

EARLY WRITINGS ON PHOTOGRAPHY IN CROATIA: MAIN ASPECTS OF THE DISCOURSE ABOUT THE “NEW DAUGHTER OF THE SUN IN THE CIRCLE OF MUSES”

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ANA ŠEPAROVIĆ

Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža /
Miroslav Krleža Institute of Lexicography
Frankopanska 26
HR-10000 Zagreb, Hrvatska / Croatia
anaseparovic@gmail.com

 orcid.org/0000-0002-1708-8358

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This article identifies the most important thematic points in early photography discourse through a critical reading of early essays that look at photography as a phenomenon. The research centers on the corpus of articles on photography published in Yugoslavian, mostly Croatian, periodicals from the beginning of the 20th century to 1941, mostly in magazines specialized in photography, which are the focus of special attention. The selection consists of articles dealing with the phenomena and divisions in the Croatian photography scene characterized by a strong polarization between professional and amateur photographers. The articles analyze photography as a cultural, social or ideological phenomenon, look into the question of the nature of photography as art or technology, as well as the establishment of a hierarchy of values with regard to photography genres, following trends on the European and world photography scene. Despite the fact that during the observed period the authors were still learning to write about photography, defining the subject and locating its central problems, and were looking for suitable methodologies, these writings constitute pioneering work, and the discussions would lay the foundation and framework for the development of an autonomous contemporary photography discourse.

Keywords: *writing about photography, photography criticism, photography magazines, amateur photographers, professional photographers*

“Today, photography is one of the most productive and modern branches of art, although the official art circles accept it with a heavy heart, in some cases even treating it as its illegitimate child that no one could tell would develop into such a wise being as recognized today. Recognizing photography as pure art is only a matter of formality.”

*FUIS, Franjo. 1935. “Fotografija umjetnost”.
Novosti, 24 November, no. 327:13.*

RESEARCH STARTING POINTS, CORPUS AND METHODOLOGY

Although photography, as an art form, entered Croatian art-historical considerations quite late, the current situation indicates that it no longer occupies the margins of art-historical and cultural studies.¹ Nevertheless, one segment of photography history never evolved into an independent research topic: the origin and development of the discourse about photography itself, i.e. the beginnings of writing about photography.² Due to the fact that relying on texts written in the examined time period is one of the foundations of historiographical research, knowing how the discourse that slowly developed and became more complex is of great importance, as this discourse had a defining influence on establishing photography as an art form, profiling its audience, forming the methodology of photography history and knowledge about it, as well as canonizing certain oeuvres.

In Croatian periodicals, the earliest texts on photography appear immediately after the invention in 1839 and follow the discovery and development of the medium. Soon, most texts on photography consisted of notices and advertisements about early photography studios and their services,³ and it is worth noting that the first lexicographical work dedicated to fine arts contains an entry by historian Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski about the Zagreb photographer Demeter Novaković (Kukuljević Sakcinski 1860:322). Although the photographs were shown at large exhibitions held in the second half of the 19th century – the First Dalmatian, Croat and Slavonian Exhibition of Agriculture, Industry and Art (Zagreb 1864), the First Art and Craft Exhibition (Zagreb 1879) and the International Art Exhibition (Zagreb 1891) – the development of critical and theoretical thought can be traced only from the first exhibitions exclusively dedicated to photography. Photography started to slowly become institutionalized with the founding of the first photography societies,⁴ with magazines specializing in photography playing a significant role, in addition to societies and exhibitions. When looking at the area forming the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes since 1918 (and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia since 1929), despite the fact that financial difficulties made the majority of magazines dedicated to photography short lived with only a few published issues, nine photo magazines were published in today's Croatia (seven in Zagreb and one each in Osijek and Ivanec) and five in the rest of Yugoslavia (in Belgrade, Niš, Vršac, Subotica and Ljubljana) from

¹ This work has been fully supported by the Croatian Science Foundation under project IP-2019-04-1772.

² This topic is poorly researched even on the international level, and some of the rare works and books worth mentioning are: Eisinger 1999; Foa 2012; Marien 1997.

³ For more information on the earliest texts on photography see: Gržina 2022.

⁴ More in: Gržina 2021.

1911 to 1941. These are mainly magazines intended for amateur photographers and photography enthusiasts whose texts mostly consist of advice on the process itself (how to take photographs at a certain time of day, season, how to approach certain types of motifs, etc.) and technical advice on types of cameras, exposure, enlargements, and other procedures and chemicals used in the process of developing photographs.⁵ They also contain overviews of exhibitions and articles in which we can trace the development of local early photography criticism, with more ambitious theoretical texts dealing with the phenomenon of photography, as well as the first articles from the history of photography that attempt to historicize and evaluate older photography, being somewhat less prevalent. The importance of photography journals, especially periodicals, was noticed as early as 1937, when the 1st International Exhibition of Photography Literature and Journalism was organized in Zagreb, accompanying a photography exhibition. Apart from the fact that this exhibition was the first event of its kind in the world, the exhibition reviews also highlight the importance of photography magazines in spreading news about “photography achievements” from one end of the world to the other, with special mention given to the journal of the Czechoslovak Amateur Photography Association *Fotografický Obzor* and the Vienna magazine *Die Galerie*, which received a plaque for best photo magazine (Harambašić 1937).

This research covers several hundred articles on photography published in Yugoslavian, mostly Croatian, periodicals from the beginning of the 20th century until 1941, which can be classified into three main categories based on genre and discussion focus: essays dealing with photography as a phenomenon, photography criticism and history of photography. Most of the articles belong to the genre of photography criticism in the narrower sense, including reviews of exhibitions and individual photographs, and were mostly authored by photographers (Franjo Mosinger, Franjo Fuis, Franjo Ernst, August Frajtić, Otokar Hrazdira, etc.). Most of the critical texts remain at a discursively rudimentary level: they mainly list exhibitors and their originating countries, the discourse is dominated by characterizing photographs as good or bad with some variations (beautiful, fine, interesting, tasteful...) with arbitrary or poor argumentation, mostly without critical potential. Most interpretations, if they exist at all, come down to features of form or style, and the most important criterion for evaluating photographs are the effects of light and shadow. The texts are first and foremost characterized by an aestheticist conception of beauty (with an emphasis on beauty, taste and harmony) which combines with modernist rhetoric and the “individuality” and “autonomy” of a

⁵ Advice and instructions for photographers on how to photograph certain motifs (e.g. mountains, architecture, portraits) or how to shoot in certain conditions (e.g. indoors, in the rain, in a forest, during winter, etc.) and how to develop the photograph (technological and chemical advice) have no bearing on the development of photography discourse, so they are not included in this research.

work of art as its main criteria and the absolute valuation of form and style over content. The general features of critical discourse include stereotypes when considering representation strategies or the treatment of the subject in relation to gender, class and race, an anti-feminist attitude towards women photographers and their work, the desirability or undesirability of certain motives with regard to the dominant bourgeois worldview,⁶ the apparent objectivity of the author-critic and indifference towards the artist taking an active ideological position.

Although modest, the corpus of articles showing some segment of the history of photography represents a pioneering effort. The authors, which include Josip Matasović, Gjuro Szabo, August Frajtić and Milan Baran among others, discuss topics such as the history of the medium and the change in dominant styles in photography. An important contribution also comes from the poet and photographer Nada Kesterčanek⁷ who wrote a pioneering overview of important women in amateur photography. That period also saw the early historicization of the Zagreb school of photography, as well as the canonization of certain oeuvres, such as that of Tošo Dabac.

