

ABSTRACT

The importance of periodicals specialising in the historical and critical study of any discipline is undeniable, but when they are dealing with a controversial and relatively modern discipline such as photography they become essential. Indeed, the methodology followed by the more recognised historians of photography is based on an anthology of texts taken mostly from the photographic magazines and the cultural press.

In this article I try to give an overview of the documentation available based on the Spanish photographic library of the entire 20th century. The importance of this material is based on two points: its very existence and its value as a document.

The fact that this photographic library exists in our country allows us, on the one hand, to study it in overall way and provide an initial assessment of it in terms of volume and publication characteristics. On the other hand, we can draw up a statistical study based on these overall data which will provide us with direct information on photographic work in the country throughout the century and the history thereof.

As regards its undeniable value as a document, it furnishes us with the first-hand opinions of the leading figures at various historical moments.

Finally, we might note that it would be a good idea to undertake and publish a serious and thorough study of this Spanish "photographic literature", which is unfortunately dispersed around libraries and archives throughout the country, a fact which hinders access to it and brings the attendant difficulties of understanding.