Defining Independent Photography

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Independent adjective
Not influenced or controlled in any way by other people, events, or things
(Press, 2020)

How we define independent photography? In general, it is about taking photograph on your own self without been controlled by anyone. But for each of the photographer, it’s all about self-expression towards the images that had been snapped by the camera. Looking at the current trend, photography, independently, got such an overwhelming response from people, not only in Malaysia, but the whole world. It shows that the photography became a very important field in the Malaysian public today, even worldwide (Sabki Md. Noh, 2017). Elliott Erwitt once said that, “To me, photography is an art of observation. It’s about finding something interesting an ordinary place. I’ve found it has little to do with the things you see and everything to do with the way you see them.” (PetaPixel, 2020). Based of my own self-experience, I described that independent photography is all about “working alone” when going out to shoot photograph. It’s all about our own spending time to seek the subject matter as we focused (framing) it through the viewfinder and “snap!”. An image had been born.

But how does our image connect with audience? How it delivers the message that the photographer trying to express? When creating Kampung Baru Tilt-shift Series (Fig. 1), all these questions are in my mind. Ismail Hashim described that “The best part of photography is the act of taking pictures. Before that, the work will have to go through a tug-of-war process with the medium” (Wubin, 2016). This artwork been created to enhance not only the uniqueness of Kampung Baru, but to appreciate the maintaining of Malays culture around it.

Independent photography is all about what the photographer him/herself trying to define description of information that lies within the visual. In photography, description is a data-gathering process, a listing of facts (Barret, 2006). In “Aku dan Sesuatu” (Fig. 2), the artist descriptively in his photograph about the wall’s writing in charcoal factory as a part of his expression in straight photography. The photograph is the blade which seizes the dazzling instant from eternity (Agnès Sire, Jean-François Chevrier, 2009).
Figure 1. 2018 © Mohammad Firdaus Azman, *Kampung Baru Tilt-Shift Series*.

Figure 2. 2019 © Mohammad Firdaus Azman, *Aku dan Sesuatu*.
David Campany stated that the process of shaping a story of photography is not unlike taking photographs. It is an art and science of abbreviation. It involves judgement, selection, framing, editing, assessment and reassessment (Hacking, 2012). Same goes to Nino Migliori, one of the famous European photographers around 1940s. He used the eclectic nature of photography better than others: a medium that enables documentary but takes on the content and values linked to art, experimentation and play (Koch, 2009). *Chairs* (Fig. 3) and *Kilang Simen* (Fig. 4) was another experimentation in expressing the nature beauty of architecture. Technically it is not about point and shoot, but far beyond the surface of those images the photographer trying to share with the audience about sharpen up our perception of structures within their respective surroundings.

In the end, this journal publication aims to appreciate to all whom their name included in this publication. Anyone who photographs hopes to achieve the perfect result: the ambitious amateur aims for a successful snapshot, a document of “lasting memory”, the professional is aiming for a masterpiece of composition, a striking testimony of contemporary history (Willingmann, 2004). There is perhaps a province in which the photograph can tell us (direct/indirectly) and everyone that nothing more than what we see with our own eyes, there is another in which it proves to us how little our eyes permit us to see. While it may seem that a new photo technology is born every day, photography is still what we make it, not what it makes us (Marien, 2012).

![Figure 3. 2009 © Mohammad Firdaus Azman, Chairs.](image-url)
REFERENCES


Figure 4. 2020 © Mohammad Firdaus Azman, Kilang Simen.