As the number of articles collected and analyzed is extremely large, it was not possible to focus on all the mentioned groups in one text. Therefore, this article focuses on early photography essays and on discussion articles that form certain thematic points of intersection, refer to cultural concepts, contain discursive potential, which serve as focal points for the phenomena and divisions present on the photography scene and which I recognized as key for the development of the discourse on photography. These are mostly texts that examine photography as a cultural, social or ideological phenomenon, discussions of whether photography is an art or a technique, and articles establishing a hierarchy of values of photography genres. It is important to note that during the period in question, the authors were still learning to write about photography, defining the subject and locating its central problems, as well as looking for suitable methodologies, which is why the texts often appear trivial, and that is not unique to Croatian history of photography.⁸ However, these are pioneering works and these discussions laid the foundation for the eventual sovereign contemporary photography discourse, and for photography to become an unavoidable part of our cultural mainstream.

⁶ In this sense, the history of photography criticism, like the history of art criticism, represents a part of bourgeoisie history (Duncan 1993:186).

⁷ Nada Kesterčanek-Vujica (1917–1971), poet; studied at the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb and emigrated to the USA after the Second World War, where she worked as a library manager at Wilkes College in Wilkes-Barre.

⁸ Joel Eisinger notes that even earlier researchers such as John L. Ward (author of *The Criticism of Photography as Art*. Gainesville 1970) recognize early texts on photography as “meager and,

TECHNIQUE OR ART: “TAKING” OR “MAKING” A PICTURE

Putting aside texts on the invention and technical development of the medium of photography, most early discussions of photography were concerned with its nature. According to Liz Wells, since its invention, photography has been understood both in terms of its apparent ability to accurately transcribe from reality and through its expressive potential. Since the mid-19th century, photographs have formed an integral part of exhibitions in England and France, and critics and practitioners debated the status of photography as art from its earliest days. Debates centered around the established view of the artist as a visionary who, by transcending mere recording, offers a unique and original vision, an insight into people, places and events, and questions of taste, legitimized by the patronage by the aristocracy and the upper class, were crucial for evaluating works. Discussions on the status of photography were based on the distinction between its technological and artistic nature, i.e. between its mechanical character and expressive potential, which resulted in a constant tension between the understanding of photography as a document and artistic interpretation. The emphasized aspect – “picture taking” or “picture making”⁹ – also affected the judgment of whether photography is art or technology, and even early photographers did not necessarily consider themselves artists (Wells 2015:292–295). One such early discussion on the nature of photography took place in Zagreb at the very turn of the century. Regarding the case of a Hungarian photographer, who – considering himself an artist – refused to pay compensation to the Chamber of Commerce, the *Agramer Zeitung* in 1900 reported that, due to this situation, the Hungarian Ministry of Trade issued the opinion that photography is not art, with the explanation that anyone can master it when using instructions. As a result, photography was classified as a trade, and photographers as craftsmen, with a note that the decision only applied to professional photographers, while the Ministry refrained from issuing an opinion related to amateur photographers (“Ist der Photograph Künstler?” 1900, according to: Gržina 2022:283).

Talbot's view of photography as a “pencil of nature”,¹⁰ created entirely from light

for the most part, superficial and vague”, and points out the problem that, at first, there were no professional critics of photography, and instead we had literary critics, curators, photographers, journalists, etc. engaging in photography criticism (Eisinger 1999:9). Michelle Foa mentions that early authors lacked substantial analysis and critical confidence mostly due to the absence of an established critical discourse on art photography (Foa 2012:36–37).

⁹ This distinction was made by Margaret Harker in *The Linked Ring: The Secession Movement in Photography in Britain 1892–1910* (London 1979), and Joel Eisinger emphasizes the dualism between the mechanical and artistic nature of photography with the phrase “trace and transformation” (Eisinger 1999).

¹⁰ This is also the title of his book: *The Pencil of Nature* (London 1844–1846).

(“sun-pictures”) and with no role played by the creator, was in line with the concepts of positivism and empiricism, and as such is important for understanding photography in the 19th century and in shaping early photography discourse.¹¹ Such a complete denial of the creative process influenced Baudelaire’s famous notion that photography is not art because he considers it an “exact reproduction of nature”, which is in contrast to his romantic understanding of art. He was appalled by the enthusiasm shown by the French middle class for photography, compared their equating of art with naturalism to narcissism and called them “new sun-worshippers”, while assigning photography an exclusively archival role of a “humble handmaid of the arts and sciences”¹² (Emerling 2012:20–21). Texts on photography published in Croatia at the beginning of the 20th century follow similar ideas, as the gradual process of legitimizing photography as an art form started to take place thanks to the first photography exhibitions and manuals on photography.¹³ An early contribution to this topic comes from historian Gjuro Szabo who, in his review of the newly published manual *Guide to Photography (Uputa u fotografiju, Zagreb 1909)* by Juraj Božičević, decisively claims that “photography is not art” but a “craft” that requires “innate gift, will and dedication”. Thus, although he was an ardent opponent of historicism (as the dominant style of the 19th century) in architecture, he undoubtedly followed the nineteenth-century interpretation of photography as a non-creative and mechanical process, and by rejecting effects from painting, he also rejects the possibility of photography being art. To him, valid photographs are only those “which will not, by imitating works of art, deceive, which forever remain only photographs (...), which do not depict everything and anything, do not care about exaggerating lighting for effect, but dominate with their simplicity of both content and means of performance” (Szabo 1909). We should note that the manual

¹¹ The neutral vision of photography was conceived not only as a boon for science, but also as a socially symbolic anticipation of a future in which the world could be better known by more people – as a means to democratize knowledge (Marien 2021:23). Right after it was invented and until the 1850s, photography was characterized by the phrase “art-science”, which reflected the merging of the humanities and natural sciences, as well as the diverse interests of people who accepted the new medium. Images like those taken by botanist and science illustrator Anna Atkins could be both aesthetically pleasing and scientific in nature, without any contradictions (Marien 2021:26–27).

¹² This relates to the article “The Modern Public and Photography” from 1859, translated into Croatian in Baudelaire’s book *Likovne kritike* (Zagreb: Mladost 1955, pp. 156–163; original *Curiosités esthétiques*. Paris: Michel Lévy frères 1868).

¹³ The authors of some of the earliest local manuals providing technical advice on the process of taking and developing photographs are Juraj Božičević (*Uputa u fotografiju*. Zagreb 1909, 2nd edition 1927), Svetozar Varičak (*Počela fotografije*. Zagreb 1917), Ljudevit Griesbach (*Uputa u fotografiju sa cjenikom*. Zagreb 1932) and Mate Mudrovčić (*Fotografija u bojama na papiru*. Zagreb 1935).

in question is an overview, a set of technical instructions related to the process of taking and developing photos, so it is not unusual that the idea of a purely mechanical essence of photography prevailed in the review of the book as well. Such notions, although they quickly lost their dominant place in public discourse, occasionally appear later, even during the 1930s, especially among more conservative critics, such as the ethnologist Ivo Franić,¹⁴ who sees photography exclusively as a craft, in the sense of reproduction or as an aid in art (Franić 1932), and the accountant and mountaineer Vjekoslav Cvetišić,¹⁵ who considers photography “just a product of the lens, which has no soul” (Cvetišić 1936).

