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10 Game-Changing Photography Books

By Ed Philips
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A good photo book is something that you can find your self returning to time and time again for a source of inspiration. With the Internet making the majority of photography easily accessible, holding a printed publication from your favorite artist can feel all that more special. To help you sort the treasure from the trash, we rounded up 10 photo books that have made a real impact in photography and have become a staple on bookshelves worldwide.

Mike Brodie – A Period of Juvenile Prosperity

Mike Brodie's compelling series of work is the result of years spent train-hopping and hitchhiking back and forth across the United States. Setting out on his first adventure at the ripe age of 17, Brodie took an old Nikon camera and began to document his travels, creating a body of intimate and honest photographs about the people he met along the way, which has recently surfaced and become his first and only book. He has since hung up his camera and become a motor mechanic in Oakland, CA. And while it seems a shame that he won't be taking any more photos, his brief burst of creativity produced an inspirational book of images that became an instant, timeless classic.



Larry Clark – Tulsa

Larry Clark's controversial series of early work burst onto the scene in 1971, giving a raw and uncensored look into the lives of Larry and his friends – a group of young drug addicts living in Tulsa, Oklahoma. After its release the book became an instant classic and changed the type of subjects people normally associated with documentary photography. Through his efforts, Clark brought an unknown youth culture to the general public through grimy and truthful photographs. He's stayed true to his shocking style throughout the years, releasing several other publications about alternative youth culture, as well as the 1995 cult movie Kids, earning his spot as one of the most influential American photographers of his generation.

Mark Borthwick – Not in Fashion

British photographer Mark Borthwick was partly responsible for changing the face of fashion photography in the '90s, breaking through the strict conventions of the time with his flowing, abstract images and leading the way for a new generation of experimental fashion photographers.

His distinct style of work continues throughout his 2009 book, Not in Fashion, which includes fashion photographs, journal scraps, polaroids, portraits and shoot notes. Now one of the defining photographers of his time, Borthwick's book has become a classic due to his juxtaposing approach to garments and his intimate photos of models and family members.

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Diane Arbus – Revelations

By the time she passed away in 1971, Diane Arbus' impact on photography was massive. She initially became famous for her surreal subject matter and black-and-white square images of unusual people. Contrary to many photographers before and after her, she photographed her subjects' flaws and imperfections with a sense of humility. Revelations is a huge 352-page retrospective of Diane's classic work, a compilation of her most groundbreaking images from her career, and since its release in 2003 has become a major point of reference for anyone interested in photography and art.



Georgia at home, Bournemouth estate SE 18 1974

Corinne Day – Diary

London fashion photographer Corinne Day is responsible for discovering and photographing the now-iconic model Kate Moss, giving Kate her first cover for The Face magazine in July 1990. She became famous for her candid approach to fashion photography, having influenced a generation of fashion and documentary photographers through her realist aesthetic.

Published in 2000, her book Diary is a collection of intimate images of friends and family shot over 10 years, an honest and open look into the characters' lives that holds no boundaries when it comes to drugs and nudity.

Stephen Shore – American Surfaces

For anyone interested in photography, Stephen Shore doesn't need a whole lot of introduction. His highly influential book American Surfaces documents a road trip taken by Shore and a friend from New York to Amarillo, Texas in 1972. The result of this trip is 300 brilliantly composed color images of shops, motels, food and toilets that's helped change the way people looked at color photography as an artistic medium and brought a whole new meaning to the term "documentary photography."

Shore's book has since become a must-have for anyone interested in 20th century photography and a sort of reference guide for life in 1970s America, as he seemed to photograph nearly everything he saw.



Viviane Sassen – In and Out of Fashion

Released in February 2013, Amsterdam-born photographer Viviane Sassen's new book has already become a great source of inspiration for fashion photography fans all over the world. In and Out of Fashion brings together 17 years of award-winning photography for huge brands and magazines such as Stella McCartney, adidas, Carven, The New York Times and Dazed and Confused.

Sassen's refreshing work shows huge amounts of imagination as she experiments with shapes, colors and the forms of her models. Never short of new ideas, each page of the book is full of fresh and innovative editorials as well as essays that offer an insight into her work in fashion.

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William Eggleston – William Eggleston's Guide

Memphis native William Eggleston is one of the world's most famous photographers. He's widely considered responsible for bringing color photography to the art world, as previously only black-and-white images were considered an acceptable medium for art photography. Eggleston's Guide contains images shot between 1969 and 1971 in his hometown. Using color as a major composition point, he photographed seemingly average and everyday subjects and brought them to life. His book has since become an essential for the anyone interested in photography or the history of art.



Hans Feurer – Hans Feurer

Born in Switzerland in 1939, pioneering photographer Hans Feurer's experimental approach to fashion photography was groundbreaking, becoming famous for his bold and distinctive KENZO campaigns throughout the '80s and his innovative work for publications like Vogue, Nova and Elle.

His self-titled book is the only publication of his work ever released, which is surprising due to his glamorous and lengthy career in photography. Packed full of the artist's most influential work, it shows just why Feurer has become a mainstay of fashion since the 1960s.

Robert Frank – The Americans

The Americans by Swiss born photographer Robert Frank is a fairly obvious choice, widely considered to be one of the most influential photo books of all time. Between 1955 and 1956, Frank traveled across the United States and brought home a series of images that changed the way people looked at documentary photography, highlighting the darker side of '50s America through his gritty images. He shot images of factory workers, poverty and racial divides, often out of focus and under/over exposed, resulting in a far cry from the polished, sterile and documentary photography of the time.

