



## Veracity versus Virality: Philosophical Reflection on Works at Bandung Photography Triennale 2022

Mardohar Batu Bornok Simanjuntak<sup>1\*</sup>, Henrycus Napitsunargo<sup>2</sup>, Deden Hendan Durahman<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Faculty of Philosophy, Parahyangan Catholic University, Indonesia; mardohar.batu@unpar.ac.id

<sup>2</sup> Faculty of Art and Design, Bandung Institute of Technology, Indonesia; napitsunargo.henrycus@gmail.com

<sup>3</sup> Faculty of Art and Design, Bandung Institute of Technology, Indonesia, dedendurahman@itb.ac.id

\* Corresponding Author

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### ABSTRACT

*The reality of our everyday life is now stifled by dense images taken by mobile phones. It is still acceptable to claim that digital photographic images are currently invading the phone memory space and social media communication platforms used for working and daily activities like Whatsapp, Instagram, or Telegram. The sheer production and distribution of such images give rise to the virality of malicious digital photographs. This unfortunate circumstance can lead to the negative spread of hoaxes, misinformation, and disinformation. Virality then undermines veracity. Digital photographic records fabricated exponentially are then thinning the line between the truth and the viral. Such image manipulation is indeed a serious problem because public scamming is now orchestrated and conducted through digitally reconstructed images which are aggressively invading chatrooms. To cope with this surge, the authors propose philosophical analyses through examining all possible ways to manipulate photographic images conceived by 35 artists participating in Bandung Photography Triennale 2022. As analytical instruments to probe the prospect of veracity to distance itself from virality, the authors employed three triangulated categories extracted from philosophical discourses on photography, that is, the Eye, the time signature, and the ideology.*

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### ABSTRAK

Realitas keseharian manusia saat ini ternyata disesaki dengan imaji-imaji yang dihasilkan dari telepon selular. Tidak berlebihan untuk mengatakan bahwa saat ini gambar-gambar fotografis digital tersebut menginvasi memori telepon selular dan ruang-ruang bincang yang kita pergunakan sebagai media untuk beraktivitas sehari-hari dan bekerja seperti Whatsapp, Instagram, atau Telegram. Masifnya produksi dan distribusi imaji fotografis semacam itu memberi celah pada karakter viral dari foto-foto yang belum terverifikasi. Situasi semacam ini memberi kemungkinan pada sirkulasi kabar bohong (hoaks), mis-informasi, atau disinformasi. Viralitas pun mengalahkan verasitas. Rekaman fotografis digital yang diproduksi in skala eksponensial akhirnya mengaburkan batas antara yang benar dengan yang viral. Manipulasi imaji menjadi persoalan serius karena pembohongan publik akhirnya dilakukan lewat imaji-imaji rekonstruktif digital yang dengan agresifnya masuk ke ruang-ruang bincang (*chatrooms*). Untuk merespons persoalan ini, penulis mencoba memeriksa kemungkinan-kemungkinan rekonstruksi kebenaran fotografis yang dari berbagai cara manipulasi imaji foto dari 35 orang seniman yang berkarya in Bandung Photography Triennale 2022. Penulis mempergunakan tiga kategori triangulasi utama yang diperoleh dari kajian literatur: cara pandang (*the Eye*), jejak waktu (*the time signature*), dan ideologi imaji fotografis (*the ideology*) untuk menganalisis potensi verasitas in bersaing melawan gempuran viralitasnya.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

When Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre patented Daguerreotype in 1839, a photograph was firmly taken as truth (*verum*). As mechanical devices depend on photonic collisions with photosensitive materials, no one doubted photographic truth. In physics, photograph is proven to have a direct causality with the object facing the lens. Therefore, a photographic process is not possible without the presence of light; this assures the authenticity and objectivity of the image made. A photograph is authentic and valid evidence of reality – something that really happens (Marien, 2014). The photographic truth of a photograph is then justified by scientific principle in physics.