Amateur photography was on the rise at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries and during the first twenty years of the 20th century, as were the efforts to place photography among the arts, which led to the emergence of pictorialism. Pictorialists achieved their subjectivity of vision by opting for motifs akin to painting, manipulating photography procedures and by subsequent interventions, which made photography similar to painting or graphic art, and some of its main advocates were Henry Peach Robinson (founder of The Linked Ring group and author of *Pictorial Effect in Photography* published in London in 1869),¹⁶ and Alfred Stieglitz, who founded the Photo-Secession group in 1902 and the magazine *Camera Work* (New York, 1903–1917). On the occasion of the International Photography Exhibition in Zagreb held in December 1913, art historian Artur Schneider recognized photography as an art form only if it subsequently introduces a “subjective artistic moment into the final result of a purely mechanical process”. He asks photographers to arrange their objects before shooting and to subsequently intervene in the photo, which makes him one of the early proponents of pictorialism in the local context. He also credits the photographer with qualities that were expected from artists in the discourse of that time – a refined sense for relationships and composition, artistic intuition, instinct for quality, good taste, choosing what to emphasize and what to hide, etc. Schneider, in a seemingly contradictory manner, derives the thesis that photography is art from the definition of art as a form whose aesthetic properties come from its own essence and character, its own laws: “The basic principle of modern art photography can be formulated in a demand: it should follow its specific laws consciously and within those aesthetic

¹⁴ Ivo Franić Požežanin (1886–1945) was the director of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb (1935–1939), and he wrote the brochure *Art and Craftwork (Umjetnost i umjetnički obrt, Zagreb 1931)* in which he does not mention photography.

¹⁵ Vjekoslav Cvetišić (1881–1959) was employed as an accountant at the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb from 1912 to 1940.

¹⁶ For more information about the argument between Robinson, who advocated pictorialism, and Emerson, who advocated naturalism, on the British photography scene see: Eisinger 1999:20–23.

limits which are in themselves revealed from its essence" (Schneider 1914). On that same occasion, the author signed as Jeka notes that "photography is truly taking on more and more hallmarks of real art," giving credence to the idea that photography is "the new daughter of the sun in the circle of muses" (Jeka 1913–1914). Around fifteen years later, while commenting on Franjo Mosinger's exhibition, Iso Kršnjavi affirms that photography is art, an argument which he supports by the fact that a photographer, just like a painter, must know how to choose lighting, recognize harmony, find the appropriate relationship between light and shadow, and contrast. However, he introduces a hierarchy in which photography is below the fine arts, because a photographer cannot suggestively express the motives and feelings from their fantasies, which is why he holds the fine arts in higher regard. The level on the value scale of art forms is proportional to the amount of creative intervention invested – does the artist create something out of nothing or was some part of the creative process performed by a mechanical device (Kršnjavi 1927). In 1936, *Novosti* presented an understanding of photography based on similar assumptions in an article by the young English art historian Roger Hinks,¹⁷ who opines that "photography, like painting (...) is a conditioned transcription of what is visible in the universe, and by no means an absolute reproduction of visible reality." Although it acknowledges that photography is close to art, the article focuses on its influence on painting, which, according to the author, is dehumanizing and destructive in the sense of destroying the exalted and clear vision of traditional painting. By bringing what is invisible to the naked eye into the visual landscape, he considers photography to be directly at fault for the emergence of impressionist and avant-garde styles, such as futurism, cubism, etc., which, according to him, came about as a result of the artists' complete disorientation in the visual world (Hinks 1936).

At the beginning of the 20th century, with the advent of modernism in Europe, manipulation was gradually abandoned, and highlighting the essence of the medium, its unique and specific features, became the main feature of straight photography, whose principles were summarized by László Moholy-Nagy in his book *Malerei, Photographie, Film* (Munich 1925). The *Deutscher Werkbund Film und Foto* exhibition, held in Stuttgart in 1929, was based on these ideas, marking a break with pictorialism and the independence of photography as a medium with its own expressive possibilities. After Stuttgart, the exhibition traveled throughout Europe, with one of its stops being Zagreb in April 1930 where it was shown as part of the International Photography Exhibition organized on the occasion of the Spring Zagreb Trade Fair (Magaš 2010). This exhibition influenced the definitive break with pictorialism in Croatian public discourse,

¹⁷ Roger Hinks (1903–1963) worked as a curator of ancient art at the British Museum in London.

and, as it seems, in photography practice as well, in addition to the general consensus regarding the status of photography among the arts.¹⁸ In this sense, the text by painter, critic, and later art historian Ljubo Babić entitled *Fotografija vizija svijeta [Photography Vision of the World]*¹⁹ deserves a special mention. The article was created as a review of the thematic issue of the Paris magazine *Arts et Métiers Graphiques* dedicated to photography,²⁰ edited by Waldemar George. Babić looks at the development of the medium in cultural terms, first as a documentary, and then as a generally necessary faithful interpreter of optical phenomena, and believes that, due to photography being developed as an exact science, “according to the old aesthetic principles, photography (...) could not enter the domain of art.” Although he agrees with the notions put forward by Baudelaire, as a strong opponent of photography, “because he rightly objected to the copy of reality and insisted that art does not present what is seen, but what is dreamt and imagined,” he nevertheless positively remarks that photography put an end to the work of “all those masters of anecdotes, folklore and that famous colored kitsch, because (...) those composed images simply had to disappear when photography arrived,” i.e., they simply became redundant when photography became available. Babić not allowing photography in the circle of art media is understandable, due to his pronounced elitism in the interpretation of art and his strong insistence on the hierarchy of art forms.²¹ In the following text, he precisely and poetically sums up the civilizational impact of photography, affirming that it “is no longer satisfied by being a mere parallel to painting; today, it is comprehensive and general, and in its best realizations reflects the world in a completely different way than painting. It reflects objectively, and thus creates its own unique vision of the world that is close to us and that we encounter at every step, where today’s civilization has progressed.” Furthermore, he focuses on expanding the reality offered to us by photography, listing all the ways in which the photographic camera expands our field of vision, everything that it has brought closer to our view – from space fog to the secrets of the microscope, from radiography to

¹⁸ The contribution from Slovenian and Serbian authors to the discussion of the relationship between art and photography is worth mentioning (F. K. 1923; Grabjec 1923; Živanović Noe 1936; Smrekar 1936; Švigelj 1936). For more information on how the nature of photography was viewed in Serbia see: Todić 1993:67–69.

¹⁹ A text that has not yet been noted in Babić’s bibliographies, and to which Marija Tonković paid deserved attention (Tonković 2012:200–201).

²⁰ The *Arts et Métiers Graphiques* magazine, devoted to graphics and photography, was published in Paris from 1927 to 1939 and edited by Charles Pignot. Issue number 16, published on 15 March 1930, is devoted entirely to photography and presents around 130 photographs selected by Emmanuel Sougez, accompanied by an essay written by the critic Waldemar George, *Photographie vision du monde* (A Photography Vision of the World).

²¹ For more on elitism present in critiques written by Babić see: Šeparović 2021.

transoceanic vessels, “American skyscrapers”, etc. Noting that “the moving artistic vision in color coming from the creator of the future will transcend (...) all our notions of painting and monumentality and will shimmer victoriously, carried by technique as a gargantuan and new expression, which will overshadow all of our previous artistic expressions as tiny and small” (Babić 1930), as he predicts the future status of film in the social and cultural field like a visionary.

