANYTHING THAT IS EASY TO DO, EASILY CLONED, EASILY MASTERED WILL NOT CARRY A VALUE FORWARD. IT SIMPLY WONT.

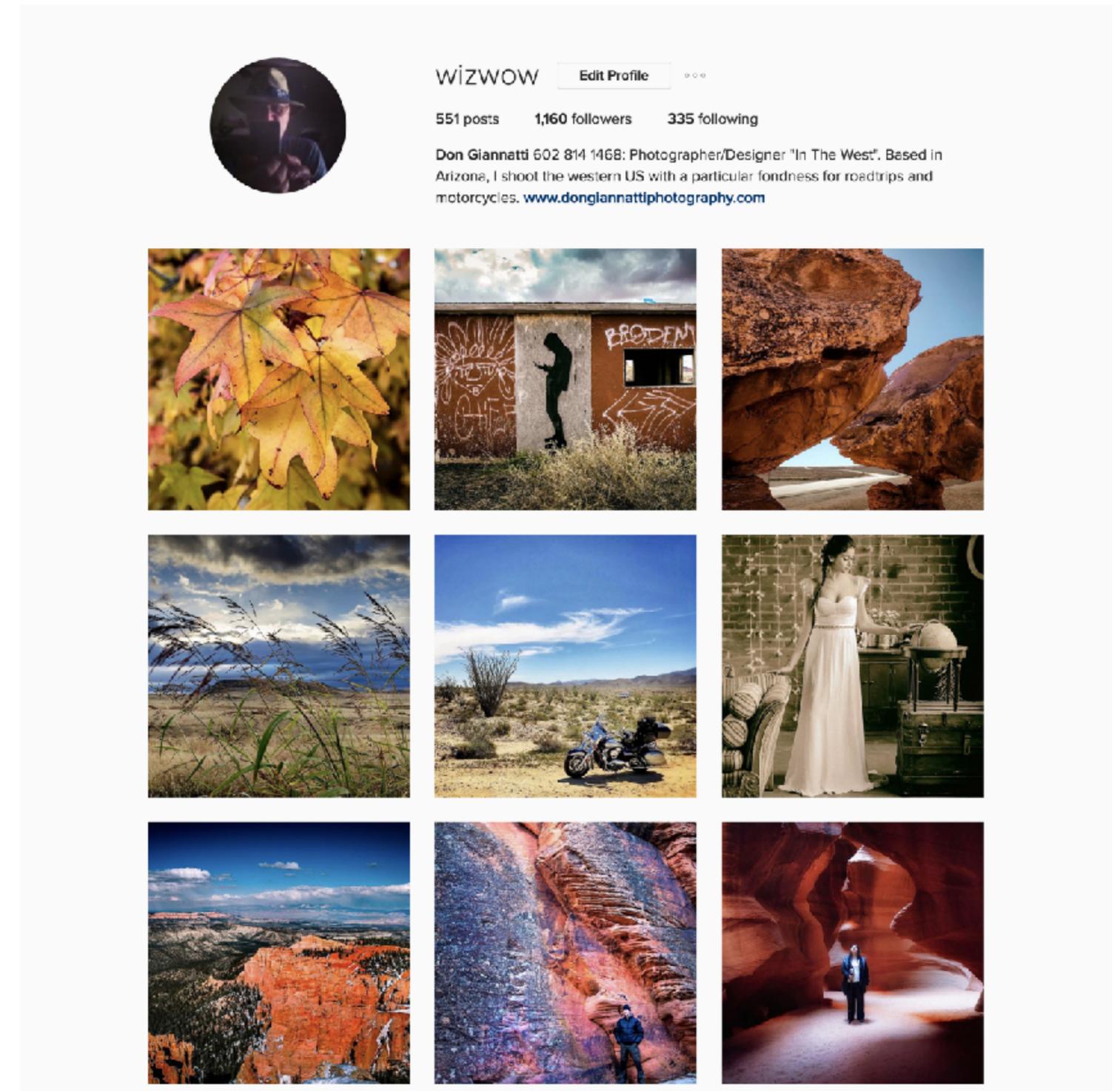
DOES THAT MEAN THAT THERE IS NO VALUE IN PHOTOGRAPHY WITHIN SOCIAL MEDIA. OH NO, NOT EVEN CLOSE. THERE IS TERRIFIC VALUE IN SOCIAL MEDIA IMAGERY.

INSTAGRAM

WHILE IT STARTED AS A PURELY VISUAL MEDIUM, INSTAGRAM HAS INCORPORATED TEXT INTO ITS FEEDS VERY WELL. WE SEE MORE AND MORE PEOPLE USING INSTAGRAM AS THEIR BLOG THESE DAYS.

