

# Bibliotekarstudentens nettleksikon om litteratur og medier

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Om leksikonet: [https://www.litteraturogmedieleksikon.no/gallery/om\\_leksikonet.pdf](https://www.litteraturogmedieleksikon.no/gallery/om_leksikonet.pdf)

## Fotoroman

(\_sjanger) En roman som ligner på en fotografi-serie, dvs. med mange fotografier etter hverandre og enten talebobler eller med dialog (og fortelling) skrevet under fotografiene. Romanene har ofte blitt delt opp i føljetonger som har gått i ukeblader.

“Not wanting to put the texts under the images like in illustrated film-novels, photonovels strived to find a place for the texts within the space of the image” (Colangelo 2023 s. 36).

Opprinnelig etterligner fotoromanen en film, med korte tekster og en atmosfære i historiene som minner om mellomkrigstidens film (Demougin 1985 s. 1403). Sjangeren har blitt kalt “en bastard født av magasin, tegneserie og film” (Olivier-Martin 1980 s. 252).

Fotoromanene utviklet seg fra en eldre sjanger, kinoromanen (på fransk “ciné-roman”; kinoromanen viser bilder fra en kinofilm og gjenforteller historien kortfattet med ord) (Baetens og Gonzales 1996 s. 17). Fotoromanen derimot, forteller ikke en historie fra en kinofilm, men vanligvis en ny, original historie, om enn med formelpreg (Baetens og Gonzales 1996 s. 212). Sjangerens blomstringstid var fra slutten av 1940-tallet til begynnelsen av 1970-tallet (Baetens og Gonzales 1996 s. 206).

Fotoromaner kan være romantiske historier, krim, skrekk, western, science fiction og annet. Det meste er formellitteratur. Ifølge Baetens og Gonzales er de aller fleste fotoromaner sentimentale historier (1996 s. 16.) Det finnes imidlertid også forholdsvis eksperimentelle fotoromaner, f.eks. franskmannen Alain Bogaerts’ *Rotomago* (1977).

“The creation of a photonovel entailed a number of people working together towards the same goal. Photonovels’ crews could vary in size according to the available budget, the scope of the photonovels, the needs of the magazine, and the story itself, but were usually always composed of at least the following people: an author of the photonovel, who wrote the story and/or the scenario or, if based on an existing story, took care of the adaptation; a photographer; and actors or models, as

many as the story required. In addition to this limited core, there could be a scenarist, one or more assistants, somebody to write the adaptation, somebody else to write the dialogue, a make-up artist, a costume designer, a hairstylist, additional photographers, and extras.” (Colangelo 2023 s. 102)

“In 1956 a certain Ennio Jacobelli described the proper way to make a photonovel in his handbook “Istruzioni pratiche per la realizzazione del fotoromanzo” (“Practical guidelines for the creation of a photonovel”). This was a work published by the Editrice Politecnica Italiana, as part of a collection of handbooks on practical subjects. [...] By 1956, the photo novel had a well-established format, stable and solid enough to be the subject of a professional how-to handbook [...] Jacobelli’s handbook thus provided a deeper understanding of what photonovels were and neatly structured, in an illustrated step-by-step fashion, all the necessary elements, know-how and technical processes that concurred in the creation of a photonovel.” (Colangelo 2023 s. 102)

I Italia og Frankrike “the majority of the magazines with photonovels were entirely dedicated to photonovels. The tendency in Belgium, however, was different [...] the magazines that published photonovels were mostly women’s weeklies that tackled a variety of subjects and presented different features and articles; photonovels were only a part of the whole of the magazine.” (Colangelo 2023 s. 105) “Belgian photonovels never appeared in publications that were exclusively devoted to the genre [...] the Belgian production also liked to privilege less typical photonovel genres like the detective story. [...] crime and suspense were never of the hard-boiled type, but gentle attempts to offer a variation on the eternal love story theme.” (Jan Baetens og Clarissa Colangelo i Colangelo 2023 s. 10 og 104)

Fotoromanen har vært svært populær i latinske land som Italia og Frankrike. Den første italienske kom ut i 1946, på italiensk kalt en “fotoromanzo” (Baetens og Gonzales 1996 s. 5 og 213). Italienerne Stefano Reda og Damiano Damiani lagde de første fotoromanene i Italia i 1947, og gjorde suksess med dem i Frankrike også fra 1949 av (Demougin 1985 s. 1403). Sjangeren ble introdusert i Frankrike i 1949 av Cino del Duca (Olivier-Martin 1980 s. 252).