The final affirmation of photography as art was confirmed by the exhibition *Photography 1839–1937* held at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1937. The book *Photography, a Short Critical History* (New York, 1938) by Baumont Newhall, which was published along with the exhibition, established the modernist understanding of photography as the work of creative genius, a personal authorial vision with exceptional formal features, and set the standard for formalist approaches to photography (Emerling 2012:25). The legitimization of photography as an art form in local circles was carefully elaborated by photographer Franjo Fuis in numerous articles. He points out that today photography is “one of the most popular and practical branches of art” (Fuis 1939) and that its artistic character is acknowledged throughout the world of culture. In line with the precepts of modernist formalism, which at the time dominated local photography criticism along with the aestheticist understanding of art through beauty, taste and harmony, the author emphasizes that an artist photographer, just like any painter, should have talent, a deep understanding of their craft (technical knowledge), a sense of color, forms, noble lines, harmony, symmetry and plasticity, and should be familiar with psychology and aesthetics, with the focus remaining on formal characteristics (Fuis 1937). In his article “Fotografija umjetnost” [Photography Art], which could be considered the Croatian manifesto of photography as art, Fuis precisely summarized the status of photography in public discourse: “although the official art circles accept it with a heavy heart, in some cases even treating it as its illegitimate child that no one could tell would develop into such a wise being as recognized today”, he maintains that “recognizing photography as pure art is only a matter of a formality” (Fuis 1935). We can notice another focus with Fuis, as he insists on the distinction between unpretentious everyday photography intended for remembrance and art photography, whose “noble purpose makes it rise far above ordinary photography, for which only familiarity with the technical manipulation of the lens and chemicals is enough for an image from nature to be transferred to paper” (Fuis 1937), which echoes photographers’ fears that the overuse of photography will result in photography losing its hard-fought status of art, which will be especially noticeable in magazines devoted to photography.

SPECIALIZED PHOTO MAGAZINES AND THE POLARIZATION OF THE PHOTOGRAPHY SCENE

Magazines specialized in photography were undoubtedly crucial in the early development of photography discourse. Globally, photography magazines started to be published almost simultaneously with the invention of photography and played an extremely important role in spreading knowledge about photography. In the middle of the 19th century, the first daguerreotype magazines, *The Daguerrotype* (1847) and *The Daguerrian Journal* (1850), appeared in New York, the Paris Heliographic Society published *La Lumière* from 1851 to 1867, and the Photographic Society, the oldest photography society still active today, published its monthly *Journal of the Photographic Society* in London since 1853. We should also mention *The American Journal of Photography*, published since 1858 in New York, as well as the monthly journal of the Vienna Photographic Association *Photographische Korrespondenz* (1864–1971) and *Photographische Rundschau* published by the Vienna Club of Amateur Photographers (1887–1943). In the territory of the former Yugoslavia, magazines dedicated to photography began to be published at the beginning of the 20th century. A pioneering role was played by two magazines published in the Kingdom of Serbia: the Belgrade-based *Fotografski pregled* (1911, 1926–1927),²² at that time “the first and only journal in Serbian or Croatian language with expert texts on photography” (“O fotografiji” 1911) and the *Fotografski arhiv* from Niš (1914).²³ After these earliest attempts, this type of specialized periodicals – with some exceptions such as the monthly *Foto-rekord* (Zagreb, 1921–1922, fig. 1)²⁴ and the *Fotografski vijesnik* section (published in the *Drogerijski i parfimerijski vijesnik magazine*, Zagreb, 1929–1931) which were intended primarily for buyers and traders of photography supplies – were strongly marked by the strict division of magazines into those intended for amateurs and those intended for professional photographers, which reflected the pronounced polarization of the local photography scene.²⁵

²² One issue from 1911 and three issues from 1926–1927 have been preserved; the editor was Sreten II. Obradović.

²³ One issue was published in 1914, edited by Arandel Jotić.

²⁴ Only two issues were published; edited by the chemist Svetozar Varićak (1894–1932), who wrote the first textbook on biochemistry in the Croatian language (*Uvod u biokemiju*, Zagreb 1922), initiated some of the earliest Croatian professional chemistry journals (*Revue Chimique*, Zagreb 1921–1923; *Zemaljska hemijska straža*, Belgrade 1927), and as a photography enthusiast wrote the book *Počela fotografije* (Zagreb 1917) and edited, in addition to *Foto-rekord*, the later *Fotografski vijesnik*.

²⁵ For more information about the arguments between professionals and amateurs on the Serbian photography scene see: Todić 1993:66.

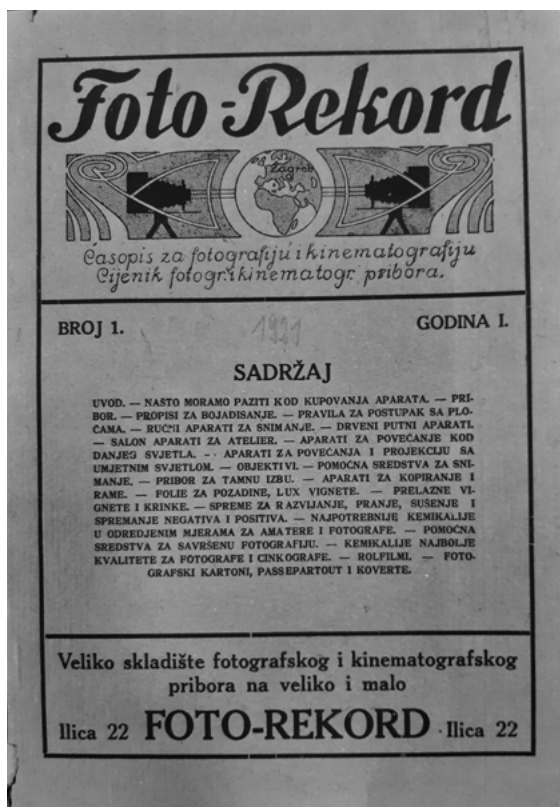


Figure 1: Foto-rekord [Photo Record] (Zagreb, 1921–1922), cover, no. 1, 1921.

Among the photography magazines intended for professional photographers, the Osijek-based *Fotograf* (fig. 2)²⁶ stands out as the earliest of its kind, and it also started a “war” against photo-amateurism in 1926, as the editorial directly called out amateurs making money from photography and noted that the magazine would “take the most determined position against the uninvited or quack craftsmen of our profession (...) especially against any shady or dirty competitors” (“Dobro Vam došli” 1926:1). This kind of attitude came about due to the emergence of amateurs who, with their knowledge of the medium and their increasing visibility and influence in the field of photography, threatened the interests of photography craftsmen. If we examine photography, as a part of the cultural field, as a dynamic concept, according to Bourdieu, we can notice how the introduction of a new element, in this case amateur photographers, necessarily causes a change throughout the entire field, and actors in different

²⁶ Six issues were published, and its editor was Andrija Beissmann, secretary of the Professional Section of Photographers of the Association of Croatian Craftsmen in Osijek.

