



# I shoot, THEREFORE I am

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**“One. Two. Three. Cheers!”**

One click of the button and the moment can be stored for ever. “One. Two. Three. Cheers,” shouts Ng Chi-wai, a visitor at the famous Wishing Tree in Tai Po. “I take pictures of my wife so as to store our precious memories,” Ng says. Meanwhile, a flurry of flashes goes off as a dozen other visitors strike different poses in front of the Wishing Tree.

With the advent of affordable digital cameras, people can take pictures again and again without giving a thought to the cost of processing and developing. They no longer just use their cameras to capture those special moments. Instead, some of them take pictures of sexy models, while others snap photos of themselves.

(1, 5) Snappers take photos of graduates-to-be in the Chinese University of Hong Kong.



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(2, 3, 4) Professional photographers and hobbyists take pictures on Government House Open Day.  
(6) A father takes photos of his children in front of the Wishing Tree.



“I don’t like to be labelled as ‘salon pal’.  
I am a photographer.”

“Salon pals” crowd a fashion runway in a mall.

“Salon pals” snap away at models at a lingerie show.

Some “salon pals” bring mini ladders and stools to capture the best angles.



**“No one can control the use of photography.”**



Friends snap their own joyful moments.

“I don’t like to be labelled as ‘salon pal’. I am a photographer,” says Tang Siu-fai, an amateur photographer of five years experience. Although he is standing among the fanatics, he does not want to be named as one of the “salon pals”.

Tang says these “salon pals” do not have any unwholesome motives when taking pictures of the models. He says the men cannot invite their girlfriends to be their models because the girlfriends are not used to the cameras and flashes. So they come to events like this to sharpen their human photography skills.

It is not only these the more mature amateurs who love photographing models, some teenagers are also obsessed with snapping them - except their models are themselves.

“Since no one else is around, I have no other model but myself,” Karen Allisa says. When she is feeling bored, the 18 year old will grab her DSLR and take pictures of herself in different outfits and poses. So far, Allisa has uploaded

more than 180 self-portrait profile pictures on her Facebook page.

“This is an act of narcissism. They (people taking photos of themselves) want to portray themselves in their most beautiful way,” says Nick Kwok Hing-fai, a photographer working for the *Ming Pao daily* newspaper.

Kwok says that, in the past, people commissioned artists to draw or paint their portraits. Thanks to the prevalence of small and inexpensive



cameras, people can now choose their most flattering looks and moments, capture them and share them with others.

Kwok believes the trend for photography fanatics to take endless shots of models stems from the most basic understanding of aesthetic value. “Most likely, people are easily attracted to the pretty young ladies because of their beautiful appearance. But if they shoot landscapes, it is hard to understand the inherent aesthetics. So they go for the young, female models.”

Still, Kwok does not want to be judgmental about the salon pals’ and self-portraitists’ use of photography. He says photography is an open platform for people to shoot what they want , to express their feelings or convey their messages. “No one can control the use of photography.”