“The first photonovel was published in serialized fashion by the magazine *Il Mio Sogno* (*My Dream*, then shortened to *Sogno*), produced by a small publishing Roman house called Novissima (then bought by Rizzoli), on May 8th 1947. [...] The title of the photonovel was “Nel fondo del cuore” (“Deep in the heart”) and it was advertised as a “sentimental novel with photographs”. Its scenarist was Stefano Reda and the main actress was a certain Giana Loris, who would later become internationally renowned under the name Gina Lollobrigida. [...] Only two weeks later, on May 25th, in the pages of the magazine *Bolero Film*, produced by the well-established Milanese publishing company Mondadori, a photonovel also appeared. This time the idea came from the weekly’s director Luciano Pedrocchi together with illustrator and scenarist Damiano Damiani and author Franco

Cancellieri, and the term ‘fotoromanzo’ (‘photonovel’) was coined.” (Colangelo 2023 s. 32 og 34)

“Whoever thought of it first, the photonovel turned out to be extremely successful and was quickly picked up by most of the other popular women’s weeklies of the time. In France the first photonovel appeared on June 27th 1949 in the magazine *Festival*, quickly followed, a month and a half later, by the first photonovel in *Nous Deux*. This latter was particularly important because of its popularity. *Nous Deux* was in fact one of the leading weeklies in France, modeled on the Italian *Grand Hôtel*. Both magazines had been founded by the brothers Del Duca, first in Italy and then exported to France, where Cino had established his headquarters. First publishing drawn-novels, both magazines began regularly including photonovels from 1950, showing that the interest of readers had shifted from one to the other, preferring the stories with photographs to the drawn ones. This was an economic advantage for the publishers of course, who could rely on less experienced personnel to take photographs instead of well-trained artists working as illustrators for the publishing industry.” (Colangelo 2023 s. 34)

“The popularity of the photonovel continued, almost unchanged, over the years, in Italy and France certainly until the 1970s. [...] Many women’s weeklies added photonovels to their offering in these years, until, as we will see, the emancipatory movements of the late 1960s put a stop to the publication of many photonovels and women’s weeklies that had not been able to adapt to the changing needs of readers. It was, however, the growing dominating power of television, which took up the main roles of entertainment and popularization of norms typical of the photonovel until then, that led to a loss of interest in the photonovel and, consequently, its downfall. [...] The popularity of these weeklies also resulted in their wide distribution, which also reached poor or secluded towns and villages, where little else was available in terms of education, information and entertainment, playing an important role in the process of spreading literacy.” (Colangelo 2023 s. 35-37)

“[P]hotography spoke of modernity and was certainly felt by the readers to be more modern than drawings. As such, it dialogued more closely with the general growing presence of photographs in magazines that was due to the technical advancements of the time. [...] photography was still strongly linked with an idea of realism. In the case of photonovels, as Baetens remarks on, this realism “was not that of the stories, in spite of regular attempts to replace the overtly melodramatic story lines with more realistic content. [...] The realism was that of faces, bodies, objects, and settings, all immediately recognizable and hence fundamental to building a relation of complicity between magazine, story, and reader, which was the key to success for all forms of popular fiction of the period.” The photography of photonovels portrayed familiar images that, as a consequence, began to gain an additional, inexplicit role: that of models. As readers could relate more and more to the characters of the stories – which tended to take place in present times and follow ‘common’ people – they started to pick up a whole wealth of information from

photonovels, such as the proper way to dress for specific occasions and how to behave in certain situations. The reading of photonovels was thus not only limited to following the narrative week after week and knowing developments and the characters, but was enriched by a constant decoding of the texts and visual elements by the readers.” (Colangelo 2023 s. 37)