Along with its scientific character, in philosophical aesthetics, when a work of art does represent reality, it is taken as the representation of reality. In the tradition of representational art, an artwork must fully represent the reality to be considered as art (Caroll, 1999). By this principle, photography is the ultimate art because it is a direct presence of reality on a resin-coated paper. However, throughout the historical development of photography, this claim has been open to criticism: apart from its physical justification, the reality, on the other hand, has been under-represented by photography.

This line of thinking was proposed by Roger Scruton, saying that the over-representation of a photograph renders it completely transparent – as the opposite of opaque characteristic of a painting (Scruton, 1977). A photograph is “painted” by photons of light that are beyond human ability to fully apprehend them (Walden uses a term “pencil of nature,” Walden, 2008), and that means the role of a photographer is solely to guide the “light brush” and let nature do the rest. Due to photographers’ inability to completely overwhelm light, photography is therefore not exactly representational. This absence of autonomy hampers them to represent reality. By saying this, Scruton also implies that only an artist can fill this gap.

The second line of objection was given by Nigel Warburton who contested the completeness of photographic representation (Warburton 2003). In short, the frame of the viewfinder that frames human sight obstructs the representation of reality on a photo paper right from the very beginning. Like a cake sliced open before the party starts, photo-reality has been stunted before it can present itself on a photo-paper. This goes with another line of argument by Warburton implying the absence of art in photography because there will never be anything real on a photograph. This also means that Warburton necessitates artists to recreate and re-enact the prerequisites of reality without being interrupted by any technical difficulties.

Both criticisms by Scruton and by Warburton – which are the most prevalent objections toward the art status of photography – are fundamentally baseless and dismissive from the scientific and aesthetic perspectives. Scientifically speaking, nothing is visually in real-time since lights take time to travel – 300,000 meters for every second travelled (the constant C) – to reach our human retinal receptor. Even our human eye is flawed from the start. We have blind spots that cannot detect any photons, and that means human brains have to reconstruct the reality we think we perceive. That also means that the visual reconstruction we created is by default speculative (Changizi et al., 2008).

Aesthetically speaking, David Davies replies that even when light photons are beyond our reach to fully manipulate, yet the pre-production and post-production stage in a photograph taking is still completely within our reach (Davies, 2008). Digital applications like Photoshop, for example, is solid proof of Davies’s argument. Even digital photography – contradictory to the randomness of chemical-based negatives – makes every pixel in the CMOS sensor can be reconstructed and manipulated. Nevertheless, the upper hand position given by these counter-arguments puts photography in a more difficult defensive stance.

The solid artistic status of photography – at least from the perspective of representation – is far stronger, yet this weakens the strength of its objectivity – the photographic truth. A photograph then becomes too subjective to be true; this means its superior status as the bearer of causality is questioned, and so does its scientific backings. By dismissing its competitive advantage and becoming more artistic, photography becomes a mere derivative of a painting. Photographic truth is slowly but surely being replaced by photographic manipulation. Photo-artists then become photo-manipulators, and the advent of social media has made this ambiguous status more problematic – especially when the reconstructed reality is distorted for economic and political purposes.

Although being digital does not necessarily follow the absence of truth (Siswantara, 2001), two media analysts, P.W. Singer dan E.T. Brooking, bring forth the worrying signs of arsenal shifting from the traditional missile-based weapons of mass-destruction to verbal-based several lined-sentences (Singer dan Brooking, 2019). For Singer and Brooking, the conventional weaponry is obsolete enough to be replaced by like and thumb signs found on any social media. Public opinion is now manageable through social media feeds relying on their emotional impacts on the viewers. Moreover, this according to Singer and Brooking has been spiraling out of control, ranging from general elections, legal processes, and even the most up-to-date public reactions concerning government policies. This also cannot be comprehended without taking media influencers – the modern-day marketers – into account. They are now the actual public relation instruments once performed by television channels.