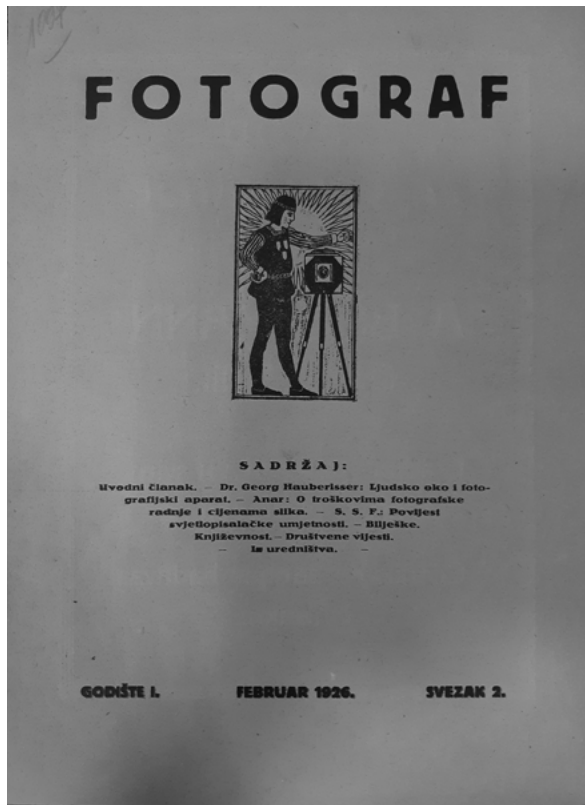


Figure 2: *Fotograf* [Photographer] (Osijek, 1926), cover, no. 2, 1926.

positions compete to control interests or resources. In this case, we have a struggle for positions between established and aspiring actors, i.e. the protection of privileges over economic interests: the “right to profit” from photography, which professionals try to keep at all costs. Professional photographers have an interest in maintaining the *status quo* in order to defend their interests, the principles underpinning their dominance (Bourdieu 1993:32, 37, 40–42, 53, 60, 83). The open hostility of professionals towards amateurs culminated in the longer-lived Zagreb monthly of the same name, *Fotograf* (1928–1936, fig. 3),²⁷ the official newsletter of the Association of Photographers of the Kingdom of SHS/Yugoslavia, i.e. the Union of Photographers of the Association of Croatian Craftsmen. From its very first issue, it announces “war” on the “flocks of post-war amateurs”, and often calls for specific actions to protect their interests. As a

²⁷ The first editor-in-chief was Martin Gasparides, vice-president of the Photographers' Organization in Zagreb, born in Novi Sad in 1872 and owner of a studio in Zagreb on Preradović Square since 1921. Its later editors-in-chief were Ivo Škorjanc and Rudolf Firšt.

result of intense frustration among professional photographers, dissatisfied not only with the emergence of amateurs trying to make money from photography, but also with “unfair competition” and the lowering of prices among professional photographers themselves, the *Jugoslovenske foto novine* (fig. 4)²⁸ was started in 1936, published in only a single issue containing a large number of articles devoted exclusively to the struggle for class interests. As the discourse itself constituted the field of “struggle”, the amateur photographer was designated as the main “enemy”, and attempts were made to disqualify this enemy by assigning certain psychological and ethical characteristics. With the aim of painting the amateurs as negatively as possible, magazines intended for professionals contained various derogatory names and phrases, such as: “quack craftsmen”, “shady photographers”, “illegal competition”, “unlawful craftsmen”, “our fiercest opponents”, “various unwanted elements”, “pests”, “weeds” and the like (S. S. F. 1926; Mitrović 1928; Vlahović 1928; F. K. 1929; “Prvi zemaljski kongres fotografskih udruženja” 1928; “Naše organizacije” 1928).



Figure 3: *Fotograf [Photographer]* (Zagreb, 1928–1936), cover, no. 10, 1930.

²⁸ Only a single issue was published, in Zagreb, and its editor and initiator was Artur Conrid.

Photo-amateurs, as “newcomers” on the photography scene, in their efforts to find their place within the system, must emphasize the difference they bring, and in that way stand out and achieve recognition and visibility, and one of the methods, in addition to founding societies and organizing exhibitions, were the magazines dedicated to art photography. The earliest among them is the monthly journal of the Photo Section of the Croatian Mountaineering Association in Zagreb, *Fotografski vjesnik* (1926–1927, fig. 5; editors Svetozar Varićak²⁹ and Josip Poljak),³⁰ specialized in mountaineering photography and intended for mountaineer photographers. The longest-running and most influential photo journal in interwar Yugoslavia was *Foto revija* (1932–1941, fig. 6; editor Franjo Ernst),³¹ published by Fotoklub Zagreb and intended primarily for



Figure 4: *Jugoslovenske foto novine* [Yugoslav Photo News] (Zagreb, 1936), cover, no. 1, 1936.

²⁹ For more information on Svetozar Varićak see note 24.

³⁰ Josip Poljak (1882–1962) was a Croatian geologist, mountaineer and photographer, as well as the director of the Geological and Paleontological Museum in Zagreb and editor-in-chief of the mountaineering journal *Hrvatski planinar* (Zagreb 1914–1929).

³¹ Franjo Ernst (1911–1996) was a photographer, accountant and prominent promoter of amateur photography. Although he converted from Judaism to Catholicism in 1938, he was entered into the

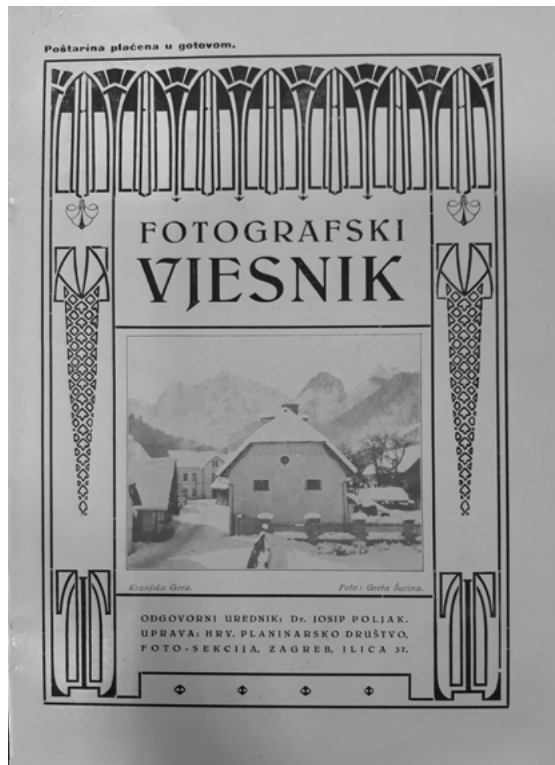


Figure 5: *Fotografski vjesnik* [Photography Herald] (Zagreb, 1926–1927), cover, no. 4, 1927.

amateurs, members of numerous Yugoslav photo-clubs and photo sections of various sports clubs. Furthermore, the Croatian edition of the international magazine *Galerija* (1933–1934, fig. 7) was published in Ivanec under editor Otokar Hrazdira,³² unique for the local area due to it being, in addition to a magazine, a gallery in the literal sense of the word, and it was not intended only for practicing photographers, but for fans of photography as an art as well, with the aim of profiling the photography audience. After the foundation of the International Union of Amateur Photographers and the Croatian Association of Amateur Photographers, the magazine *Savremena fotografija* (Zagreb 1940–1941, fig. 8; edited by August Frajtić)³³ began to be published, conceived as a

Register of Jewish People after the establishment of the Independent State of Croatia. He wrote as Teodor Erić from 1939 (the change in his first name was probably due to the change of religion), and he also used the pseudonyms Stjepan Babić, M. Marković and Ivan Kukić.

³² Otokar Hrazdira (1898–1944) was a photographer and promoter of amateur photography and the founder of the Photo Section of the Croatian Mountaineering Society Ivančica in 1931.

³³ August Frajtić (1902–1977) was a photographer and promoter of amateur photography, secretary of Fotoklub Zagreb and vice-president of the International Union of Amateur Photographers.

