

The dilemma of representing women's body and expressing identity in contemporary photography

Dr. Maryam Mohamed Mohamed Hassan

Lecturer at the Department of Photography, Cinema and Television Faculty of Applied Arts - 6th October University

marygraphia@hotmail.com

Abstract:

Photography presents presence and identity questions. We have look for evidence of our existence, moments that enable us to understand ourselves, often we discovered multiple identities within us. The body representation in the visual arts is central to society's construction not only of norms of sexual behavior but of power relationships in general. Through an analytical reading, we explore the history of body representation in photography, the concepts associated with, and its relation to contemporary issues, beside the changes that shaped the ideas, and the artistic practices through changelings that occurred of technology. By close reading to the Middle East women photographer's artworks, the research explores concerns and questions were posed by them, and compare their perspective to the Western female perspective.

Research problem:

The lack of in-depth studies of the contemporary women photographer's artworks in the Middle East, which represent the female body and its symbolic and expressive implications in the social. beside, the use of the female body as a photographic subject highlights many social, religious and cultural problems that face preconceived ideas or stereotypes on the level of criticism and expression. So by close reading, the visual experience of viewer will be developed, to be able to deconstructing the symbols, which terminates a lot of conflict.

Research Objectives:

Examine the differences and the similarities, between the feminine Western and Eastern perspectives of the body.

Examine how the human body represented by photography throughout the history for exploring the relationship between identity interpretations, culture and heritage.

Methodology:

The study relies on careful analytical reading in many of the photographic works of contemporary women artists who have used their bodies as an equivalent to expressing their identity, or to express how others look to female body, also they represent concepts related to women body as a commodity or a temptation ,in the light of cultural openness, the study concerns of the interpretation of identity ,especially as the embodiment of identity is influenced by culture , heritage ,history and our own vision of our bodies.

Keywords: fine art photography - conceptual photography - women - body and identity - culture - sacred – inherited