Social media are not possible without pictures, and the pictures circulated are now dominated by digital photographs. The number of smartphone subscribers now has reached 7.7 billion (Statista, 2022), and that means the number of digital photographic images would be in trillions. Felix Richter, a data analyst, calculated that photographic images produced in 2017 were as high as 1.2 trillion – that means at least every cellular phone user took 160 pictures per person (Richter, 2017). In today's term, digital images have gone viral. Virality is then the verbal "weapon of mass destruction – in the line of argument from Singer and Brooking. Unfortunately, virality does not necessarily necessitate veracity. A complete lie can go viral and steal constituent votes – in an election for example.

This, unfortunately, poses a serious question: what if virality overtakes veracity, will photographic truth still be relevant? The weight of the argument cannot be put aside considering there are scientific disciplines that still accept photographic truth on face value. Take astronomy, for example. This branch of scientific measurement values photographic truth absolutely – using photographs as the foundation of a theory. In fact, for astronomy, something is true if and only if there is reliable photographic evidence, as those taken by James Webb Space Telescope. On the other side of the argument, photographic manipulation in artistic expressions in this decade reached another milestone when a photograph can be practically doctored without anything in front of the lens. Artists use the photographic lies to reveal the existential truth behind a phenomenon.

Therefore, what at first was perceived to be symmetrical – something true is always something truth – has now taken separate ways. A photograph then can be true, true and truth, or just truth lies. Taking the risk by Singer and Brooking into account, we can see now that there emerges a dichotomy between true and truth – in that the truth does not necessitate something true and the other way around. This raises the research question of this paper: can this binary opposition be justified, or it is just a mere side effect from our inability to cope with the lightning speed of technological advancement in image-making?

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This philosophical research is conducted in two ways. First, the authors examine the current debate in the philosophical discourse of photography. From this inquiry we triangulate three standpoints that we believe to be the major theoretical grounding. The anchored foundations are then employed in critical analyses over an observable phenomenon. We decide to use the analytical tools on an international photography exhibition that took place from 8 September to 31 October 2022.

In the first step, the literature review, we consider major arguments from scholars like André Bazin, Susan Sontag, Roland Barthes, Patrick Maynard, Kendall Walton, and Stephen Bull. They have been a major influence in this discursive movements throughout the 20th and 21st century. Despite technological proliferation in photography – ranging from a single photograph to infinite and completely cost-free reproduction – their thoughts remain relevant to the discussion on image makings. However, embracing all their premises and conclusions will result in infinite line of arguments and categories. Therefore, we analyze their dispositional standpoints and triangulate them to forge analytical tools.

In the second step, the triangulation will be used against 35 works from 35 artists from various countries. We decide to use this exhibition due to its contextual similarity. The title of the event is *The Future is Now, Dystopian Diffraction*. The major theme given to each artist pertains to the death of objectivity in photography due to the easiness and facility in digital manipulation. All the artists were invited to manipulate a photograph as sophisticated as possible. We then analyze each artwork and apply the triangulation from our previous analysis.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1. *The Eye, the Time Signature, and the Ideology*

Generally, we categorize the philosophical debates on photography in three major triangulation footings: the Eye, the time signature, and the ideology. The first of the three is about photography and way of seeing, or in Maynard's term imagine seeing (Maynard, 1997: 218). The second takes time very seriously, and to us Barthes and Bull elaborate this standing elaboratively. The third one is in the box of ideology – and we use the approach from thinkers like John B. Thompson and Jack M. Balkin to aid us in constructing the third domain that covers photographs that do not fit in the first two.

