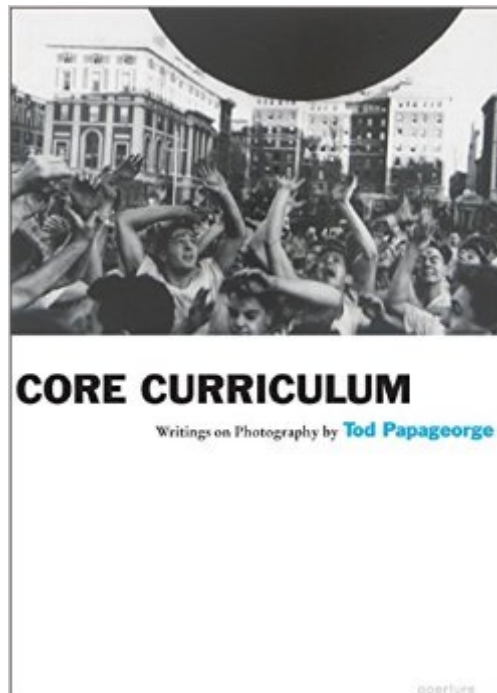


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Tod Papageorge: Core Curriculum: Writings On Photography (Aperture Ideas)



Synopsis

"Core Curriculum: Writings on Photography" is the long-awaited collection of essays, reviews and lectures by Tod Papageorge, one of the most influential voices in photography today. As a photographer and the Walker Evans Professor of Photography at the Yale University School of Art, Papageorge has shaped the work and thought of generations of artist-photographers, and, through his critical writings--some of which have gained a cult following through online postings--he has earned a reputation as an unusually eloquent and illuminating guide to the work of many of the most important figures in twentieth-century photography. Among the artists Papageorge discusses in this essential volume are Eugène Atget, Brassai, Robert Frank (with Walker Evans), Robert Adams and his close friend Garry Winogrand. The book also includes texts that examine the more general questions of photography's relationship to poetry, and how the evolution of the medium's early technologies led to the twentieth-century creation of the artist-photographer. Among the previously unpublished pieces in "Core Curriculum" are an unfinished poem written in response to Susan Sontag's "On Photography," a profile of Josef Koudelka and a commencement speech delivered at the Yale School of Art in 2004. "Core Curriculum" also includes a number of interviews with this esteemed photographer/teacher/ author, ranging in topic from his own photographic work and background in poetry to his energetic observations on the art of photography. Tod Papageorge (born 1940) earned his BA in English literature from the University of New Hampshire in 1962, where he began taking photographs during his last semester. He is the recipient of two Guggenheim Fellowships and two National Endowment for the Arts Fellowships. In 1979, Papageorge was named Yale University's Walker Evans Professor of Photography and director of graduate studies in photography, both positions he continues to hold today.

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Customer Reviews

Not only is Tod Papageorge a very fine street photographer, he's one of the few photographers who can talk and write about photography as well as do it. I nearly fell out of my chair when I read: "...at their best, photography and poetry can share a near-blood relationship, easier to assert than to explain." It's something I've been trying to explain to photography students for a long time. Tod covers many of modern photography's seminal contributors, and sheds new light on the period when he, Garry Winogrand, Joel Meyerowitz, and Paul McDonough were on the streets of New York establishing a major branch of street photography. All in all it's a wonderful book. My only beef is that the book doesn't include a couple of Atget's pictures Tod deals with at length. You need to have a pretty complete book of Atget's work when you read that part of Core Curriculum. If you're interested in street photography you need this book.

I love this book! It's like sitting down and listening to Tod talk to you about the love he has for photography and get the benefits of his insights. I am using it for my students to read and do a research project based on one of the articles inside. Each week we discuss a few of the articles. They pick the quote from each that touched them in some way. They look up the photographers and images talked about but not shown. Perfect to get them thinking in a new way about images and ideas. And it is so smart. I don't always agree with Tod about one thing or another but his argument for his point of view is so clear that I indeed understand why he comes to that conclusion. It will be interesting to see the final research based on this jumping off point.

First, let me preface my critical remarks by saying that it's difficult to write coherently and without artifice about the subject of photography, whether it be about photography as Art or as representation or about particular photographers and how they approach the craft. I've rarely read a good extended article, let alone a collection of essays, that can hold one's attention for long without lapsing into artspeak or muddled hagiography. And that's my criticism of this book. It simply doesn't say much. What it does manage to say it says in a particularly oft-putting artspeak that seemingly intends to camouflange the essay's lack of content. The author is a photographer and tenured professor in the Yale Art Department. This explains the empty verbosity coupled with a marked

narcissistic emphasis on his own work, in particular a tendentious view of his own extended photo essay on Central Park. If I learned anything from the book, it's not to send my kid to Yale to learn photography.

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