“*Fumetti* literally means “small puffs of smoke,” which suggests the speech balloons common to most comic strips. In Italy, *fumetti* has become synonymous with comic strips, and particularly photo-comics, where written dialogue (in a balloon or not) is superimposed over a photo that was probably shot especially for the comic or, perhaps, a series of stills excerpted from a film.” (<https://www.printmag.com/daily-heller/italy-s-fumetti-curiously-sophisticated-pulp-comics/>; lesedato 20.05.22) “*Fumetti*” ble altså brukt om serier både når det var tegninger og når det var fotografier.

“The photo novel is quite a well-known genre in Europe where it appeals chiefly to a female and popular audience, particularly because it usually tells love stories. Its essential feature is that it is a story in photographs, just as the strip cartoon is a story told in drawings. [...] Its relationship to the cinema is equally important, especially in the case of those publications that lay claim to a certain editorial quality, through its use of techniques designed to make the story more vivid and modern: switching angles, reversing shots, day for night, etc. [...] Since photographs are used rather than drawings, actors must also be involved. [...] Its greater accessibility and less forbidding format as compared with the pure and dense prose of the novel, the brevity of the texts, the help given by the pictures and the “cinematographical” attraction ... everything conspires to take the drama and the ritual out of reading, to attract a public that is disinclined or unused to reading and to make them wish to persevere. [...] In photo novels as in strip cartoons or indeed in novels, quality varies greatly. The biggest danger as regards the photo novel is that of purveying “rose-tinted” stories, stereotyped, conveying dubious values, seeking so much to prettify reality that they end up lying about it. Rather than making the readers dream, this sends their minds to sleep. The characters become stereotypes (rich, handsome hero, submissive, timorous woman – or, conversely, dangerous, treacherous woman, etc.), the stories spread illusions rather than hopes; they stupefy instead of energizing.” (<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001821/182121E.pdf>; lesedato 27.01.15)

Den første franske fotoromanen skal være en fra 1949 i bladet *Festival* (Saint-Michel 1979 s. 190). “Hver tredje franskmann leser fotoromaner” estimerte Serge Saint-Michel i 1979 (1979 s. 7). I 1985 hadde fotoromaner over 60 millioner lesere månedlig i Frankrike. Av disse leserne var 20-30 % menn (Demougin 1985 s. 1404). Mange av de franske var oversatt fra italiensk. På 1970-tallet ble franske og italienske fotoromaner solgt (på fransk eller oversatt) i Afrika. Det franskredigerte bladet *Afrikanerinne* (*Africaine*) inneholdt fotoromaner med fotografier av afrikanere i afrikansk miljø, blant annet lagd i Dakar. Disse fotoromanene

tematiserte ofte problemer i afrikanske samfunn, f.eks. en landsby som ikke vil la seg flytte på for et jernbanespor som skal legges, smugling, en muslimsk kvinnes vansker med å akseptere sin manns kone nummer to, ekteskap mellom europeer og afrikaner, og lignende (Saint-Michel 1979 s. 133). Fotoromaner ble også lest mye i Sør-Amerika og Canada (Saint-Michel 1979 s. 166). Fotoromaner har ifølge et fransk litteraturleksikon vært svært populære i Latin-Amerika, Canada, Afrika og Midtøsten (Demougin 1985 s. 1404). Baetens og Gonzales kaller sjangerens suksess i Italia, Spania og Latin-Amerika for spektakulær (1996 s. 42).

I Elfenbenkysten har fotoromaner vært populære, blant annet fordi de inneholder lite tekst og dermed krever mindre leseferdighet enn en vanlig roman (Dehon 2014 s. 285).