We propose this method considering that mapping the whole discourse in photography would be an immense task, if not an impossible one. As an illustration, let us consider the analysis given by Aron Vinegar on Ed Ruscha through the lens of Martin Heidegger. Vinegar starts by explaining the basic features of deadpan – the emptiness, flatness, and bitterness – which is the recurrent theme in Ruscha works. Heidegger's works, according to Vinegar, are instrumental in reading and justifying Ruscha's approach because the deadpan feature embeds Heidegger's theory of the facticity, not the factuality of an event. In Ruscha line of works, his mission is to offer an extended possibility for being by being passive, and not by limiting Beings and by burdening them with visual labels (Vinegar, 2010).

It is not uncommon that almost every debate in discursive analyses starts from the standpoint similar to that we see in Vinegar's arguments. We therefore take a different approach by standing on triangulated points to avoid particularities that can result in problematic findings in reading sophisticated and complex artworks. This certainly can lead to further dispositions in the triangulation, yet we deem it necessary in order to have a different perspective in how we understand a photograph. The three, the Eye, the time signature, and the ideology, is simply based on the very basic nature of photographic experience: from (1) how we see a photograph, (2) what we feel when we see it, and (3) what makes a photographer – or simply an artist – decide to present the work the way it is: the ideology of the artist.

(1) In the first triangulating point, we base our conclusion from the analyses given by Maynard and Walton. Both Maynard and Walton take human eye as an instrument to seeing, not merely to see. For Walton, in seeing we mediate what we see and with what we see (the eye). This

intermediation will result in a mental state to believe – or to be precise to make-believe, a situation we lived everyday when we were children and imagined boxes to be cars and spaceships. Every action of imagine seeing then requires a prop – a term very common in theatrical play (Walton, 1993).

This means in the light of Walton dan Maynard that a camera used in photography is the props to seeing – or imagine seeing (Maynard, loc. cit.). In their line of argument, photographing is ways of seeing because different props can be employed to see something differently. From this approach we propose the capital 'E' to differ imagine seeing in photography from the usual natural way of seeing (Cf. Setiawan dan Simanjuntak, 2015). By employing the Eye, humans can see things that cannot be seen using his ordinary human eye. A commercial photographer, Thom Rouse, uses a Greek term *ekhprasis* to show that the photography industry is based on “photographness” and not on photographs (Rouse, 2016). That means what can be monetized is the different ways of seeing.

The Eye makes photography the primary instrument of decoration and documentation. At this junction the two paths intersect: the scientific and the commercial. Precisely this is the original state of photography at its birth around 150 years ago. This standpoint offers photography a definition that denotes its existence as a better way to draw or paint something – a faster, more colossal, and more accurate way of painting or drawing. This identification renders photography to more of a craft rather than of an artwork – exactly like the objection raised by Scruton discussed in the introduction of this article.

(2) The second triangulation point is about the mental state that we have from seeing and artwork. To this we propose that the biggest impact is given by time signature. We arrive at this conclusion from a simple argument: what makes the difference between seeing a painting about a car accident and a photograph about the same accident. The latter is surely gives us the fright from seeing the dismembered human organs in scattered in different areas. Our believe is based on the belief that the accident does happen in a timeline. The photograph is then a time signature that affects our mental state.

Two thinkers that have explored and given strong influence in photography discourse are Barthes and his follower Bull. To Barthes, time is an element that cannot be denied from a photograph, even when the thing or the person in the photograph no longer exists (Barthes, 1980). Bull then takes Barthes' line argument further: when something has happened (this-has-been), than the temporal signature never expires – it cannot be this-was. When this is the case, then the only logical step is to acknowledge that this-will-be. The ever presence of the absence is called the indexicality of the transient by Bull (Bull, 2010).

There is actually nothing new in the neologism proposed by Bull. His predecessor, Bazin, says that the sheer representation on a photograph is uncontestable, not even by the passing of time, so that painters are no longer burdened by this obligation (as in portraits for the rich and famous). By relieving this to photography, painters can freely pursue ontological exploration and contesting the margins of the medium (Bazin, 1960). Bull's this-will-be for Sontag is the proof that photography can present something that is absent, or the token of absence (Sontag, 1977). What Barthes, Bull, Bazin, and Sontag propose is not entirely speculative, at least according to thinker Daniel Kahneman.

