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Seizing The Light: A Social History Of Photography



Synopsis

Seizing the Light: A Social History of Photography provides a thought-provoking, accurate, and accessible introduction to the photographic arts for all readers. With stunning images and commentary by hundreds of international artists, the text clearly and concisely provides the building blocks necessary to critically explore photographic history from the photographers' eye, an aesthetic point of view.

Book Information

Paperback: 496 pages

Publisher: McGraw-Hill Education; 2 edition (December 9, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0073379212

ISBN-13: 978-0073379210

Product Dimensions: 8.5 x 1.1 x 10.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 3 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 49 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #15,652 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #3 in Books > Arts & Photography > Photography & Video > History #4 in Books > Arts & Photography > Photography & Video > Criticism & Essays #18 in Books > Textbooks > Humanities > Visual Arts > Photography

Customer Reviews

Robert Hirsch is an artist, author, curator, and educator. Hirsch is the author of *Seizing the Light: A History of Photography*; *Exploring Color Photography: From the Darkroom to the Digital Studio* published by McGraw-Hill and *Photographic Possibilities: The Expressive Use of Ideas, Materials, and Processes* published by Focal Press. He is a former associate editor for *Photovision* magazine and is a contributing writer for *Afterimage*, *Digital Photography (UK)*, *exposure*, *Ilford Photo Newsletter*, and *The Photo Review*. He was the Executive Director and Chief Curator of the Center for Exploratory and Perceptual Art (CEPA Gallery) in Buffalo, NY. Hirsch is on the art faculty of SUNY Buffalo and teaches history of photography online through Eastern New Mexico University. Recently his images have been shown at: University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM; Vermont Center for Photography, Brattleboro, VT; Artspace, New Haven, CT; Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; George Eastman House, Rochester, NY; Williamsburg Art & Historical Center, Brooklyn, NY; Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY; Contemporary Museum, Baltimore, MD; and Stefan Stux Gallery, NY, NY.

Robert Hirsch's survey of the origins and evolution of photography, "Seizing the Light," is a welcome addition to the expanding study of the medium. In clear, insightful, and engaging prose, Hirsch unfolds photography's hit-or-miss birth which was rapidly followed by coherent technological developments almost at the speed of light. Hirsch makes us believe that photography was inevitable; the darling and necessary child of destiny wed to information theory. And Hirsch's treatment of early 20th century Modernist photography and the philosophy behind Pictorialism is excellent. As a primer for the invention of photography and its chemical underpinnings, "Seizing the Light" is as good as it can be. It falls a little short, however, in its treatment of contemporary photography. The book would have been better served by including a few in-depth surveys of important contemporary photographic projects in order to emphasize the centrality of this discipline in contemporary art history and postmodern theory which is heavily dependent on the nature of images and processes of image-making.

History can be boring, and dry. The book starts with, as one may expect, the dawn of photography. At first, I avoided this book, letting my reading for class pile up until midterms hit and SURPRISE! I found myself needing to read half of a textbook. It was that task that lead me to love this book. I sat and read it, which at first, was painful. Then as it drew on, I realized, that I was enjoying learning the roots of my passion, and that Hirsch wrote it in such a way that drew me in, and was actually entertaining. I got a 102% on that midterm, and I went on to buy a used copy of this book when I stumbled across it.

When I first got the book I thought it would be a lot more beat up than it was. But to my surprise, the pages were in tact and also just a few pages were a little worn and folded. I was skeptical, because books seem like they are always beat up when you get to read it next. In the meantime, I am using this book until the semester is over with because of how low the pricing is for rentals. Thanks, I will highly recommend to students to check out your site. Marie

This book delves into more of the cultural and societal implications of photography. Highly recommend for photo students and those interested in photographic history.

I'm enrolled in a basic photography history course at a community college. This is the textbook we were assigned to buy for the class. The book is well put together and full of great facts. The size is

rather large but this allows for the many pictures and nice size text used in the book. The chapters flow well and the book is not hard to read. I am all around satisfied with the textbook. I also found out after purchasing it that it's available for digital download onto the Kindle. Some in my class have downloaded it and say they read it throughout the day and can study on the go with the book in digital format.

This textbook is a wealth of information. I had no idea the history of photography was so rich. You never really think much about the history of our technology, etc the way you do about the history of people or cultures as a whole. There are several pages of pictures in each chapter to accompany all of the writing, and each chapter ends with endnotes, citations and information about the text from the chapter. The writing is very organized. I have no complaints. It's a great textbook to learn from.

I rented this book for my History of Photography class and it was a pleasure to read. Like most history books, there were a few areas of very boring text (I'm looking at you Post-Modernism). However, overall, I found this book flowed very well with the class and even found myself liking many of the chapters.

Very helpful book for my History of Photography class.

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