



Walker Evans: The Hungry Eye

Gilles Mora , John T. Hill

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"A major figure in American photography, Walker Evans stands among Alfred Stieglitz, Edward Steichen, and Paul Strand as an artist of the first rank. Evans documented the look and feel of much of his native country in a notably distinct way throughout the majority of the twentieth century. This definitive retrospective of Evans's career, which received France's Prix de Nadar and England's Krasna-Kraus Award when first published in hardcover, is now available for the first time as a reduced-format paperback."

"Prepared by John T. Hill in cooperation with Gilles Mora, Walker Evans: The Hungry Eye begins with the artist's early abstractions and his project on the Brooklyn Bridge done in collaboration with American poet Hart Crane, and continues through Evans's photographic studies of New England and New York Victorian buildings; his travels to Tahiti and Cuba; his work in Florida and New Orleans; and his three-year involvement with the Farm Security Administration. A highlight of this volume is the material from Evans's highly influential show American Photographs at The Museum of Modern Art in New York, re-created in exactly the sequence that Evans established for the original exhibition." No broader or more comprehensive view of this important, innovative, and distinguished photographer exists to date. With all of the images superbly reproduced from negatives prepared by Thomas Palmer, this volume will long stand as a tribute to an American original.

Walker Evans: The Hungry Eye Details

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From Reader Review Walker Evans: The Hungry Eye for online ebook

R.Friend says

This book was given to me by my bosses at my graphic design internship over a decade ago. All these years, and all these *books* later, it's still one of my favorites. Just a tremendous body of work represented, and beautifully designed.

Frank McAdam says

The big problem with any book that attempts a comprehensive overview of Evans's work is that the photographer's career extended over such a great length of time (almost a half century from 1927 to 1975) and contained so many important works that it would be difficult for any author to cover adequately the entire breadth of his oeuvre in a single volume. And that is the difficulty here. The study proceeds chronologically - first in groupings by years and then in sub-groupings that discuss the individual projects completed within those time frames. Such an approach results in major accomplishments, such as the FSA work or *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, unfortunately receiving less attention than they deserve and minor assignments, such as the 1941 Florida Mangrove Coast photos, receiving only perfunctory mention in passing. Most importantly, there is no attempt at a synthesis that would provide the reader with an understanding of the end to which Evans was working. The artist's intentions remain an enigma. In the Foreword, author John T. Hill speaks of Evans's "purposes" but makes no attempt to define them.

"For Evans, photography was an infinitely malleable medium, one meant to be hammered to fit his own purposes. For him, there were no canons or sacrosanct methods. The camera was simply a convenient mechanism for collecting ideas, icons, and anecdotes. Like a master carpenter selecting the right tool, Evans moved easily from one photographic format to another, choosing whichever seemed to suit the job at hand."

Evans, of course, is one of the key figures of 20th century photography not only for his own work, which was brilliant and innovative, but also for the influence he had on the generation of photographers who followed him. His proteges included such notable figures as Robert Frank and Diane Arbus. Evans stubbornly adhered to his own path in determining the direction his work was to take. While Ansel Adams and Edward Weston were promoting straight photography purely as an aesthetic experience in the service of fine arts, Evans saw the importance of creating photos that captured the spirit of the country and its people, no matter how depressed or cynical their outlook might be. This particularly incensed Adams who wrote of *American Photographs*: "A poor excuse, and imitation of the real beauty and power of the land and the real people inhabiting it." And yet Evans's insistence on anonymity rendered his images timeless so that they transcended any purely documentary function they might otherwise have had.

The reproductions of Evans's work contained in *The Hungry Eye* are excellent but often of such small dimensions, especially in Abrams' 2004 reduced format edition, that they lack the impact they would otherwise have had. Also, there is very little technical information provided for any of the photos shown and this makes it difficult to fully appreciate the scope of Evans's achievement. The text is limited to introductory remarks to each group of photos shown and is lacking any cohesive commentary.

Susan Brearley says

Photographic historical art. How can you go wrong?

Marissa says

This is a great, chronological survey of the incredible photography of Walker Evans, with good explanations of the biographical context of different works and Evans' approach to the medium. Was especially good as a beginner's guide, to get a thorough overview of his work.

dirt says

The Writer's Almanac had a tiny segment on Walker Evans for the Saturday, November 3rd edition. He wanted to be a writer until he picked up a camera and discovered how to narrate with a photograph. I was compelled to find out more about him, his photography, and his life after seeing some of his photos. I found a few hefty books at the library and started with *The Hungry Eye*. The photos are stunning, especially the raw portraits and graffiti. People knew how to dress with style back then, when everything was in black and white.

P.S. Thank god for the Works Progress Administration and the Farm Security Administration (even if FSA was directed by a foolio in the first degree [boo Stryker & idea of plenty]). For without WPA & FSA we wouldn't have these photos that document the human experience and help us make sense of this world.

Davy says

Very good overview of Evans's career. Exceptionally well-organized, devoting separate chapters to the photographer's different projects and commissions, each one with a short but informative introductory text. A recommended next stop after *American Photographs*.

Joe says

Awesome chronological collection of Evans' work. Appreciated seeing his vision and perspective change and evolve as he aged, but also how some themes and elements remained constant.

Ray Dunsmore says

An excellent overview of the work of legendary photographer Walker Evans. The highlight is definitely the

complete reprinting of his American Photographs exhibition in MOMA, notably altered significantly in the book (though you'll want to get out a magnifying glass, as most of the prints are extremely small to cram them all into the book). Contains some great insights into his mindset and rebelliously atypical method.

Ben Royal says

Evans was a great photographer, but the French authors got a little carried away in their praise of his work. Actually, they got a lot of carried away. However, this is a solid introduction to his work and its evolution from the late 20s until his death in the 70s. Almost everyone will recognize his photos taken for the FSA during the height of the Depression.

His influence on American photography after WWII is pervasive. For that reason alone, this book is worth more than a glance.