Time signature is just one of several symbols that provoke our brain different from our neo-cortex usual outputs. Like time, numbers also push us to simply believe it without thinking – something that Kahneman calls system to believe (Kahneman, 2011). Likewise, time signature triggers the same system to believe that the event does happen. It fills, in the light of Kahneman, the gaps in our memory – pushing it to become pseudo-memory that we believe to be real. The picture of an accident backs Kahneman's argument and it is exactly what happens every time we see a photograph. Photography does something real to our configuration of our mental imagination.

(3) The final triangulation point is the values lie beneath our ability to realize what we are going to do. This applies to the picture taking process in photography. Analyzing this standpoint

is much easier through the study of ideology. Thompson provides us with a fruitful insight when he draws the line between what a mere idea is and an idea can do to affect our decision in our daily life. Deriving his analysis from De Tracy, Thompson clarifies that the latter is better called ideology (Thompson, 1990). Our action is guided by our ideology, Thompson proposes, and this distinction has been constantly neglected.

Thompson's proposal goes in line with Balkin, who uses evolutionary biology to analyze ideology. Like Thompson, Balkin agrees that the set of ideas that guide our action even when we are not aware of it is ideology. However, Balkin proposes that the systemic mental approach is to stay and to be transmitted (Balkin, 2001). Both Balkin's and Thompson's proposals are confirmed by a team of neuroscientists headed by Clara Petrus. According to their finding on brain scan correlatives, they conclude that the irrational – that is, the ideology – controls the mechanism of the rational (Petrus et al, 2018). This flaw – the irrational override unrealized by the artist – is precisely Warburton criticism on photography, as discussed above.

In this ideological approach, taking a photograph is everything but the photograph. The more important point in taking – or making – a photograph is the action itself. In photography as an ideology, a photograph reveals the value guiding the photographer or the artist. A photograph is then a mere artefactual consequence from a subconscious action. Here we see that what is taken is the one who takes the picture. Following this line argument, we can now understand for example why Ruscha is not actually taking the picture, rather he is providing a gentle space of Heideggerian facticity. The third triangulation point is also the habitus of contemporary art – where existential truth is the fundamental drive of the work.

To conclude, the three points that we propose vary the degree of the true and the truth of a photograph. The Eye leaves no space for something true, and as the opposite end the ideology provides nothing for the true. Only in the time signature photography gives us the space to explore both the true and truth. We also predict the possible loci for each of the triangulation points, to help us to understand the working mechanism of each point. Finally, as we have elaborated in the previous paragraphs, we pair the three with foci, complementing the analyses. The table below illustrates our finding.

**Table 1. Triangulated Dispositions in Photography Discourses**

<b>Triangulated Points</b>	<b>Discourse Dispositions</b>	<b>Possible Loci</b>	<b>Foci</b>
The Eye	<i>True</i>	Science, Business, Industry	Object
The Time Signature	<i>True/Truth</i>	Art, Science	Subject/Object
The Ideology	<i>Truth</i>	Art, Religion, Politics, Philosophy	Subject

The possible loci we assigned indicate how far those fields can confirm the triangulation points from different dispositions. We need to mention further that it certainly is possible for a locus to affirm all the three, as all triangulations do. However, we perceive that a different locus cushions the triangulated points differently. In industry and science, for example, ideology can be dismissed, as philosophy does not have significant interest in the commercial field. Time signature offers something worth taking since here both science and art have something in common. The question of when becomes very relevant, both scientifically and artistically.

In the next section we aim to examine the ideology since this is where the lies lie. The third triangulation point dismisses the relevance of true. On the hand on an artist, this can be a way to investigate and then to reveal the reality beyond – exactly like a CT-Scan or even MRI. The pathological and toxic sides of the subconscious values of the artist can be revealed. On the hand of a political manipulator who aims to go viral for a dishonest gain in an election, the absence of the true is likely to undermine veracity – thus virality goes unchecked.