Den tidligste opprinnelsen til fotoromanen skal være stereoskopiske bilder som ble solgt fra midten av 1800-tallet og som viste fiktive hendelser som f.eks. et bryllup under konge Ludvig 15. eller illustrerte kjente sanger (Saint-Michel 1979 s. 13). Franskmannen Henri Tournier lagde midt på 1800-tallet en fotoroman basert på en roman av Louis Desnoyers: *Jean-Paul Chopparts ulykker* (1834). Et av fotografiene viser en scene der Jean-Paul Choppart blir angrepet av en ape (Saint-Michel 1979 s. 13).

En tidlig forløper for fotoromanen er den franske teatermannen og surrealistene Antonin Artauds fortelling *Munken* (publisert som bok i 1931, men basert på en skrekkroman av Matthew Gregory Lewis fra 1796). Artaud har i boka komponert sammen en montasje av fotografier som han har tatt selv, i håp om å lokke en filmregissør til å filme historien (Virmaux og Virmaux 1983 s. 95).

Nært beslektet med fotoromanen er kinoromanen, som ble solgt i store opplag fra tiden etter 1. verdenskrig. I disse romanene var det tatt lange serier av bilder fra kinofilmer og historiene ble så gjenfortalt i bokmediet. De første spanske fotoromanene hadde svart bakgrunn omgitt av små hvite firkanter, en imitasjon av perforeringene i film-celluloiden (Baetens og Gonzales 1996 s. 42).

I fotoromanene brukes det visse knep for å la handlingen foregå vekselvis på f.eks. to steder samtidig, blant annet ved at to personer snakker i telefon med hverandre (Saint-Michel 1979 s. 41).

Noen fotoromaner ble lagd episode for episode etter at leserne fylte ut et lite spørreskjema i bladet der romanen gikk som føljetong. Leserene kunne dermed "få viljen sin" i hvordan historien skulle fortsette fra gang til gang. Det hendte også at disse bladene oppfordret leserne til å sende brev til skuespillerne som var med i fotoromanene (Baetens og Gonzales 1996 s. 38).

Eksempler på skapere av fotoromaner er Henri Mazenc, Mario Padovan og Hubert Serra. Padovan stod bak over 500 fotoromaner, Serra omtrent det dobbelte antall

(Saint-Michel 1979 s. 141). Padovan gjorde Victor Hugos roman *De elendige* (1862) om til fotoroman og fortalte i et intervju med avisen *Le Monde* i 1973: “En dag (i Italia) gikk jeg tur i en avsidesliggende fjellegn. Jeg støtte på en gammel gjeter. Vet du hva han gjorde? Han leste min adaptasjon av *De elendige* til fotoroman. Denne gjeteren holdt på å oppdage Victor Hugo!” (gjengitt fra Saint-Michel 1979 s. 163).

Mange filmer som er adaptasjoner av litterære verk, er svært løst eller fritt basert på det opprinnelige verket (f.eks. en roman) eller korter historien drastisk ned. Fotoromaner som går som lange føljetonger, tar ofte med mer av historien når de er adaptasjoner enn det filmer gjør, og kan derfor fortone seg som “å gå tilbake til kilden” sammenlignet med filmversjonene (Virmaux og Virmaux 1983 s. 95).

Det er glidende overganger til andre sjangrer. Den franske forfatteren Hervé Guiberts *Suzanne og Louise* (1980), med undertittelen (*Roman-Photo*), altså med undertittel i parentes, er en håndskrevet fortelling (skjønnskrift i stedet for trykte bokstaver) og med mange bilder. Det er likevel ingen fotoroman, for bildene og den verbale teksten henviser ikke så entydig til hverandre som i en fotoroman. De to gamle søstrene som boka handler om, forteller om sitt liv (Guibert 1980; upaginert).

I Federico Fellinis film *Den hvite sjeiken* (1952) har en fotoroman-serie en sentral funksjon i handlingen, en handling som dessuten har et visst preg av en sentimental fotoroman.

