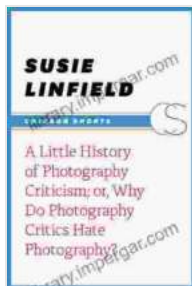


Little History of Photography Criticism or Why Do Photography Critics Hate

Photography, as an art form, has always been accompanied by a chorus of critics. These critics have played a significant role in shaping the way we perceive, interpret, and appreciate photographs. But why do photography critics often seem to have a negative outlook on the art form? What drives their critical stance, and how does it impact the development of photography?



A Little History of Photography Criticism; or, Why Do Photography Critics Hate Photography? (Chicago Shorts)

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This essay delves into the fascinating world of photography criticism, exploring its history, methodologies, and motivations. We will uncover the reasons behind the critics' seemingly negative stance and examine the complex relationship between photographers, critics, and the public. By understanding the purpose, biases, and impact of photography critique, we

gain valuable insights into the evolution of photography as an artistic medium.

The History of Photography Criticism

The roots of photography criticism can be traced back to the very beginnings of the medium. As early as the 1840s, critics debated the artistic merits of photography, arguing about its status as art, its relationship to painting, and its potential for social commentary.

In the late 19th century, photography criticism began to take on a more formal structure. Critics such as Charles Baudelaire and John Ruskin established influential theories about the aesthetics of photography, which continue to shape critical discourse today.

The 20th century saw the emergence of modern photography criticism, which focused on analyzing the social, cultural, and political implications of photographs. Critics such as Susan Sontag and Roland Barthes argued that photographs were not simply objective representations of reality, but rather constructed narratives that reflected the ideologies of their creators.

The Methodologies of Photography Criticism

Photography critics employ a variety of methodologies to analyze photographs. These methodologies can be broadly divided into two categories: formalist and contextualist.

Formalist critics focus on the formal elements of a photograph, such as its composition, lighting, and color. They analyze how these elements work together to create a visual impact and convey meaning.

Contextualist critics, on the other hand, look at photographs in relation to their social, cultural, and historical context. They examine how photographs are produced, circulated, and consumed, and how they reflect the values and beliefs of the society that produced them.

The Motivations of Photography Critics

Photography critics are motivated by a variety of factors, including their own personal experiences, their knowledge of photography history and theory, and their desire to engage with the broader public.

Some critics are driven by a passion for photography and a desire to share their insights with others. Others are motivated by a desire to challenge the status quo and to push the boundaries of the medium.

Whatever their motivations, photography critics play an important role in the development of the art form. They help to shape our understanding of photography, to identify new trends, and to challenge conventional wisdom.

Why Do Photography Critics Often Seem to Hate?

One of the most common criticisms of photography critics is that they seem to have a negative outlook on the art form. Critics are often accused of being too harsh, too dismissive, and too focused on finding fault.

There are a number of reasons why photography critics may seem to hate. First, critics are often held to a higher standard than other writers. They are expected to be knowledgeable about photography history and theory, and to be able to articulate their opinions clearly and persuasively.

Second, critics are often writing for a specialized audience. They are not trying to appeal to the general public, but rather to other photographers, art historians, and curators. This can lead to a more critical and analytical tone.

Third, photography critics may feel a sense of responsibility to challenge the status quo and to push the boundaries of the medium. They may believe that the best way to do this is to be critical of existing work.

The Impact of Photography Criticism

Photography criticism has a significant impact on the development of the art form. Critics help to shape our understanding of photography, to identify new trends, and to challenge conventional wisdom.

Critics can also help to raise the profile of individual photographers and to bring their work to a wider audience. In some cases, critics can even help to change the course of photography history.

Of course, not all photography criticism is positive. Critics can be harsh, dismissive, and even cruel. But even negative criticism can be valuable. It can help to identify weaknesses in a photographer's work, and it can inspire photographers to push themselves harder.

Photography criticism is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon. It can be negative, positive, or somewhere in between. But regardless of its tone, photography criticism plays an important role in the development of the art form.

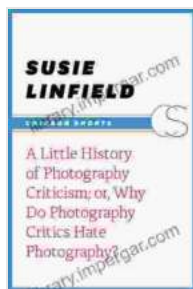
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the profile of individual photographers and to bring their work to a wider audience.

So, if you're a photographer, don't be afraid of criticism. Embrace it. Use it as an opportunity to learn and to grow as an artist.

Further Reading

- Tate: Photography Criticism
- MoMA: What is Art Criticism?

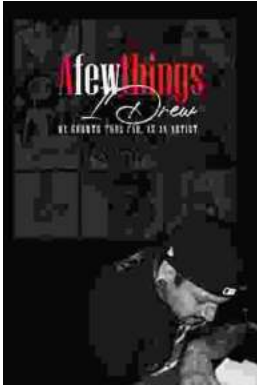


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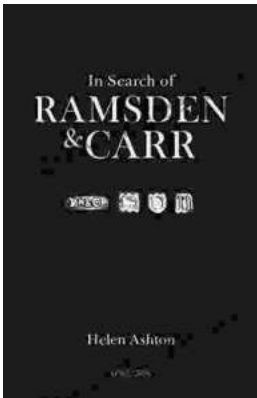
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