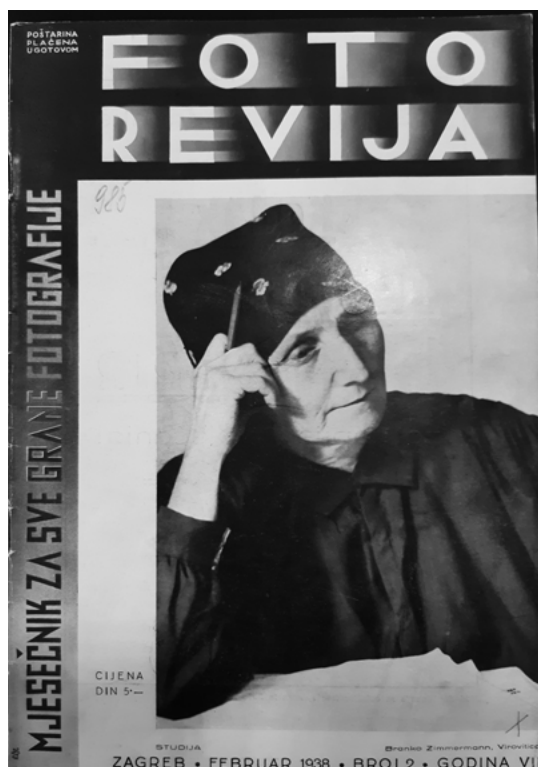


Figure 6: *Foto revija* [Photo Review] (Zagreb, 1932–1941), cover, no. 2, 1938.

newsletter for all Yugoslavian amateur-photography societies. We should also mention *Foto-amater* from Ljubljana (1932–1935, fig. 9),³⁴ the second most influential and longest running amateur journal after *Foto revija*, as well as the amateur magazines from Vojvodina: *Jugoslovenska fotografija* (Vršac, 1930–1931)³⁵ and *Foto amater / Foto amater* (Subotica, 1936).³⁶

Over time, initiatives to reconcile the opposing sides started to appear, for example, the Zagreb-based *Fotograf* introduced a column dedicated to amateur photographers in 1933 under the title *Amateur News from Professional Photographers for the Production of Amateur Works*, addressing the amateurs as allies and potential customers, and Franjo Mosinger, in the illustrated magazine *Kulisa* from Zagreb, started the *Fotoamater* section (1931–1934) to provide technical instructions and constructive criticism of amateur photographs as a professional, with the aim of

³⁴ The editors were Bogomil Hrovat, Rudolf Mušič and Leo Novak.

³⁵ Five issues were published, edited by Milorad Radović.

³⁶ Three issues were published, edited by Đorđe Ječinac.

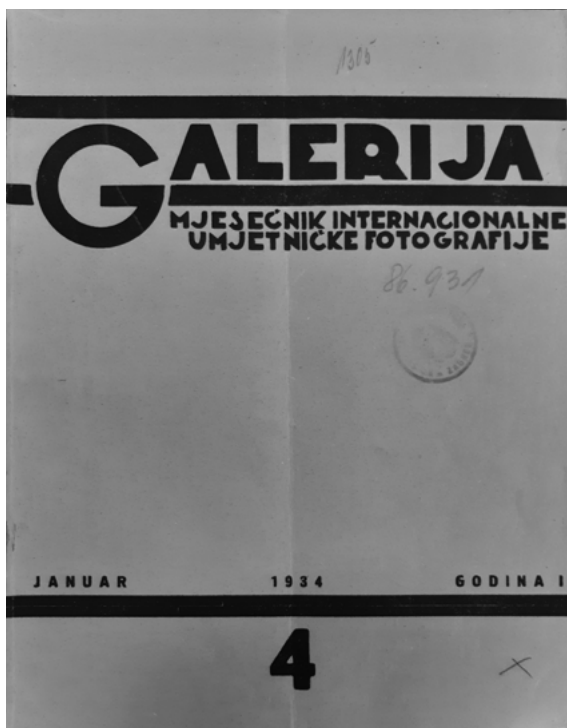


Figure 7: *Galerija* [Gallery] (Ivanec, 1933–1934), cover, no. 4, 1934.

improving amateurism. Amateurs also offered an “olive branch” to professionals, and August Frajtić suggested a cooperation in which amateurs, since they can experiment more easily, would inform professionals on the usability of “this or that innovation”, encouraged amateurs to contact professionals for developing, copying and enlarging their works and advocated for exhibitions which would be accessible to both camps, all with the aim of “uplifting our national photography” (Frajtić 1934a). During that same year, at the Autumn Exhibition of Art Photography, Franjo Ernst highlights the fact that this was the first local exhibition where professionals and amateurs showed their work side by side, which “broke the ice created by the unjust and completely unfounded enmity between these two camps” (Ernst 1934:202). Although, according to Bourdieu, the positions within the field are not the result of an objective consensus or the intention to achieve coherence, but of permanent conflict and struggle, it could be said that both sides showed a willingness to create a balance between those who dominate the field (professionals) and those who harbor aspirations (amateurs). This resulted in the division of spheres of interest – cultural capital was split in two: the economic aspect, left to professionals, and the symbolic aspect (including the status of art and the prestige that comes with it) which is taken over by amateurs (Bourdieu 1993:34, 57–58, 108).

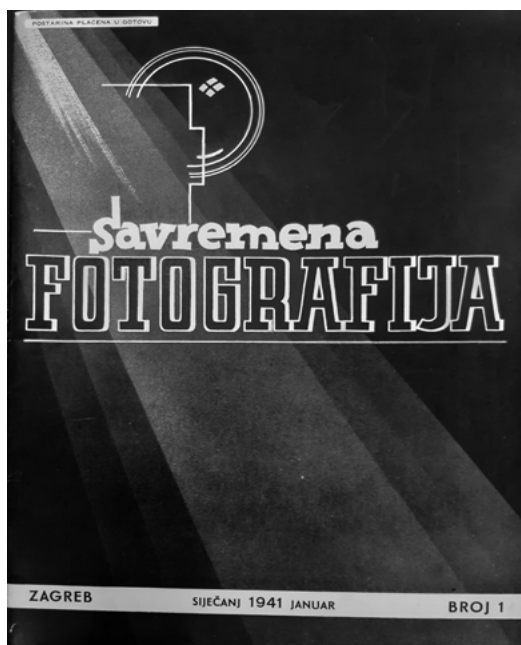


Figure 8: *Savremena fotografija* [Contemporary Photography] (Zagreb 1940–1941), cover, no. 1, 1941.



Figure 9: *Foto-amater* [Photo-Amateur] (Ljubljana, 1932–1935), cover, no. 12, 1933.

HIERARCHY OF PHOTOGRAPHY GENRES

The establishment of a “value” scale for genres of photography, already announced in Franjo Fuis’s article, represents one of the most interesting thematic focuses in magazines specialized in photography. It undoubtedly comes from the arguments on the status and nature of photography, and builds on the distinction established by modernist theory between art photography and other types of photography, such as scientific, snapshot, advertising, report photography, etc. (Eisinger 1999:3, 24). A hierarchy was established, placing “real art photography” at the top, with sports or mountaineering photography valued as somewhat less worthy, while so-called knipsers photograph was considered its lowest form. The term “knipsers” has its origins in the German word *knipsen* (to snap) and implies a private photograph without artistic aspirations, intended exclusively for remembrance. This division also defined the intended audience of amateur magazines, despite the fact that they purport to be intended for anyone interested in photography. Thus we have *Fotografski vjesnik* addressing photographers-mountaineers, *Foto revija* and *Savremena fotografija* addressing art photographers, *Galerija* was intended for the audience of photography, and *Foto* was for the “knipsers”.