Legeromaner har “stått sterkt som fotoromaner i ukebladene. De har gjerne italiensk opphav. Da det første norske fotoromanbladet, *Michelle*, kom på markedet i 1983, var det nettopp en italiensk legeroman som ble presentert.” (Vibe 1984 s. 5)

Ragnar Hovland har gitt ut en kort tekst med tittelen “Eg kunne ikkje late som ingenting heller: Fotoroman”. Under fotografiene har Hovland skrevet korte tekster. Teksten er publisert i *Åleine i Alpane: 20 bøker* (1999).

Fotoromanens kulturelle status er svært lav; sjangeren “is often described in terms of ‘moving yet traumatizing stupidity’ [...] It is said that a photo-novel is so stupid, so poor, and so repetitive that there can be only one possible reaction: ignore it. One may agree that there are good reasons to bypass this medium: it can be quite meager visually (often a mechanic succession of talking heads); it can be very narrow thematically (a set of variations on the romantic and eternal love between two people that fate would keep apart); from an ideological point of view it is often highly suspect, given its unconditional defense of outdated values (such as the inferior position of women); and the medium has not changed since its origins in 1947. However, such a categorisation is unreliable. It is necessary to have a closer look at what the photo-novel really is in order to notice that it raises a lot of fascinating questions which are not possible to examine through the lens of other

media such as photography, cinema, or comic strips. The photo-novel is a medium unto itself – not simply a sequence of pictures, a book version of what might have also been a film, or a comic strip with photographs – and as such it has something to teach us.” (Baetens 2012)

“Like so many other forms of popular culture and mass media publication, the photonovel no longer materially exists, having been neglected, thrown away, pulped or burned, and eventually gone.” (Jan Baetens i Colangelo 2023 s. 8)

Fotoromanens popularitet, men samtidig lave kulturelle status, er en tvetydighet som har “been named “fame versus shame”: the incredible popularity of the photonovel on the one hand, and the contemptuous opinions of highbrow readers on the other, which determined for many years a lack of interest in and study of a topic that had such a large influence on its readers.” (Colangelo 2023 s. 25)

“Despite its success and merits, it was either ignored, shunned or openly despised by many, and, as [Ermanno] Detti convincingly says, “[it was] banished among the things one does not talk about or for which one spares only a contemptuous, cursory irony”. [...] The fact that the magazines publishing photonovels were extremely cheap and the paper quality was poor were elements that did not help the photonovel improve its reputation, ostracized as a ‘cheap’ product in every sense of the word. Moreover, an additional aspect detrimental to the image of the photonovel was the perceived audience, thought to consist of housewives and women of poor means and education. The fact that statistical studies showed that many middle- and upper-class people, both men and women, read photonovels as well never truly managed to breach the wall of prejudices that had already formed. Such a low opinion of photonovels, maintained mainly by those who considered themselves as well educated, had a strong impact on the production side. Many people who authored, created, wrote the scenarios or published photonovels did so either in anonymity, used pseudonyms or tried to keep this line of work a secret. There was a conscious attempt at detaching one’s name from a profession that was considered anything but prestigious. The publishing house Mondadori, for example, kept an orderly record of all its publications that surprisingly (or perhaps unsurprisingly) never included the many photonovels that came out of its printing presses. Actors of photonovels, while often finding fame thanks to the popularity of the photonovel, which put them into the spotlight and worked as a launchpad, moved away from it and never looked back, as if beginning their acting career as actors of photonovels was something to be ashamed of and best kept quiet.” (Colangelo 2023 s. 39-40)

“A common criticism of the photonovel had to do with the melodramatic and sentimental tone of its stories. No literary legitimacy was recognized for the photonovel, seen on the contrary as a dangerous product because it entertained a large number of readers who, instead, could have potentially been dedicating their time to what was considered ‘real’ literature. Naturally this criticism failed to

acknowledge the important role of photonovels in bringing people, especially those less literate, close to a literary format” (Colangelo 2023 s. 40).