### **3.2. Ideology and the Destructive Side of Virality**

Balkin designs a framework for ideology that is relevant for a time that is dominated by computation technology, evolutionary biology, and neuroscience. He proposes that ideology is a set of value that can be transmitted from a person to another. Balkin calls this transmission agent cultural memetic unit. Balkin proposals mean that there is something akin to genetic codes that define our existence (Balkin, *ibid.*). As discussed earlier, without the confirmation from Petrus and her team, Balkin’s claim may sound preposterous. However, as we have seen before, Balkin does have a point. The scan brain scan shows how the irrational controls the rational (Petrus, *ibid.*).

Independently, Thompson argues that ideology is essentially conditioned. Indoctrination is a vivid example of how values are built inside a person’s mind (Thompson, *ibid.*). Thompson emphasizes how important verbal labelling is, far mor important than image planting (Thompson, *loc cit*). However, Thompson does not offer explanation on the nature of the matter transplanted. Balkin further elaborates a taxonomy of the cultural memetic unit, in which he divides it in three major categories, the destructive, the neutral, and the symbiotic, as given in the following table.

**Table 2. Balkin’s Cultural Memetic Units**

<b>Destructive Transmission to Hosts</b>			<b>Neutral Transmission to Hosts</b>			<b>Symbiotic Transmission to Hosts</b>		
Viral Unit	Cultural Memetic Unit		Filter Unit	Cultural Memetic Unit		Mutualistic Symbiont Cultural Memetic Unit,	Commensal Symbiont Cultural Memetic Unit	Parasitic Symbiont Cultural Memetic Unit

From Balkin’s proposition we know that an artist expecting reflective and contemplative moments from her or his audience occupies different cultural memetic unit from those of mis-informant purposefully creating hoaxes or mis-information – whose category is viral cultural memetic unit. An artist most likely directed his or her viewers to the mutualistic symbiont cultural memetic unit. The problem is, the line is so thin so that it is very easy to switch from mutualistic to viral.

MIT thinker Lee McIntyre explains that the line between the truth and the post-truth lies on the grounding. When the ground of causality is absent, then the truth becomes post-truth (McIntyre, 2018). The viral in Balkin’s taxonomy is the one that is destructive to its host, and the post-truth is suitable in this regard. Any political propaganda is baseless and groundless – in terms of causal relation. The term ‘viral’ in social media is used for something destructive to the matter in the post or feed. Viral means something bad goes out of control – precisely what Balkin proposes.

To elaborate further let us borrow the idea from Nicholas Negroponte concerning the viral movement of an idea. In this context, we can apply it to the memetic unit. Negroponte explains that something goes wider when it matches the prerequisite when it moves from the “Daily Me” to become the “Daily We” (Kahneman, Sibony, dan Sunstein, 2021). When we take this point to Balkin, the viral memetic unit overrides any rational judgments when it exploits the grievances of the daily me to the daily we – as confirmed by Petrus’ findings (Petrus et al, *ibid.*). In short, as an ideology a photograph can be a knife to kill, or to create a memorable signature dish.

### **3.3. Photo Manipulation in Bandung Photography Triennale 2022**

The idea behind this Triennale is to see how far a photograph can be manipulated and what will it become when it is taken to be meaningless before mass and unlimited reproduction. The committee behind this event believes that even at its worst manipulation, photography still has something meaningful to offer. In another word, even when the temporal indexicality is dismissed entirely, and its elements are dismantled, photography still has something existential to offer to humanity. We begin this part by listing the 35 artists and their works participating in five different venues in this exhibition, as can be seen in the table.