In an article published in *Fotografski vjesnik* in 1927 which could be considered the manifesto of Croatian mountaineer photography, geologist, mountaineer and photographer Josip Poljak writes about the unbreakable bond between photography and mountaineering, and ascribes an important position to mountain photography not only in observing and discovering nature, but also in discovering the homeland, its natural beauty, its people, customs and art – according to him, it represents an important cultural and national factor (Poljak 1927), echoing ideas about “our expression,” dominant on the Croatian art scene of that time. Aside from promoting mountain photography, *Fotografski vjesnik* also established a value difference between “knipsers,” who see photographing “as an end in itself,” who shoot “a nature motive for its own sake” and “what they want to keep as a memory,” and on the other hand those who engage in “serious photography,” who “are not satisfied with just taking photos,” but “want to create photographs in an artistic sense, to transform the motif artistically according to certain principles” (“Izbor motiva” 1926:25).

The antagonism towards “knipsers” was raised to a new level in *Foto revija*. August Frajtić expressed his open dislike towards them in numerous texts: “Thus, we need to emancipate ourselves, drive away the people who are eager to see themselves in an image (...) If they don’t have the money to hire a professional photographer, they should look at themselves in the mirror” (Frajtić 1932). He distinguishes between “the person on a Sunday field trip who happens to have a camera and who shoots

impossible groups, thereby tainting the film” and “the amateur photographer (...) who sincerely and devotedly takes serious photographs with the aim of perfecting the art of photography and its expression” (Frajtić 1933a), and expresses open contempt for the custom “of going either to the sea or to the mountains, taking a camera with you and ‘knipsing’ something as a memory, only so that you could later say you went to Triglav, Makarska or Lake Ohrid” (Frajtić 1933b). He also classifies mountain photos into different categories, claiming that pure mountain and sports mountaineering photos actually constitute scientific work and serve to illustrate and document certain geological forms (“pure mountain”) or various phases of climbing and use of equipment (“sports”) and as such have a place in the social archives for the purpose of illustration in lectures and classes, but they cannot be allowed at exhibitions as they have no artistic value nor do they garner wider interest. At the same time, mountains can be a place to take landscape photographs that, if they have no special purpose and are taken according to the rules of artistic composition, such as mastering perspective, proportions and balance, and contain well-observed and understood details – in that case, according to Frajtić, we are dealing with an art photograph. He also opines that “free motifs” should be recorded in an artistic way – “so that everyone infuses their photograph with a piece of their own personality, their own understanding” (Frajtić 1934b). These kinds of remarks are influenced by the modernist understanding of a work of art as an apparently cultural product with no interests that rises above ideology, and from the understanding of individuality and originality as imperative.

The *Galerija* magazine launched an even more scathing attack on taking photos for remembrance, which can be explained by the magazine’s target audience. As *Galerija* is not only intended for art photographers, but also for the photography audience it intends to “educate”, i.e. photography enthusiasts, as the magazine’s name suggests, it is important to establish a distinction between “real” or “serious” photography and non-art photography. In its texts, “knipsers” are usually associated with epithets that suggest the frivolity of their work, in contrast to the “serious” work of an art photographer. *Galerija*’s area of interest is international art photography, so it avoids any scientific, sports, documentary, reporting genres, exalting art photography as the only real and serious artistic photography. It seemingly has no limitations with regards to motive, style or iconography, freedom of artistic expression occupies the main conceptual center, in line with the modernist postulates of understanding art. An editorial of *Galerija* rejects mountain and sports photography as less valuable and describes them as “a means to promote tourism,” while “knipsers” photography is seen as “taking pictures for memories and scrapbooks.” They stand in opposition to the only real and serious photography, which is also “an activity that shows a certain and solid tendency to assert itself as an independent form of art” which this magazine

covers ("O ovom časopisu" 1933). The *Galerija* published an excerpt from the preface to Aleksandar Šafranski's book *Kako treba fotografisati* (How to Photograph),³⁷ in which he expresses concern that most amateur photographers are not familiar with the "etymology and syntax of photography": "You cannot get some paint and brushes and immediately start painting pictures, thus becoming an artist (...) Likewise, it is also impossible to become a good artist of photography and a literate photographer by acquiring cameras and accessories" (Šafranski 1934a). Šafranski writes about the alleged terminological confusion: "In our country, a serious, advanced amateur who is known abroad, and someone who bought and picked up a camera for the first time today are both considered amateur photographers" (Šafranski 1934b). Belgrade photographer Ludvig Šistek explicitly established a hierarchy among photographers according to genres. As the least appreciated group of amateur photographers he sees those "who do not have and do not want their own darkroom, nor are they deeply interested in photography technique," but are simply "owners of a photography camera." Above them on the value scale are those who "need a camera for purely technical purposes" or "for special photoshoots, such as mountaineering photography," while the highest position is occupied by those who engage in art photography and who are interested "in the possibilities of photography as a means of expressing artistic ideas" (Šistek 1934).

It can be assumed that the real goal of such a hierarchy of photography genres, insisted upon in photography magazines, is actually to achieve public consensus to recognize photography as an art form. A clear distinction between non-artistic (scientific and "knipser" photography) and artistic practice of photography ("pure" photography) was needed in order to clearly profile photography as an artistic medium that fulfills all modernist requirements such as freedom, originality, autonomy, the author as a genius etc. Despite the fact that the "knipers", the owners of cameras who used photography for remembrance and the creation of family albums, actually had no ambition to be recognized as artists, it can be assumed that "knipser" as a derogatory term was created and instrumentalized to establish a binary opposition, to create the Other in the field of photography, so that in contrast to non-artistic "knipser" photography, amateur photography would be elevated to the pedestal of sublime artistic work.

As a curiosity, we should also mention the magazine *Foto* (Zagreb 1941, fig. 10)³⁸ intended specifically for "knipers", started by Artur Conrid, the former founder of

³⁷ A Russian photographer and emigrant who worked in Serbia between 1922 and 1941. He is the author of the books *Osnovi fotografije* (Basics of Photography, Belgrade 1929), *Kako treba fotografisati* (How to Photograph, Belgrade 1934) and *Leicagrafija – nova era u fotografiji* (Leicagraphy – A New Era in Photography, Belgrade 1938).

³⁸ A single issue was published.

Jugoslavenske foto novine. It is unusual that the same person who started a magazine intended for professional photographers, which declared “war” on amateurism in photography, later published a magazine intended for those same amateurs, more precisely, complete beginners who just bought a camera, as an invitation to everyone to try their hand in amateur photography (“‘recruits’ are everyone and anyone, male and female, old and young”; “Kamera – pratilac čovjeka” 1941), which highlights the deeply anti-elitist and democratic character of the medium of photography.



Figure 10: Foto [Photo] (Zagreb 1941), cover, no. 1, 1941.

