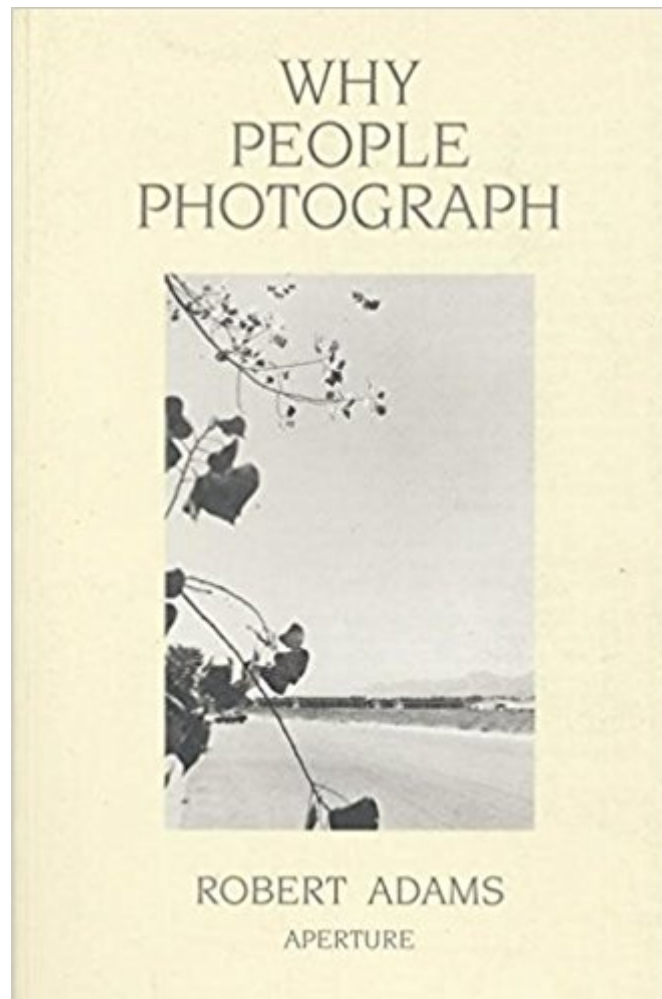


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Robert Adams: Why People Photograph: Selected Essays And Reviews



Synopsis

A now classic text on the art, *Why People Photograph* gathers a selection of essays by the great master photographer Robert Adams, tackling such diverse subjects as collectors, humor, teaching, money and dogs. Adams also writes brilliantly on Edward Weston, Paul Strand, Laura Gilpin, Judith Joy Ross, Susan Meiselas, Michael Schmidt, Ansel Adams, Dorothea Lange, and Eugène Atget. The book closes with two essays on "working conditions" in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century American West, and the essay "Two Landscapes." Adams writes: At our best and most fortunate we make pictures because of what stands in front of the camera, to honor what is greater and more interesting than we are.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

If you are not connected with any photography/art community, this book is for you. If none of your friends has an MFA, and if you are in need of someone who can speak intelligently about photography as art, then again, this book is for you. Robert Adams' writing is clear, concise, and insightful. Adams tells us why we photograph, for example, why we photograph landscapes. The answers include: because the images are of "emblems of a land" (pages 146 and 163), because our photographed subjects redefine us and is part of our biography (page 15), because art is "specifics made universal" (page 120), and because "art is a discovery of harmony" (page 181). Adams consoles photographers who come to realize that spending ten years doing photography won't necessarily result, e.g., in a contract for preparing a coffee-table book: "[t]hey may or may not make

a living by photography but they are alive by it" (page 15); and the experience of having an exhibit where the photographer "stand[s] through the opening of an exhibition to which only officials have come." (page 16). Adams reveals the secrets of some of the masters, e.g., Weston: "limbs and torsos . . . treated as shapes to be enjoyed as one might the sight of a smooth stone" (page 64); and Paul Strand: "he worked off axis as if it were a moral principle . . . but usually just slightly off axis." (page 81) Robert Adams offers some critiques of the masters, e.g., of Paul Strand: "[o]ff-centering is used here . . . it begins to seem formulaic (page 87); and of Ansel Adams: "I have been derivative of myself for fifty years." (page 116). Robert Adams' book is a stand-alone book, that is, it does not require a knowledge of literature, art criticism, or history. The book is for the layperson.

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