“The photo-novel chooses a certain host medium: the weekly magazine, which implies a certain format, a certain kind of paper, a certain kind of publication rhythm (the photo-novel is an example of periodical literature; most photo-novels are not released as complete novels but rather follow the installment format), as well as a certain kind of serialisation. [...] The photo-novel also chooses a specific kind of sign; not only photographs, but photographs made according to a certain aesthetic, based on the eroticism of the face (both male and female) and of the body (mainly female). [...] and the capacity to exploit the seductive nature of glamour photography in original narrative contexts” (Baetens 2012).

“[T]he photo-novel selects a certain kind of story to link to: the melodrama. [...] In the case of the photo-novel, which continues the abandoned melodramatic tradition that passed from the boulevard theater (where it was to be discarded by the return of the text theater) to the so-called primitive cinema (where it was to be abandoned in favor of the more realist acting style that accompanied the narrative turn of the film industry), the reuse of melodrama seems to be both naive and unabashed, often on the verge of crude plagiarism. This can be seen, for instance, in the oriental variant of the early photo-novel in which the influence of Rudolph Valentino’s star power is still very much present. At the same time however, the medium sets the melodrama in a contemporary and usually urban setting. Under the influence of postwar neorealism the photo-novel will abandon this exoticism, as is demonstrated by Federico Fellini’s *The White Sheik* (1952), a film that takes the photo-novel craze in Italy as its theme while also parodying the exotic and escapist tendencies of some of its early attempts.” (Baetens 2012)

“A medium does not change because this or that aspect of its automatism is put under pressure but rather because the whole automatism is being redefined. One change has to do with a medium’s content. In the case of the photo-novel this change has been manifest since the mid-1950s, when the medium actually absorbed or assimilated the structures of the film-novel. The presentation of the film-novel shifted radically to that of the photo-novel, whose host medium and visual language it began to obey. The influence of the dominating structure of the photo-novel was so strong that the content of the film in question was even undergoing changes aimed at bringing it closer to the photo-novel’s basic mode of the melodrama. In exchange, the photo-novel used the sub-type of the film-novel to find an answer to the rapidly growing critiques of its own artificial and anachronistic content (this was the conceit of *The White Sheik*: the alienation of the female reader, brainwashed by the exotic dream world of the first photo-novels). More and more photo-novels tended to be ‘photo-novelised’ versions of the former film-novel.” (Baetens 2012)



Evelyn Sullerot, “writing about photonovels in the 1960s, noted that around 50 % of the female characters in French photonovels worked and were presented in the story in the context of their work. She compared this number with the actual employment rate of women in France at the same time, which was only 34 % and mainly consisted of modest jobs. The author then identified modest jobs and a situation that bordered misery as a transfer element for the readers, who could easily identify themselves in the characters. The fact that photonovel women eventually moved out of their situation of poverty or difficulty had the function of giving hope to the readers for a brighter future. This was however mainly synonymous with a good marriage to a wealthy man, which would provide economic stability together with social standing. The male characters had much better jobs than their female companions, often jobs like doctor or officer where they had to wear uniforms. While women worked for a living, men’s positioning seemed to satisfy a need for ‘masculine values’ that would please the readers. A closer look at the Belgian corpus reveals a similar pattern. Photonovel author Hubert Serra remarks on how his female characters were different from the typical Italian ones because they were much stronger and more independent, and fought for their beliefs, their love and their professional life. The stories moved on the boundaries of tradition and certainly did not promote a social revolution, but they nonetheless presented stronger female models readers could be inspired by. An extreme example of this was the photonovel “Pilote d’essai / Proefpilot”, published in *Lectures d’Aujourd’hui / Lectuur voor Allen* in 1956. The story, though romanticized, revolved around aviator Jacqueline Auriol, who starred as herself in the photonovel, thus offering readers a clear example of a powerful woman holding a job that was traditionally considered masculine.” (Colangelo 2023 s. 43)

