



How to Read a Photograph: Lessons from Master Photographers

Ian Jeffrey

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Ian Jeffrey is a superb guide in this profusely illustrated introduction to the appreciation of photography as an art form. Novices and experts alike will gain a deeper understanding of great photographers and their work, as Jeffrey decodes key images and provides essential biographical and historical background. Profiles of more than 100 major photographers, including Alfred Stieglitz, Bill Brandt, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Walker Evans, Paul Strand, Lazlo Moholy-Nagy, highlight particular examples of styles and movements throughout the history of the medium. Each entry includes a concise biography along with an illuminating discussion of key works and nuggets of contextual information. *How to Read a Photograph: Lessons from Master Photographers* is the third book in Abrams successful series that includes *How to Read a Painting* and *How to Read a Modern Painting*.

How to Read a Photograph: Lessons from Master Photographers Details

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Virre says

It is not exactly what one would think, still okay though

Jim Coughenour says

I'm a big fan of Abrams's "How to read" series. These softcover books are beautifully published, lavishly illustrated, and provide excellent (if necessarily brief) critical introductions to a wide spectrum of artworks. Jeffrey's addition to this series is as pleasurable as a photo album found among a pile of academic texts – good for hours of reverie nourished by 100-odd photographers.

btw - I prefer the William Eggleston photo on my edition to the one shown above, which otherwise seems identical.

Peterk says

Thought this would be a great introduction to the work of several giants but while some context of the making and/or significance of the images shown is there, this info is so brief it reduces the book to merely a collection of images sorted by photographer. Could've been very good but ends up to be just under mediocre :-)

Bill Mutch says

This is, so far, the best book of its type I've encountered. Ian Jeffery selects photographers from the earliest technical explorers to very recent members of the photographic pantheon... and a few along the decades that most of us have never heard of... for an exposition of how to view the pictures in both their personal and historic contexts. Unlike most authors in the survey of photographic history realm, he provides enough biographical and sociological background along with technical information that the analysis of the pictures makes sense. Irrelevancies like dates of gallery shows don't appear and useful but distracting bibliographies and provenance info appear as appendices. There is a really useful index. Sometimes the discussions of the pictures point to small details that are actually important. Sometimes Jeffery is frankly but articulately subjective about feelings that enhance understanding. Bravo. I especially appreciate the presentation of Soviet era and post WWII Japanese photographers that are usually way under-represented in such volumes. An ass-kicker that puts the book over the top is the cover photo by William Eggleston. Every element of this picture below the type lines has something to be seen. Look in every corner.

Mariska says

Mooi en interessant boek. Voornl. heel nuttig om de fotohistorie en je zo bekend te maken met de allereerste meesters. Vaag genoeg wordt de foto op de voorkant niet eens besproken. Heb er veel aan gehad in de zin dat ik wat meer oude fotografen heb leren kennen en weer wat weggezakte kennis over het kijken naar foto's is terug gekeerd. Mooi voor op je boekenplank!

Simon says

Lovely photos but let down by the text...

Ola Loobeensky says

I would throw it away long time ago if not for all those beautiful pictures. The worst book about photography I've ever read; polish version is really awful however I'm not sure if it's because of the author himself of the translator. Does Ian Jeffrey use all those collective grammar forms in english version too?

Co za niezno?nie denerwuj?ca ksi??ka; r?ce opada?y mi tyle razy, ?e wyd?u?y?y si? o jakie? dziesi?? centymetrów. Nie ?a?uj?, ?e j? kupi?am, bo trudno by?oby inaczej wej?? w posiadanie równie przekrojowego zbioru znakomitych fotografii, ale te zdj?cia to jedyne, co powstrzymuje mnie przed rzuceniem jej w jaki? ciemny i bardzo, bardzo zapomniany k?t. Jeffrey ma t? doprowadzaj?c? mnie do szewskiej pasji manier? uogólniania swoich odczu? i interpretacji na wszystkich czytelników; bez przerwy co? "widzimy", "odczuwamy" i "my?limy". Problem w tym, ?e czasami widzimy co? innego, albo, co gorsza, nie odczuwamy i nie my?limy, i wówczas Autor patrzy na nas - tak sobie to wyobra?am - oczami wielkimi jak spodki, by chwil? potem tonem wyra?aj?cym bezbrze?ne zdumienie zapyta?: "Jak to?" Do tej litanii narzeka? dochodz? jeszcze dziwaczne, jakby wyrwane z kontekstu zdania (nie wiem, czy to wina t?umacza, czy samego Jeffreya), a tak?e karygodne b??dy merytoryczne - co to, na Boga, jest "obiektyw 8x10 cali"?

Connie D says

I haven't actually finished yet, but am pausing halfway. I love the way this book is set up, relatively chronologically by photographer, with a sampling of excellent photos and discussion.

Andy Lawless says

From the back cover "Iran Jeffrey presents a history of photography and landscapes of the 1840's and

traveling up through the modern era"

Although not a good history of photography book, it is well written and full of illustrations, and provide excellent but brief introductions to many of the famous photographers from the past up to near the modern era.

Tom says

After seeing a review of this book in Photoshop Magazine, I was able to get it secondhand on-line through Barnes and Noble. I very much enjoyed reading about Master Photographers from 1835 to present. Ian Jeffrey presents many iconic photos for the period and incite into the photographer's motivation behind the photographs they took.

Sarah says

So very cool. I read a few pages every morning while pumping. But, man, dude can to write. Horribly awkward and stilted prose. That said, it was good for a regular laugh. Also helpful for figuring out what monographs to put on my wish list.

Joe says

Well, I skipped around and read about half the book. Can't really recommend it as a history of photography, and also didn't find the analysis very stimulating. Not excited about how small some of the images are, either. All that being said, I'm not sorry that I picked this book up from the library and spent a couple of hours perusing it.

Ci says

An excellently accessible book on photography, going from the very earlier ones of 1840's to modern era. The author is sensitively engaging both in terms of technics (not too heavy) and the cultural and social settings of each major work.
