

What is autobiographical photography?

Autobiographical photography is a form of self-expression that uses narrative structures that we know from literature.

The visual narrator/photographer and the person who reports about his life is identical.

Those three characteristics define autobiographical photography:

- self-expression
- narrative structure
- subject and object of the visual narration are identical

The visual narrator/photographer defines what he or she considers as relevant to communicate to the public. The choice which was made by an individual may be influenced by the cultural environment of the person and the collective memory. Thus the visual narration of an individual will be of importance for the collective since it reflects on social conventions.

What can autobiographical photography do for people who normally are „reported about“?

Speaking to the welfare organization Diakonie we learned that people who are in supervised living have multiple possibilities to express themselves: painting, photography and all manual operations. Their linguistic skills may be limited (genetically caused handicap) but they communicate via photography and other means.

Possibly we will see a reportage ABOUT people who are in supervised living. But do we see a reportages FROM one of them?

Do we see a reportage from people who live in open penitentiary?

The result of autobiographical photography is a personal document, which could be made visible to the general public by professional journalistic or artistic mediation.

The competent support of the autobiographical act and the competent mediation between visual narrator and public will be done by another person / institution than the visual narrator/photographer.

Thus autobiographical photography can lead to social integration of not yet perceived topics.

Even more is possible.

By the act of autobiographical photography the narrator takes possession of his or her history/story, creating a visible self-design. In this process photographs and biographic connoted objects will be collected, created and then brought into a meaningful order.

This definite order could be a continuous narrative or even it could possess a fragmentary or associative character.

Autobiographical photography can lead to self-assurance and identity formation.

For this process it does not matter that the lines between facts and fiction are blurred.