**Table 3. Lists of Artists and Their Works**

	<b>Artists</b>	<b>Work Titles</b>
1.	Agus Heru Setiawan	<i>Museum of The Dead Fishes and Sea Creatures</i>
2.	Anna Kedziora	<i>Herbarium From the Edge</i>
3.	Hari Krisnadi	<i>The Unspoken Distress</i>
4.	Jim Ramer	<i>Qualifiers</i>
5.	Lavender Chang	<i>Don't Walk in Front of Me, I May Not Follow</i>
6.	Patriot Mukmin	<i>The Simulation</i>
7.	Sabrina Asche	<i>Photographing Garment Workers Pattern, Daily</i> <i>Bobita, Mafuza, Mina, Rukaiya, Shapla, Shipra, Tania, Tanjila</i> <i>This Is Why I Have Taken The Photo</i> (Video, 32 min. Loop)
8.	Shiho Yoshida	<i>Whale Under the Sand</i>
9.	Utami Dewi Godjali	<i>Virtual Insanity</i>
10.	Yong Hwan Lee	<i>Ctrl, Shift, Enter</i>
11.	Alberto Marin Castro	<i>Jet Lag</i>
12.	Nguyen The Son	<i>Premonition</i>
13.	Sjuaibun Iljas	<i>Moksa</i>
14.	Ahn-Thuy Nguyen	<i>I Cry So You Can Remember</i>
15.	Iswanto Soerjanto	<i>Untitled</i>
16.	Jessica Arsenau	<i>Aurora</i>
17.	Michael Binuko	<i>The Magician</i>
18.	Sophie Chalk	<i>Ghost of Plant</i>
19.	Agan Harahap	<i>The Immortals</i>
20.	Arum Dayu	<i>Novelty Vogue</i>
21.	Gun Ketwech	<i>Lost In My Homestead</i>
22.	Kang Jaegu	<i>12mm# Korea Army Center, Byeongyeon, Age 21</i>
23.	Peter Fitzpatrick	<i>Waking Up To CNN</i>
24.	Ryota Katsukura	<i>Our History</i>
25.	Chien-Hua Huang	<i>The Secret Garden Of Non-First Person</i> <i>The Forest Of Hertz</i> <i>Plan V</i>
26.	Kamila Kobierzynska	<i>Pigeon's Tale</i>
27.	Kelly Hussey-Smith	<i>Central Queensland Project</i>
28.	Alan Hill	
29.	Krisna Trisila Satmoko	<i>Bon Appetite</i>
30.	Larissa Muhlrath	<i>Hours of a Day</i>
31.	Laurent Millet	<i>Reliquaries Of The Diaphanous</i>
32.	Naraphat Sakarthornsap	<i>The Other Side Of Flower Arrangement</i>
33.	Oh Soon-Hwa	<i>Mekong River</i>
34.	Piyatat Hemmatat	<i>Ballistics</i>
35.	Wimo Ambala Bayang	<i>The Knowing Eye</i>

Source: *Bandung Photography Triennale 2022 Organizing Committee*

From the 34 artists, we then implement the triangulation points derived from our research. We began by asking three questions: (1) "How can I see this?"; (2) "Does it really happen?"; and (3) "What does the artist want to tell, if this is just a photograph?" The first question

relates to the Eye, the second to the time signature, and the last one to the ideology. We decide to take the most relevant answer to arrive at the primary triangulation, as we believe each work can be applied to all the three. We then agree to triangulate the artworks as follows.

