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ISOTANI, Yusuke. Multiple Aspects of Photography in Mid-1930s France: A Study on *Arts et métiers graphiques*

The period between the two World Wars has been considered as a watershed in the history of photography. The rise of modernism marked a break with the past art photographic tenets of Pictorialism, while the innovations of photomechanical processes entailed frequent uses of photography in and as reproducible informative media. This paper clarifies that there was a movement against these two currents in mid-1930s France by analyzing the seminal graphic art magazine *Arts et métiers graphiques* (or *AMG*, 1928–1939) and its annual collection of photography entitled *Photographie* (1930–1939). In so doing, this study reconsiders the canonical photo historical narrative founded on the notion that the interwar period was the time of evolution in the medium's history.

Arts et métiers graphiques has been recognized as one of the trendsetters in the interwar French photographic scene. In particular, the annual *Photographie* both reflected and catalyzed changing tastes in photography throughout the decade. *Photographie* in the early 1930s heralded the advent of modernism in France by featuring works with modern subjects and experimental techniques. However, after 1934, the publication turned to conservatism as its content started to be dominated by carefully crafted photographs of landscape, still lifes, and portraits, almost abandoning modernist repertoires. This return to traditional pictorial expressions has been ascribed to the increasingly nationalistic and xenophobic cultural climate of mid-1930s France.

Nevertheless, when we closely examine contemporary works and critical discourses, the rise of conservatism was based not only on the socio-political contexts but also on the criticism of photography's unprecedented proliferation in mass printed media, such as illustrated weeklies and publicity works. Modernist photography's radical expressions became worn and degraded due to their overuse in mass media by the mid-1930s. The reevaluation of photography's aesthetic values and its craft emerged as a resistance against such vulgarization of photographic modernism. The proponents of this current also clearly distinguished photography meant to be contemplated as an artwork from the works exploited in mass media.

Though such changes marked a return to art photography's tenets, it was not simply a revival of Pictorialism. In reality, *Photographie* in 1934 contained a vast range of photographic styles that includes references to neoclassical subjects, Pictorialist techniques, and the stylized modernist experimental visual repertoire. This mixture and coexistence of different photographic tendencies in one published volume suggests that the mid-1930s French photographic scene was truly eclectic, and it should suitably be called photographic "mannerism."

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