BUT ALWAYS IT IS IMAGE CENTRIC, IMAGE FOCUSED, IMAGE DRIVEN. YOU CANNOT EVEN MAKE A POST THERE WITHOUT A VISUAL ATTACHED.

INSTAGRAM WILL ALSO LET YOU CREATE SHORT VIDEOS, AND VIDEO MIXES OF MOTION AND STILLS CALLED “STORIES” IF YOU WANT TO MIX IT UP IN MIXED MEDIA.



BRAND MARKETING ON INSTAGRAM

INSTAGRAM IS A HUGE MARKET FOR BRANDS WHO WANT TO TAP INTO THE DEMOGRAPHIC CHART WITH A SCALPEL, NOT A SHOTGUN.

BEING ABLE TO FILTER THEIR OFFERINGS MAKE THIS PLATFORM HUGE FOR MARKETERS OF EVERYTHING FROM SOAP TO PERFUME TO MOTORCYCLES.

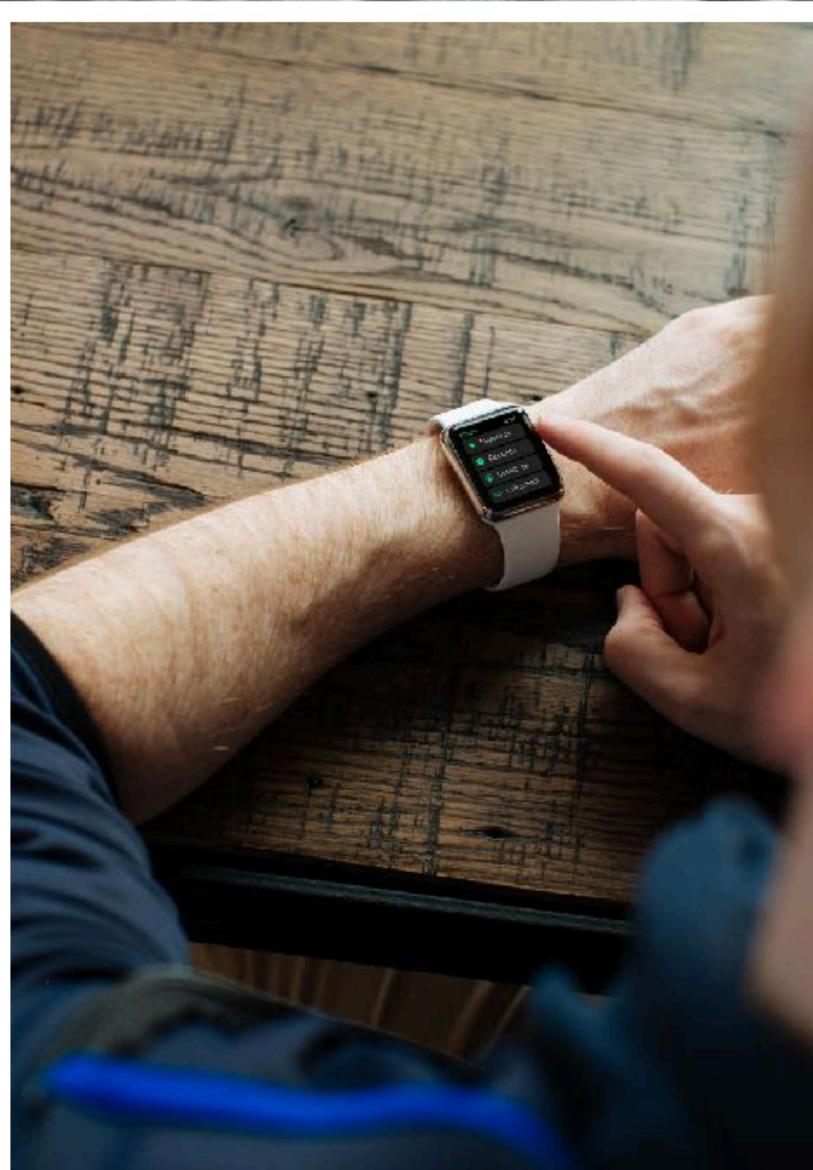
IT'S ALL IN THE HASHTAGS, BABY.



MILLENNIALS CANNOT BE 'SOLD' ANYMORE

HELL, IT IS HARD TO SELL ME THESE DAYS. YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE BEEN SOLD TO 24/7 THEIR WHOLE LIVES. FROM BANNER ADS TO IN-APP, TO ONLINE GAMING, TO EVEN ADS ON THEIR SCHOOL WEBSITES. THEY DO NOT SEE THEM ANYMORE.