Although the hierarchization of photography genres represents a sort of artistic elitism which is a result of the modernist doctrine, here we should certainly draw attention to photography as a highly democratic and essentially anti-elitist medium, which Walter Benjamin already noted in his article “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” in 1936. Photography, as a truly revolutionary medium, contributes to the destruction of the imperative of an aura and authenticity of a work of art, which leads to the liquidation of the traditional value of cultural heritage, therefore Benjamin associates its emergence, which introduced the social and political dimension and value to art, but also rendered the question of the original meaningless, with the rise of socialism (Benjamin 2006:24). This democratic feature of the media is

evident on the pages of amateur photography magazines, which constantly appeal for the expansion of photographic activities among the widest possible classes of society. This was influenced by the left-wing ideas and art trends of the 1930s, with the most prominent local activity and artistic policy of that time being the Association of Artists Zemlja, which sought to introduce the wider population, including all classes of the people – workers and peasants, into art as both creators and audience. Magazines devoted to photography played a decisive role in spreading the new technology and art to a large number of middle-class people. It can also be assumed that precisely because photography, at that time, existed on the margins of the art field, without access to the art establishment, photographers shared a stronger feeling of solidarity. Thus, for example, Otokar Hrazdira called for lower membership fees for photo clubs and photo sections which were inaccessible to less-well-off amateurs, which would bring education in photography to a much larger number of amateurs (Hrazdira 1934). Milan Fūzy saw “a large number of unorganized amateur photographers” as a problem, while he also defined photo clubs as privileges of individuals, and emphasized the need for an organization that would bring together a wider membership: “The general interests of the photography movement should be represented and (...) we should always look to (...) organize as many amateur photographers as possible.” He also proposed a unique type of organization for the entire country, reorganizing work in these organizations and lowering membership fees, all in order to make art photography accessible to as many people as possible (Fūzy 1934).

CONCLUSION

An analysis of the early development of understanding photography and its nature, and the formation of its discourse, which framed photography as a segment of cultural production, and which largely influenced our present-day history of photography, shows that, after an initial delay that can be explained by the peripheral cultural context in relation to European centers of photography, it perfectly aligns with European trends in thinking about photography. The search for an answer to the question of whether photography is art or not, marked the beginning of the century, while the interwar period was crucial for the development of a critical, theoretical and historiographical understanding of photography, with the appearance of the first coherent critical and theoretical texts, as well as the first attempts to historicize photography with the recognition of the Zagreb school and the canonization of individual works.

Shortly after the formation of the first photography societies, exhibitions and publications, the first texts dealing with photography in a phenomenological manner

appeared at the beginning of the 20th century. They reflect the nineteenth-century Baudelaire-like view of photography as a mechanical transcription of the visible, denying photography a place among the arts (Szabo). Art historians soon recognized photography as art, but only conditionally: either through the pictorialist demand to imitate painting and graphics (Schneider), or they considered it a lower form of art compared to painting because a part of the creative process is performed by a mechanical device (Kršnjavi). The Film und Foto exhibition, just like in the international context, marked the definitive end of pictorialism both in photography practice and in the way photography was publicly perceived in the local context. That same year, Ljubo Babić recognized the cultural importance that photography will have in the future, referring specifically to its potential to “expand reality.” The most interesting and relevant texts on photography in the first half of the 20th century were written, as can be expected, by intellectuals with a wide range of interests and activities, such as G. Szabo, A. Schneider,³⁹ I. Kršnjavi⁴⁰ and Lj. Babić, as well as J. Matasović as one of our earliest historians of photography. All of them were active in various fields of Croatian culture – from conservation, museum work, music, journalism, history, painting, literature, graphic design, education – and aside from “high art”, they held in high regard the less valued areas of culture, science and art of that time – graphics, book editing, crafts, applied art, history of everyday life, home crafts, folk crafts, etc. Undoubtedly, by participating in shaping the Croatian art and cultural space of the early 20th century, they created the conditions for photography to finally be legitimized as art, which is most prominently elaborated in the texts of Franjo Fuis during the 1930s.

The interwar photography scene was largely marked by a “game of thrones” between professional photographers and amateur photographers for dominance in their segment of the cultural field, which largely spilled over into magazines specializing in photography. When it comes to the position of women, it can be concluded that the social context of the interwar period was not conducive to their affirmation in the field

³⁹ Schneider was one of the authors who popularized “marginalized” and often neglected areas in critical discourse, including photography. He participated in the organization of the first international photography exhibitions in Zagreb (1910, 1913); he wrote about them and was engaged in photography as a hobby as well (Tonković 1994:121–124; Magaš Bilandžić 2016:277–278).

⁴⁰ It is especially worth noting that Kršnjavi’s interest in photography was twofold: as a photographer he shot landscapes and panoramas (exhibiting them at the International Photography Exhibition held in Zagreb in 1913), and worked on popularizing the medium by encouraging the establishment of the Zagreb Amateur Photographers Club as a section of the Society of Arts in 1893 and by including photography in the Millennium Exhibition held in Budapest in 1896 (Tonković 2015). Also, at his urging, photographer Rudolf Mosinger created a photography album in 1909 with reproductions of artworks from Strossmayer’s gallery, and he reproduced selected works in the catalog Svjetlotiskarski zavod R. Mosinger D.D. in Zagreb (1909).

of photography, and there were even fewer women writing about photography than women working creatively in the field.⁴¹ Only a few texts were authored by women, and we should highlight the pioneering overview of important women in amateur photography by Nada Kesterčanek (Kesterčanek 1940). During the interwar period, much like the wider field of art criticism, the discourse of photography essays and criticism was dominated by the modernist formalism doctrine combined with an aestheticist understanding of art through beauty, taste and harmony, and there was no pronounced appearance of avant-garde thought in the field of photography. Modernist formalism, as in other fields of art, in the area of theorizing on photography, is accompanied by elitism, particularly visible in the effort to differentiate and establish a hierarchy between photography genres, with only art photography considered worthy of the epithet “artistic”, while scientific and sports photography are given an archival and educational value, and family or “remembrance” photographs, derogatorily called “knipser” photography, is seen as in opposition to artistic tendencies. Although texts of individual photographers echoed left-wing ideas and the effort to bring art closer to all walks of life, thereby confirming the democratic nature of the medium of photography and its anti-elitist potential, in terms of further development of criticism, theory and history of photography, a key role was played by the modernist paradigm which is still present with individual researchers today.

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⁴¹ For more information on the position of women photographers see: Križić Roban 2020.

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Počeci pisanja o fotografiji u Hrvatskoj: Glavni aspekti ranoga diskursa o "novoj kćeri sunca u kolu muza"

Ana Šeparović

U ovome radu kritičkim čitanjem rane esejistike koja razmatra fotografiju kao fenomen uspostavljaju se najvažnija tematska čvorišta ranoga fotografskog diskursa. Obuhvaćen je korpus članaka o fotografiji objavljenih u jugoslavenskoj, mahom hrvatskoj, periodici od početka 20. stoljeća do 1941. godine, i to velikim dijelom upravo u časopisima specijaliziranim za fotografiju, kojima se posvećuje posebna pozornost. Odabrani su članci u kojima se prelamaju pojave i podjele prisutne na hrvatskoj foto-sceni obilježenoj snažnom polarizacijom između profesionalnih i amaterskih fotografa, a koji razmatraju fotografiju kao kulturni, društveni ili ideološki fenomen, bave se pitanjem prirode fotografije kao umjetnosti odnosno tehnologije, te uspostavljanjem hijerarhije vrijednosti fotografskih žanrova, pri čemu se uklapaju u trendove na europskoj i svjetskoj fotografskoj sceni. Unatoč činjenici da su se u promatranom razdoblju autori tekstova još učili pisati o fotografiji, bavili se definiranjem subjekta i lociranjem središnjih problema te tragali za prikladnim metodologijama, riječ je o pionirskom djelovanju i upravo će te rasprave postaviti temelj i okvir razvoju suverenog suvremenoga fotografskoga diskursa.

Ključne riječi: *pisanje o fotografiji, fotografska kritika, fotografski časopisi, fotografi amateri, profesionalni fotografi*



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