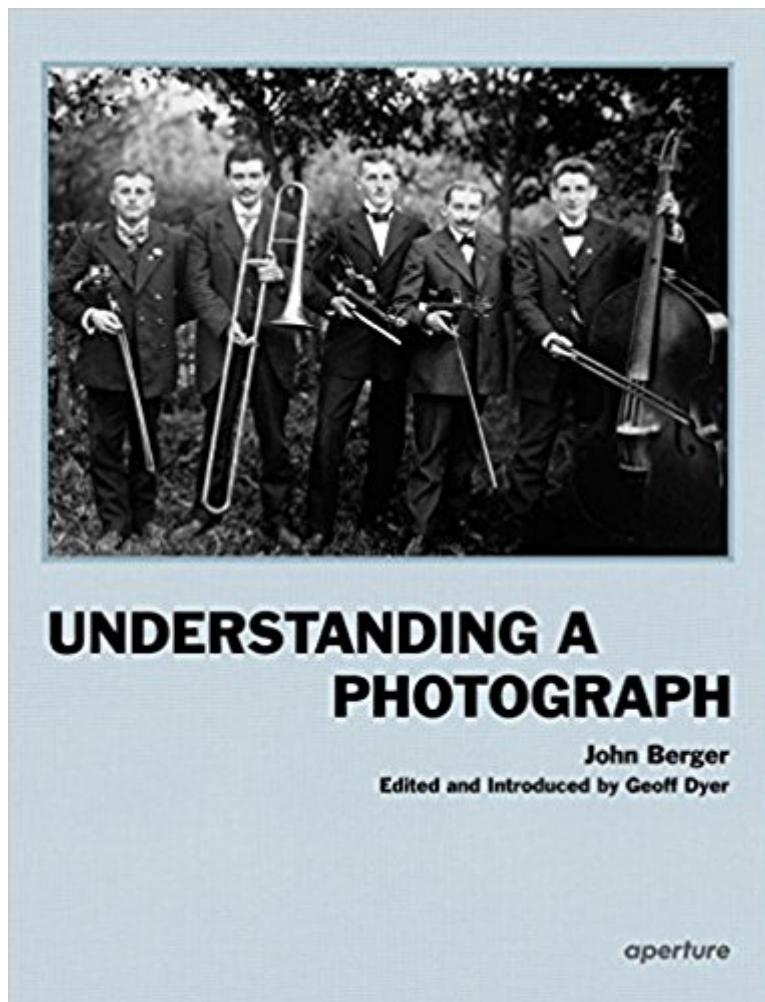


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# John Berger: Understanding A Photograph



## Synopsis

John Berger's explorations of the relationships between the individual and society, culture and politics, and experience and expression through the written word, films, photographic collaborations and performances are unmatched in their diversity, ambition and reach. His television series and book *Ways of Seeing* revolutionized the way that art is understood. Now, *Understanding a Photograph* gathers the photography writings of one of the most internationally influential authors of the past 50 years. *Understanding a Photograph* is arranged chronologically, leading the reader on a thought-provoking journey through selected essays from hallmark works such as "About Looking" and "Another Way of Telling," as well as previously uncollected pieces written for exhibitions or catalogues that discuss a wide range of artists—from August Sander to Jitka Hanzlová. This collection of some 25 texts has been carefully selected by novelist and essayist Geoff Dyer, who has also written a critical study of Berger's oeuvre.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is a series of Berger's essays, arranged chronologically, about photography's role in the shaping of society. "American Photo" This new selection of more than 20 essays, edited by Geoff Dyer and including previously uncollected pieces, is essential reading for anyone interested in understanding the power of this ubiquitous medium. Spanning some 40 years, they include pieces on the 1967 photograph of Che Guevara's corpse, on the meaning of photographs—on the shock effect of war images. There are also typically insightful pieces on Paul Strand, W. Eugene Smith, André Kertész and Henri Cartier-Bresson. As ever with Berger's

writing, the theoretical is always informed by politics and a deeply felt humanity. The  
Guardian

John Berger is a novelist, poet, screenwriter, and critic. He is the author of numerous works of fiction and nonfiction, including *To the Wedding*, *About Looking*, and *G.*, for which he was awarded the Booker Prize. Among his best-known works is the television series and book *Ways of Seeing*. He has received prestigious awards for his writing, including the Petrarca-Preis and a Golden PEN Award. Geoff Dyer is the author of a critical study of John Berger, *Ways of Telling*, and a critically acclaimed book on photography, *The Ongoing Moment*. He also has written four novels, and five genre-defying books, which include *But Beautiful*, awarded the Somerset Maugham Prize.

While I try to understand a photograph by reading this book, I fail to understand John Berger in many of the essays. It is a book about John rather than about photographs. If you want to know him better, read hard but I won't guarantee success.

This is a very eloquent and very, very intelligent reading. Although quality of printing of my copy has something to be desired. Anyway, he is an extremely talented observer and real connoisseur of historical photography. It is what makes John Berger such a wonderful practical critic and reader of individual photographs. Recommended.

John Berger is a really intriguing and stimulating writer. Essays are his forte. Berger has had a life-long interest and involvement in photography. His collaborations with the photographer Jean Mohr (*A Seventh Man*, *A Fortunate Man* and *Another Way of Telling*) were truly original and have been highly influential. So it is great to have this collection of all his essays on photography. I am not wild about the paperback format which I purchased. Aperture produce some exquisite books - see their recent books in the 'Workshop' series (*Larry Fink and the Webbs*) - but this is not quite up to their usual standard. It feels a little cramped, the cover is not one I enjoy holding in my hand. Sorry, Aperture... wish you had done the contents full justice.

The book is a classic. John Berger's book deconstructs much about photographs, and reconstructs them again. The writing may seem simple enough, but it delves deep into the art and philosophy of photography, as well as the art of some of the photographers. It is, however, advisable to read up on the photographers he talks about before you read the book, else some of it may not make too much

sense. Or, read about them after you read the book, and then re-read the book. I am not sure why he held such a high regard for Susan Sontag's "On Photography", but then you can't have it all.

This is required reading for all my photography classes. Lyrical and illuminating: Berger is still one of the greatest, most accessible authors writing about "seeing".

Still rocking after all these years

As with all his books Berger is insightful and his writing makes my brain work. A must have for all photographers and visual artists.

Eloquent journal for the photo enthusiast. I enjoyed it, a keepsake for the library, and it makes a great gift.

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