

Learning Activity: Delving Deeper Into the History of Photography

Question 2 (Tintype):

What Tintype is:

The technique Tintype was an extention of the Ambrotype, and was most likely the precursor of the known Tintype. The tintype technique is a simpler and more inexpensive way to produce a photograph compared to other techniques at the time. It opened up the way for a more common use amongst the normal people in the streets. In earlier years film were put on copper plates and thus made it less accesible to people who did not come from a wealthier stock than others.

The Tintype technique uses a thin sheet of metal and laquer to coat the film in before exposing it to what will be the actual photograph. When the film has been exposed to the light one takes the film into a red-lit room and see the film produced. As the film gets taken in negative form, the wash of potassium cyanide is used to clear the image and make it into what the normal picture is going to be.

One of the very positive things about the Tintype is that the materials used to produce the pictures was the first one to not be breakable. Earlier techniques as Ambrotypes used glass to print the pictures on it, and thus the tintype was an exceptional improvement on the older versions.



Who made it:

In 1853 the idea of the process was put forward by Adolphe-Alexandre Martin and was then patented in the United States and the United Kingdom by Hamilton Smith and William Kloen respectively.

More Affordable:

Not only was the tintype an easier, quicker and more inexpensive way to produce the pictures, this opened up the way for common-people to enjoy photography more easily than other iterations of the techniques used in photography before the Tintype.

Within minutes people could take the picture and get it in their hands. Since tintype then was such a huge and easy commercial success, its usage did not falter before well into the 19th century.

How did it contribute:

The tintype had many great innovation in the way of photography; It made it easier, more accessible, more inexpensive and was the newest and most popular from the period of 1856-1867. The technique was still commonly used to a good part of the early 19th century.

Tintype showed an easy way to get the photos developed and make with great detail and affordable cost to most people. Later this technique would be improved upon in the upgraded versions of for example; the Kodak or in even later upgrades such as the Polaroid which came out in the late 19th century.

You can see in several types of photography when they used this type of red-light development technique that is used in the earlier version of photography such as Tintype.

Even though the tintype was a very good iteration of the popular photography, its successor, the Kodak, made photography even more accessible to the middle-class.



Sources:

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