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The Little Things vs. Mood

When a person takes a photograph, there’s always a reason, whether it was because it was an important moment, or simply nice to look at. As Susan Sontag said “Although there is a sense in which the camera does indeed capture reality, not just interpret it, photographs are as much an interpretation of the world as paintings and drawings are” (532). There are so many components that make up a single photo. For example, the dominant impression which is the emotion or feeling given to the person looking at it. The two photos that I chose to compare and contrast are “The Little Things” and “Mood” by Melody Batista. While both photos are aesthetically different, I think that both show a great deal of similarities and differences between each other.

“A photograph is a result of the photographer’s decision that it is worth recording that this particular event or this particular object has been seen” was said by John Berger in his essay, *Understanding a Photograph* (292). In my 1st photo “The Little Things”, it was taken on Spring Street in Manhattan and it is a photo of a brick wall with a quote on it. The brick wall says “Happiness can be found in the smallest of things. It is our passion to transform your everyday routines into more meaningful rituals…” which seems to be stenciled on it. There are shadows that are casted onto the brick wall as well, which is one being that of a fire escape ladder, and the other of a pole with traffic light and street sign. There is a shop window on the right with the word “Berlin” written on it and candles stacked in a pile on top of a wooden counter. On the left side of the photo there is a red door to an apartment that has keycode panel next to it. This photo follows the rule of thirds with the wall being in the center of the photograph. The dominant impression that is given from this photo is happiness and would be considered an art photo.

The 2nd photo that I have decided to choose is “Mood” and was taken in the Lower East Side of Manhattan on Broome Street. It is a picture of a wall with another quote, which was pasted onto it saying, “Motivationally speaking, I am underwhelmed.” The top portion of the picture, shows a brown gated window with a cup of coffee behind it, and under this, is a big white rectangular paper which is peeling and has aged and become dirty. The lower portion of the photo shows a beige wall that is cracked and has with many stains. The dominant impression is almost a feeling of melancholy and this would be considered an art photo as well.

“A way of certifying experience, taking photographs is also a way of refusing it- by limiting experience to a search for the photogenic, by converting experience into an image, a souvenir” said by Susan Sontag (534) means that we take these photos to not only capture an experience but to also memorialize it in an artistic way. The two photos, “The Little Things” and “Mood” by Melody Batista have some similarities and differences. In terms of similarities they both are photos of quotes and on walls. They both follow the rule of thirds with the main focus in the middle and are art photos. In terms of coloring both photos contain the colors black and white. The differences between these photos are that the feelings evoked from the photos are completely different. In “The Little Things” the emotion happiness and in “Mood” it was melancholy which is because of the coloring in each one, the coloring in “The Little Things” is vibrant and in “Mood” it is dull and very cool toned. The walls that quotes are placed on are different in terms of look and cleanliness, the first one is a brick wall and it is kept in relatively good shape while the concrete wall in the second photo it is dirty and cracked in different places.

Photos are almost a fundamental part in people’s lives. It’s a way for us to capture moments that we feel are important and can tell someone a lot visually. The photos that I chose in this essay were simple but they each have their own story.

Works Used

Berger, John, “Understanding a Photograph*”, Classic Essays on Photography, edited by Alan Trachtenberg, New Haven: Leete’s Island Books, 1980*

Sontag, Susan, “On Photography”, *Susan Sontag: Essays of the 1960’s & 70s,* edited by David Rieff, Library of America, 2013