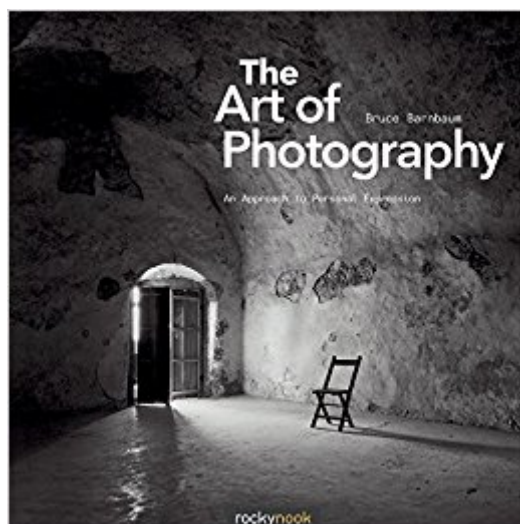


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# The Art Of Photography: An Approach To Personal Expression



## Synopsis

This is an updated and newly revised edition of the classic book *The Art of Photography* (originally published in 1994), which has often been described as the most readable, understandable, and complete textbook on photography. With well over 100 beautiful photographic illustrations in both black-and-white and color, as well as numerous charts, graphs, and tables, this book presents the world of photography to beginner, intermediate, and advanced photographers seeking to make a personal statement through the medium of photography. Without talking down to anyone, or talking over anyone's head, Barnbaum presents "how to" techniques for both traditional and digital approaches. Yet he goes well beyond the technical, as he delves deeply into the philosophical, expressive, and creative aspects of photography so often avoided in other books. Bruce Barnbaum is recognized as one of the world's finest landscape and architectural photographers, and for decades has been considered one of the best instructors in the field of photography. This latest incarnation of his textbook, which has evolved, grown, and been refined over the past 35 years, will prove to be an ongoing, invaluable photographic reference for years to come. It is truly the resource of choice for the thinking photographer.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Here's a case where 's star rating sytem doesn't work very well. As described below, for a very small number of photographers this book will prove useful. For the vast majority of photographers it

will not. I've long been an admirer of the work of Bruce Barnbaum. An original Barnbaum print hangs on my wall. A copy of his book of photographs, "Visual Symphony" graces my coffee table. Several years ago I purchased a used copy of the original, but then out of print, "The Art of Photography" at an outrageous price. I have to confess that much of the book was unread because it dealt with film photography, and I had long since made the switch to digital. Now "The Art of Photography" has been reissued in a revised form, supposedly updated for the digital age. The book attempts to cover all of photography from visualization to hanging the print on the wall. There are even chapters that discuss ideas like innovation and old saws like truth in photography. There are references to digital photography, but a great deal of the book is devoted to Barnbaum's take on the zone system for film photography, including processing film to increase (or decrease) the range of light captured on the negative. There is a tip of the hat to digital photography, including the importance of the camera's histogram to capture exposure, and reference to high dynamic range photography to increase the range of light for digital captures but the heart of the book is film. The book is illustrated with Barnbaum's photographs, mostly in black-and-white, and they are drop-dead beautiful. If you like Ansel Adams you will love Bruce Barnbaum's images. I suppose these images alone may justify the updating.

I suggest you read this quote first: "Whether I like or dislike the subject matter, I will not attempt to produce meaningful work with it if I am not moved by it. At best, I could produce a good but meaningless composition, much like a grammatically perfect speech that says nothing". If you agree with this, then you will enjoy reading The Art of Photography from first pages. If not, then just go to the HOW part and you won't be disappointed either. In a nutshell, Bruce Barnbaum first explains what the principle "Subject matter is a subject that matters" is all about. Then he teaches you how to express yourself "grammatically" correct. So many photography books describe such thing as composition, for instance, as some illusive matter that can only be explained in abstract terms or very basic rules and cannot be taught consistently. "You need to have a vision... You've got to learn how to see in black&white..." Stuff like that reads okay until you come across a book like The Art of Photography. This book is so concrete and practical that every paragraph teaches you something useful (I mean, really teaches you, not just tells you how important it is). It's the only book of all those I've read so far that clearly states what Composition is, what elements it consists of, and what roles each of the elements plays. The critical thing for me is that the author really guides you through this labyrinth: you can feel that his goal is to bring you to the point where you'll be able to feel comfortable in this labyrinth and navigate there alone. After reading The Art of Photography you

won't miss those "Why Photographs Work" books because you will be able to see it yourself. The book is both very fundamental and simple (not simplified!)

Books about photography can be placed across a very wide spectrum. Some focus almost entirely on the mechanics of capturing and producing images in a pleasing but essentially documentary fashion. Others approach the making of photographs from a largely aesthetic point of view emphasizing the physiology of human vision, emotion, creativity, and the artistic elements of light, color, composition, style, and social discrimination. A few attempt the difficult task of trying to cover all the bases, usually coming up short due to limited time and space, or by fostering exceedingly narrow points of view. In this book, Bruce Barnbaum covers a great deal of territory, including theory, mechanics, philosophy, psychology, and the expression of a strong personal viewpoint along with over 100 images illustrating specific points, all wrapped in a nicely produced square format with a fairly elegant feel for a paperback. For the photographer who is a serious student of the art and craft of imaging it's a wealth of information, and certainly an excellent learning tool and reference piece. It is not, however, without limitations. First is the fact that the views expressed are quite narrow in perspective. There's no question that the author is exceedingly bright, highly experienced, and duly lauded within the tight-knit community of well-known fine-art photographers. But photography as a medium deserves freedom from too much pigeonholing. The strong emphasis in this piece is on artistically created large-format black & white images processed in a wet darkroom and delivered in the form of silver prints.

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