“The new photo-novel that appears from the 1980s onwards elaborates new content and new forms by taking as its starting point the book form and/or the art gallery exhibit. What matters here is not the fact that it is now real artists that are making photo-novels (Duane Michals, Marie-Françoise Plissart, James Coleman, Soll LeWitt) but that this shift in host medium goes along with a much more visible change in content matter (the new photo-novel forsakes the melodrama) and visual style (it foregrounds photography).” (Baetens 2012)

“Targeting a semi-literate and extremely poor audience photo-novels were, at least in the beginning, publications read collectively. They were shared by many readers (which was a way for consumers to cut costs) and they were commented on by groups of readers in places and at moments that fostered public debate (hence the cliché of the photo-novel as typical reading material in places of gossip such as barber shops or laundromats). However, it was not only the reading of the photo-novel that had strong collective and interactive aspects – the construction of the medium itself obeyed similar laws. How did readers actually participate in the storytelling? Two mechanisms should be stressed here. First, the industry was inviting the public to feed the scriptwriters and authors with ideas and comments;

in certain cases this feedback was ‘hidden’, for instance when the content of the readers’ letters section was ‘recycled’ in the storylines. In other cases it was direct and blatant, for instance when readers were encouraged to write their own stories or to help resolve the decision-making during the unfolding of an installment. Many magazines not only ended their weekly installments with cliffhangers, they also asked their readers how they would solve the big or small enigma raised at the end of the episode. For example, does A (the man) save B (the woman) from drowning because: 1) he is interested in her money; 2) he is a good man; 3) he takes her for somebody else; 4) he is already falling in love with her, etc. The extremely flexible ways of producing a photo-novel, which allowed for the creation of new storylines almost overnight, were a strong incentive for reader participation.” (Baetens 2012)

“In addition (and probably the strongest form of interaction), both male and female readers were also urged to send in their picture so that they could become a star in the next photo-novel. Most photo-novels were shot in environments that were very familiar to the readership. Moreover, most photo-novels used men and women that had been recruited not through modeling agencies but through beauty contests that were organised in everyday locales. The step from zero to hero was not just a myth – for some young people it was a dream that could really come true (most magazines also featured stories on their actors and actresses and in all cases the proximity of reader and star was strongly emphasised). All of these procedures and mechanisms may seem to be deceptive forms of interactivity (after all, it is the scriptwriter who decides how the story will conclude and it is the producer or the owner of the magazine who picks the next star). A film like *The White Sheik* is certainly right to criticise the illusions of those who can no longer tell the difference between fiction and real life. However, such a conclusion is suspect; it bears many traces of elite and anti-feminist criticism that is as questionable as the stereotypes it claims to denounce. Other readings of the photo-novel are possible, which foreground, on the contrary, the liberating effects of this medium and its importance for a better understanding of what it means to tell stories not just in general and abstract ways but as cultural practices involving real people in real historical circumstances.” (Baetens 2012)

“Melvin van Peebles’ *Confessions of a Ex-Doofus-Itchyfooted Mutha* (NY: Akashic, 2009) is part graphic novel and part photo novel, based on his 2008 film of the same name. There is a long history of publishing photo novels that essentially retell the story of a feature film or television program using production stills, both as a way of extending the product line and enlarging the fan base. What is so interesting about the book version of *Confessions* is that it blends traditional hand-drawn imagery of the graphic novel with film stills.” (<https://sebald.wordpress.com/2014/03/11/3-photographic-novels/>; lesedato 22.01.15)

“In the French publishing industry today [2023] photonovels are everywhere. After the high-cultural intermezzo of the 1980s, where inventive photographers like Belgian Marie-Françoise Plissart, often in collaboration with scriptwriter Benoît

Peeters, had produced superb examples of visual narratives competing with the sophistication of the French New Novel, the genre has come once again to the fore in very different forms and formats. All of them have in common redefining the scope and breadth of the classic photonovel, drawing it always farther away from the exceptionally successful commercial formula of the romance comics-with-pictures formula that dominated the magazine market for more than two decades (1947-1968).” (Jan Baetens i Colangelo 2023 s. 7)

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