



The Selfie

Back in the far past, when one wanted an image of oneself, one hired an artist. There was a rumor that because these artists charged by the limb, the term *it costs an arm and a leg* came about. If one could not afford an artist, the practice of silhouettes became popular. This was the tracing a shadow of a profile on a piece of black paper and then cutting it out to frame. The 19th century saw a breakthrough with the photographic camera that produce an image on a plate of glass.

These first cameras required one to sit or stand very still for a long period to expose the plate. Therefore, the old tin plates never showed one smiling, for the smile would not hold and would distort the final result. Photographers were used during the Crimean War in the 1850s and were widely used during the American Civil War. Most of the battlefield photo plates were too graphic for the public, so the glass plates were used to make greenhouses.

The next big jump in the camera came with the Eastman Company and paper film. Eastman-Kodak produced the Brownie Box camera that was affordable. The camera was sent off for development and later turned into a disposable camera. The next innovation was the Polaroid camera with self-developing film. The photos always had one person left out of the picture, so the time delay was invented to take everyone at the same time. The camera operator would set the timer and then run to get into the picture frame. Each new change allowed for a faster image and development, so that today, we have the digital age.

The digital camera allows one to take still shots and motion film with the same device. This new invention created a fad—the selfie. One would hold out their arm and take a picture of themselves. Then, people felt that their arms were not long enough, so the selfie stick was invented. Social behavior shifted from respect of someone else's photo to a craze of “photo-bombing” other people's photos. Another craze has people taking photos of the meals and other items the photographer thinks others might want to see.

So, smile! There are cameras everywhere!

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