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# Towards A Philosophy Of Photography



## Synopsis

Media philosopher Vilém Flusser proposed a revolutionary new way of thinking about photography. An analysis of the medium in terms of aesthetics, science and politics provided him with new ways of understanding both the cultural crises of the past and the new social forms nascent within them. Flusser showed how the transformation of textual into visual culture (from the linearity of history into the two-dimensionality of magic) and of industrial into post-industrial society (from work into leisure) went hand in hand, and how photography allows us to read and interpret these changes with particular clarity.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

As both an art medium and a way to record events, photography has become ubiquitous in our increasingly image-driven culture since its invention in the early 1800s. These two interesting books take a serious academic look at how photography has influenced culture. Prague-born philosopher Flusser (1920-91) concerned himself with design, communication, and language. His illuminating essays, originally published in German in 1983, are offered in English for the first time. Flusser describes a world fundamentally changed by the invention of the "technical image" and the mechanisms that support and define industrialized modern culture. He argues that whereas ideas were previously interpreted by written account, the invention of photography allows the creation of images (ideas) taken at face value as truth, not interpretation that can be endlessly replicated and spread worldwide. His essays identify players in this model (his lexicon includes the Apparatus, the

Functionary, and the Technical Image) and warn of rising illiteracy owing to an uncritical faith in photography's "reality." Flusser does not speak of specific photographs or images but of the larger forces at work in the increasingly technical and automated world. Unlike Flusser, Batchen (art and art history, Univ. of New Mexico) delves intricately into individual works to explicate his thoughts, digging into such topics as the invention of photography, the medium's impending demise, photography about photography, and "da(r)ta" digital art that comments on its own structure. Conveying a deep respect for the importance of photography, he laments the way images have become commodities in the digital age. Batchen also explores the history of photography and looks at larger cultural forces from within the framework of the medium. This collection of nine recent essays of various origins (with thorough notes and index) contains some repetition, but that small complaint is outweighed by Batchen's compelling arguments and analyses. Of interest to photographers, historians, and philosophers, both books will serve multiple audiences and are recommended for academic and large public libraries. Debora Miller, Minneapolis Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc.

“In Flusser, we’ve found our Wittgenstein. By that I mean, in the ways that 1960s conceptual artists found his *Philosophical Investigations* as granting them the necessary permission to see the world around them with fresh eyes, Flusser’s forays into media have framed, theorized, and unpacked the new complexities of our digital world. By empirically questioning received knowledge and recasting it within crisp lines of history and logic, he’s made the digital legible in a time when its theorization is occluded and murky to say the least. Like de Kooning’s famous statement: “History does not influence me. I influence it,” taken Flusser’s analog-based investigations in the twentieth century to show how to be in the digitally soaked twenty-first.” (Kenneth Goldsmith Los Angeles Review of Books)

textbook is in good condition and with nice cover!

I bought this book as a supplement to Korean version of the same book, because the transfer of meanings can change slightly according to the language. This english version really helped to understand the original meaning of the author. (Original version was written in German as you may already know.) If you are interested in photography and philosophy of photography, this book will help you a lot although it will be slightly difficult to understand the author's concept at the first

chapter.

This is a short book but some great points are made. Maybe you don't agree with all of them, but it's interesting to read another's point of view about photography. Written at an advanced level, if you're casual about photography, maybe pick something else. If you're trying to get a deeper perspective on photography then this is a useful read.

I'm re reading it, but it was an introduction to some interesting problems in contemporary photography. I found it very inspiring

Flusser is the ONLY exciting theorist on the subject of Design, and this collection on Photography, mostly published in Art Forum in the 80s, is a very nice, post-digital, update to Roland Barthes.

Vilém Flusser proposes a fascinating philosophical contribution considering the impact on the photograph, photographer, and their impact on contemporary society. His perspective is truly groundbreaking. Well worth the purchase and highly recommended for those interested in the social flow of perspective relative to content in concert with its distribution.

An excellent read for any photographer, especially those who enjoy high concept art/reading. The book arrived in perfect condition.

Fast shipping and great product!

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