WANT TO GET THEM INTERESTED IN WHAT YOU DO? SELL THEM VISUALLY WITHOUT 'SELLING THEM'. THAT IS WHAT INSTAGRAM AND SIMILAR SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS CREATE.



PHOTOGRAPHER'S DILEMMA TWO

NOT NECESSARILY.

ARCHIVED PHOTOS ARE STILL A BIG PART OF PHOTOGRAPHY, BUT THEY ARE NO LONGER THE ONLY PART OF PHOTOGRAPHY. SOME IMAGES SHOULD AND WILL BE ARCHIVED, MOST WILL NOT.

THAT WASN'T THEIR PURPOSE, NOR WAS IT THE GOAL OF THE MAKER OF THE PHOTOGRAPH. IT SIMPLY EXISTS FOR A FEW MOMENTS IN TIME AND THEN... --.



“BUT... PHOTOS ARE TO BE ARCHIVED.”



IT'S (JUST) A CONVERSATION

JUST LIKE CHATTING WITH YOUR FRIENDS AND BUDS, THE CONVERSATION IS NOT SAVED OR ARCHIVED. THE IMAGES ARE PART OF THAT CONTEMPORANEOUS EXPERIENCE NOW.

YOU CAN CHOOSE TO ARCHIVE THEM IF YOU WANT TO, BUT THAT IS NOT NECESSARILY THE POINT OF THE VISUAL LIN CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL SETTINGS ANYMORE.



SNAPCHAT

THE NEWEST PLAYER ON THE SOCIAL MEDIA LANDSCAPE IS SNAPCHAT. PHOTOS, VIDEOS, TEXT, AND AUDIO ALL COMBINE TO ALLOW THE SNAPCHAT USER TO EXPERIENCE ALL THE MEDIUMS AS THEY ARE 'CHATTING' WITH FRIENDS. DISCUSSING THE MEAL, HERE'S A SHOT. THAT RACKET IN HALL, LISTEN TO THIS. LISTS, CONTEMPORANEOUS CONVERSATION ALL AT THE TOUCH OF A FINGER. AND NOTHING IS SAVED. DO IT SHARE IT, FORGET ABOUT IT.



BRAND

PHOTOGRAPHERS ARE BEING HIRED TO MAKE IMAGES FOR BRANDS LIKE RESORTS, CRUISELINES, RESTAURANTS, FOOD SERVICES, TRAVEL COMPANIES AND CLOTHING. THEY ARE BEING HIRED TO SHOOT THE IMAGES ON SNAPCHAT AND INSTAGRAM. PURELY VISUAL PLAYS THAT SUPERCEDE COPY, HEADLINES, PLACEMENT, AND DEVICES.

PURE BRAND MARKETING USING VISUALS.



AND NOW THE NUMBERS

THERE ARE INSTAGRAMMERS WITH MILLIONS OF FOLLOWERS. MILLIONS. SO IF YOU ARE A BRAND, FINDING A POPULAR INSTAGRAMMER MAKES SENSE IF THEY CAN ALSO DELIVER MILLIONS OF THEIR OWN VIEWERS TO YOUR PRODUCT.

YES, POPULAR PHOTOGRAPHERS ARE BEING HIRED TO MAKE PHOTOS FOR AD CAMPAIGNS BASED ON THE AMOUNT OF FOLLOWERS AND THE ENGAGEMENT OF THOSE FOLLOWERS.



PHOTOGRAPHER'S DILEMMA THREE

BY MAKING EXCELLENT PHOTOGRAPHS, ENGAGING WITH OTHER PHOTOGRAPHERS AND BRANDS, WORKING HARD TO MAKE THE CONTENT YOU CREATE RELEVANT AND EXCITING.

NO GAMING THE SYSTEM, NO 'BUYING FOLLOWERS' - JUST YOU WORKING YOUR BUTT OFF TO GET THE EYEBALLS AND THE ENGAGEMENT TO YOUR IMAGES. IT ISN'T EASY, BUT IT IS POSSIBLE.



“HOW DO I GET MORE FOLLOWERS?”



WHAT'S NEXT?

HONESTLY, I DO NOT KNOW. I AM NOT SURE SNAPCHAT WILL BE AROUND IN A YEAR. REMEMBER VINE?

BUT I DO KNOW THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT TOOL FOR MARKETERS AND THE MOST IMPORTANT TOOL FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IS THE SAME THING: THE IMAGE.

WE WILL SEE MORE AND MORE IMAGE BASED MARKETING, COMMUNICATION AND EVEN SEE VISUALS MOVING INTO NON-TRADITIONAL AREAS LIKE NOVELS, NEWS, AND MORE... SOON.

