

Eve Carrier
Art 12A
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In the late 1970s, Susan Sontag critiqued the growing sensationalism of photography, as the practice moved out of its artistic context in favor of sentimental value. She ultimately criticizes this movement, acknowledging an apparent equality between physical experience with the photograph one takes in its midst. Critiques today can make (and have made) similar observations, particularly in regard to younger generations who are more in tune with emerging technologies. Craig Mod's argument carries a similar tone when comparing the shift from traditional camera to digital and finally to combined lens and network devices. In both instances, artists and art historians are likely to view these shifts as the death of photography, and in her writing Sontag seems to agree, but these occurrences should be viewed instead as radical paradigm shifts in the functionality of the photograph.

To me, Mod's piece seems to take on a significantly more hopeful view than in Sontag's writing. Mod appears to almost embrace the rise of networked photography, while Sontag harshly critiques the spread of photographic practice as a loss of artistic quality. I personally agree with Mod, and even believe that to some degree that the artistry Sontag perceived as being lost has been reintroduced through photo sharing apps such as Instagram. This app in particular, especially among younger generations, seems to promote a certain level of quality in its users' posts. It is well known that one simply does not post silly or frivolous images to their Instagram feed, insisting on only the higher quality, well-staged, and fundamentally more beautiful photos, because these received more attention and ultimately, more 'likes.' Personally, this reads as an affinity for the artistic photo, to some extent going beyond documentation. Though the images may still depict a family vacation or what one ordered for dinner, users are pressured by social conventions to make specific, unique choices in order to stand out and reach farther in terms of media notoriety. This is the trend Mod makes note of in comparison to Sontag's statement that what cannot be photographed loses importance. A unique image, one with enough intrigue and impact to be shared worldwide and networked over and over again, becomes the most important. Thus, the practice of photography has regained its coveted artisanal connotations, but rather than in effort to create new meaning and perspective, it is for the gain of social clout and fame.