**Table 4. The Result from Primary Triangulation**

	<b>The Eye</b>	<b>The Time Signature</b>	<b>The Ideology</b>
1.	<i>The Unspoken Distress</i>	<i>Museum of The Dead</i>	<i>Qualifiers</i>
		<i>Fishes and Sea Creatures</i>	
2.	<i>Don't Walk in Front of Me, I May Not Follow</i>	<i>Herbarium From the Edge</i>	<i>Photographing Garment Workers</i> <i>Pattern, Daily</i> <i>Bobita, Mafuza, Mina, Rukaiya, Shapla, Shipra, Tania, Tanjila</i> <i>This Is Why I Have Taken The Photo</i>
3.	<i>Virtual Insanity</i>	<i>The Simulation</i>	<i>I Cry So You Can Remember</i>
4.	<i>Moksa</i>	<i>Whale Under the Sand</i>	<i>Novelty Vogue</i>
5.	<i>Aurora</i>	<i>Ctrl, Shift, Enter</i>	<i>Lost In My Homestead</i>
6.	<i>The Magician</i>	<i>Jet Lag</i>	
7.	<i>12mm# Korea Army Center, Byeongyeon, Age 21</i>	<i>Premonition</i>	
8.	<i>Waking Up To CNN</i>	<i>Untitled</i>	
9.	<i>Reliquaries Of the Diaphanous</i>	<i>Ghost of Plant</i>	
10.	<i>The Other Side of Flower Arrangement</i>	<i>The Immortals</i>	
11.	<i>Hours of a Day</i>	<i>Our History</i>	
12.	<i>Ballistics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The Secret Garden Of Non-First Person</i></li> <li>• <i>The Forest Of Hertz</i></li> <li>• <i>Plan V</i></li> </ul>	
13.	<i>Central Queensland Project</i>	<i>Pigeon's Tale</i>	
14.		<i>Bon Appetite</i>	
15.		<i>Mekong River</i>	
16.		<i>The Knowing Eye</i>	

The primary triangulation yields these findings. First, even when the artists are invited to manipulate the photographs as far as they can, the majority of them still relies on time signature, followed by the Eye. Second, the choice of time signature reveals their intention to always blend the true and the truth. Third, ways of seeing are still favorable for almost half of the participants. Fourth, dismissing the true entirely is still taken to risky, and only a handful of artists decide to opt for this triangulation point.

The reliance on time signature implies that the intersection between the true and the truth is justified by time. To this we refer to the oscillating movements proposed by Barbara Savedoff. Savedoff coins this term to show that photography's greatest advantage is its pendulum like movement, from the true to the truth. This, according Savedoff, draws the line between photography and other artforms (Savedoff, 1992). The same movement is also proposed by Sontag, although she uses a different term, erotics. Inspired by the direct impact to the senses from photography, Sontag provokes the movement to see artwork differently, and to embrace the senses as the primary instrument instead of the speculative line of arguments in hermeneutics (Sontag, 1961). What Sontag suggests has a deep root in the Aristotelian concept of *aesthesis*, or the pre-Kantian term *ars pulchre cogitandi* coined by A. Baumgarten.

#### 4. Conclusion

The result of this research leads to a very strong conclusion that even when a photograph can be manipulated completely, the time signature acting as the guarantor of the true is not dismissible. Therefore, we conclude that the asymmetry that results in the dichotomy between the true and the truth is not a fundamental one. This can be explained by the oscillating movement between the true and the truth, in that the time signature that hosts both dispositions acts as the balancing point. When photography is at one end, only acts as a causal consequence of light perceived by different lenses and sensors, the pendulum will swing to another end, provoking the meaning and questioning its objectivity, and so on and so forth. Every time the movement happens, it will go through the time signature to justify the oscillating nature. The true and the truth always confront each other.

If there is no dichotomy, then veracity is not to be overtaken by virality. That means the image itself is not strong enough to be a viral cultural memetic unit, as it is directly be confronted by the true. That also means the quantity of photographs is not to be taken as a threat as we have dismissed the asymmetry in the false dichotomy. The photographs, therefore, are not invading the social media, but pervading them. Photography is never invasive; it is just pervasive. For further research, we propose an examination over Thompson's proposal that verbal sealing can turn symbolic artefacts – that include photographs – into ideological instruments.

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#### Data

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/330695/number-of-smartphone-users-worldwide/>

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